CHAPTER 3

Literature Review-1

English Language Teaching
Chapter Three

Chapter Three begins with a literature review of the history of English Language Teaching and the important models, theories and concepts in second language acquisition which corresponded with the different approaches to language teaching over the years and their relevance to this study.

English Language Teaching (ELT) methodologies have evolved over time as new learning in the related areas of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics was incorporated into the research dealing with second language acquisition (SLA) which is the main focus of the present study. This helped to refine the teaching methods to a great extent; however each approach to language teaching experimented with, over the years, still remains useful to the discerning researcher as these provide inputs which, in combination with insights from contemporary research, can help create new patterns of teaching that are capable of achieving present day language learning objectives. We shall now look at the major landmarks for the various approaches and methods that have shaped the course of ELT and SLA as we know it today.

3.1 The Grammar translation method (1840s to 1940s)

This method was built upon the traditional existing methodology of teaching Latin. Latin was not a language used for everyday communication and the grammar translation method does not serve the purpose of teaching language as a tool for everyday communication. Its aim was to prepare students to learn and appreciate great literature and philosophy. The course was designed around the written language of classical literature and the students were expected to study the structure and grammar rules and apply these through translations. Vocabulary lists were memorized and
the teaching method aimed to create an awareness of the syntactic structure through the presentation of rules. The learners were high calibre students, the intellectually elite who were into in-depth study and appreciation of literature and philosophy.

Generally, this method came under attack because the grammar used was inappropriate to the English commonly used, and the stress on grammar, its obsession with ‘completeness’ and the neglect of the spoken language led students to learn about the language rather than learn the language itself. Howatt (1984) ascribes the adoption of this methodology to the social and educational changes of the 1850s where a need was felt to systematize middle class education through a system of public examinations. Thus both the content and methodology were fixed on the basis of what was then considered as advanced educational thought. By the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, this approach based on the study of Latin had become the standard way of studying foreign languages in schools -Richards et al(1986).

3.2 The Structural Approach (SA)

The 1920s and ’30s saw the introduction of a more standardized methodology in language teaching by the most prominent applied linguists of that time. Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby were the leaders of this movement. This movement has special significance for ELT for it was at this point that vocabulary came into prominence as “one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning” Richards et al(1986).

These efforts to introduce a scientific and rational basis for choosing the vocabulary content of a language course represented the first attempts to establish principles of syllabus design in language teaching. In grammar, efforts were on to teach basic grammatical patterns through an oral approach, and this was termed as the Oral Approach or Situational language teaching.
This later came under the broad banner of what we now term as the Structural Approach. There were two reasons for the development and spread of this methodology. With the 1940s, World War II created the need for quick acquisition of language skills and this gave way to the Structural Approach. Crash courses focusing on acquisition of oral-aural skills sprung up in several parts of the USA.

The second reason was that the ideas of psychologist Skinner started filtering into language teaching research, and the relevance of these in the teaching-learning process started gaining wide acceptance. Skinner’s theory of behaviourism suggests that the process of learning happens mainly through two processes, namely imitation and repetitive action, and these lead to habit formation or conditioning—Macaro (2003). This gave rise to the pattern practice method in language teaching and linguists like Bloomfield and Roberts were greatly influenced by the Skinnerian theory. Repetition and substitution were supposed to impress patterns of language in the learner’s mind. Comparative studies between the native language and the target language undertaken by the linguists were supposed to strengthen the acquisition process in the learners mind.

3.2.1 The audio-lingual model

This was based on the structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural oral procedures and behaviourist psychology and was introduced in response to the felt need for a more intensive effort to teach foreign languages in the US. The spoken form of the language was emphasized and foreign language learning was conducted through pattern drills and by memorizing dialogues in order to minimize errors. Audiolingualism reached its period of most widespread use in the
1960s and was applied both to the teaching of foreign languages and to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language -Richards et al(1986).

### 3.2.2 The Structural-Oral-Situational (S-O-S) model

This model was based on the Structural Approach where the knowledge of structures were linked to situations. A great deal of controlled practice in the form of substitution tables and choral repetitions was given— Prabhu (1987). This was also not considered fully satisfactory as it would fulfil only a part of the learner’s linguistic needs in a certain situation as it was too closely tied to particular circumstances. It was what Widdowson(1983) termed as language like behaviour and he makes it clearly distinct from productive ability though he does not completely deny the role of imitative and repetitive methods in language acquisition.

Prabhu(1987) has summarized the dissatisfaction with the S-O-S pedagogy applied in Indian schools in three concise points. The students were unable to

- Use or deploy language when necessary outside the classroom
- Achieve grammatical accuracy outside the classroom even if they were successful in classroom practice
- Achieve situational appropriacy in their language use outside the class

There have been experiments of ESP courses designed on the basis of the SA which select those scientific or linguistic technical structures which are found frequently in the written discourse of a particular discipline like medicine or engineering. Students are taught the basic structures and vocabulary of a particular discipline or a register through the production of correct sentences and the use of lexis found most frequently in the analysis of different registers. This methodology
assumes that a student who understands the basic patterns and structures used in a discipline will be able to communicate properly Al-Hasso (1988).

There were many arguments levelled against the SA. Johnson (1982) believes that it does not serve the practical purpose of using language in real life situations.

Nevertheless, there are some valuable insights from the structural approach that we should keep in mind even as we pass on to newer, more effective teaching methods. It was a method that forced the learner’s attention to structures in language and, though it had its drawbacks, this aspect of attention and noticing would be revisited even as teaching methodologies evolved with time.

3.3 The Communicative Approach (CA)

The Communicative Approach evolved by the late sixties largely through the efforts of Naom Chomsky who offered a radically different basis for language acquisition based on a theory of transformational generative grammar. In addition to this, Chomsky rejected the psychological theory of behaviourism which had hitherto been the basis of the SA. Instead, he emphasized the importance of cognition in human language activity and the CA was largely based on the mentalist view of language acquisition.

The CA was a response to the problem of language learning that produced structurally competent students who could not communicate appropriately. Scholars like Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson drew on the work of British functional linguists like John Firth and M.A.K. Halliday and American sociolinguists like Hymes and Labov.
Theories and concepts in CA

Research into Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been described as the search for an appropriate level of description for the learner’s system of rules and hence it is important, at this point to review the important concepts, theories and models in SLA that have evolved within the CA.

3.3.1 Universal Hypothesis

Chomsky’s controversial theory termed as the Universal Hypothesis attempts to explain SLA in terms of an independent language faculty, rather than in more general cognitive terms. This is what is generally termed as the nativist approach. His version of language acquisition is based on the concept that language is generated from the learner’s underlying ‘competence’. Chomsky speaks of a set of general principals that apply to all languages.

The nativist theory of language acquisition originated with the rejection of the behaviourist explanation of how language was learnt. They emphasized the mental processes involved, in particular the innate human propensity for language. The input functioned only as a trigger for setting in motion the internal processing mechanism or the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Chomsky views Universal grammar as a set of principles that guide all grammar. Universal grammar sets parameters which must be then fixed according to the particular input data the child obtains. This forms the core grammar. Core grammar is in accord with the general tendencies of the language and is different from peripheral grammar which is exceptional in some way. According to Chomsky, core grammar is acquired first and peripheral grammar comes later.
3.3.2 Inter-language

In the development of theories of SLA, the effects of this Universal grammar alongside the effects of the first language (L1) were studied and the term ‘Inter-language’ evolved— Selinker (1992). Inter-language refers to the structured system which the learner constructs at any given stage of his development. The concept of ‘hypothesis testing’ was used to explain how the L1 learner progressed along the inter-language continuum.

Corder saw the making of errors as a strategy, evidence of the learner’s internal processing and in opposition to the behaviourist view of language learning.

Another important concept in SLA is termed as fossilization. This is one of the reasons that Selinkar gives for the inability of L2 learners to reach the end of the inter-language continuum. “Fossilized structures can be conceived as errors or as correct target language forms” depending on whether the correct or wrong structure has been fossilized in his inter-language— Ellis (1986).

Chomsky’s LAD and theories of generative grammar did not satisfactorily explain the practical processes involved. It is this disconnect between theory and application that limits the value of his observations. This meant that language practitioners could not frame their language teaching models to fit in with the mental processes to gain maximum ground in second language teaching.

3.3.3 The Humanistic approach

At about the same time another psychological theory gave rise to what is popularly known as the Humanistic Approach. Erikson and Maslow are considered as the pioneers of this school of educational psychology. Williams et al(1997)defines this as an approach to ELT where the
learner is treated as a whole person whose involvement in the teaching-learning process is absolutely essential for positive results in language learning. It also emphasizes the creation of a learning environment that minimizes anxiety and enhances personal security.

Several teaching methodologies have arisen from this approach. The most well known among these are the **Silent Way** from Gattengo where the teacher remains as silent as possible while the learners are involved with the learning, **Suggestopaedia** by Lozanov which aims to keep the learners relaxed and free from anxiety and **Community Language Learning** developed by Curran which borrows from the principles of counselling.

### 3.3.4 The Monitor model

Krashen’s Monitor Model has been, perhaps, the most widely debated theory of language acquisition in communicative language teaching. The acquisition–learning hypothesis proposed by Krashen distinguishes between acquired and learnt knowledge by specifying that acquired knowledge of language comes through participating in natural communication situations. This subconscious process of language learning, where the focus is on content, is available for automatic processing. ‘Learning’ which involves conscious study of form, is available only for controlled processing. Learned knowledge acts as a monitor and its function in language performance is limited because three conditions are necessary for its use: Knowledge of the rule, sufficient time and focus on form rather than meaning.

While many objections have been levelled against this hypothesis, the main one deals with the position that Krashen takes on the complete separateness of acquisition and learning. Later theorists of SLA continue to challenge this stand claiming that learnt knowledge with enough practice becomes acquired and is freely used by the learner.
Added to this, Krashen also theorizes about the level at which input results in intake. The Input Hypothesis states that acquisition takes place as a result of the learner being given input that is little beyond the current competence level of the learner \([i+1]\). This has been corroborated by Vygotsky’s Theory of Proximal Development.

From input he goes on to touch a psychological element of language learning in his Affective Filter Hypothesis: this advocates that a mental filter controls how much input is converted into intake. The learners’ filters are low in situations where learning is not a conscious activity.

Controversy over the ‘acquired’ and ‘learned’ aspects of language acquisition has taken centre stage and the impenetrable divide between explicit and implicit learning drawn up by Krashen in this model continues to be challenged by researchers and linguists alike.

Besides this, studies of immersion classes in Canada by Swain and Harley (Macaro 2003) found that exposure to ‘comprehensible input’ was not enough for language acquisition. The learner’s production of language was still found to be faulty.

### 3.3.5 The Acculturation Model

This was popularized by John Schumann (1978) and it also conforms to the same principles of immersion. This postulates that the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language. Closely related to this is the Nativization Model. According to this, SLA is determined by the degree of social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture.
3.3.6 The Social interactionist approach

As a framework for language teaching practices, the models presented above proved to be unsatisfactory. It was at this stage that social interactionism came into the limelight through the work of Lev Vygotsky and Reuven Feuerstein. This is a combination of humanistic and cognitive perspectives and gives a more definite basis to the teaching-learning process. It is an interactive model that involves teachers, learners and tasks. The Discourse Theory finds its roots in this approach and is based on the learner’s discovery of the meaning potential of language by participating in communication. Halliday studied first language acquisition and came to the conclusion that basic language functions grow out of the interpersonal uses to which language is put. Closely related to the theory of social interactionism is the social constructivist model which involves teachers, learners, tasks and context in a dynamic learning environment-Williams et al (1997).

3.3.7 The Task-based model

According to Prabhu(1987), whose experiment with task-based learning in Bangalore is still taken as a point of reference by later researchers in this area, “the aim of using communication as a pedagogic procedure would thus be to develop in the learners an internal system which was deployable, and when deployed, be capable of achieving grammatical accuracy.” Within this framework, Prabhu’s task based model tried to put into practice a methodology where the ‘affective filter’ (Krashen 1981) was lowest and the focus remained on content.

His disillusionment with the S-O-S methodology led him to reject the ideas of planned progression, pre-selection of material to purposely concentrate on one grammatical item at a time, and form-focused activity. Instead he tried to achieve his objective through ‘meaning
focused activity’ in which “learners are occupied with understanding, extending or conveying meaning, and cope with language forms as demanded by the process… Attention to language forms is thus not intentional but incidental to perceiving, expressing and organizing meaning.” Prabhu (1987).

Prabhu had two objectives when he implemented this methodology. The first was to achieve grammatical competence and the second was to enable the learner to deploy the language structures in real life situations. The tasks in the classroom create a real need to communicate in a genuine interaction that is necessary for the process of task completion. This powerfully supports the learner’s attempts to infer meaning and strengthen newly formed language structures. “In task based teaching, lessons in the classroom are not acts of texts, or language presentation but rather contexts for discourse creation.”

Thus we can conclude that task based teaching is a methodology based on the communicative approach to language teaching where attention is focused on a task and the resulting interactions form the framework on which language structures are learnt, strengthened and readied for deployment. No form of explicit teaching or attention getting activity is recommended during the process by Prabhu. However, further development of this methodology led to the ‘focus on form’ methodology at a later stage. Nunan (2006) has quoted the experiments of various researchers who used the concept of ‘focus on form’ within the task based methodology.

These were some of the major building blocks of communicative language teaching that have left an indelible mark on the history of ELT and have paved the way for further research. Howatt (1984) speaks of a ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ version of the CA. The weak version stresses the importance of providing learners with the opportunities to use English and to integrate these
activities into an English teaching programme. The stronger version advances the claim that language is acquired through communication or, in other words, ‘using English to learn it.’ As a result of further developments in the inter-disciplinary areas of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics we shall see how research has further refined the development of language teaching pedagogy up to the present.

Communicative language teaching has proved to be efficacious in its natural approach to language acquisition and in its objective to use language for communication rather than for its own sake, and its fundamental approach is widely acknowledged as one which should not be discarded but rather developed upon.

3.4 Cognitive processing

During the 1970s, there was another major shift in the approach to language learning. Research in psychology and psycholinguistics brought in new knowledge on how mental processes worked and how this knowledge could be harnessed to improve upon existing methodologies of language learning. Language acquisition through the natural approach still held its place, but there was a felt need for SLA in the short term. Researchers were interested to see whether greater success could be achieved by modeling methodology in ways that could hasten the process of language acquisition in the light of recent research into psycholinguistics.

Much of the second language (L2) research until now was based on the process of L1 acquisition and the variables of attitude, motivation as well as the working of the short term and long term memory were not taken into consideration.

In the article titled “The structural syllabus and Second Language acquisition”, Rod Ellis (1993) supports the role of the structural syllabus as a means towards ‘gradual mastery’ of implicit
second language knowledge. Though he has reservations about the SA being the complete solution to SLA, he identifies a role for the structuralists in isolating structures that need to be pushed into the learner’s procedural knowledge. In this way he opened the door to teaching methods that ensure that learners explicitly notice features or specific language structures, or at least understand the gap that exists between their current representations and these features.

**Explicit and Implicit knowledge**

Interest in these two types of knowledge first began with Krashen (1981) with his uncompromising distinction between *learned competence* which corresponds to explicit knowledge and *acquired competence* which means implicit knowledge.

Bialystok (1978) gives a brief definition of the two: “Explicit knowledge, broadly speaking, denotes a conscious analytical awareness of the formal properties of the target language whereas implicit knowledge means an intuitive feeling for what is correct and acceptable.”

Krashen allows no interface between learned and acquired. His argument was that if learned knowledge can be used by the learner without time and focus on form, it has been acquired by the intuitive route and not through learning.

Mclaughlin (from Smith 1990) objects to Krashen’s model explaining this phenomena through cognitive psychology. He speaks of two types of performance behavior— automatic processes and controlled processes. The second begins slowly until it gets into automatic mode. Bialstok’s model is also based on this concept.

**Teaching methods based on explicit learning techniques**

Naturalistic techniques have undoubtedly their own advantages but the time that is needed for the learner to amass sufficient amount of implicit knowledge and the appropriate skills for using it may be its major disadvantage. By revealing some pattern or system in the target language, the
teacher holds out the promise of a short cut as far as learning is concerned. Armed with explicit information about particular linguistic tasks, the learner can use conscious application of rules to practice in and out of class and to communicate in the target language at a higher level of proficiency, albeit without the speed and spontaneity associated with fluency. Fluency is assumed to come later and as a result of practicing Target Language (TL) structures in formal and informal naturalistic ways.

Thus, Ellis makes a very important claim that also forms one of the supporting pillars of the present study. Ellis characterizes implicit knowledge as “knowledge that is intuitive and unanalysed and explicit knowledge as knowledge which the holder is aware and which, as a consequence, is analysed.” In summary, Ellis has clarified the role of explicit knowledge in the development of implicit knowledge

- Explicit knowledge can be used to monitor output, which, in turn, serves as a source for input.

- Explicit knowledge can help learners notice features in the input and understand the meanings they realize.

The importance of explicit knowledge and its role in language acquisition came into prominence with the plethora of research into the cognitive aspects of language acquisition.

3.4.1 The noticing hypothesis

With the advances in research in cognitive psychology, the role of the working memory and its relation to long term memory within the framework of the theories of connectionism had a major
impact on research into Second Language Acquisition. Macaro(2003) gives the following explanation linking psychology with language acquisition:

According to connectionist explanations of language acquisition (McClelland and Rumelhart in Macaro 2003) language storage is perceived as an infinitely complex set of connections between the nodes or cells in the brain. The individual nodes are able to contain fragments of information and it is in their interconnections that language is stored.

When a word is noticed and comes into working memory, it hits a post and associates but also rebounds and hits other posts and makes a number of connections (phonological, syntactic, semantic, morphological, emotional). The storage of the word will be secured by these connections and retrieval will be via the activation of these connections.

Schmidt(1990) claimed that consciousness or awareness of the form of input at the level of “noticing” is necessary to subsequent SLA—this is opposed to Krashen’s dual system hypothesis that acquisition or unconscious learning is the main source of SLA and conscious learning plays a peripheral role. He explains the connection between consciousness and short term memory and rehearsal leading to long term memory and makes the claim that “conscious processing is a necessary condition for one step in the language learning process and is facilitative for other aspects of learning.” However, he qualifies the claim by saying that he did not deny the important role of unconscious processes in language comprehension. The crux of his argument is crucial to the full understanding of the distinction between conscious and unconscious learning and the outcomes we can expect from each type:
“Unconscious processes attributed to specialized systems operating in parallel, are not limited by short term memory capacity. They are not under voluntary control and are difficult to modify, but are fast, efficient and accurate, and are responsible for skilled performance and most details of cognitive processing. Consciousness is the experimental manifestation of a limited capacity central processor and is therefore slow…and effortful. However conscious processing is partially subject to deliberate control and can be used for setting goals and for trouble shooting.”

*This explanation is the basis on which the new model has been created in the present study to introduce an application based on conscious learning within the framework of task-based teaching. Whereas we can only expect general improvement in proficiency from task based teaching, we have to use consciousness raising techniques if we need to focus on a particular deficiency and maintain control over the improvement process by setting specific targets.*

The basic premise on which SLA through noticing and consciousness raising is based is stated by Robinson (1995) “Noticing is a consequence of encoding in short term memory and is necessary for learning. What is noticed may be subsequently encoded in long term episodic memory.” The process of encoding into long term memory has also been explained by Robinson and it provides clues towards formulation of teaching strategies that harness these theories: “More permanent encoding into long term memory is a consequence of the level of activation of information in short term memory, itself a result of rehearsal and elaboration” Thus the main difference between the communicative approach typified by the task based model and the form focused approach of consciousness raising methods lies in the degree of explicit knowledge that the learner is required to acquire about a particular linguistic form.
Smith (1981) divides consciousness raising methodology into four types—Type D which is the most overt form of explicit teaching which includes definitions and is recommended only for linguists and not for teachers or ESL learners; Type C would be confined to brief indirect clues which does not take the learning out of its naturalistic settings; Type B which calls for a more elaborate and explicit guidance and Type A which is a toned down form of Type B.

Schmidt (1990) goes up to the extent of stating that “Noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input into intake for learning.”

**Consciousness raising in task-based teaching**

Ellis (2006) recommends the use of form focused activities at each stage of the task based unit:

> Teachers can employ both implicit and explicit techniques to achieve this focus on form. These techniques can be used when some kind of communication problem arises (as occurs in the negotiation of meaning) or they can be used when the teacher chooses to abandon his/her role as a language user momentarily in order to function as an instructor (i.e. to negotiate form rather than meaning).

This is in variance with Prabhu (1987) who excludes preventive or pre-emptive attention to form. Ellis also suggests that linguistic features can also be made the topic of the task so that the basic tenets of task based teaching are not trampled upon. This is an echo of the idea expressed in Fotos et al (1991) where they suggest using a task type which allows the learners to solve the grammatical problems they come across interactively.

What can be essentially concluded here is that different means can be used to achieve the phenomenon of consciousness raising in natural and functional ways.
3.4.2 The Output Hypothesis

The Output Hypothesis – Swain (1993), is an offshoot of the same school of thought that deals with focus on form. It claims that, under some circumstances, output stimulates language acquisition by forcing learners to process language syntactically. Whereas the learner can often comprehend a message without much syntactic analysis of the input, production forces the learner to pay attention to the forms which the intended messages are expressed. Fotos(1994) has also expressed the same idea in her theory on negotiated interaction which she believes often results in adjustment and modification of language output. “Native speakers modify their output to learners so that it becomes more comprehensible, and learners strive to make their own output increasingly like the target language in order to be understood—a process termed as pushed output.” (Pica 1987). Izumi et al (2000) conducted several experiments where output proved to be a major stimulant towards consciousness raising in language learning.

This would be the focus of the present study where proficiency is sought to be achieved through exercises in output or, in other words, improvement in productive language skills. (See Chapter 2-Statement of the problem). Mangubhai (2006) discusses Swain’s explanation of the four ways in which output might play a role in language acquisition/learning: (1) provides opportunities for meaningful practice; (2) could force a learner to move from simply semantic processing to syntactic processing also, (3) provides opportunities for hypothesis testing, and (4) one’s output can generate responses from other speakers, feedback that can lead speakers to reprocess their output. Productive exercises in language learning were considered to be a consciousness raising technique in language learning.

Several models came up based on the theory of cognitive processing and ‘noticing’ in SLA.
3.4.3 The Variable Competence Model – Ellis (1986)

This model of SLA rose as an attempt to fill the gaps caused by the previous theories where the variability in SLA was not accounted for. The model also seeks to explain the mental processes involved in the various stages of inter-language development. In addition, the model also rejects Krashen’s theory that acquisition can only result from unconscious learning and conscious learning can, at best, act as a monitor.

The Variable Competence Theory suggested by Ellis extends the work of Tarone and Bialystock. The model is based on two distinctions.

- Product

- Process of language use

Product comprises a continuum of discourse types ranging from entirely unplanned to entirely planned.

Process is to be understood in terms of the distinction between linguistic knowledge (or rules) and the ability to make use of this knowledge (procedures). Widdowson terms the former as competence and the latter as capacity.

Therefore, the product is a result of either or both of the following:

1. A variable competence i.e. the user possesses a heterogeneous rule system

2. Variable application of procedures for actualization of knowledge in discourse
Ellis describes two procedures for actualizing knowledge: primary processes which are responsible for engaging in unplanned discourse and secondary processes which are used for planned discourse. Primary discourse uses semantic simplification and secondary discourse uses the monitor.

Language acquisition is a result of our capacity to make sense. New rules are created when we endeavour to use existing knowledge in relation to the linguistic and situational context in order to create shared frames of reference.

Ellis says that SLA processes which the learner calls on to participate in discourse are themselves developmental. For instance, early SLA is characterized by heavy use of semantic simplification because this is a procedure that requires little L2 knowledge. Later SLA reduces its dependence on non-verbal and shared knowledge and can make explicit the relationship between one proposition and another.

Also, knowledge that to begin with is available for use only via secondary processes because it exists only in analysed form, can eventually be accessed by means of primary processes and so used in unplanned as well as planned discourse. This is where the model suggests an interface between learned and acquired language in opposition to Krashen’s view.

Closely connected to this is Tarone’s Capability Continuum Paradigm where capability is described as the heterogeneous knowledge which underlies a second language learner’s language production.

Tarone (1990) in a response to Gregg’s (1990) criticism of Ellis’s and Tarone’s model says that “The variationist approach is able to incorporate the view that some aspects of language are innate and may not have to be acquired but it has been stronger than the rationalists approach in
its ability to provide very specific proposals as to how forms are initially assimilated into the IL (interlanguage) system and how these forms spread over time to new and more complex linguistic contexts and acquire new and more specific functions.”

3.4.4 Bialystok’s model

Bialystok’s model also shows an interface between explicit and implicit knowledge. She depicts output, cultural aspects and implicit knowledge contributing to explicit knowledge. The model also shows how explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge through the strategies of practice.

3.5 The model in the present study

The model in the present study has been designed as a combination of two methodologies. The ESP model is the framework on which the present model is constructed. This model has been adopted because it aims at proficiency in communication tasks pertaining to the target situation (the corporate workplace). Prabhu’s task based model has been adopted because it aims at productive language proficiency through the process of carrying out tasks. The task-based model is based on the communicative approach to language teaching. Thus two objectives of an English programme will be achieved by adopting a combination of the two models.

However task proficiency achieved through this methodology can only aim towards a general increase in language proficiency. The needs analyses planned for this study also aims to identify one or more language deficiency areas for the population under study which will need to be improved to achieve greater proficiency. Literature tells us that specific deficiencies are better tackled through consciousness raising methods of teaching. Thus the researcher seeks to combine methodologies in order to produce a customized model for the population under study.
Socio-cultural considerations are also viewed as an important aspect of SLA. Gardner’s theory of motivation and attitude are considered to be important variables in language learning. The needs analysis done among the student respondents tests for motivation and attitudes towards language learning. Thus the socio-cultural aspects of language learning are also measured on the basis of the acculturation and accommodation theories which are related to Gardner’s definition of motivation and attitude.