CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 Introductory

This chapter is divided into three parts: Part A attempts to briefly define Classroom Centred Research. It traces its beginnings and development and describes the research tools that have been developed and have proved useful. Several research topics in Classroom Centred Research are identified and a few investigatory studies relating to each topic are very briefly discussed.

Part B considers the probable reasons for the mismatch between input and intake. It then discusses the concept of 'classroom interaction' and 'uptake' which are central to the study.

Part C reviews briefly a few recent research studies which are in some sense related to the present study.

PART A

2.2 Classroom Centred Research

2.2.1 Attempt at a definition

Classroom Centred Research (hereafter CCR) properly considered is research which investigates classroom processes.
The classroom for such studies is not merely a setting but the object of investigation. CCR tries to understand the things that happen in the classroom, how they happen and why they happen the way they do. For example, why is it that an apparently shy non-participating learner has achieved better results than the more vocal ones? Why is it that the majority of learners have processed a particular aspect of input in a uniformly incorrect way? Why do three different learners give different interpretations of the same explanation? How far are teachers open to learner feedback? and so on.

A large number of classroom studies with a process-product perspective have used classroom data to investigate particular aspects of the teaching-learning phenomenon. These studies are not interested in classroom processes in the manner described above. They are studies that are experimental and are primarily interested in correlations between variables and statistical significance. Such studies will be described here in order to show what kinds of research make use of the classroom as a setting before proceeding to classroom-centred research proper.

2.2.2 Underlying premises

(a) The emphasis in CCR is on describing in detail the instructional environment.
(b) CCR is concerned with generating hypotheses not in testing them.

(c) Direct observation of classroom happenings is a key point in CCR methodology.

2.2.3 How it began

CCR did not originate among the language teaching researchers. It began in the fifties among teacher trainers with a view to give adequate feedback to student teachers. The problem of what constitutes effective teaching, though fascinating as a research problem, proved too complex to hold on to and so the teacher-training issue slowly got relegated to the background. It had however provided the basic tools, the observation instruments (and 'Interaction Analysis' itself). As these tools had certain drawbacks, they needed to be developed to suit the needs of research in language teaching.

2.2.4 Interaction analysis

Observation schedules employing a set of preconceived categories were used in content classrooms. The most notable among them was the PIAC (Flanders 1970) system. As these schedules were intended for content classrooms for teacher training purposes and further as they focussed on teacher behaviour, (learner behaviour had not been the focus of attention at that time), they had to be modified to suit the FL/SL classroom where language is both the medium and the
content. A number of modified versions of FIAC appeared, the most well-known among them being FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction System) of Moskovitz (1971). Fanselow prepared Focus which is a modification of Bellack's analytical system. (See page 15). Over 200 such observation schedules have been prepared for describing the classroom behaviours of teachers and students.

2.2.4.1 **Drawbacks of Interaction Analysis**

Interaction analysis has come in for severe criticism.

(a) As Long (1980) observes:

".... many instruments focus heavily on what the teacher does or says. This is reflected in the number and kind of categories." Student speech, for example, is characterized as 'response to a teacher's question, or initiation'. Issues such as how students obtain speaking turns, or use them, hold on to turns, compete for the floor, clarify doubts, check on problems are not made clear.

"In general, interaction analysis systems code surface behaviour and so may miss the communicative value of remarks. This is partly
due to their use of low-inference categories." A focus on behaviour leaves out the participant's intentions.

(b) Non-verbal communication is generally ignored altogether.

(c) Many behaviour categories are ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations.

(d) Bailey (1975) observes with reference to Flanders and Flint. "The number of categories observed, the rapid decisions made about frequently changing behaviours and the necessity of recording data while verifying the passage of time make the observer's task difficult."

(e) "Split-second" decisions are required to be made while recording frequently changing behaviours. Such factors negate accuracy and reliability in the data recorded.

(f) Most Interaction Analysis Systems derived from FIAC (Flanders 1970) use an arbitrary time unit for example, 3 seconds rather than a natural time unit, say a speech turn.

(g) Interaction analysis was intended primarily for subject classrooms. It fails to take into account the fact that in the L2 classroom, language is both medium and content.
2.2.4 Need to find alternatives to 'interaction analysis'

Douglas Barnes:

For these reasons, it was necessary to find alternatives to 'interaction analysis'. It may be worthwhile considering the work of Douglas Barnes in this respect. Both Barnes (1969) and (1976) show that Barnes is not concerned with language teaching but with language use in the classroom. Barnes does not propose a system of analysis or a theory of discourse but "to study the language of the classroom is to study both the learning processes and some of the internal and external constraints upon it" (Barnes 1969). His analysis, for example, of 4 kinds of teachers' questions, factual, reasoning, open questions not calling for reasoning and social questions; his analysis of pupil initiated sequences give useful insights into classroom teaching and learning.

Bellack (1966):

This is one of the first studies to recognize the role of learners in the instructional process. "Studying the activities of teachers in the classroom without at the same time analyzing the actions of students would give a distorted and incomplete view of the teaching process."

The major task for the study was "to describe the patterned processes of verbal interaction that characterize
classrooms in action", Classroom discourse was transcribed and examined. It suggested four major categories: (1) Structuring (2) Soliciting; (3) Responding and (3) Reacting. Each move had a pedagogical function for example, a structuring move sets the context, for example, by focusing attention on the topic. The analysis of discourse revealed four different kinds of meanings.

Bellack's study is specially significant because it has influenced several studies including Fanselow and Sinclair and Coulthard.

Sinclair and Coulthard:

Sinclair et al took Bellack's ideas as the starting point for a study of classroom language use. Their report entitled 'The English Used by Teachers and Pupils' was published in 1972. Later, a theoretical discourse analysis perspective was added and the book was published under the title 'Towards an Analysis of Discourse - the English Used by Teachers and Pupils' Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The authors were not interested in teacher training or in teaching, for that matter. The book presents ideas on discourse analysis in the classroom context because a classroom lesson is structured.

Sinclair and Coulthard use a hierarchical system of analysis modelled on Halliday's Categories of a Theory of Grammar. Working downwards each rank of unit consists of
elements of the rank below. The highest unit is the Lesson which consists of one or more Transactions. Each Transaction in turn consists of one or more Exchanges and each Exchange of several moves. Each move again consists of Acts. The Act is the smallest unit and so cannot be subdivided.

Fanskelow; FOCUS

Fanskelow, as mentioned earlier, also took his inspiration from Bellack. Fanskelow's paper 'Beyond Rashomon - Conceptualizing and Describing the Teaching Act' (1977) presents in detail the 'FOCUS' (Foci for Observing Communications Used in Settings) Observation System. 'Focus' distinguishes five characteristics of communication: the source, the medium, the use, the content and the pedagogical purpose. It speaks of 4 aspects of pedagogical purpose: structuring, soliciting, responding and reacting. Further, in Focus, the tone of voice and spoken words are considered two separate mediums.

Aware of the complexity of the system, Fanskelow suggested that only a small part need be used at any one time.

Allwright: Turns, Topics and Tasks

Allwright (1980) presents analytical categories for turn-taking analysis. The distinctive feature of these categories is that they belong to the "high inference" type.
and are therefore capable of capturing interesting aspects of what happens in the classroom. Further they are applicable to both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Thirdly, no a priori differences are made between the teacher and the learners. This is a clear departure from the Flanders' tradition. Allwright applies the categories to classroom data. The analysis focuses on one learner in detail. Differences between teacher and learner behaviour emerge from the data. Allwright's study also presents and uses a set of topic analysis categories on the same data. Finally a task analysis is presented. Thus an overall research framework has been used to explain one individual learner's behaviour and its effect on the other participants, in a language class of just one hour.

The study illustrates the value of combining a quantitative and a qualitative interpretation of data to get better insight into the working of classroom life. Allwright has, in fact, proved the insufficiency of category systems by showing that a category system analysis cannot adequately account for the data.

2.3 **Search for Appropriate Research Tools**

Because of the general inadequacy of observation systems for interaction analysis along with the view that fundamental research and teacher training make very different
demands on observation tools, researchers felt the need to develop more sophisticated and appropriate research instruments.

2.3.1 What gave impetus to the search: Failure of methodological experimental research

As mentioned above OCR had its origins in teacher training in content classrooms and the language teaching researchers took to it much later because in the fifties choice of teaching method was of crucial importance. What happened in the classroom depended on this choice. However, when experimental research in the sixties (See Scherer and Wertheimer 1964, Smith 1970) failed to establish the superiority of any one particular teaching method, the very idea of methodological prescription had to be rejected. Researchers gave up large scale research at the level of method and researched on technique instead. Results of small scale research on technique also being inconclusive (See Allwright 1983), researchers turned their attention from technique to classroom processes. Thus there was a move from 'prescription' to 'description' and from 'technique' to 'classroom processes' and a further search for appropriate research tools.

2.4 Talking about Research Instruments and Procedures

2.4.1 Observation

Classroom observation has remained the central procedure for data collection.
2.4.2 **Non-participant observation**

This involves taking down field notes by a trained observer. Audio or video recording of the lesson is essential and becomes really useful after it is transcribed.

2.4.3 **Participant observation**

This is when the researcher is himself a participant in the activities of the classroom which he observes and on which he writes detailed notes.

2.4.4 **Introspection**

Diary-keeping has been used since about 1976. It is an introspective technique which may be used either by a learner or a teacher to keep a record of classroom events which can be used as research data. (See learner diaries Schumann and Schumann 1977, Bailey 1980, 1983).

2.4.5 **Other mentalistic data**

Other types of introspective and retrospective studies are commented on by Cohen and Hosenfeld (1981) who introduced the technique called 'think aloud'. Here, learners talk aloud as they tackle a learning task. Through a structured questioning procedure, the interviewer elicits students' strategies. Through self-observation and self-reporting learners provide access to the learning process. The important thing to note is that learning strategies as
revealed through the 'think aloud' technique are different from teachers' and applied linguists' expectations. (See also Hosenfeld 1976)

2.4.6 Triangulation

When at least three sets of perceptions of the same event are brought together to get a richer perspective, the procedure is termed 'triangulation', for example, one may obtain through interviews the interpretation/views of students, the teacher and the observer about an event, an explanation, the usefulness of a classroom task and so on.

2.4.7 Quantitative and qualitative research

In quantitative research the variables have to be pre selected for observation and measurement. In classroom teaching and learning, a large number of variables need to be discovered and hence quantitative research is less appropriate. As pointed out earlier OCR is not concerned with the testing of hypotheses but with the generating of hypotheses. A qualitative approach is better suited to exploring classroom processes leading ultimately to the generation of hypothesis.

Further external observation cannot probe into learners' thought processes to study how input is processed and converted to intake. Interviews, questionnaires and learner self-reports serve this purpose better. Through these means even an introvert, non-participating, shy learner can be approached and persuaded to open up.
However, as Chaudron (1986) observes, qualitative and quantitative approaches are "interdependent" and "inseparable" and exist side by side in second language research.

2.4.8 Ethnography

The ethnographic researcher may be 'participant' or 'non-participant'. He is concerned with the whole picture and so he will use qualitative analysis, triangulation, interviews, questionnaires and elicitation procedures to analyse and interpret the data which has been audio/video recorded and transcribed. The ethnographer uses the participants' perspectives as the basis for description and so trust is of vital importance in his work. The cognitive and social aspects of an individual's mind are not open to direct observation. Ethnography is based on trust.

Only with trust and openness will people yield the knowledge of themselves that ethnography seeks.

- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1982

Ethnographic analysis requires intensive immersion in the data and familiarity with the setting. The data needs to be interpreted in the context of its occurrence and the classroom context is linguistic, cognitive and social 'Interactional analysis' Mehan (1979) (not 'interaction analysis' as in the work of Flanders - see above) is useful to the Ethnographer. The term 'interactional analysis' is
intentionally used by Mehan to distinguish it from 'interaction analysis'. The former is rooted in participants' words and actions. It has nothing to do with preconceived categories.

2.4.9 Constitutive ethnography

This is a term coined by Mehan (1979). According to Van Lier (1988) referring to Mehan, the following are its basic characteristics:

i) Retrievability of data (for example, audio-tape data which can be re-examined and re-interpreted.)

ii) Comprehensive data treatment (accounting for each instance of teacher-student interaction).

iii) Convergence between researcher's and participants' perspectives. This requirement means that the structures and actions described must be described in such a way as to reflect exactly the way that these structures and actions are perceived by the participants. One way the ethnographer generally does this is by asking the participants pertinent questions.

iv) The fourth characteristic is an interactional level of analysis.

This chapter has so far attempted a definition of CCR, traced its beginnings in interaction analysis and discussed
the search for appropriate tools. Some of the areas and topics which have been the focus of CCR are listed below.

2.5 Some Topics Which Have Been Focussed On

a) Simplification in teacher talk: teacher talk as input.

b) Interactive aspect of classroom behaviour.

c) Error treatment.

d) Communication strategies and interlanguage.

e) Questioning strategies.

On account of constraints of space only a few studies under each of the above themes will be considered here briefly.

2.5.1 Simplification in teacher talk

The teacher's speech is an important source of input for the classroom learner. Researchers have analysed teachers' speech to see how it differs from normal speech - whether like 'motherese', 'foreigner talk' and 'caretaker speech', teachers' speech is also carefully modified to render it simple to the second language learner. For example, Long 1983(b) reviews "studies of linguistic as well as interactional adjustments in native speaker talk with non-native speakers including classroom based studies." (Mitchell 1985). In another study Long (1983(c), it is argued that modifications in the interactional structure are more likely to provide
comprehensible input than linguistic simplications. Modifications in the interactional structure include comprehension checks, semantic repetitions, expansions, confirmation checks, clarification requests etc. (See also Long 1981). Chaudron (1985) reviews "empirical research to explore what modifications of teacher speech might influence comprehensibility". Aspects of teachers' speech studied are rate of speech, degree of subordination, (that is degree of syntactic complexity) and frequency of input. Chaudron (1979) and (1982) shows how teachers' attempts at simplifying vocabulary by elaborating and explicating end up in providing misleading or confusing input to $L_2$ learners. Gaies (1977) compares the syntactic features in the speech of ESL teachers in and out of class and discovers that their classroom speech is less complex. Some of the strategies teachers use in the classroom are "repetition", "prodding", "prompting", "modelling" and "expansion".

2.5.2 Interactive aspect of classroom behaviour

Seliger's 1977 investigation, pertains to the view that 'interaction' or 'practice' as he calls it leads to linguistic development in a learner at a fast rate. The study postulates two kinds of language learners. The HIGs (High Interaction Generators) and LIGs (Low Interaction Generators). The former are vocal, always seeking opportunities to use $L_2$, the latter remaining passive
recipients of the language used around them.

Seliger's hypotheses were that HIGs would show more improvement on final scores and would demonstrate more interest in using practice opportunities outside the classroom. To test these hypotheses, the interaction of HIGs and LIGs was observed by 2 observers during 4 hours of classes. Every speech act, even a monosyllabic 'Yes' counted as an 'interaction'. There were only 6 learners, 3 from each group.

The findings from the study (See Seliger 1977 for details of the research) supported both hypotheses and so Seliger holds the view that "the more one practises, the better his competence should become". The HIGs, Seliger argues, exploit the classroom situation for further practice and so benefit from instruction.

In 1983, Seliger conducted another study. Here, he observes that those learners who seek opportunities to practise the language would be able to test their hypotheses about the grammatical system of a language more often than those who remain passive listeners. The former would therefore learn at a faster rate and errors arising from mother tongue interference would be fewer in the case of such learners. On the other hand, the passive LIGs who interact less and have fewer opportunities to test hypotheses are prone to more errors due to L1 interference.
In the 1983 study, Seliger comments on the quality of the interaction by distinguishing 2 types of learner turns - those which the learner obtains through the teacher nominating him and those which he initiates himself. The second type of turn enables the learner to draw the teacher's attention and to have input directed at him.

The validity of Seliger's conclusion is subject to much doubt. For instance, Ellis (1984) while studying the effect of formal instruction on the acquisition of WH questions found that those learners who interacted little made better progress. Seliger's finding is also disputed by Allwright (1980). Here, the least interacting participant scores the best results on the achievement test. She has apparently benefited from the interaction of one of the HIGs called Igor in that study. In the present study, Anjou hardly contributes to the discourse and yet scores fairly high on both uptake and PI tests.

Day's (1984) study also does not bear out Seliger's results. Day explored the relationship between classroom participation and learner achievement on final tests. However, while Seliger had only 6 subjects, Day had 58. Secondly, unlike Seliger Day took into account only learner's self-initiated turns and responses to the teacher's general solicits. It may be recalled that Seliger had taken into account every learner-utterance. The difference in coding
may have had some bearing on the difference in results. Those who participated in the classroom interaction in Day's study neither performed significantly better on achievement tests nor on the use of language outside the classroom. It may be pointed out that the testing procedures used by the 2 researchers differed widely. Seliger used a discrete point test of English structure and an integrative oral comprehension test. Day used the Bachman Palmer oral interview test which seeks to measure a learner's overall grammatical, pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence. The difference in testing procedures may also have affected the results.

It is significant that neither researcher focuses on the potential value of interaction itself on those present in the classroom. Both researchers are concerned with correlations between the level of participation and achievement on test results. Neither writer attempts to relate the discourse generated through interaction to learners' achievement.

Recent research, which is to be discussed in relation to the present study in Part C, and the present study itself regard interaction as helpful to both - those who interact and those who listen to the interaction of others.

Schinke (1983) discovered that Low English Proficiency (LEP) learners had fewer opportunities to
interact in the classroom than the non-LEP learners. Further, the few opportunities that the LEP students have are also "managerial" rather than "instructional" in nature. The interactions that do occur are also briefer. Schinke fears that "differential treatment" may affect the self-esteem and confidence of these learners.

Sato (1981) compared the interaction patterns of nineteen Asian and twelve non-Asian learners and found that Asian students initiated fewer turns. Teachers also allocated turns less often to the Asian learners. Sato suggests that the general reticence of Asian learners may have led the teachers to perceive them as unwilling to participate and therefore teachers may have nominated them less often. Sato's study has used "ethnicity" as a variable affecting L2 instructional processes.

2.5.3 Error treatment

There have been numerous studies in this area specially since the mid-1970s (See particularly, Fanselow 1977, Allwright 1975, Chaudron 1977, Long 1977, Nystrom 1983).

Aspects of the problem which have received attention are:

1) Which errors (how many kinds of errors) are treated?

3) Which strategies of error correction are helpful to learners? (for example, "Suppliance of the correct form, reduction or expansion of the utterance" and so on.)

Variables which influence the nature of error treatment have also been studied, for instance, the level of the learner, the classroom activity during which the error occurred and individual teaching styles. Nystrom (1983) observes how overt correction would be harmful in a conversational class. "The overtly corrective teacher allowed a range of topics in classrooms but the communication could not be considered conversational for its emphasis on correct form." Chaudron (1985) reporting Chaudron (1977) refers to the relationship between the correction of an error and its inclusion in the learner's correct response in the following utterance.

The major conclusions that emerge from the various studies are that error correction is a very complex task involving the making of discreet decisions. Allwright (1975) points out the risk that teachers run into when error correction is unwittingly inconsistent and ambiguous. This view is reinforced by Long (1977) and Fanselow (1977):

It is a crisis point in a teacher's classroom life.

- Allwright 1988 (p.198)
Allwright (1988) however also views error treatment as an event in a learner's life, something to be comprehended and learned from as part of the whole process of second language acquisition.

(p.198)

2.5.4 Learners' communication strategies and learner interlanguage in the classroom

Tarone 1980 defines 'communication strategies' as "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared."

Tarone reports a study in which adult learners (from a variety of first language backgrounds) learning English as a second language at university level were asked to perform a picture description task in both their first language and in English. The communication strategies they used were described. The learners themselves were asked to explain why they thought they used the strategies they did. The analysis of the data was used to

1) differentiate between the different communicative strategies.

2) determine which strategies learners preferred.

3) determine the correlation between preferred strategies and the first language background of the learner or other learner variables.
On the basis of this preliminary data, Tarone hypothesizes that

1) second language learners do exhibit preferences in the use of communicative strategies.

2) personality characteristics may influence a preference for either avoidance strategies or a preference for assistance.

3) strategy preference and L₂ proficiency levels may be related. For example, as learners progress they may prefer 'paraphrase' as a communicative strategy.

Further work in this area in the classroom setting has been done by Pica and Doughty (1985) who studied students' communication strategies when negotiating meanings on group tasks and whole-class settings. Mitchell (1983) gives a taxonomy of communicative strategies. Faerh and Kasper (1983) give an overview of communicative strategies in non-classroom settings.

2.5.5 Questioning strategies

Teachers' questioning strategies in the L₂ classroom have been explored by Long and Sato (1983) and Cynthia Brock (1986), Long and Sato observe that ESL teachers ask more Display questions (that is, questions to which the answer is already known) than Referential questions (that is, Wh questions for which the answer is not known).
Brock's study sought to determine whether the frequency of referential questions had a bearing on classroom discourse. Two teachers were trained to ask referential questions while the other two were not trained to do so. Each teacher taught the same reading and vocabulary lesson to a group of six NNS (Non-native speakers). The two trained teachers asked significantly more referential questions than the control group teachers who had not been trained. Students' responses to referential questions were longer, syntactically more complex and contained more connectives. Brock reports that the other aspects of questioning strategy researched are:

i) the intellectual level of teachers' questions.

ii) the degree to which teachers can be trained to ask referential questions.

iii) the relationship between types of questions teachers ask and certain features of students' responses.

The last topic has been less researched according to Brock. Results however suggest that the level of a question affects what the student says in response. Low cognitive level questions (apparently display questions) ask for factual recall or recognition. Those at higher cognitive levels (that is, referential questions call for evaluation or judgment.)
2.6 Conclusion

It appears that the two major areas of investigation under which the others are subsumed are first, 'input to the classroom' and second, 'the interactive nature of classroom talk'. The first, as Allwright (1983) observes, has brought CCR closer to SLA (Second Language Acquisition) studies and the latter, because of its sociological underpinnings, to the work of ethnomethodological researchers such as Mehan (1979). Long's (1981) is one of the early studies to consider the relationship between input and interaction and Seliger's (1983) is an early study which looks into the effect of interaction on language acquisition. There is however, hardly any research done in Europe in the second language classroom, following an ethnographic or microethnographic approach, even though, as Mitchell 1985 observes "theoretical arguments for the adoption of a qualitative, ethnographic approach to the study of L₂ classroom processes have been advanced by Mehan (1977)" and others. Van Lier (1988) rightly points out

Most classroom research is concerned with the establishment of formal criteria and categories for the classification of classroom events, or the development of a model of discourse structure. He argues that such an approach "may shed some light on the structure of the interaction," it "does not lead to a description of what participants in classrooms actually do."
He further adds, "in order to describe the process of interaction, it is necessary to follow an ethnographic approach." The present study is an attempt in this direction.

As the present research is concerned with the relationship between 'interaction' and 'uptake', Part B of this chapter will consider first, the probable reasons for the mismatch between 'input' and 'intake'; then, the changes which the concept of 'input' has undergone and finally the notions of 'interaction' and 'uptake' which are central to the present study.

PART B

2.7 Relation Between Input and Intake; Interaction and Uptake

2.7.1 Mismatch between input and intake

Until recently it was taken for granted that there is a substantial relationship between what is taught and what is learned. Input, it was assumed, equalled intake. Input was regarded as what the teacher and/or the textbook provided, what the syllabus and the teacher's lesson plan represented and 'intake' was the learning of language items as reflected in the linguistic output of learners. The advocates of various methods believed that learners would inevitably learn most of what was taught if it was taught through appropriate methods and teaching strategies. Later, it was realised that
even the best methods failed to achieve expected results. (See Chapter 2, Part A). The mismatch between input and intake became apparent and has been a worrying issue. Teachers have wondered why learners do not learn what they so assiduously and conscientiously strive to teach.

Allwright 1984(b) attempts to explain the mismatch between teaching and learning by bringing together some of the recent research in second language teaching and learning. Five hypotheses are worked out from recent research studies mainly in Second Language Acquisition, to explain the absence of a direct relationship between teaching and learning. These are briefly discussed below. Allwright then relates the mismatch issue to his view of classroom interaction and suggests two more hypotheses to explain the relationship between teaching and learning. His argument suggests that by equating input and intake, one would lose sight of the learner's role in the classroom learning process, which is of vital importance. Allwright's view of 'interaction', 'input', and the two 'interaction hypotheses' are also discussed below following an account of the five hypotheses as given by him.

2.7.1.1 The incubation hypothesis

Lightbown's study (1983) provides some evidence for this hypothesis. The study was designed to investigate the relationship between the language second language learners
hear and the language they produce. Summarizing the results, Lightbown says:

... the use of grammatical morphemes by young French speakers receiving formal BSL instruction and aspects of the language they heard in the classroom suggest that there is no direct relationship between the frequency with which certain forms appear in the classroom and the frequency and accuracy of use of these forms in the learner's language at the same point in time. However, there is some evidence that frequency has a "delayed" effect.

(underlining for emphasis by the researcher).

This suggests that the focussed items do not appear soon after instruction but after a period of time which is perhaps the 'incubation period' during which the unconscious acquisition processes are at work. Prabhu (1980) referring to the "communicational teaching project" speaks of an 'incubation' period too. According to him the raising to consciousness of language items is likely to interfere with the unconscious processes during the incubation period. Though evidence for the hypothesis is not especially claimed in the literature, it is apparent that the hypothesis convincingly explains the mismatch between input and intake.

2.7.1.2 The input hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis assumes that for language acquisition, the acquirer must encounter 'comprehensible input'. Comprehensible input is that which is only 1 stage ahead of the learner's state of competence. Thus if the learner is at stage i, comprehensible input would have to be only i+1.
Like Prabhu, Krashen (1980), (1981), (1982) believes that explicit teaching focus on linguistic items hinders their acquisition. For acquisition to be facilitated, it is sufficient for input to be merely encountered in situations that render it comprehensible. This view conflicts with that of linguists (For example, Long 1983(a), Seliger 1977) who hold that teaching is beneficial for learning. It is, however, in keeping with present day thinking:

> We must always remember that teaching never causes learning, but rather creates (or fails to create) the conditions in which learning can occur.


The Input Hypothesis again throws light on the indirect relationship between teaching and learning. It is a challenge to teachers and radically changes the conventional role of teaching.

2.7.1.3 **The natural process hypothesis**

According to the Input Hypothesis (see above), the explicit teaching focus on an item hinders its acquisition. Krashen suggests that according to the Natural Process Hypothesis the method of instruction frustrates the learner's natural processes of acquisition. On the other hand, when language items are merely encountered in a suitable environment, learners are free to use the natural processes of acquisition that suit them best. The mismatch between
teaching and learning is again explained through the Natural Process Hypothesis.

2.7.1.4 The natural order hypothesis

Krashen suggests that there is a natural order of acquisition which even instruction cannot disturb in any significant manner. The sequences of acquisition are pre-determined. Whether items appear frequently, are taught / not taught matters little to the emergence of the natural order. In this sense, teaching is futile unless it happens to co-incide with the order of language acquisition. The morpheme acquisition studies (See Dulay and Burt, 1974; Larsen-Freeman 1976) explain the emergence of the nine morphemes in terms of this natural order. There is not much evidence of the natural order with regard to other aspects of language development. The hypothesis accounts for the teaching-learning mismatch and poses a serious threat to the teaching profession, however.

2.7.1.5 The personal agenda hypothesis

Some learners have a conscious approach to language learning. They know exactly what they desire/need to learn and also know how to go about it. Such learners will select from a classroom lesson that which is on their 'personal agenda'. The term 'personal agenda' was used by Schumann and Schumann (1977) Allwright (1984(b) accepts this
hypothesis as a common sense view acknowledging the fact that it has no support in the general literature on language teaching and learning. This is one more hypothesis to account for learners not learning what has been taught.

2.7.2 Defining input, classroom interaction

..... it is not only the teacher and his contribution to the situation that need to be adequately described, but also the learners and their contribution.

- Allwright (1972)

According to Allwright it is necessary to focus not simply on what the teacher does but on what the teacher and the learners do jointly. This is because the interaction generates of all the participants a wide spectrum of learning opportunities. Learners themselves provide learning opportunities, no less than the teacher. These learning opportunities to practise language items, test rules of language, make sense of learning strategies are created during the process of interaction and may not be a part of the syllabus or the teacher's lesson plan at all. For example, if a learner makes a mistake, the teacher may be required to do something about it and whatever feedback the teacher offers, provides a learning opportunity to other learners. If a learner asks a question, seeks some clarification, explanation etc, the teacher's response to him will present a set of listening comprehension opportunities
that had not been part of the lesson plan. This view of classroom language learning extends the notion of 'input' to cover all language learning opportunities that arise in the course of classroom interaction. Input would thus include not only information about and samples of the target language but also hints, clues, explanations, examples, guidance, learner query, response and feedback in all forms. 'Input' is no longer a sequence of teaching points but the manifold learning opportunities generated by the interaction of all present.

2.7.2.1 The interaction hypotheses

Weak interaction hypothesis:

The learning opportunities encountered through the process of classroom interaction are far more than and different from those presented by the syllabus and the teacher's plans and what learners learn is influenced by the learning opportunities available to them. This view of classroom learning and input should explain the mismatch between what is taught and what gets learned. Allwright calls it the Weak Interaction Hypothesis.

Strong interaction hypothesis:

This hypothesis suggests that interaction is the learning process itself. Not only are learning opportunities generated and made available through classroom interaction
(Weak Interaction Hypothesis) but input is negotiated and made comprehensible through the interactive process. (Strong Interaction Hypothesis). The second (that is, the strong) hypothesis is more important because according to it, interaction "produces linguistic development." (Allwright 1984(b). Through interaction, classroom learners negotiate the meaning of input in order to render it comprehensible and comprehensible input, according to Krashen, can become intake. The strong interaction hypothesis relates specifically to negotiation of meaning through interaction rather than to interaction in general. To understand the learning process one needs to "look no further than the process of interaction itself." (Allwright 1984(b).

The present study (sparked off initially by Allwright's views on classroom interaction) seeks to understand the relationship between teaching and learning by analysing, describing and interpreting classroom audio data to see what actually happens in the classroom during instruction. Participants' contributions (verbal and non-verbal) are studied with a view to understanding the factors which facilitate or impede the process of language learning.

A detailed rather than a global investigation of what gets taught and what becomes available to be learned from it could reveal a sensible relationship between the teaching and learning phenomena.

- Slimani 1987.
2.8 Uptake and the Problems in its Identification

According to Allwright 1984(b) different learners have different perceptions of the same language lesson. Apparently, these differing perceptions are related to what learners actually learn from a language lesson. And what they learn may not be directly related to the teacher's teaching points but possibly to the numerous learning opportunities that arise during the lesson. The term 'uptake' coined by Allwright refers to the language items which learners themselves claim to have learned from a particular language lesson. In this respect, 'uptake' differs from 'intake' which is reflected in the linguistic output as measured by a performance test. Test content cannot be satisfactorily selected until the lesson has been analysed and the risk would be of selecting mainly the points that had been focussed on, by the teacher rather than what individual learners might have picked up from the learning opportunities which the interaction made available. To identify during an ongoing lesson what different learners may have learned and construct a test before the next lesson or further learning intervened would be a very difficult, perhaps impossible, task. Controlled elicitation procedures

The researcher is indebted to Allwright 1984(b) for the use of the concept of 'uptake' and the procedure for identifying it.
cannot be used as they presuppose what one is looking for. Free elicitation procedures would provide masses of irrelevant data. What was needed was a means of identifying uptake. Both test data and elicitation data could be used later to ascertain how welluptaken items (identified in some other way) were learned.

2.8.1 How 'uptake' was identified

Uptake was therefore identified in a simple, straightforward manner. Learners were asked, after each lesson, to list items which they believed they learned during that particular teaching session. (See Chapter 3 for details). The advantage of this 'self report' data is that a manageable list of items was made available. These could then be analysed in relation to the interactive evidence in the lesson tapescript data and other useful evidence provided in the learner and teacher interviews. The uptake data itself was the starting point for probing learners at interview sessions about their learning problems, learning strategies and in this sense its usefulness needs to be specially recognised.

This part (that is Part B) of this chapter has attempted to clarify present day views on concepts such as 'input', 'intake', 'classroom interaction' and 'uptake'. Further it has hinted at the usefulness of the notion of 'uptake' in the research design and data analysis of the present study.
Part C reviews briefly a few studies in the area of classroom research which kindled the investigator's interest in the present research. These studies were either just completed before 1985 (when the present study was begun) or were in process and have subsequently been completed.

PART C

2.9 Brief Reviews of Recent Related Studies

2.9.1 Joan Fleming

Joan Fleming's M.A. thesis 'A preliminary investigation into the ways in which teachers and learners deal with unfamiliar lexical items in the EFL classroom' was submitted to the University of Lancaster in 1984.

Unlike other studies on vocabulary which dealt with selection of vocabulary for inclusion in syllabuses, processing and structuring of vocabulary in lexicons and teaching techniques especially mnemonic techniques, Fleming is interested in a classroom data-based investigation.

She attempts to study first the source of unfamiliar lexical items. (ULIs she calls them) and the kind of interaction patterns that develop when ULIs are encountered. Next she considers the ways in which ULIs are explained and the effect of this on learners' interpretation and finally she investigates whether any follow-up work is done either by teachers or learners on ULIs explained or understood.
The data for Fleming's study consists of 6 hours of classroom audio recordings and questionnaires administered to the 4 teachers and 25 learners concerned. Further data was obtained by copying notes made by learners during the lessons and in a few cases interviews were held.

The learners were all adult intermediate/advanced level students attending mixed nationality classes in Britain. All 4 teachers were experienced and qualified.

Those parts of the lessons during which ULIs were focussed upon were identified and transcribed. The major research instrument to obtain data was, it appears, the questionnaire. The questions sought to obtain the teachers' and the learners' perceptions on the lesson with respect to ULIs. The observer's views were also taken into account and a triangulation procedure was adopted to compare different perspectives on the same event.

The first question researched concerns the number of ULIs learned, the source of ULIs (that is, whether materials, teacher discourse or learner discourse) and by whom focus is initiated. It was found that 'materials' constituted the largest source of ULIs cited by learners as new. However teacher and learner contributions to the discourse were also important source of ULIs. Overall focus on ULIs was more frequently initiated by teachers, Fleming speculates on the reasons for less student-initiated focus but in the absence of interview data her hunches remain unverified.
Some of the important findings from the above mentioned aspects of the investigation are:-

(1) considerable variation in learners' 'intake' from the lesson 'input'.

(2) ULIs may be cited by learners as new without having been publicly focussed upon in the classroom.

(3) the conception of teaching materials as the major source of ULIs may be a misleading one.

(4) teachers may be more likely than learners to initiate focus on ULIs in the classroom.

(5) teacher's predictions of difficulty in relation to LIs may not always be borne out.

The next point investigated is the treatment of potentially unfamiliar lexical items in relation to classroom interaction. The data suggests 2 major category types

(a) eliciting/checking meaning of ULIs.

(b) asking for LI itself.

Interaction sequences in each case are discussed. The sub-questions researched at this point are ways in which learners signal problems, the question of delayed/immediate focus by the teacher and types of teacher feedback.

Fleming then considers in depth the issue of explaining ULIs. A flow chart representing ways of conveying
the meaning of lexical items is presented. These different ways include use of synonym, explanation in the target language, multi-word phrase, contextualization, non-verbal means and translation. Fleming enumerates the various decisions that have to be made when attempting an explanation. She also discusses the problems which learners encounter in interpreting explanations and the type of feedback learners provide to the teacher. Once again Fleming speculates on what may have constrained learners from providing adequate feedback and signalling comprehension of the LI explained. Finally she briefly discusses the problems in learner’s interpretations (of ULIs) based on classroom explanations.

Lastly the important issue regarding follow-up work done by teachers and learners on ULIs identified as newly taught/learned is taken up. The data reveals that once an ULI had been explained, there was little public follow-up treatment either by teachers or learners.

In addition to the findings mentioned above, the following are also of importance:

(1) interactive work done by learners in relation to ULIs did not seem to be connected with their intake from the input.

(2) teachers did not pre-select specific LIs for classroom focus.
(3) certain learners were more likely than others to request explanations of ULIs.

(4) teachers did not always create opportunities for learner feedback at the end of explanations.

Fleming's dissertation is of special interest to the present study in the first place because it deals with the teaching of lexis in the classroom. Among other things it investigates the classroom treatment of unfamiliar lexical items and their initial interpretation by learners. The present study has a parallel aim in as much as it seeks to understand the relationship between classroom interaction and uptake of lexis.

Fleming obtains the data for her study primarily through responses to questionnaires given to teachers and learners. The intent of some of Fleming's questions is similar to that of the procedure followed in collecting uptake data in the present research. For instance, Fleming's questionnaire includes the following learner-directed questions:

(1) What new words did you learn in this lesson?

(2) Could you explain to someone the meaning of these new words?
   (Feel free to give an explanation / give an example / transcribe into the mother tongue / draw a picture etc.)
In the present research learners are asked to list the words which they think they learned during a particular lesson and then to assign a meaning either in English or the mother tongue to each new word listed.

Further, two of Fleming's subsequent questions (viz. Q.4 - Which words did you find easy to understand? Why? and Q.5 - Which words did you find difficult to understand? Why?) are apparently designed to get learners' perceptions of classroom interaction in relation to ULIs. The present research uses the interview as a research tool to understand learners' perceptions on classroom interaction and the treatment of specific words. Here, it may be observed that as a research tool an informal interview has a distinct advantage over a questionnaire because it enables the researcher to probe the learner whenever necessary in order to obtain information. However, if a rapport has not been established between the researcher and the learners, the interview sessions might be quite threatening. Ideally, perhaps, a questionnaire should be followed by an interview so that learners may be able to explain their responses to questions. Fleming was unable to hold interview sessions (except a few) and therefore often arrives at valuable intuitive interpretations of the data which cannot be verified by being referred back to learners at interview sessions.
One of the major findings in Fleming's work is that interactive work done by learners in relation to ULIs did not seem to be connected with their intake from the input. It is therefore significant that the present research seeks to investigate the relation between classroom interaction and uptake of lexis and the analysis of data reveals that there is substantial relation between interaction and uptake. (See data analysis in Chapter V and Conclusion Chapter VIII for further discussion.)

Another crucial finding from Fleming's study is that "learners' intake from the lesson input varied considerably". This finding finds support in the present research. Learners' uptake has been found to be idiosyncratic across lessons.

An important step ahead made by the present study over Fleming's is that while Fleming's study (as she herself admits) "has necessarily limited itself to the product of learners' interpretation of ULIs, the present study considers the processes involved in the interpretation of classroom input, the way input is processed by learners. Fleming admits that this is "potentially difficult of access". The difficulty was surmounted in the present research mainly with the help of interview data.
Like the present study, Fleming's is descriptive, uses classroom audio data and non-participant observation combined with a 'triangulation' procedure for obtaining different perceptions. This is significant because earlier classroom based research had been concerned with experimentation, quantification and control of variables. (See Allwright 1983, Gais 1983, Mitchell 1985, Chaudron 1985)

A basic difference between the two studies - Fleming's and the present one - lies in the linguistic competence of the learners. While Fleming's group of 25 consisted of adult, motivated, intermediate/advanced learners, the present study is based on the classroom interaction of learners whose competence in English is below average.

2.9.2 David Bonamy

David Bonamy's M.A. thesis 'Perceptions of Saliency in the Language Classroom' - submitted to the University of Lancaster in 1984, is yet another study where the starting point is the assumption that input does not equal intake; that a language lesson is the outcome of interaction between all present and what each learner takes away from the event is different. The study focuses on interaction, the management of learning and the nature of learning opportunities created. It acknowledges that it is a challenging task to investigate the relationship between 'teaching variables' and learning.
Bonamy's study seeks to investigate not what is learned but merely what learners reported "as the salient features of the lesson". It is assumed that learners' selective attention would be directed towards what appears salient to them and selective attention according to cognitive psychology is the first step in the direction of learning. In this way the researcher hopes to understand at least part of the learning process.

The study examines the reports of perceptions of saliency presented by eleven learners, a teacher and an observer who had all participated in a language lesson. A triangulated methodology is used to understand and explain the substantial differences in their perceptions.

Bonamy first analyses features in the text that are likely to draw learners' attention. It is found that only two features 'Arousal' and 'Activation' come close to reported saliency. Features of 'potential perceiver attention' are analysed next to see if these could explain what the text analysis could not. Some of these factors could explain saliency reports that were "low in text saliency markers". Thus actual reported saliency could be explained in terms of the interaction between text saliency and perceiver attention.

The basic text saliency categories are termed 'spontaneous saliency' and 'pedagogical saliency'. Learning opportunities which are pedagogically salient carry one or
more of the markers called (1) Extent (2) Status (3) Activation (4) Clarity (5) Coherence (6) Emphasis (7) Depth (8) Resolution. Each marker is defined. Next, the factors which induce selective attention in the learner are also listed and defined. These factors are: (a) gap in prior knowledge, (b) personal agenda (c) receptivity and (d) personalisation of learning opportunities.

Before presenting conclusions, the researcher makes it clear that these cannot be reckoned as generalisations because they pertain to a very restricted data base.

The main findings reported are a definite tendency for learning opportunities to be reported as salient which (a) fill a gap in the learner's knowledge; (b) involve learner/teacher interchange; (c) are problem-solving and resolving; (d) build on spontaneous humour; (e) have a learner's utterance as their source; (f) satisfy the pull of learners towards conceptual understanding.

It is apparent that the present research shares the basic premises on which Bonamy's study is built. viz. Input does not equal intake and that classroom language learning is the result of the interaction of all present. The details of inquiry and methodology necessarily differ. However, the idea of asking learners to recall the salient learning opportunities in a particular lesson parallels to some extent, the attempt in the present study to get learners to list
their uptake - the lexical items they recall as being unfamiliar earlier. Uptake may be sparked off by saliency as a characteristic of the learning opportunity. Hence Bonamy's categorization of saliency is relevant to the present study and some of the markers of saliency identified by him are, in fact, reflected in the data of this study as well. Further, the markers of pedagogically salient learning opportunities have also been identified in the data of the present research.

2.9.3 Assia Slimani

The doctoral study entitled 'The Teaching Learning Relationship: Learning Opportunities and Learning Outcomes. An Algerian Case Study' was begun at the University of Lancaster about the same time as the present study was in Bombay. It was completed in 1987.

According to the author, Slimani, the study aimed primarily at exploring the relationship between learners' claims (uptake) and the classroom interaction they had participated in. The data for the study consisted of audio-tape transcripts of six lessons covering a total of eleven hours classroom teaching-learning. This data was supplemented with field notes made by the researcher while observing the lessons in progress. Learners' claims were obtained through an uptake chart which required them to list all the points in the lesson that had preceded. After about
three hours, the uptake charts were returned to them and they were asked to dissociate items which they thought they learned for the first time in that lesson. It may be noted that the teacher in all the six lessons observed was teaching grammar. Yet the overall uptake identified by learners in the uptake charts was lexis. The author says "The instruction for these items mainly evolved around the provision of metalinguistic information about the grammatical features" (p.314). Slimani administered a Michigan test before and after the experiment to gauge progress.

The study intended to test mainly the 'strong' form of the interaction hypothesis discussed by Allwright (1984(b). According to Allwright, interaction, besides being a process which accounts for the opportunity of language development (weak form of interaction hypothesis) may also be the learning process itself. "It may be that interaction somehow produces language development." In other words, Allwright suspects a strong relationship between interaction and learners' uptake. The methodology, therefore, simply required tracing the uptake back to the tape transcripts to see the nature of the relationship.

2.9.3.1 Slimani's findings

The major findings of the study turned out to be negative. The researcher could hardly trace any direct
relationship between learners' claims and the overt features of the classroom discourse pertaining to the lesson.

Despite the efforts spent on the direct observation of interaction, it was seen that it was quite impossible to pinpoint particular features in the interactive work which could relate to the emergence of uptake.

- p.305.

The researcher explains that though each lesson is a co-production, each learner's interpretation of classroom discourse (and consequently his uptake) is governed by his individual schemata, his cognitive and affective development. Hence in order to trace the link between interaction and uptake, it would be necessary to delve into each learner's head. It is therefore, perhaps, an oversimplified view to expect a direct link between learners' uptake and classroom interaction. The relationship is viewed by the study to be "complicated and indirect". Observation itself as a research instrument is seen to have a limited value.

The study however does not undermine the value of classroom interaction. Interaction is "the process whereby learning opportunities are created by some, but made available to all." In other words, the study supports the weak form of the interaction hypothesis. (Allwright 1984(b)

Having investigated the original research question (discussed above) Slimani uses the same data to test some
variables claimed by researchers in the field to strongly influence second language acquisition. These variables are: (1) Participation, (2) use of conversational adjustments, and (3) frequency of language use by the teacher. Each variable is examined in the light of the data and it is suggested that: (a) participation and achievement do not necessarily match. In fact those who participate seldom profit much; on the other hand, the participation of some benefits others. (b) the use of conversational adjustments did not enhance uptake. (The data, it is admitted, did not present frequent examples of conversational adjustments.) (c) frequency of language use by the teacher correlated in a weak but positive way with uptake.

The study then moves on to consider the role of topicalisation. It is suggested that uptake is influenced far more by learners initiating the discourse rather than by the teacher initiating it, even though the teacher initiates it most of the time.

The study discusses the idiosyncratic nature of learner uptake at some length. It expresses its own limitations and finally offers suggestions for future research emphasizing particularly the need to design instruments which enable the researcher to view aspects of the teaching learning process beyond overt classroom discourse and behaviour. The study suggests that a better understanding of the complex classroom
processes can hardly be achieved without trying to probe into the workings of learners' minds through learner self-reports, learner diaries, interviews and the like. The need to refine data collecting procedures, the need for long-term studies and the need for triangulation in order to arrive at less biased, more objectively-based conclusions is stressed.

2.9.3.2 The present study compared

Though, the major research question which the present study addresses is the same as the one addressed by Slimani—viz. the relationship between classroom interaction and uptake, the two studies are quite different. The present study goes beyond Slimani's in a number of ways.

(1) The audio data of the present study is itself of a different kind. The learners are being taught reading comprehension with a special focus on the learning of lexis, and it was rightly envisaged that this would yield a richer interaction than a grammar lesson dealing with rules of syntax and explanation of aspects of usage. Slimani, on the other hand herself says that the "focus" of the lessons "was explicitly on form". Further, she adds that the teacher showed a tendency to monopolise the discourse and to clarify things at every opportunity." It appears that in such a teaching-learning situation there would be little occasion for interaction between teacher and learners and among learners themselves. As already mentioned, "instruction
evolved around the provision of metalinguistic information about grammatical features." Slimani also observes that conversational adjustments did not influence learner's uptake. In the same breath, however, she admits that conversational adjustments were limited in the data. This admission suggests that it was a teacher-dominated classroom with little interaction going on.

(2) In addition to audio recorded tapescripts of the classroom interaction, the present study avails of audio recorded interviews with the teacher and interviews with the learners after almost every teaching session. As expected, these interviews have yielded valuable data which is used to check on and interpret the audio lesson transcript data. The interview data is of special help in investigating the relationship between participants' interactive work and learners' uptake. Slimani refers rather dejectedly to "this exclusive and clearly too optimistic reliance on observational data" and later stresses the need for better data collection measures. It must therefore be emphasised that the data in the present study is not exclusively observational.

(3) While uptake in the preceding study was confined to recall of language items, the present study required the learners to assign meanings to the items recalled. While analysing the data, the recall of items and the recall of
items with meanings assigned will however be considered separately. The assignment of meaning provides some indication of how well a word has registered on the learner's mind. Slimani comments on the absence of such a measure in the research design of her study. (p. 326)

(4) While Slimani stopped with the learners' claims, the present research tests the claims. The post-session tests and the post-investigation tests are a part of the research design. Analysis of learners' success on the uptake measure is compared with their success on the post-investigation tests, thereby gauging the value of uptake in relation to long-term retention.

The only research question common to both studies is the relationship between learners' uptake and classroom learning opportunities. The present research then addresses quite different questions such as the factors which facilitate or hinder uptake, the process whereby learning opportunities are created, learners's own perceptions of learning opportunities and whether the characteristics of classroom interaction can predict uptake.

It must be pointed out that the present research design had already included certain research features which Slimani (1987) later advised future research to consider.
Finally, the findings of the present study as regards the major common research question (relation between uptake and classroom interaction) are quite different and not at all negative. Classroom interaction has been found to be directly facilitative of uptake and on other occasions it is seen as the major hindrance to uptake. The detailed findings of the study will however be spelt out in the conclusion.

2.9.4 Safya Cherchalli

Cherchalli's Ph.D. study entitled 'Learners' Reactions to their Textbook (with special reference to the relation between differential Perceptions and differential Achievement): A Case Study of Algerian Secondary School Learners' undertaken in the University of Lancaster sometime before 1985 and completed in 1988 is a descriptive study. It hypothesizes that learners of different achievement groups (strong versus weak) perceive elements of their language learning experience differently. The study tries to understand the relationship between learners' achievement and their perceptions and speculates on the potential implications of such a relationship for Language teaching. This is an interesting line of inquiry because one generally talks about groups of learners being homogeneous or otherwise. If learners' perceptions about various aspects of language learning experience differ then this is a threat to the concept of homogeneity itself, as commonly understood.
In the present study, a large part of learners' uptake has been differential. Perhaps this differential uptake can, at least to some extent, be attributed to differential perceptions of the learners. One would have to further develop interview techniques or other research instruments to probe into learners' perceptions in order to account for differential uptake. It may be that learners' different perceptions of the same classroom lesson and of learning opportunities relate to their uptake.

It may be pointed out that in Cherchalli's study, learners' perceptions were tapped mainly through their reactions to a new modern textbook. Cherchalli speaks of the immense value of approaching learners from the "inside" - of using learners as informants on their learning processes and behaviour. The 'interview' can be used to explore what learners think, what learners do, much more effectively than mere observation of learners' performance or external classroom behaviour can. As 'interview' with learners and the teacher, has proved a very useful tool in the present research, Cherchalli's study is of special interest. Learners' comments in the two studies have something in common.

Cherchalli's findings indicate that there are interesting differences between the perceptions of the strong and weak learners as groups. This is not stated as a
generalisation, in view of the fact, that the study was confined to a section of secondary school learners in Algeria.

Like the present study, Cherchalli's stresses the need for learner-training and for educating learners in the use of appropriate strategies, in order that they may be able to cope with learning problems.

This chapter has traced the development of CCR, explained the notion of uptake, discussed the concept of classroom interaction and reviewed recent related studies. The next chapter moves on to giving a description of the present study in terms of its design.

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