3.1 THEORY OF LANGUAGE

Three different theoretical views of language and nature of language proficiency form the basis of current approaches and methods in language teaching.

The first view is the structural view. "The view that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The target language learning is seen to be the mastering of the elements of this system, which are generally defined in terms of phonological units and grammatical units."

(Richards & Rodgers, 1986 : 17)

The second view is the fundamental view - "Language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. The communicative movement in language teaching subscribes to this view of language".

(ibid. 1986 : 17)
The third view of language is the interactional view. "It sees language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations."

3.2 LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES

Various theories have been proposed by researchers regarding the language learning activity or process, which are discussed below.

3.2.1 Monitor Theory

In Monitor Theory, Stephen D Krashen distinguished the terms acquisition and learning. Acquisition refers to the unconscious process that involves language proficiency through usage for communication while learning refers to a conscious process which involves the study of language rules. According to Krashen's theory, acquisition and learning are two different processes and they convey two different functions. While communicating, the learner uses acquired system (unconscious) and learned system (conscious) functions as a monitor that checks the language. But for this to operate the
learner must have sufficient time and then he can choose and apply a learned rule.

3.2.2 Silent Way

The emphasis on human cognition inspired by Chomskyan revolution led to a new general approach to language teaching termed as cognitive code. Although Caleb Grattegno's Silent Way did not evolve directly from cognitive - code approach, its principles are constituent with it. One of the basic tenets of Silent way is "the subordination of teaching to learning". Another shared principle is that errors are inevitable and are signs to the teacher that the learner is exploring new areas of the language. The teacher tries to help the students to become self-reliant and increasingly independent of the teacher.

3.2.3 Suggestopedia

Georgi Lozanov (1978), the originator of suggestopedia feels that the inefficiency in language learning is due to the psychological barriers learners establish - the fear of failure is one of them. Teacher can help learners to surmount these barriers and to fully tap their mental powers by desuggesting the
learners' self imposed limitations. When the learners trust in the authority of the teacher, they will reach a state of infantalization - adopting a child like role. If they feel secure, learners can be more spontaneous and less inhibited.

3.2.4 Counseling-Learning/ Community Language Learning

According to Charles Curran (1976) learners should be seen as "whole persons", not just cognitive beings. In this method, teachers understand and accept their students' fears and concerns. In addition, teachers try to provide a secure learning environment in which, a sense of community is fostered. In such an atmosphere students can be non-defensive and their positive energies can be channeled towards the language teaching task. In community language learning the syllabus is learner generated.

All the methods make assumptions, elaborate and detailed ones, about the learner and the ways of learning. While these assumptions appear plausible in principle, they have not been viewed critically and systematically against the realities of actual learning.
3.3 METHODS IN TEACHING

Method is a vital factor in the language teaching and learning process. The central point in describing methods is the difference between the philosophy of language teaching at the levels of theory and principles and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language. It is a known fact that in most of the urban elite colleges the Direct Method and SOS Method are in use and in rural colleges the teachers are still following the Grammar Translation Method.

3.4 METHOD, APPROACH AND TECHNIQUE

"Linguistic method has surpassed religion in its capacity to arouse controversy and create trends. Much of the fields of language method has become a matter of opinion rather than of fact. Method means either so little or so much".

(Mackey, 1966 : 135)

E.M. Anthony in an article published in 1963 attempted to distinguish the terms approach, method and technique. According to him,
"the arrangement is hierarchical. ..An Approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. It indicates a point of view, an article of faith.

..Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts and all of which is based upon the selected approach. it is procedural.

..A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom".

(Anthony 1963 : 63-67)

Halliday, et al (1964 : 200), however, used the term "Methodics" for linguistic based teaching. It is the framework of organisation for practical teaching, in which pedagogical techniques and linguistic theory cross fertilize each other. It is not the same as methodology, which refers to pedagogical aspects of language teaching without necessarily any reference to linguistic categories. Methodics thus does not supersede Methodology, but relates rather to a different area of the total operation.
The lexical set made by the three terms, method, methodology and methodics can be summarised as follows.

Method A specific set of teaching techniques and materials, generally backed by stated principles but not necessarily having any reference to linguistics

method An alternative term for methodology, often less technical and less specific

Methodology Principles and techniques of teaching with no necessary reference to linguistics

Methodics A framework of organisation for language teaching which relates linguistic theory to pedagogical principles and techniques

3.5 POPULAR METHOD

The popular method, that is being followed by most of the language teachers, is no doubt the lecture method, where the teacher is the active member and students are the passive listeners. As the main objectives at PU/Inter level is
proficiency in language skills, this method is an outdated one. Attempts should therefore be made to evolve an informed eclecticism as suggested by Richards and Rodgers.

In the changing language teaching/learning context of India, more emphasis is given to language than to literature. So it is necessary to examine what methodological changes are required to bring in coordination between the changed objectives, methods, materials and evaluation procedures in the teaching/learning context. Keeping in view the needs of the learners it is necessary to examine what is good in old methods, what is new in new methods and what changes are needed to suit the present needs.

3.6 GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

This is the oldest method employed in the teaching of language. It is a relic of teaching Greek, Latin and Sanskrit based mainly on cramming the grammatical forms of the language.

Memorization of grammatical rules, paradigms, bilingual word-lists and application of these in translation constitute the essence of this method. This is simply a
combination of the activities of grammar and translation and this method is based on the following principles.

1. Grammar is an outline of formal grammar.
2. Vocabulary based on texts.
3. Teaching begins with rules, isolated vocabulary items, paradigms, translation.
4. Students native language is the medium of instruction.
5. Pronunciation either is not taught or is limited to a mere introduction.

3.6.1 Drawbacks of Grammar Translation Method

Grammar Translation method has the following disadvantages.

1. Mere grammar does not provide an opportunity to speak.

2. Language is a process of communication among the people of particular tradition, customs and environments. It is not possible to translate one language into another completely. Hence this method does not fulfill the need and requirement of second/foreign language teaching.

3. It is an unnatural method because in learning a language the first step should be to learn spoken language and
then to practice it through oral expression. This method violates this natural principle.

4. Learning takes place on the basis of isolated sentences which keep out the element of cohesion and that can not be neglected in language learning.

3.6.2 Merits of Grammar Translation Method

It would be unfair to condemn the grammar translation method outright. Although as a teaching method it is unsatisfactory, certain elements in it are found useful in a teaching situation. Use of Mother tongue or translation is useful in certain contexts.

"When the foreign word to be demonstrated is known to be for all practical purposes the equivalent of a native word, translation is a better mode than definition."

(Palmer 1917 : 58)

3.7 DIRECT METHOD

"There is no such thing as the Direct Method", when considered as one method says Gauntlett. In a broad sense any
method which does not use mother tongue may be said to be a
direct method. The term direct method implies, a direct
association between thought and expression and experience and
language. Its main characteristics as stated by Mackey are:

1. The use of everyday vocabulary and structure.

2. Grammar taught by situation.

3. Use of many new items in the same lesson to encourage
normal conversation.

4. Oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

5. Concrete meaning through object lessons, abstract
ones through the association of ideas.

6. Most of the work is done in the classroom and therefore
more class hours are needed.

7. The first few weeks devoted to pronunciation.

8. All reading presented orally.

9. Both speech and listening comprehension are taught.
This method aims at developing further abilities and perfect command over language, comprehension, speaking with good pronunciation, reading and writing. It is more or less based on the natural method. The learner is encouraged to use the foreign language with the same ease which he has while using his mother tongue.

3.7.1 Demerits of Direct Method

1. The method over emphasizes the similarities between natural first language learning and classroom foreign language learning and fails to consider the practical realities of the class room.

2. It requires teachers who are native speakers or who had native like fluency in the foreign language.

3. Only skilled teachers with natural command over the language can adopt this method.

4. Over emphasis on speech leads to neglect of reading and writing.

5. Over crowded classes and paucity of good teachers do not allow the method work effectively.
Since direct method demands individual attention, the size of the class should not be large. But in reality a general English class anywhere in Indian consists of 100 to 150 students where this method is practically an impossibility.

Secondly, this method suits only those students who are linguistically minded, as its basic principle is that the aural/oral appeal is stronger than the visual in learning a foreign language. But in a class with students of varying abilities, the Direct Method does not succeed. DM completely ignores translation which at times (the actual contact time of teacher with the students is 4 to 5 hours a week) can be easy and time saving for explanation. In a time bound second language teaching/learning situation with mixed abilities of the students, the selection grading and sequencing of the syllabus can not be left to the discretion of individual teachers.

The critics of the DM point out that the goal of trying to teach conversational skills was considered impractical in view of the restricted time available for foreign language teaching in
Since no model is given to the students, the teacher has to build up dialogues artificially on written texts without considering the principles of selection and grading.

3.8 STRUCTURAL ORAL - SITUATIONAL APPROACH

"The theory of language underlying structural oral situational approach can be characterised as a type of British Structuralism".

(Richard & Rodgers: 35)

Palmer, Hornby and other British applied linguists proposed pedagogical descriptions of basic grammatical structures of English and these were to be followed in developing methodology.

"Word order, structure words, the few inflections of English and content words will form the material of our teaching".

(Frisby 1957: 134)

Structure lists considered speech as the basis of the language because a child learns first to speak and then to write. The theory that "Structures must be linked to situations in which they could be used" is one of the distinctive features of
SOS approach. The British linguists such as J.R. Firth, M.K. Halliday developed powerful views of language in which meaning, contest and situation were given prominent place. Language was viewed as a purposeful activity related to the goals and situations in the real world.

The term structure is difficult to define. One of the definitions of structure is given by Benveniste in 1959 as "An inter ordering of linguistic items".

3.8.1 The Characteristics of SOS Approach

1. Structural approach pre-supposes that structures, not mere words, are important in language learning.

2. Language teaching begins with spoken language and material is taught orally before it is presented in written form.

3. The target language is used exclusively in the classroom.

4. Well graded grammatical items are used.

5. Language items are used situationally.
6. Reading and writing is introduced only after sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established.

3.8.2 Objectives of SOS Approach

1. To teach a practical command of the four basic skills of language. This goal it shares with most other methods of language teaching. But the skills are approached through structures.

2. Accuracy in both pronunciation and grammar is considered crucial.

3. Automatic control of basic structures and sentence patterns is achieved through speech work which enables the learner to read and write fluently.

3.8.3 Practical Application of SOS Approach

The SOS approach is based on structures which are carefully selected and graded. Vocabulary too must be selected and graded. In grading structures attention is paid to meaning and form. Items of vocabulary and grammar are taught in appropriate situations. Only one meaning is taught at a time and is established by practice before another meaning is taught.
Drill should be the watch word of the teacher and visual aids may be produced by the teacher like wall charts, flash cards, pictures, etc. Structural drills proceed from the most mechanical exercises — simple repetition and substitution to the freest. Students are given more opportunity to use language in less controlled situation. The teacher can choose exercises considering the students needs.

3.8.4 Merits of SOS Approach over Direct method

SOS approach has some points in common with direct method. Both emphasise the importance of speech and habit formation, inhibit the use of the mother tongue, teach language in situations by use rather than by rule. However, the SOS approach scores over D.M as it follows a carefully selected and graded syllabus. The selection and gradation of structures and vocabulary items facilitate learning on the part of the pupil. The SOS approach deals with the three main levels of language i.e., Phonology, Morphology and Syntax and the teachers use a controlled and definite process of input based on the rules of linguistic structures unlike in D.M. where the teachers are given full freedom in the choice of input.
3.8.5 Indian Version of SOS Approach

The SOS approach is the modified version of situational/structural approach to language teaching (Prabu-1987). The term SOS was used by RIE, Bangalore to refer to the pedagogical principles it has been helping to implement. This was a popular method during sixties. The characteristics of this approach are:

1. use of graded structures and vocabulary in appropriate situations.

2. to teach the four fundamental skills, namely understanding, speaking, reading and writing.

3. Grammar to be taught explicitly in the form of sentence analysis and parsing.

N S Prabu (1987) in his book "Second language pedagogy" observes that those who were taught through SOS method several years at school still lacked the following abilities.

1. to use (deploy) the language when necessary outside the class room. (They found themselves deliberating unnaturally).
2. to achieve an acceptable level of grammatical accuracy in their language use outside the classroom. (Though they might achieve such accuracy in the classroom context).

3. to achieve an acceptable level of situational appropriacy in their language use outside the classroom (Though they might achieve grammatical accuracy).

Keeping in view these facts, attempts were made at regulating the learner's internalization of the grammatical system through planned progression, pre-selection and form focused activity, which too did not yield good results.

The observations on SOS Pedagogy in schools in India highlight certain points.

1. Though the students perform well in the classroom situation, their language skills outside the classroom situation is very poor.

2. The basic foundation required to build up further language experience at the college level is inadequate.
3.8.6 Demerits of SOS Approach

1. SOS approach is mainly based on the principle of oral proficiency, hence, it can not be practiced in large classes.

2. It is effective in the hands of trained teachers because the method demands proper study and understanding of the theories underlying the practice drills.

3. The methods require a well graded syllabus which insists not only the grading of structures but also a basic vocabulary within which the structures should be operated i.e., grading of structures and vocabulary control are essential.

3.9 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

The origin of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the English language Teaching tradition from the late 1960's. Noam Chomsky in his book "Syntactic Structures" (1957) demonstrated that the structural theories of language were not capable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language - the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. British applied linguists
like John Firth, Halliday, American Sociolinguists such as Hymes, John Gumperz and William Labov emphasized another fundamental dimension of language - the functional and communicative potential of the language. Consequently this has resulted in Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.

The CLT starts from a theory of language as communication. Hymes (1972) used the term communicative competence in order to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky's theory of competence. In his redefinition of "Communicative Competence", he said that what is crucial in language learning is not so much an understanding of how a language is structured but an understanding of how a language is used. It is more of an approach rather than a method. It aims to

1. make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and

2. develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication (Richards and Rodgers).

It is this comprehensiveness that makes CLT approach different in scope and status from other methods and approaches.
3.9.1 Characteristic Features of CLT

1. Places paramount importance on meaning because language learning is learning to communicate

2. Contextualization a basic premise

3. Any device which helps the learner is accepted.

4. The criteria of sequencing is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning which maintains interest

5. Students are expected to interact with other people, teachers help students in any way that motivates them to work with the language.

6. Language ability should be achieved through the "language" rather simply through "exercises" on the language.

7. Communicative syllabus should be based on needs analysis

8. The communicative syllabus should be semantic based.
3.9.2 Communicative Syllabus

The main aim of communicative syllabus is to teach the students how to express things with language and this is incorporated into the syllabus through texts. Teaching of meaning is done systematically through sentences in combination which gives priority to the meanings rather than to the structures. The communicative syllabus demands the following changes:

1. A semantic syllabus demands an emphasis from learner oriented approach. The needs of the learner are given importance taking into consideration his previous language experience, focusing attention on all aspects of the learner.

2. The students can no longer be passive as the syllabus demands interaction.

3. Interactive classroom activities demand unconstrained behaviour. Students should be allowed "the liberty of natural behaviour" [Widdowson 1986].

4. The techniques applied to the materials should be task oriented rather than exercise oriented.
5. The tests should be valid i.e., they should test what has been taught.

3.9.3 CLT in Indian Context

English Language Teaching in India is mainly based on the fact that it is used as library language and as a language for communication. To satisfy this need in the present context requires specific approach in proficiency of reading and writing. In this context, the CLT methodology appears to be impracticable.

Though informal atmosphere is conducive to learning, a class teachers' role in a large classroom in our situation has to be obviously formal.

Learner centered activities of the CLT require a regular feedback from teachers regarding students work. But in Indian context, with a large class of varying abilities and time bound syllabuses, this approach is practically difficult to follow.

3.10 CLOSURE

"Recently, methods seem to have exploded in all directions. Everything is called a method, whether or
not it fits in Antony's definition. One element these methods have in common is that they tend to be concerned with practical segments of the whole spectrum. Some are strongly focused on one aspect of the basis for a curriculum, namely the nature of the language learner, others are grounded in particular education philosophies".

(Richards 1985)

Though there are various methods and approaches that are in practice today, no method is fully successful in achieving the goals and objectives of the learners needs. But we can adopt various features and techniques from various methods and approaches without explicit reference to course objectives in order to realise the specific objectives of learning English. For eg.,

Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching can be adopted for oral proficiency i.e., phonetics, vocabulary etc.

SOS can be used for reinforcing grammatical and structural patterns.
While using these methods and approaches it is necessary to consider how far these methods and approaches be useful in checking the learners goals and objectives and at the same time the level of the students and their age should also be considered. So it is necessary to replace the traditional lecture method by a principled eclecticism, combining techniques and principles from various methods. Effective teaching depends on the teacher and his 'eclectic' ability to adopt and adapt methods and approaches to suit his classroom environment.

The eclectic method is not one homogeneous method since it combines in itself all that is good in other methods. Thus it makes use of the learner's mother tongue when necessary, makes use of situations for presenting teaching material and freely uses audio-visual aids.

"Choice of a particular method can be justified only when it is clear that there is a close degree of fit between the program goals and objectives of the method. Information concerning the kinds of gains in language proficiency that the method has been shown to bring about in similar circumstances would be needed. When a
close degree of fit between method and program objectives as lacking a choice can be made through informed eclecticism".

(Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983)

It is necessary to follow some form of eclecticism in language teaching, i.e., either informed eclecticism or uninformed eclecticism.

"Eclecticism is a matter of operating with a combination of perceptions or procedures which though different and ... perhaps ... inconsistent with others, have nevertheless found a satisfying balance in the mind of, an individual ..., the teachers mental mix is eclectic...

( N S Prabhu 1986 : 67)

It is said:

"We would be well advised to opt for 'informed eclecticism' in our ELT programmes to prevent further deterioration of standards, instead of eloquently swearing by unattainable (and to my mind undesirable)
native norms and standards which when adopted would undoubtedly alienate us from our students who are basically bilingual”.

(S. K. Rangacharya 1985 : 5)

It is necessary to keep in mind that no one method is suitable for all occasions and the teacher cannot decide a priori that a particular method is the only one that he/she must use. What is important for the teacher is to find out what approach and what technique will enable him to realise a particular objective under a set of particular situations. There is a strong need to examine the needs of the learners. Therefore needs analysis should focus on the learners present level of language proficiency and what the learner is required to do for acquiring the necessary language proficiency.