CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF THE STUDY
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3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research method employed for the study namely, the pilot study, sample, tools, administration of the tools and the procedure for data analysis used. The scales and scoring procedures used for quantification and the statistical methods used for data analysis are also discussed.

3.1 The Pilot Study

The study was conducted in three phases. A pre-pilot and a pilot study were conducted which were followed by the final study.

A pre-pilot was conducted on a sample of 10 open and distance learners from the study centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) at Ram Lal Anand College of University of Delhi. The pre-pilot helped in identifying variables relevant to the learner of English. It helped us to prepare the questionnaire.

It was followed by a pilot study carried out to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and cloze test designed for both the face-to-face and open and distance learners.

The pilot was conducted on a sample of 15 face-to-face learners pursuing first year undergraduate courses from Maharajas College, Cochin. The learners were from different subjects of the arts stream. For the pilot study on the open and distance learners, 15 first year undergraduate learners from the study centre of IGNOU, Cochin were approached. The pilot sample for open and distance learners had learners from science, arts and commerce streams.

The pilot was extremely useful in choosing the correct sample of learners from both the modes of learning for the final study. The pilot helped to streamline the focus of the study. The pilot study showed the relevance of carrying out this study. The research tools were refined and finalized on the basis of the pilot study. The research
tools of questionnaire and cloze test were found to be reliable and relevant. Also, the average time required for administering both these tools were estimated on the basis of the pilot.

Some questions from the pilot questionnaire about the learner’s caste and marital status were dropped after they were not found to be useful for our study.

The scoring procedure for the final study was decided on the basis of the pilot study.

3.2 Sample

The sample selected for the study consisted of 94 first year undergraduate students who were doing B.A. in English. The first year students were selected as subjects as “by this level the learners’ attitudes crystallize and they begin to think in terms of their future prospects” (Pathak 1999: 96). The sample was drawn from both the modes of study, namely from the conventional face-to-face mode and the open distance mode. The study is a comparative analysis of learner variables affecting second language acquisition of English at the undergraduate level in both modes. B.A. English elective students were selected because they could give interesting insights into the reasons why they had opted for a degree in English.

The total sample consisted of 94 informants. It consisted of 44 face-to-face learners from two colleges in Cochin under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and 50 open and distance learners (ODL) from the study centre of Indira Gandhi Open National University at St.Albert’s College, Cochin. Two of the colleges surveyed were Maharajas College and St.Albert’s College. These two colleges were clubbed together as representatives of the traditional face-to-face learners (F2F). All the 94 learners were in the first year of their B.A (Bachelor of Arts) undergraduate degree with comparable papers in English major at the time of beginning data collection (2009-10). They were followed over a period of two years for the purpose of data elicitation in the form of Questionnaires, Cloze tests and Personal Interviews.
3.2.1 The Conventional Face-to-face Learners (F2F)

The F2F sample consisted of 44 learners with 11 male learners and 33 female learners. They were 17 – 19 years of age and had completed twelve years of school education. We selected Maharajas College and St. Albert’s College because they followed the same curriculum and syllabus and had similar type of learners. These two colleges were selected due to their accessibility. They were centrally located and close to each other which made co-ordination with the authorities, teaching staff and students possible. Two colleges were selected (instead of one) as the number of learners in first year B.A. in English in these colleges was less than fifty in number. Maharajas College had 20 students and St. Albert’s College had 24 students enrolled for B.A. in English. Also, St. Albert’s College was the study centre for the ODL learners and some of the teachers from the college also taught the ODL learners in the contact classes.

These colleges represent the general learner population of the state of Kerala. Cochin, being the most developed city and the undisputed commercial hub of the state, has a representation of the student population from the entire state. There are students from all over Kerala studying in these two colleges of Cochin. As a result the sample could be considered heterogeneous and representative of the average English learner in colleges of Kerala.

Maharajas College, established in 1845, was a single room school run by the Royal Kingdom of Cochin 'to impart such instruction to the students as would enable them to converse with Englishmen without the aid of an interpreter'. It was later upgraded into a College in 1825 which was later affiliated to Madras University. At present the College is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. In 2010 the College was selected as a "College with Potential for Excellence" by the University Grants Commission and is one of the five ‘Centres of Excellence’ in the state.

St. Albert’s College is a minority community institution set up in 1946, initially to provide educational facilities to the members of the Latin Catholic Community of Cochin. The College now provides educational opportunities to one and all irrespective of caste, community or religion. (see the websites for more detail). Both
these colleges have a sizeable number of learners from the socio-economically backward communities.

3.2.2 The Open and Distance Learners (ODL)

The final sample of open and distance learners (ODL) were selected from Cochin Regional Centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The final ODL sample consisted of 50 learners with 21 male learners and 29 female learners. They were in the age group of 17 to 40 years. Data was collected from first year B.A. English students from the ODL mode to make the data comparable to the B.A. English major learners of F2F.

The study centre for the ODL learners offering B.A courses is St. Albert’s College, the same college from where part of our face-to-face sample was drawn. These learners were also being taught by some of the teachers from St. Albert’s College. The ODL sample also consisted of learners from all over the state and could be considered as representative of the average English learner enrolled in the open and distance mode of learning. At the time of collection of data, Cochin was the only Regional Centre of IGNOU in Kerala (Another Regional Centre of IGNOU was established in Trivandrum in 2009 and had yet to begin functioning at the time of data collection). Learners from all over Kerala are enrolled with IGNOU for different courses. A random sample of fifty learners was selected for the study.

The coding for the representative colleges was done in the following manner:

- Face-to-face (F2F) consisting of Maharajas College and St.Albert’s College- 1
- Open and distance learners (ODL) from IGNOU - 2

3.3 Description of Tools and Procedures used in the Study

The tools selected for the study were the questionnaire, cloze test and personal interview. The tools of data elicitation were finalized on the basis of a pre-pilot and a pilot study.

The tools were designed to elicit the social, psychological and linguistic data of the sample and two kinds of data were generated- social and socio-psychological data and linguistic data. Social and socio-psychological data was generated by means of the
questionnaire and linguistic data was obtained by means of cloze test and personal interview.

3.3.1 Social and personal data

A questionnaire was prepared to elicit the learners’ social and socio-psychological data. The questionnaire was finalized after a pre-pilot and pilot study (Appendix I to II).

The Questionnaire:

The questionnaire method is a standard tool for eliciting exact responses. It is more structured and controlled. The closed-response type of questionnaire was selected for data generation (see Appendix II). The closed-response character of the questionnaire helps in stream-lining the enquiry and eliciting relevant responses which can be codified and analyzed empirically. It is easy to collate and analyze responses to closed questions (Nunan, 1992). Scores are given according to a standard scale like that of Likert’s Scale. Thus data elicited through the questionnaire method can be converted into quantitative data. The Quantitative data would be coded and entered as per the requirements of SPSS Package.

The questionnaire consisted of variables that would elicit data regarding social, economic, and socio-psychological factors. A multiplicity of variables was selected for the study to gain an insight into the complex and inter-related nature of factors that influence second language acquisition. These variables would be correlated with the language proficiency scores obtained from the cloze test and personal interviews to arrive at the learner factors that may affect second language acquisition.

A set of twenty eight variables were finalized for the final questionnaire. The variables were determined mainly based on previous studies and after consulting experts from the fields of Sociology, Education, Psychology, and Linguistics. The questionnaire has made use of many of the variables in the previous studies on learner variables. The questionnaire follows the tradition of socio-educational model of previous studies of Gardner (1985) and Sahgal (1992). The socio-educational model will be discussed in detail under ‘attitude and motivation.’
The variables selected would elicit personal data along with socio-economic, sociological, and psychological data. The objective social characteristics as well as the subjective feelings of the participants are important to arrive at a holistic view (Beebe, 1988). Individual differences in language proficiency are an important indicator as “individual differences in second language are an index of a learner’s social background, experiences and aspirations” (Agnihotri et al., 1998: 17). The interaction between the social environment and the individual learner can be seen only when variables concerning both the social environment and the individual are systematically measured and analyzed.

The questionnaire would elicit data on personal, socio-economic, psychological, and attitudinal factors of the learners along with generating data on learner autonomy, learning style, and motivation. The details and the coding system followed for this study is given in the following sections.

3.3.1.1 Personal and Social Data

The personal and social details looked into include the age, sex, details of schooling, annual family income, parents’ education, and claimed use of language in different domains of interaction. Questions numbered from 1 to 10 would help in eliciting personal, socio-economic and academic data of the sample. Factors like age, sex, employment status, and annual family income are important variables that have been found to have correlation with language acquisition. Indian studies have found social variables important in second language acquisition.

3.3.1.1.1 Age

Age is considered an important factor in second language acquisition. Two kinds of age were looked at for the purpose of our study- the chronological age of the learner and the age of learning English. The age at which the learner had started learning English could possibly affect his or her performance and competency in the language. The sample drawn from the F2F learners were about the same age group (17 to 19 years). However, the ODL learners were older (17 to 40 years). It would be
interesting to see if there is any effect of age in second language acquisition and proficiency.

There has been continuous debate among researchers to decide who is a better learner- is younger the better or are adult learners at an advantage when it comes to second language acquisition? Popular beliefs put the younger learner at an advantage. In the case of acquisition of English as a second language, “this belief [younger the better] partly accounts for the expansion of English language teaching to younger and younger children in many parts of the world” (Hall 2011:126). However, there have been continuous debates among the researchers on the factor of age in second language acquisition. The debate goes back to Lenneberg’s (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis which stated that maximum learning takes place in the initial years of one’s life before lateralization of the brain takes place. However there is no consistent evidence to these claims. Younger learners have been found to be more successful in the acquisition of native-like pronunciation compared to adult learners (Larsen-Freeman 2001, Ortega 2009). Adults and older children were seen to have advantage initially in the acquisition of a second language but younger learners soon catch up (Krashen, Long, Scarcella 1979 in Ortega 2009: 16). Other studies (Brown, 2007 and Cook, 2008) state that adult learners tend to learn and retain vocabulary better than children. However, the evidence in favour of a particular age for the acquisition of language remains largely inconclusive and highly debatable. “Age may exert universal effects on the learning of a second language, but context moderates these universal effects and needs to be considered carefully” (Ortega 2009: 17).

Coding for chronological age was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age below 20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and above</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coding for the age of learning English was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.1.1.2 Sex

Many sociolinguistic studies have considered sex as an important variable in the study of linguistic proficiency. Studies conducted by Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1972, 1974) show women scored closer to the ‘standard prestige variant’ than men. In a patriarchal society women have been excluded from centers of power and wealth. As a result, they try to compensate and ‘over report’ by performing better than men. The ‘prestige variant’ of language is seen as a marker of status and power and women being denied the other markers of power and prestige turn to language.

According to Trudgill, it is because women try to compensate for their insecurity in a male-dominated world that they perform better linguistically. Also, the social construct of femininity expects women to be gentle, polite and discreet. This in turn gets reflected in the use of ‘appropriate’ language among women.

Popular belief also favours women over men in the acquisition of a language. This could be because of the society and culture which expects them to be behaving in a particular manner and inculcate social norms and mores in their children as a carrier of culture. Such behaviour in a woman is rewarded and reinforced by society. Other follow ups of variationist studies which quantify gender (Macaulay, 1978; Shuy, 1970; Wolfram, 1969 in Mesthrie et al., 2009) have found a statistical spike in women’s use of ‘prestige’ variants of language. These early studies were straightforward with ‘binary’ gender distinctions and do not “emphasize diversity among women and among men” (Mesthrie et al., 2009: 240).

Recent studies see gender as a fluid term and study it against various contexts that dynamically underlie social and cultural interaction using language. The issues of inequality, power, identity and status are contested and examined in the light of socio-economic and cultural underpinnings. While commenting on the studies of Milroy, Nichols, and Thomas, Mesthrie et al., (2009: 221) say, “in order to understand gender
differences in language it is important to look at women’s and men’s lifestyles in
different communities: whom they interact with, and what might motivate them to
adopt certain varieties.” The choice of a particular variety of language over others is
also suggestive of an ‘act of identity’ by women. There are other notable studies on
gender and language that need to be mentioned here. Lakoff’s (1975) ‘Deficit
Hypothesis’ states that women’s language is lacking in several aspects and the way
they speak keeps them away from centres of power. Zimmerman and West (1975)
look upon the aspect of ‘Dominance’ in the use of language among men and women.
They argue that men use language to dominate and interrupt women while
conversing. Pamela Fishman (1983) posits that women tend to show more cooperation
and interest in their conversations with people. Another school of thought (Maltz and
Borker 1982; Tannen 1990) considers the language of men and women as belonging
to ‘Different’ ‘gender subcultures’ and as a result their use of language also differ.
However, the works of Deborah Cameron (1995a, 1995b, 2006, 2007) challenges the
Differences hypothesis and questions these popular beliefs. These are all instances of
how language is used as a tool to negotiate one’s identity in a society charged with
economic, sexual, political, cultural overtones. Milroy, Eckert and Horvath (in
Mesthrie et al. 2009: 223) stress on the need to differentiate gender and class in
Sociolinguistics. “…evidence that females are better L2 learners than males is scarce,
partly because gender interacts with so many other aspects of social identity such as
race, social class, ethnicity and age in influencing language learning experiences and
outcomes” (Hall 2011: 133).

Indian studies (Sawhney, 1980; Khanna, 1983 and Agnihotri et al., 1988) have
found boys to be more proficient in English. However, it should be noted that these
data were obtained from lower economic strata and it is bound to reflect the better
exposure and opportunities enjoyed by the boys in society. Studies conducted among
the elite urban population of Delhi show women to be better performers (Sahgal,
1983).

Our study aims to look at the language proficiency among the genders and it would
be interesting to see whether gender is an important factor in second language
acquisition. Correlational analysis of gender with other variables would help us gain
an insight into the complex interplay of various factors that affect second language acquisition.

Males were coded as 2 and females were coded as 1.

### 3.3.1.1.3 Employment Status

Only two of the conventional learners were employed compared to the open-distance learners. Many of the respondents from the open-distance mode were employed. It remains to be seen whether the exposure to the world through the job market would make any difference to second language acquisition and proficiency. It is however expected that the learners with exposure to the world of work would be better equipped with their language skills.

Coding for the employment status was done in the following manner:

- Employed: 2
- Unemployed: 1

### 3.3.1.1.4 Annual Family Income

The annual family income is a significant factor in understanding the socio-economic status of a respondent. The income levels were divided into three categories. The language proficiency of a learner could be an indicator of socio-economic status and vice-versa. The Government of India Planning Commission’s State specific poverty line for urban Kerala for the year 2009-10 was pegged at Rs.830.70 per month (GOI Press Note, 2012). The government figures have come under a lot of criticism for being not in touch with reality. As a result, we devised more realistic income brackets after consulting experts from the field of Sociology and Economics. The gross annual income of both the parents was considered. Those with a family income of INR three lakhs or below would be considered the lower middle class, those with an annual income between INR three to five lakhs would represent the middle class and an annual family income above INR five lakhs would be considered the upper middle class. It is interesting to note that those families with income less than Rupees three lakhs per annum have been considered ‘Bottom of Pyramid’ (BoP) by a Bangalore based leading seed fund company Unitus. They have
arrived at this figure “after reviewing a number of studies with varying conclusions” and for “urban India, where cost of living is higher, (they) consider BoP to have an annual household income of less than INR 300,000. This is equivalent to less than INR 25,000 monthly household income” (see website of Unitus Seed Fund). So our measurement scale can be considered reliable.

The coding for annual was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Family Income</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INR 0-3 lakhs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INR 3-5 lakhs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INR above 5 lakhs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1.1.5 Details of Schooling

This is an important factor which could have a significant bearing in the language proficiency of a learner. It is well known that schools play a major role in shaping the lives of its students, be it academic or personal. Some studies conducted in India (Sahgal, 1983; Agnihotri et al., 1988) have shown positive correlation between the type of school and second language acquisition.

Type of School

For the purpose of our study, schools were divided into three broad categories – private schools, semi-government/aided schools and government schools respectively. The division was made to capture the complexity of school system in India. The private schools are run by private trusts or boards with no government aid, the semi-government/aided schools receive aid from the government but follow their own policies. These schools are owned by private organizations or individuals. Some of the minority institutions come under this category. Government schools in India have the reputation of being poor performers compared to the privately run schools which are better in terms of teacher-student ratio, better library and computer facilities, and an environment conducive to learning and better exposure to English. Some of the ODL learners had completed the Bachelor Preparatory Programme (BPP) offered by
IGNOU before entering the degree programme. The BPP course is for those who have not completed their higher secondary education but wanted to enter the mainstream to acquire a degree.

Coding for this variable was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-government</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP (only for ODL)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medium of School**

The medium of schooling is an important factor in understanding the learner. A learner coming from an English medium background would have an edge over the vernacular educated learner. English medium schools are known to have better qualified teachers and a better learning environment. The learners could benefit from the ‘immersion’ in an English-speaking environment. According to Krashen (1982) in such an environment, the learners’ affective filter would be down and better input in the form of learning would take place.

Compared to this, the vernacular schools would not have an environment conducive to learning English. Dearth of well qualified language teachers results in the students’ incomplete and improper acquisition of the language. The medium of instruction being Malayalam or the mother-tongue, students develop insecurity about their English language proficiency. Avoidance is used as a strategy. The coding was done in the following manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents were either from English or Malayalam medium schools. The language ‘Hindi’ was listed as one of the options and coded as ‘2’. As there was no one with a Hindi medium schooling, the option was dropped.

3.3.1.1.6 Scholastic Achievement

The scholastic achievement of the learners would be calculated on the basis of the average percentage of marks scored in their last Board examinations i.e., twelfth standard examinations. These scores are of paramount importance as admission to any higher course of study is based partially or wholly on them. It should be kept in mind examination scores measure scholastic achievement whereas cloze scores and interview scores measure proficiency in a language. It would be interesting to see if there is a correlation between the two. Are academically bright learners better at second language acquisition? Is there a correlation between academic achievement and second language acquisition?

Scholastic achievement was scored in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholastic Achievement</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 50% marks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60% marks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 to 70% marks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 to 80% marks</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% marks and above</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1.1.6.1 Parents’ Education

Parents’ education is a very important factor in the language acquisition of a learner. Education is a tool for social mobility in the Indian context. Educated parents tend to take their wards’ education seriously. The categories devised were of four levels- Schooling, Graduation, Post Graduation and the Professional category.

Both fathers’ and mothers’ educational background were considered to see if there is a correlation between their educational background and the English language
proficiency of their wards. Studies have shown that mothers’ positive attitude to a language correlate positively to their children’s proficiency in that language (Sahgal, 1992). Children look up to their parents as role models and emulate them. Educated parents could have positive and supporting impact on their children’s education and language proficiency.

Coding for parent’s education was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Education</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1.1.7 Languages Known

Bilingualism is a way of life in the Indian context with 780 languages spoken (PLSI data 2013) and 22 languages given official status by the Constitution of India (Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India). The question on languages known by the respondent would elicit data on the number of languages known and the age of learning them. Also we would be able to explore the relationship between English language proficiency and proficiency in other languages. Is a bilingual (also multilingual) learner better at English language proficiency? Almost all the F2F and ODL respondents claimed to be bilinguals with proficiency in Malayalam, their mother tongue and English, with which they all claimed to be functionally adept. Very few claimed to know a third language well and in most of the cases it was Hindi. Some claimed to know Tamil well. This did not come across as a significant variable. The state of Kerala could be considered bilingual as Malayalam and English are the two major languages in use and only an insignificant percentage claimed proficiency in a third language.
3.3.1.1.8 Domain Analysis

Domain analysis reveals the learners’ preference for a particular language in a particular context. Also it helps us to see the pattern of language preference for general interaction. For instance, learners tend to use English in their interaction with administrators and teachers thereby giving the language a formal identity and prefer their mother tongue when it comes to interacting with the immediate family and friends. The question on claimed use of language would elicit data on patterns of language use in different domains of activity. This background information would help to see if there is any relation between language use and language proficiency. The various domains of everyday interaction have been divided into three. The family domain consists of the father, mother, siblings, and relatives. The second is the college domain consisting of classmates, teachers, administrators, and friends. The third is the outside domain of shopkeepers, doctors, and travel.

Coding was done in the following manner for the three domains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Language</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly English</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both English &amp; Malayalam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally Malayalam</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Malayalam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1.1.9 Language Exposure through the Media

The question on the extent of language exposure through different kinds of media would look at the possible relation between media exposure and language proficiency. The learner could be exposed to both his/her mother-tongue and the English language through different media like T.V., newspapers, radio, songs, cell phone, magazines, internet, movies, and novels. Preference for any particular language could be an indicator of the learner’s exposure to that language. Also better exposure to a
particular language could have a bearing on their language proficiency. The scoring was done on a five point scale ranging from 5 to 1.

Scoring procedure for language exposure through media was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Exposure</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always English</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both English &amp; Malayalam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes Malayalam</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Malayalam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2 Social Psychological Data

The social psychological data was elicited by means of the questionnaire. The learners’ attitude towards English and their mother tongue Malayalam, their motivation to learn the language, learning styles, and claimed level of learner autonomy were probed. A modified version of the Bogardus scale of social distance which seeks to measure attitude towards people based on the language they use was also part of this section in the questionnaire.

3.3.2.1 Attitude towards English and Malayalam

The five point scale to test the respondents’ attitude towards English and towards their mother-tongue Malayalam was prepared. It consisted of 14 statements. 7 statements were about English and 7 about Malayalam.

A positive attitude towards the target language was first included in Gardner’s Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) model (1985). It is one of the three dimensions of the socio-educational model and is discussed in detail under ‘Motivational Variables.’ A five-point Likert scale was given to gauge the learners’ attitude towards the target language. The attitude towards the target language is compared and contrasted with that of the attitude towards the learners’ mother tongue.
It would be of interest to see whether a particular attitude, positive or negative, would correlate with the learners’ competence in the English language. A positive attitude towards the target language is an antecedent to motivation.

The statements were about certain qualities attributed to both the languages, the importance of these languages in science, technology, and politics, and the prestige given to them. There were 6 negative statements and 8 positive statements. The statements seek to judge the attitude of the learner towards English as against his or her mother tongue which in this case is Malayalam.

A positive attitude towards the target language is believed to be conducive to second language acquisition.

Scoring for both the positive and negative statements was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Statements</th>
<th>Negative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2.2 Bogardus Scale of Social Distance

A modified version of the Bogardus Scale of Social Distance used in Sahgal (1992) was adopted for eliciting learners’ acceptance and preference for languages used by others in their proximity. The learners’ attitude towards the target language community has formed an integral part of many studies. Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) socio-psychological theory assumes that the learner’s acceptance of the target
Social Distance refers to how much acceptance a member of a particular group has towards members of other groups. For our purpose, the questions asked concerned the learners’ acceptance of people based on their language preferences. The scale has been used extensively in sociology and psychology to measure affinity/psychological closeness to people belonging to other groups or communities. The questions asked relate to the learners’ attitude to others based on their use of both the English and Malayalam languages. For instance, how would they like someone who spoke in English/Malayalam as their neighbour or friend? A score of 5 or 4 indicates greater acceptance of people who prefer to communicate in a particular language, be it English or Malayalam. Kerala does not have a significant number of English speaking natives to be counted as representative of English speakers but English is spoken and understood by many in the state. The state is famous for being a tourist destination and the locals have ample points of contact with tourists at various levels. The three groups of people given as choices were:

i) Those who generally spoke in English
ii) Those who spoke both English and Malayalam equally
iii) Those who generally spoke in Malayalam

The respondents had to select their keenness or lack of it for people based on their language use.

The coding was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Keen</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite Keen</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okay</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not so Keen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Keen at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The learner’s preference for a particular category of people based on their language use would be indicative of his/her identification to that particular group. It could also indicate their liking for that particular language. Preference for one’s own language group would signify ethnocentric attitude whereas preference for English would mean acceptability of westernized people. Preference for those who spoke both Malayalam and English equally signifies the openness and acceptability of people who used both the languages. Code mixing and code switching is an acceptable way in India and even considered normal.

3.3.2.3 Ethnocentrism and Authoritarianism

A modified version of the E and F-scales of Adorno et al. (1950) to suit the Indian context was used to measure the learners’ ethnocentric and authoritarian beliefs. Ethnocentric learners tend to view their own culture as superior to that of others and this may come in the way of effective second language acquisition. They could be rigid in their views and not accept the values of other people and cultures. Ethnocentric learners may have a negative attitude towards a second language and this could reflect in their proficiency.

Question numbers 19.1 to 19.5 seek to measure the ethnocentric beliefs of the respondents. It has been adapted from the E-scale of Adorno et al.

Question numbers 19.6 to 19.10 are based on authoritarian beliefs of the respondents. Authoritarians are anti-democratic and believe in the power of rules and authorities. Both ethnocentrism and authoritarianism tend to go together. They are often inter-related. Such attitudes could be imbibed from homes where parents exercise a lot of authority and control and from other social and cultural set-ups with authoritative figures. The respondents had to mark their level of agreement to the given statements on a 5-point scale.

Lower scores would indicate ethnocentric and authoritarian beliefs. Higher scores would point towards a democratic and mature outlook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motivation is one of the most dominant and researched areas of second language acquisition. It was pioneered by the studies of Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) and has come to be known as the ‘socio-educational model’ of motivation. Gardner’s (1985) AMTB – Attitude/Motivation Test Battery has been the basis for many studies along the socio-educational model of motivation. The focus had been the intensity, attitudes towards the L2 and personal investment made in the learning process. Gardner and Lambert’s model of motivation further divided motivation into instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Integrative Motivation refers to the respondents’ desire to empathize with and assimilate the language and culture of the target language group. Instrumental Motivation refers to the desire in learning a language for all the practical and material benefits it brings to the learner. This rather binary view of looking at motivation has been attacked by many researchers on the ground that these studies were limited to the Canadian context and that motivation is a dynamic aspect influenced by time, context and behaviour (Dörnyei & Otto 1998; Dörnyei, 2002; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). “Orientations and attitudes vary across contexts for L2 learning…” (Ortega 2009: 189).

The latest concept associated with motivation is that of ‘L2 Motivational Self System’ propounded by Zoltan Dörnyei (2005). It has been developed from the latest psychological theories on affect and motivation by E. Tory Higgins. It is based on the proposition that human beings have the ability to ‘self-regulate’ their behaviour and that there is a ‘promotion focus’ which would enable people to work harder to better their individual selves. It is possible for us to foresee this gain and it is associated with an ‘ideal self’ that is, the kind of person we would like to become as a result of our efforts and hard work. Dörnyei’s idea of ‘L2 Motivational Self System’ also reworks
the notion of ‘Integrative’ motivation. According to him the learner need not necessarily have to identify with the target language community. “That is, the highly motivated individual will score high in integrativeness while simultaneously being intrinsically as well as instrumentally motivated to learn the L2 because of a formed L2 speaking ideal self that she or he can anticipate as a reference point and that links L2 success with a promotion focus” (Ortega 2009: 186). Thus in other words, the concept of ‘integrative’ motivation is given a new identity by incorporating context which in turn is also influenced by ‘instrumental’ motivation and attitudes towards the L2 community.

Khanna and Agnihotri (1982) and Khanna (1983) had modified the two kinds of motivation devised by Gardner and Lambert to suit the Indian scene. They termed the two kinds of motivation as Complementary Motivation and Supplementary Motivation. The motivation to learn English to get a better job or to study further would be Complementary motivation. The motivation to learn English for ‘additive’ or ‘ornamental’ purposes as to read foreign literatures, to appreciate English films or songs, or just for superior status is termed as Supplementary motivation. The purpose of the questions on motivation is to see the reasons why the respondents learn English.

English is learnt in the Indian context as a means of getting a job, passing an examination or to just to feel superior. In our study we had devised questions to incorporate the learner’s motivation to ‘better his/her self’ towards an ‘ideal self’ with aesthetic and/or monetary gains. Questions were asked on the usefulness of English in appreciating literature and the way of life it represents, in getting a degree and job and in one’s social standing and relationships.

The coding for this question was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning style refers to the style in which a learner acquires knowledge and processes information.

Question 16 consisted of questions with two opposite statements. The respondent had to choose one out of the two which would best describe his/her cognitive learning style. The question is taken from Wyss (2002). Field Dependence and Independence (FDI) is one of the many learning styles studied by researchers. The study of Field Dependence and Independence in second language acquisition is one of the oldest research traditions (Ortega 2009: 205). It has its origins in psychology and “distinguishes individuals dichotomously as to whether or not they are dependent on a prevailing visual field” and the “field (surroundings) gets in the way of field-dependent individuals” (Gass & Selinker 2008: 435). It is a psychoanalytic approach to understand the underlying dynamics of learning.

These two styles are polar opposites on a continuum and no style is inherently good or bad but both have their advantages and disadvantages. Pioneered by Witkin (1973), many sociolinguists have tried to understand how learners differ in their cognitive style of learning. The Embedded Figures test devised by Gottschaldt is used to measure field-dependence and field-independence. Field-dependent individuals are characterized as ‘sensitive’ and ‘interested in others’ and their learning style depends on the surrounding environment whereas field-independent individuals are described as being independent and not affected by their surroundings. They are able to distinguish between figure and ground and tend to be self-sufficient and analytical. Many studies have found a positive correlation between field-independent learners and second language acquisition. They would be successful at language learning because of their ability to distinguish the important elements to be learnt from the less important ‘background factors’ (Naiman et al., 1978 in Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997).
There are some interesting implications for second language learning based on these two categories. It would imply that field-independent learners would have an impersonal orientation, are analytical, independent and work with abstractions easily whereas field-dependent learners would show personal orientation, a holistic outlook and are dependent on the surroundings and find it difficult to operate out of contexts. Both the styles have advantages and disadvantages. An ideal would mean inculcating some aspects of both the styles.

However it would be impossible to summarize field-independent learners as better language learners as this learning style could be influenced by so many other factors as intelligence, analytic ability, context, etc. (Chapelle & Green, 1992 and Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003 in Gass & Selinker 2008: 436-7).

Our questionnaire does not make use of the standard Embedded Figures Test but uses a list of binary statements which would elicit self-reported data on the learners’ preference for one style over the other.

More of ‘a’’s in the answer would indicate field-independent learning style and more ‘b’’s would be indicative of field-dependent learning style.

Coding was done in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response ‘a’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response ‘b’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2.6 Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy “is the ability to take charge of one’s learning” (Holec, 1981: 3). The concept was introduced by Holec (1981) in association with the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project. It was intended to be a practical look at the way languages were learnt in context and the role played by the learner in the learning environment. It would mean taking full responsibility for one’s learning process. Learner autonomy is more than developing a metacognitive awareness of the learning process. It means to have a commitment to self-learning and being proactive in the
process of learning (Little, 1991). The concept revolves around learner involvement, as the paradigm shift from the teacher to the learner in the recent years has brought learner to the centre of the learning experience. A reflective and self-motivated learner is autonomous and brings in his/her own personal styles and strategies to the learning experience and does not totally depend upon the teacher or facilitator. The autonomous learner would be self-directed and follow reflective thinking. However, it is to be remembered that autonomy does not mean learner isolation.

Learner autonomy is of special interest to the open and distance way of learning. In fact the open and distance learner is expected to be autonomous in their learning process. “Distance learners are often assumed to be learning autonomously because they control a number of aspects of their learning, such as the time, the pace, what to study and when to study, …” (Murphy 2007: 74). However, they are also required to take responsibility for setting goals, planning or evaluating learning. It is more important for the open and distance learner to be autonomous in his/her learning as the contact classes are not compulsory and they need not report to a teacher regularly. This results in greater freedom but can result in greater chances for the learner to lose focus and drop out. Kasworm (1992) has drawn attention towards the need to evolve a curriculum design which would be participatory and democratic involving the learners. Learning becomes more successful when the learner is aware of his or her own responsibility towards the learning process (Little, 1991). Therefore efforts should be on to instil a sense of responsibility in the learner towards learning.

Theory and research on learner autonomy has been criticized on the basis that it has been more inclined towards advocacy and plain empirical research without much concern for the fact that autonomy is “a contextually-variable construct”. However, research on learner autonomy has now slowly started including factors like age, gender, cultural context and the like and become more critical and “often qualitative in nature, of the ways in which learners and teachers respond to such initiatives and of the ways in which learner and teacher autonomy develop in the longer term across contexts of teaching and learning” (Benson 2006: 34).

The English Language Portfolio designed by the Council of Europe to foster learner autonomy is “also designed to record all of an individual’s language learning, including learning that takes place outside formal education; to promote the concept
of plurilingualism and its adoption as a general educational goal; to support the
development of intercultural awareness; and to encourage lifelong learning” (Little

The questions given to the learners are a set of self-reported analysis of their extent
of autonomy in learning. They were asked whether they enjoyed learning
independently, took initiative for their learning experiences, and used a variety of
methods in making learning enjoyable. If they preferred to answer ‘Strongly Agree’
or ‘Agree’ to majority of the statements, then they could be considered autonomous in
their learning to a great extent.

The question on claimed learner autonomy should be able to throw light on to what
extent the learners are autonomous in their approach to second language learning and
whether this self-reported autonomy would translate into better proficiency in the
language.

The respondents had to base their choice on a 5-point agree-disagree scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3 Linguistic Data

Linguistic data for the two sets of respondents were elicited by means of two well
established linguistic tests of cloze and personal interview (see Appendix III).
Students from both the F2F and the ODL pedagogy were approached as part of pre-
pilot and pilot studies to gauge their competency in English and in finalizing the text
passage for the cloze test. The cloze test is global in nature testing general language
proficiency, whereas personal interview tests the speaking skill which is specific in nature.

3.3.3.1 The Cloze Test

The cloze test is a highly reliable measurement of language proficiency. The cloze procedure was originated for testing readability of a text. The cloze test is very commonly administered to learners for the assessment of language proficiency, be it second language or the mother tongue. It is a standard test to measure the proficiency in a given language. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), the cloze test can be used for testing skills like reading and writing and to test overall language proficiency. Cloze tests were introduced as a test for language proficiency by Taylor in 1953. The term ‘cloze’ is derived from the concept of ‘closure.’ The test is based on Gestalt psychology which refers to “the human tendency to complete a familiar but not-quite-finished pattern ...” (Taylor, 1953: 415). The cloze is based on the Gestalt theory of closure propounded by psychologists. The Gestalt psychologists say that we view the world by filling in the outlines. We have a tendency for closures.

Certain number and order of words are deleted from the given passage to give it an incomplete feel. A standard cloze is a text from which every nth word has been deleted. According to Jacobs (1988: 47) there are two methods of deletion followed in a cloze passage: fixed deletion method and rational deletion method. In the fixed deletion method, every nth word is deleted- ranging from a minimum of every fifth word to a maximum of every ninth word could be deleted. The rational deletion method does not follow a fixed pattern and is based on the discretion/selection of the examiner.

The cloze test is integrative in nature and correlates very highly with standardized tests. Various studies have found correlation between cloze scores and various language skills like listening comprehension (Oller, 1973), oral scores (Shohamy, 1978), and reading skills (Hinofotis, 1980). There is a proven relation between the cloze test and skills of language proficiency, thereby making the cloze test global in nature. The cloze test correlates highly with all the four skills in the language i.e., speaking, listening, writing and reading skills respectively. According to Bachman (1982: 61), “[t]here is now a considerable body of research providing sound evidence
for the predictive validity of cloze test scores. Cloze tests have been found to be highly correlated with virtually every other type of language test, and with tests of nearly every language skill or component.”

The learner has to fill in the blanks to give the cloze passage a closure. The completion of a cloze passage requires the learner to have basic and functional competency in the language along with general awareness. These tests require the learner to have the basic ability to understand and comprehend the context and the vocabulary to identify the missing words that have been deleted. The cloze test enables the learner to use “linguistic knowledge, textual knowledge, and knowledge of the world” (Cohen 1980:97).

We had decided to use the cloze test as one of the two main measures of linguistic competency mainly due to the nature of ODL learners. They were not required to attend the contact classes compulsorily and as a result it would not have been possible to meet the same learners continuously. It would have been very difficult to follow these learners for more number of specific tests like that of listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing.

3.3.3.2 Selection of the Cloze Passage

The passage to be selected had to be of relevant standard to test the English language proficiency of first year undergraduate students. The objective was to select a passage from an English text prescribed for the First Year Undergraduate students and yet at the same time the text had to be unfamiliar.

A passage was selected from the story “Chronicle of the Peacocks” by Intezar Husain, from the text *The individual Society: Essays, Stories and Poems* prescribed for the First Year students of the University of Delhi (see Appendix III).

The first two and last two sentences from the passage were left untouched. From the third sentence onwards every sixth word was deleted for the students to fill in. The total number of blanks to be thus filled in was fifty in number. The cloze passage was scored using the exact word method. The maximum, thus a student could score, was fifty. In the pilot administration of the cloze, more than 60% of learners from both the
F2F and the ODL had scored above 30% which was decided as the minimum passing score.

The scores out of fifty were converted into percentage and the scores were coded in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Percentage Score</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 to 100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3.3 Method of administering the Cloze Test

The cloze test would be more effective when administered under a supervised examination environment. A pilot test was conducted on both F2F and ODL learners from Cochin. 15 students each from both the F2F and the ODL modes were approached for this purpose and a cloze test was administered to the learners to assess their language skills. The pilot administration of cloze took around twenty five minutes so a maximum of thirty minutes were allotted for the final test.

The face-to-face learners were administered the cloze test in a class-test environment during one of their English lectures. They were told that it was a general language proficiency test for a study on learners and were told about the seriousness with which they were to approach the test.

The distance learners were administered the cloze test during one of their first contact programme classes at the study centre. There were around hundred learners present. The test was administered to the whole class, out of which fifty learners were selected at random for the follow up involving the questionnaire and personal interview. Being an open distance learning programme, attendance is not mandatory. As a result each time there would be a different set of learners in the class. The later
contact classes had a steadily declining number of learners making it impossible to administer more linguistic tests. All these reasons made the selection of cloze test as the most appropriate measure for testing the ODL learners’ linguistic proficiency.

3.3.3.4 Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were conducted mainly to test the spoken skills of the respondents in English. These interviews also formed the source for qualitative analysis. It helped in further elaboration of their views. ‘Personal Interview’ method introduced by Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974) were used. No other method would get us sufficient and valid data on the speech sample of a person compared to personal tape-recorded interviews. It would yield us individual speech sample through systematic observation (Beebe, 1988).

The researcher tried to establish a comfort level with the respondents by frequently visiting their classes and departments and thereby slowly getting to know them. Total 70 respondents were interviewed, 42 from F2F and 28 from the ODL. The F2F learners were interviewed in their college premises whereas to interview the ODL learners, the researcher went to their houses, places of work and contact classes. Only 28 learners from the ODL sample could be interviewed because of their busy schedules and lack of time. Some of them had jobs outside Kerala and it was not possible for these learners to commit themselves for an interview.

There are mainly three types of interviews- Structured Interviews, Semi-structured Interviews and the Open Interview. Structured Interview closely follows the questionnaire style with a pre-decided set of questions and answers which can be easily coded and analyzed. The interviewer has total control of the interview and expects the respondent to strictly follow the structured format allowing no space for deviation. It is highly focused and precise which allows for the comparison of various responses rather objectively.

The Semi-structured Interview loosely follows a structured format with the interviewer exerting some control over the proceedings. The interviewer will be focused on a particular set of questions or topics to be covered but allows some flexibility compared to the Structured Interview. “Part of the skill in using this form of interview, therefore, lies in allowing the interview to develop naturally so that the
respondent does not feel that they are simply replying to questions” (Richards 2009: 186).

The type of interview followed for this study was the ‘Open Interview’ with a loose structure and format. The questions were partly premeditated and the respondents were led to speak about themselves. The common topics included their hobbies, beliefs about certain happenings and events, hopes and aspirations. The Open Interview was favoured over the other two types with a view to assess the learners’ ability to hold a meaningful conversation on matters ranging from the simple to the complex. The questions started with simple small-talk about their life’s hopes, aspirations, hobbies, such as: “Could you tell me something about yourself?”, “What are your hobbies?” , “What do you plan to do after college?,” etc. Once the respondents got comfortable answering these kinds of simple questions, they were asked questions of increasing complexity like “What do you think is the importance of English in today’s world?”, “What made you opt for a degree in English?”, “Do you take initiative in your learning of English?”, “What do you think of young people joining politics?”, “Which writer has influenced you deeply”, etc.

The interviews were conducted individually and recorded on tape and took about 8 to 15 minutes. The interview would help to assess the individual learner’s spoken skills in the English language. A 5-point scale was adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) handbook to grade the spoken skills of the learners. The scale was designed keeping in mind basic levels of spoken communicative competence. The grading was done by two language experts and the average of their scores in percentage was used for the final coding.

The 5-point Scale for Speaking Skills for grading the interview was devised focusing on the following aspects:

**Point 5**

- Communicates fluently and effectively.
- Has an extensive vocabulary and uses it effectively.
- Full command of grammatical structures with almost no errors.
- Speaks with proper stress and intonation patterns.
• Requires no effort by the listener.

Point 4

• Speaks fluently.
• Has a wide range of vocabulary.
• Uses most basic structures (e.g. phrases, simple/compound sentences) correctly, with some minor mistakes in complex sentences which do not impact communication at all.
• Stress and intonation mostly correct although there may be some errors.
• Mother tongue interference- but does not affect intelligibility.

Point 3

• Communicates adequately in most everyday contexts.
• Has sufficient range of vocabulary.
• Basic structures are correct but some inaccuracy in complex structures.
• Some mistakes in stress with some impact on intelligibility.
• Mother tongue interference noticeable in terms of pronunciation.
• Very little use of mother tongue.

Point 2

• Interaction is ineffective and lacks coherence.
• Some everyday vocabulary and phrases are known.
• Basic structures (e.g. phrases, simple/compound sentences) are frequently inaccurate.
• Speech is very slow and hesitant.
• Some use of the mother tongue.

Point 1

• Ineffective communication.
• Very little vocabulary.
• Inaccurately and inappropriately worded messages.
• Speech is very slow and disconnected with constant lapses in fluency.
• Speech is often incomprehensible.
• Almost completely speaks in the mother tongue.

The average of the two grades given by the two experts was considered the final score. The final average percentage was coded in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Percentage Score</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 to 100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to gain insight into the feelings and experiences of the learner with regards to language, questions like “Why did you chose English for specialization?”, “What do you think of your mother-tongue Malayalam ?”, “How would you describe yourself as a person?” , “Where do you see yourself in five years from now?” etc. were asked. The ODL learners, over and above these questions, were also prodded on their learning experience, the difficulties they faced and their expectations from the open and distance learning system. The respondents were encouraged by the researcher with meaningful interventions and insights.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained by means of questionnaire and the proficiency tests of cloze and personal interview was analyzed statistically. Statistical tests of Correlational analysis, t-Test and Factor Analysis were performed on the quantitative data. Correlations significant at p<.05 and p<.01 were considered, thereby making our observations highly reliable. Personal interviews were analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. We have used both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the learner variables. Literature in research methods in linguistics term it as “mixed methods” which again is further divided into many categories depending upon the combination/integration of both quantitative and qualitative data (Angouri, 2010).
3.4.1 Triangulation Method

The research method followed is what is termed as “Data Triangulation” and “Methodological Triangulation” under “Mixed Methods” (Denzin, 1970 in Angouri, 2010). Data triangulation refers to the use of different sources for information gathering (Dörnyei, 2007). In this study, data has been collected from two different sources, namely, the F2F learners and the ODL learners. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of more than one method for the gathering of data. We have used the questionnaire method, cloze test and personal interviews to gather data. The language proficiency scores from cloze test and closed-response questionnaires are quantitative in nature. The personal interview is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Both quantitative and qualitative data would be considered equally important in arriving at the result. The quantitative research part refers to the numeric data collected in the form of closed-response item Questionnaire, Cloze scores and the Personal Interview scores. These numeric results would be used for correlation analysis, t-Test and Factor analysis. The Personal Interviews would be looked at qualitatively to explore and describe in detail the learner variables that influence Second Language Acquisition among the learners.

The quantitative and qualitative data and the findings will be integrated and connected at the interpretation stage of the study. This would be of particular relevance and interest in the case of Open and Distance learners. It would help us gain an insight into the learner dynamics at play in the ODL pedagogy in comparison to the F2F pedagogy. The teaching of a skills based subject like the English language is fraught with many practical difficulties and it remains to be seen whether the learners are able to utilize optimally the inputs provided by both the pedagogies. The language competency of the learners could be explained in light of the associated variables. The Interview scores here would perform two roles, that of being both quantitative and qualitative in nature. This method “can also result in well-validated and substantiated finding because it off-sets the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another method” (Creswell et al., 2003 in Heigham & Croker 2009: 143).
3.4.2 Statistical Analysis

The data elicited through the above mentioned methods would be analyzed statistically. Data analysis would be done with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17). Correlation, t-Test, and Factor Analysis would be done to analyze the data. Variables which show significance at p<.05 and p<.01 are considered for analysis and interpretation.

3.5 Conclusion

We have discussed the method of collecting the data and the materials used. The justification for the inclusion of the tools and the variables selected for the study has been given in this chapter.

We shall analyze the data in the next two chapters and interpret the findings based on our study. We would compare both the sets of data and try to understand if they are different from each other and what implications could it have on our understanding of the study of second language acquisition. The next two chapters have both descriptive and inferential statistics of the data.