CHAPTER 4

COVARIATION OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH AND SOCIAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
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4.0 Introduction

In this chapter we will analyze the English language proficiency of both the F2F and ODL learners. Part A is a study of the learners’ language proficiency measured by cloze test and personal interviews. It will be followed by a detailed qualitative analysis of the personal interviews. Thereafter, the statistical test of t-Test which is a measure of significant difference in mean scores of linguistic performances will be discussed. We will be studying the linguistic variables first as it would indicate the learners’ performance in the second language and is of paramount significance to our study. The cloze test is global in nature and has high correlation with all the four basic skills of language namely listening, speaking, reading and writing whereas personal interview is specific in nature and focuses on the speaking skill. Cloze measures the overall linguistic competency of the learner. We have thus used both global and specific kind of proficiency tests in our study. The linguistic scores of both the sets of learners will be analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

Part B is an analysis of the social and social psychological variables that seemed to have direct correlation with the learners’ linguistic performances. We need to remember that the responses elicited by means of questionnaire are claimed indicators. This chapter is an attempt to understand the linguistic profile of the learners from both the modes of learning.

PART A

4.1 Linguistic Proficiency

In this section, we will analyze the statistical scores obtained by the two sets of learners in the proficiency tests of cloze and personal interviews. This will be the quantitative part of our data triangulation.
4.1.1 Linguistic Proficiency: Cloze and Personal Interviews

English was the medium of instruction for both the F2F and the ODL groups of learners at the college level. For these learners, English was a part of their academic world and some of them claimed it to be part of their personal and social worlds as well as we will see in Chapter 5.

We need to remember that these two groups of learners come from different modes of teaching and learning. It would be interesting to see how these two sets of learners differ in their linguistic performance. The F2F learners had more points of contact with the English language in the form of classroom lectures, interactions with friends, and accessible teachers. The ODL learners on the other hand, had access to learner-friendly learning materials and some of them were working which provided them with opportunities to use English at the work place. As we will see in Chapter 5, many of the F2F learners were introduced to English at a younger age than were their ODL peers.

The mean and standard deviation for cloze test and personal interview for both the F2F and the ODL sets of learners are given in Tables 1 and 4 respectively.

4.1.1.1 Linguistic Proficiency: Cloze and Personal Interviews (F2F Learners)

The mean and standard deviation for the proficiency scores for F2F is given in Table 1. The descriptive statistics for both cloze tests and personal interviews is given in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 1: Mean and S.D. for Cloze and Personal Interview (F2F)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Cloze Test</th>
<th>Personal Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2F</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the mean scores we can see that the F2F learners had performed better in spoken interview compared to the cloze test. It could be attributed to the better scope enjoyed by the learners to interact with their peers and teachers in the traditional face-to-face set up which in turn could help them improve their spoken skills in English. Also, the students while they are familiar with fill-in the blanks, are not very familiar with the cloze test. The method of grading the cloze scores was ‘same word’ score method as discussed in Chapter 3. The spoken interviews were graded by two language experts.

Table 2 shows the breakup of the cloze scores obtained by the F2F learners.

**Table 2: Cloze Scores of F2F**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 to 100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The score range of ‘0 to 33’ signified poor linguistic skill with little or no comprehension of the language (see Chapter 3). From the table for cloze scores we can see that majority (72.7%) of the F2F learners scored above 33% marks in cloze. There were also learners who scored very high in cloze as we can see in Table 2. Table 3 shows the scores obtained by the F2F learners in personal interviews.
Table 3: Interview Scores of F2F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Interviewed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 to 100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their performance in interviews was slightly better compared to the cloze test. 80% of the F2F learners had scored more than 33% marks in personal interviews. The overall performance of the F2F learners in personal interview was 7.3% more than that of their cloze scores. The learners were less familiar with the cloze test which might have impacted the score.

Another important observation was that both cloze scores and interview scores correlated highly ($r=.657$, $p<.01$) with each other indicating the reliable and valid nature of both the tests. It also corroborates previous research (see Chapter 3) which has given a comprehensive status to cloze tests. Cloze test has proved to be a valid and important tool for testing the linguistic proficiency of the learners in our study. Their spoken skills were measured by the personal interview.

Figure 1 shows the cross-tabulation of both the interview scores and cloze scores obtained by the F2F learners.
Figure 1: Cross-tabulation of Interview scores and Cloze scores (F2F)

Figure 1 of the cross-tabulation between cloze scores and personal interview scores clearly show that those who had done well in cloze test had also done well in personal interviews.

In the next section we look at the proficiency scores obtained by the ODL learners in cloze test and personal interviews.

4.1.1.2 Linguistic Proficiency: Cloze and Personal Interviews (ODL Learners)

The descriptive statistics for the proficiency scores of ODL learners is discussed in this section. It is clear from comparing the two Tables 1 and 4 for the mean and standard deviation for both the proficiency scores that the ODL learners had not performed as well as the F2F learners in both the tests. These learners scored higher on an average in the cloze test compared to their performance in personal interview.
Table 4: Mean and S.D. for Cloze and Personal Interview (ODL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Cloze Test</th>
<th></th>
<th>Personal Interview</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ODL</strong></td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The break-up of the cloze scores is given in table 5. 58% of them scored above 33% marks in cloze. The highest the ODL learners could score in cloze was in the range of 51 to 67% marks.

Table 5: Cloze Scores of ODL learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the interview scores of the ODL learners. 28 learners could be interviewed and the rest could not be contacted for interviews due to various reasons (see Chapter 3).
Table 6: Interview Scores of ODL learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Interviewed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 to 50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 to 84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 21.42% of the ODL learners had scored above 50% marks in personal interviews. None of them had scored above 84% marks in personal interviews as compared to the F2F learners. The average marks for the performance in personal interview were lower than that of the average marks obtained for cloze test. The ODL learners thus performed weakly in both the proficiency tests as compared to the F2F learners. Their competency in spoken skills was far lower than their F2F counterparts. These learners clearly lacked even basic skills in the spoken component of the language. This has implications for teaching and learning a skill based subject like English through the ODL mode.

In the case of ODL learners also cloze score showed strong correlation with interview score ($r=0.396$, $p<.01$). This corroborates the fact that both these tests are highly reliable in nature and suitable to test the spoken skills and the general linguistic competency of the learner in English.
Figure 2 shows the cross-tabulation between the interview scores and cloze scores of the ODL learners. Here also we can see consistency in their performance in both the proficiency tests. This means that those who did well in cloze also did well in personal interviews. Likewise, those who did not do well in cloze performed badly in the personal interviews.

**Figure 2: Cross-tabulation of Interview scores & Cloze scores (ODL)**

Thus, comparing the linguistic scores for both the sets of learners, we can infer that the F2F learners had performed better than the ODL learners in both the proficiency tests. Among the F2F learners, scores for personal interview were greater than their scores for cloze test. In the ODL group, the learners performed better in cloze tests than in personal interview. Overall, the F2F learners had outperformed their ODL counterparts in both the proficiency tests. Also, see Appendix IV and V for sample transcripts of personal interviews of learners from both the modes of study.

4.1.2 Linguistic Proficiency- Analysis of Qualitative Data: Personal Views of the Learners

The previous section was a quantitative analysis of the learners’ proficiency in English. In this section, we will look at the opinions and views of the learners with respect to their mother-tongue Malayalam and English. This would be the qualitative analysis part of our data triangulation. It would help us to compare the linguistic competencies of both the sets of learners quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

All the F2F learners were interviewed face-to-face. However, in the case of ODL learners, some of the interviews were conducted over the phone given their
constraints of time, place and availability. In the personal interviews, the learners were encouraged to speak about themselves, their education and what they thought about the role English played in their life. These interviews can be seen as accounts of hope and aspiration rooted in the learners’ quest for success. English happens to be one of the most important pathways in this quest. The language has come to occupy a coveted position in the context of Kerala where people dream of economic and social mobility through English. It has become part of the ‘cultural capital’ in the Bourdieuan sense (1986). To the middle class especially, it is the vehicle which will land them into the promised land of wealth, prestige and success in life.

The interviews were ‘open interviews’ which encouraged the learners to share their views on matters important to them and at the same time they were guided by a loose framework of questions (see Chapter 3).

Qualitative analysis of the personal interview is done from the ‘emic’ focus, that is, from the learner’s perspective. The learners’ attitudes towards Malayalam and English were probed. They were also asked questions on the importance of English and the reasons for studying English at the undergraduate level. There were questions probing their future plans and aspirations. The interview provided us with both quantitative and qualitative data. We have already looked at the learners’ spoken skills quantitatively at the beginning of this Chapter. At one level, the interviews were given grades based on the respondents’ spoken skills and on the other level, the answers were studied closely looking for their reported attitudes and opinions on several relevant issues related to language.

**Personal Interviews**

We were in contact with the learners from both the modes of study for two years (2009-2010) for the purpose of data elicitation. The interviews were all conducted when the learners were into the second year of their course. The personal interviews were conducted at the learners’ place of study, their homes, places of work and at other locations convenient to the learner. The interview began with initial questions to make the learner comfortable—these included questions on the city of Cochin, the weather, the reasons for doing a B.A course in English and so on. Once a comfort level was established with the learner, we moved onto more complex and thought
provoking topics like the place and importance of English in their life and society, their plans and dreams for the future, what they thought about their mother tongue Malayalam, the role English and Malayalam played in their lives, etc. Questions like ‘Why did you opt for a degree in English?’; ‘Which novel has influenced you?’; ‘In what way do you think English is going to help in your career?’ etc were asked.

We have used some of the words and quotes of the respondents verbatim. According to Patton (1987: 11) quotations “reveal the respondents’ levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions. The task for the qualitative evaluator is to provide a framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their point of view about the program.” Many opinions and idea that could not be captured by the questionnaire could be voiced in the personal interview. We have not transcribed and studied each interview in detail as our purpose is to look at the overall spoken performance of the learners along with looking at their views on language and language learning.

The questions ranged from the personal and particular to the general. We will see how other factors (see Chapter 5) contribute towards developing language attitude among both the sets of learners. Among other questions, they were also asked about the books that had left a deep impression on them. Not many of them reported to be keen about reading. Malayalis are often perceived as a population who loves reading; however, recent studies have shown that this is not entirely correct. (The Hindu, 2011. January 29). Our research also corroborates this.

**The profile of the learners**

Before we discuss the significant correlations of linguistic proficiency, it is a good idea to give the profile of these two sets of learners. In this section we look at the profile of both the sets of the learners and the main reasons they had cited for joining the B.A course in English. They had already completed the first year of the undergraduate study and were to a great extent sure about their future plans and goals and had definite views on how their course was going to contribute towards their career and future.
The F2F learners

Most of the F2F learners were below 20 years of age and had joined the undergraduate programme in English after passing their twelfth standard board examinations. Out of the total 44 F2F learners, 42 learners were interviewed. This group consisted of 31 females and 11 males. (see Chapter 5).

These learners had joined the B.A course in English in the hope of becoming school teachers, college professors, and the like. The F2F learners also hoped that they would improve their English language skills by doing the course. Two of them were interested in film making and claimed to have already tried their hand at making short films. They expected English to be of help while learning the ropes from senior directors in the industry. The F2F group of learners comprised more or less homogenous type of learners. That is, they had all joined the course straight out of school. None of them had taken a break before joining college. Some of them expected to read many great works in English in the due course of completing the degree course and hoped to reap the benefits of the finer and aesthetic aspects of the language. We will see (Chapter 5) how these learners had reported more integrative motivation to learn English. Majority of the girls reportedly wanted to become school teachers. Teaching appeared to be one of the most sought after careers by girls. We have already seen how the state has limited scope for employment opportunities and teaching as a profession seemed to have comparatively more scope.

The ODL learners

The ODL learners were from different age groups. 46% of them were below 20 years of age. Not all of them had joined IGNOU straight after school. We interviewed 28 learners out of the total 50 of the ODL sample. The problems and difficulties faced in interviewing the ODL learners have already been discussed in Chapter 3. 13 males and 15 females were interviewed. Along with the practical difficulties experienced in interviewing the ODL learners, we also faced difficulties in communicating with them in English during the interviews. General lack of linguistic competence in English was observed among the ODL learners.
The quantitative analysis of the proficiency tests of cloze and personal interviews showed how the ODL learners lagged behind compared to their F2F peers. They had performed badly in both cloze test and personal interviews.

The ODL group consisted of learners from different walks of life. There were nurses, primary teachers who had done PTC courses, merchant navy employees, secretaries, aviation trainees (ground staff), airhostess trainees, pharmacists, medical transcriptionists, tele-callers, marketing executives, clerks, ‘gulf’ hopefuls and the like. There was even an ex-seminarian among the learners. There were also women who had joined the course in order to complete their education which they had had left incomplete due to marriage, children and other responsibilities. Also, some of them had joined the B.A course after taking break after finishing school. There were also a couple of learners (n=4) who had joined the IGNOU B.A course after completing the bridge course of BPP offered by IGNOU (see Chapter 5). Sixty eight percent of the ODL respondents were employed. Thus, the ODL learners were more heterogeneous in their profile.

The expectations of the ODL learners were two pronged. On one hand they all wanted a college degree and on the other hand they wanted to learn the English language. The flexibility of the ODL system allowed them to take care of their work and family commitments along with pursuing a degree course. These learners had a lot of expectation from the course. They expected their degree to help them secure better jobs, promote their career advancement, and assist in any career switch. A major underlying expectation was to improve their spoken skills in English for career, social and personal purposes. These learners could be considered a microcosm of the average Indian learners who aspire to climb the social and professional ladder by means of education and the English language. Some of them were interested in joining the service sector and the tourism industry given the employment opportunities available in these areas in Kerala. For this also English is a pre-requisite.

**Views on English and Malayalam**

In this section we look at the views expressed by both the sets of learners on the importance and place of English in India. They were also asked about what they
thought about their mother-tongue Malayalam and the place it had in their lives. Questions were mainly about English and Malayalam as they did not appear very keen or concerned to discuss other languages like Hindi or Tamil.

**Views of F2F learners on English and Malayalam**

According to all the F2F learners interviewed for this study, English is essential in all fields of life. It is the language of higher education, career and social ‘prestige.’ They were well aware of the importance enjoyed by English. Many of them wanted to migrate and settle abroad for which the knowledge of English is necessary. Some talked about doing the B.Ed course after their B.A course in order to become a school teacher. School teaching came across as a much sought after career in Kerala. In the context of low industrialization and less opportunities, teaching is an important career option for those who do not want to migrate.

Proficiency in English is seen as very important to enter the world of work. One of them rightly mentioned communication skills in English as the most desired attribute in a potential candidate at the time of recruitment. The F2F learners considered English as an important factor for professional advancement, academic pursuits and helpful in general communication across languages and cultures. These learners talked about a ‘good future’ guaranteed by proficiency in the language. Prestige was cited as an important reason for acquiring the language. The F2F learners were more tuned towards literature and claimed to enjoy reading both English and Malayalam works. One of the top scorers in the interview had this to say about her reasons for opting for English though it was not considered “as useful as Economics” and other so-called practical subjects, “… reason was that I was very fond of languages…particularly English, more than my mother tongue…. Whenever I read (something) I used to relish the beauty of the words, the way the words are used to produce meaning…things that can’t be shown in a movie can be expressed through words by an author in a book…” This shows the learners integrative attitude towards English. Later she had also expressed the desire to sit for the prestigious Civil Services Examinations and considered English literature to be of help. There was another such IAS aspirant among the F2F learners. There were also creative minds among them who considered the degree to be complementing to their career plans. For instance, a learner had this to say about his learning of English. He was “studying
literature just for the fact that I can improve my language. I am not studying it for any employment or any other purposes. I am more interested in creative field and I wish to pursue a career in film making after this.” He planned to make thoughtful and revolutionary movies in English or at least have them sub-titled in English and reach out to the ‘world audience’ and for this considered English to be of help. These learners had both integrative and instrumental attitude towards learning English.

To the question whether it was necessary to know English, one learner replied, “Yes, it is 100% ...because if we are going Kerala outside, we can just manage with English...if I am knowing only my mother-tongue...we cannot manage anything...telling something in English other people can understand... [sic]” This learner considered English as a bridge which would connect him to other people and ideas. There were other learners also who spoke about English as the only link with which they could connect to people outside the state and country. There was a consensus on the need to rise and go beyond the regional in order to grow and expand one’s horizon for which English is indispensable. According to another learner “English language is one of the most important languages today because English has developed as a global language. If we want to go abroad then we need to study English. Then only we can communicate. (...) at least there will be one man who will know English. (...) I want to go abroad. [sic]” Many other learners also reiterated this typical Malayali aspiration of ‘going abroad.’ They perceived English as an international language that would make their dream of ‘going abroad’ come true. As a community with a sizeable number working and settled overseas, they are acutely conscious of the role played by English in helping them find a job and settle abroad. We have already seen how the state of Kerala comparatively has fewer avenues of employment opportunities due to the low industrialization and other complex socio-political reasons. These learners were also politically and culturally aware and had strong opinions about political and cultural issues.

One learner even claimed trying to ‘think in English,’ and another described it as ‘easy to study.’ The state of Kerala is known for its tourism industry and many of the F2F learners talked about their interactions with foreigners in English and how much they had enjoyed such encounters. They thought it was not ‘a big deal to know’ English as it was just another language and how in the Indian context, knowledge of
many languages was a way of life. There was also a nun among these learners and she
was pursuing the course in order to help her congregation in the role of a teacher in
future. In the case of Christian religion, it is the congregation which decides what
courses these nuns/priests should pursue. The needs of the congregation are the main
factors leading to decisions. According to Devika (2007), in Ernakulam the majority
of the government aided schools are run by Christians. Along with aiding social
transformation, these schools are also important economic resources for the
community. This reflects how even religious institutions consider English essential in
their mission. In fact, we had already seen in Chapter 1 how missionary activities of
the Church had played an important role in establishing English in India.

Some of the learners claimed to be avid readers and were vocal about their
favourite English works and authors. Some of the works cited were The God of Small
Things, Mutation, David Copperfield, My Grandmother’s Tale, The Alchemist, and
Oliver Twist.

These learners were positive in their attitude towards their mother tongue as well.
Malayalam, to one, was ‘very beautiful’ whereas English was ‘useful.’ In the words of
a learner, “Mother tongue Malayalam is a beautiful language... but I don’t want to
study it...its not need to study. I don’t have to study....studied it from
childhood...acquired it. It is an acquired something. It is a beautiful language. I love
Malayalam more than English.[sic]” The learner here considered the knowledge of
English essential in order to have a successful career. Many of these learners
cherished and celebrated the mother tongue along with a healthy appreciation and
acceptance of the English language. They raised issues of mother tongue education,
language attrition and language death in the context of English. One of the F2F
learners criticized the present day television anchors and radio jockeys who pretended
not to know the mother tongue and spoke Malayalam with anglicized and affected
mannerisms. These learners took pride in their mother tongue yet at the same time had
no qualms about accepting English as the language of computers and science and
technology. Their views and attitudes corroborate the quantitative data which had
shown the F2F learners’ preference for and positive attitude towards their mother
tongue Malayalam on one hand and on the other hand they were able to perform well
in the proficiency tests in English.

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Views of the ODL learners on English and Malayalam

We have already seen how the ODL learners had scored less in the proficiency scores measured quantitatively. The ODL learners like the F2F learners were aware of the importance of English in today’s world. They all considered English to help in their jobs and career advancement. The arrival of ‘Smart City’ (an ambitious project of the government to develop the technology sector of the state) in Cochin had given wings to the aspirations of many of these learners. Many of them already had entry level jobs in BPOs and KPOs, some of them worked as aviation ground staff, primary school teachers, nurses and the like.

On being probed about the reasons for doing a course in English from IGNOU, two major reasons emerged- the desire for a degree and the desire to learn English. For one learner it was his ‘dream’ to get a degree. Almost all of them dwelled upon the ‘usefulness’ of English. They did not appear to be interested in the finer aspects of the language. In this aspect they were different from F2f learners. They all sounded very eager to be a part of the ‘English knowing’ world so much so that one learner declared that English was “necessary to exist in this world”!

The desire to learn and improve their English language skills was the main propeller for these learners. In the words of one of these learners, “I want to improve my language, my speaking way... improve grammar...,” and “… if I am seeing anyone speaking in English I just wish to speak like that ... motivated to speak fluently like that ... so I want to learn English” [sic].

On being asked if English was helpful to him, a learner who was a marketing executive had this to say: “Yes of course...and also I have the aim to be a college professor or college lecturer by using this. Also the situation is not good for regular study so am working in part time studies… ” [sic]. This shows how they wanted to switch careers for social mobility and more prestige. Another learner who was working as front office staff in a five star hotel was planning to become a school teacher eventually and that was the reason why she was pursuing the course along with her job. A learner who was employed as a clerk at the High Court of Kerala was also planning to get into teaching after getting his degree. As in the case of F2F learners, teaching was rated highly as a career option by the ODL learners. There
were learners who even aspired to be professors and successful entrepreneurs after acquiring proficiency in English.

As mentioned earlier, many of the female learners were primary school teachers and had completed Teacher Training Course. They wanted their degrees to help in their career and to help in improving their language skills. One of the T.T.C teachers spoke about the ‘usefulness’ of the classes and how she planned to do an M.A eventually. Most of them were teaching in private schools and one of them was a government school teacher.

Many of the ODL learners reported a strong desire to migrate and knew they had to clear international English language tests like the IELTS or the TOEFL to fulfil their desire. This added to their desire for English. In the words of a ‘foreign’ hopeful, “One year before I started studying IELTS for migration. Actually that time I know about the English…from at that time…at that time I liked English very much. Another thing is it is an international language and help to communicate. Actually I have a great desire to speak like a professional….I am very weak in English… [sic]” Some learners from this group felt they were weak in English and needed more sustained and personalized intervention from the system.

Another group of learners wanted to work in other states of India. There is a sizeable number of Malayalis in all the states outside Kerala. One of the learners wanted to go to Gujarat in search of better prospects, “After my studying I am going to Ahmedabad so English is very important for me…in Ahmedabad there is a good salary and that is the reason. (…) in this city there is opportunity… [sic].” A nurse who was pursuing her degree had already got a job with Batra Hospital in New Delhi and she planned to go abroad eventually from there. In fact majority of nurses in almost all the major cities of India are Malayalis. One of the nurses already had done her BSc degree in nursing. She had opted for a second degree in English as she was sure of getting more opportunities especially to go abroad. Also she wanted to teach nursing for which English would come in handy.

A tele-caller pursuing the course spoke about the positives of her job on how it gave her opportunity to better her English by speaking with customers. It gave her an opportunity to “… co-operate with so many customers. Through that I can … I think I
can develop my language also... can interact with the customers and all ...” For this learner, the course in English helped in her work which in turn helped in learning the course. Here the learner was able to supplement her learning with helpful ‘output’ as well.

Unlike the F2F learners, the ODL learners had no desire to read. This is reflective of the general trend observed all over. As these learners were mostly hard pressed for time, they found it difficult to cultivate reading habit and found it difficult to spend more time for studies. Not many of them mentioned about the desire to read books and novels in English. One reason given was the lack of time. Many of these learners mentioned their preference for short stories due to this reason. Some claimed to have read books of Mohammad Basheer, Madhavikutty (nee Kamala Suraiya) and Jane Austen. Some of the works mentioned were *Mein Kampf*, *Khalifa Umarul Farooque*, and *The Holy Bible*. On the whole, the ODL set of learners did not profess much passion for reading and cited lack of time and a busy schedule as reasons for their poor reading habits.

The ODL learners were not particularly enthusiastic about their mother-tongue unlike their F2F peers. Malayalam was taken for granted as a language they all used most of the time. They were all anxious about acquiring English for practical purposes. They were motivated by the utilitarian gains they hoped to reap after getting a degree and becoming proficient in English. They did not have much to say about Malayalam.

**Experience of learning English through the ODL mode**

These learners had joined the ODL mode due to the flexibility it offered in terms of time, pace and place. Work, family commitments and financial constraint were cited as the chief reasons for pursuing their education with this mode. They were comfortable about not being compelled to attend regular classes. The contact classes conducted during the weekends are not compulsory either. The advantage of being able to continue with their jobs along with their education helped them chose the ODL mode. These learners liked the space the system gave them to carry on with their hectic schedules. As a learner puts it, “I can’t able to do regular studies so ...
continued my studies with IGNOU ... [sic].” Some planned to pursue post-graduate courses after acquiring their B.A in English. “My aim is to have my MBA course ...” and for this she was working part-time along with doing the degree course. She was saving money for higher studies. The ODL system is relatively cheaper and helped learners like her to save money.

For learners from other fields like nursing, aviation and medical transcription, the experience of learning once again was welcome and they found the classes “much more interesting than the professional classes.” Even though these learners were professionally trained, they found it necessary to have a B.A degree.

These learners from other background had very high opinion about the syllabus and texts prescribed for the course. One learner had joined the IGNOU course after a month with M.G. University’s B.A course. She found her present course to be at an ‘advanced level’ and ‘well planned.’ She was appreciative of the syllabus and course contents. The same view was echoed by many of the top scorers in the spoken skills. An ex-seminarian who was doing the course was very happy about his experience of learning through the open and distance mode: “I didn’t see anything wrong... I am happy with the teaching of IGNOU, the teachers, the syllabus is nice, the system is also nice and you have arranged in good way [sic].”

Some of them claimed to be self-directed and motivated in their learning experience. It was not easy for them to learn without the guiding presence of a teacher. Inspite of such shortcomings, one claimed to “… note many of the languages...sentences we used in daily speaking and all and I also used to note that and tried to use such sentences in daily language and all ... I used to watch English movies ....” Some of them shared about how they always used a dictionary while reading the texts and about accessing the internet for further help with their studies. These kinds of learners also reported about seeking out opportunities to practise their spoken skills in English. We have already seen how some of them tried to align their learning experience with that of their real lives and the world of work.

From all these personal accounts we can conclude that those who were self-motivated, enthusiastic and had basic skills in English perceived the ODL system as helpful and encouraging.
Some of the problems encountered by the learners in the ODL mode

In this section, we look into some of the difficulties reported by the ODL learners in their learning experience. The low performers who were already weak in English and academics in general found it very difficult to cope with the demands of the system. Some of the difficulties were attributed to the sense of isolation and abandonment experienced by the learners, some of it had to do with the syllabus, lack of consistent interventions by a teacher/counsellor, and the teaching and learning system of the open and distance education.

These learners were inducted into the ODL system by the study centre by giving them a brief overview of the system and how they could approach their studies as a distant learner. The researcher had attended their induction programme conducted at the commencement of the course. They were given practical tips on learning and the assurance of having teachers and contact classes to help in their learning programme. However, the enthusiasm seen at the commencement was seen to decline once the course advanced. The weekend contact classes were bursting at the seam in the first few months of the course. Thereafter there was a steady decline in the number of students coming for these classes, so much so that by the end of six months there was hardly any one attending!

One learner complained about the over-packed classrooms. He reported to have “…attended only two classes then it got boring. When I reached the college at ten o’clock... sorry eight o’clock ... at that time classes full of people, some of them are standing, some of them are outside the class and I am everyday ... I watched the class from outside the class ... that I feel very bad. Actually its one reason to stop coming ... I think it’s a mixed classroom with more subjects… [sic]” Here the learner clearly had attended the initial classes and thereafter had not bothered to go back! He appeared clueless about the whole system.

Many of the learners had approached the ODL system thinking it would be similar to the traditional set-up. They were unhappy about the fact that not everything was covered in the contact classes. They expected to be taught everything in these classes. However, these classes are meant to clear doubts and seek guidance for further reading. The students are expected to do a lot of self-study and come prepared with
their doubts and problems to these classes. It is evident that this does not happen that way.

Many of them missed the personal touch provided by peers and teachers saying “there is nobody around to motivate you. That’s what is expected … I don’t really think it will improve my English…” The interaction with teachers and peers provide the learner with helpful ‘input’ especially to learn the spoken skills in the language. The ODL learners miss out on this opportunity. We have seen how their spoken interview scores are less than their cloze scores.

Some of them were contemplating to quit the course. Many cited personal commitments and lack of time whereas a few admitted to being not motivated enough to pursue their courses. Many of these learners complained about the sense of isolation in the ODL setup. The transition from the traditional learning to the ODL was not easy for most of them. However, they were all united in their expectations from the course outcome, that is, learning of the English language. The ODL learners considered English a gateway to their aspirations in the world. Some of these learners hoped to get promotions based on their degrees and were confident about completing the course.

High drop-out rate is one of the major problems faced by ODL pedagogy of learning. The learners cited lack of time, motivation and continuity, sense of isolation and difficulty in adjusting to the ODL system as some of the reasons why some of their peers had quit the course halfway. These learners were so enthusiastic about English that they had over-reported their preference for it and had showed preference towards people who spoke in English. This was done at the cost of relegating their mother-tongue to a secondary position (see Chapter 5).

The ODL learners who were employed performed comparatively better in the interviews because of their exposure to spoken English at the workplace and the confidence it gave them compared to the unemployed ODL learners. They were unanimous in their idea of English being indispensable to education, employment and a better standing in society. These learners hoped their degree from IGNOU would help them fulfil their dreams and aspirations.
4.1.3 Linguistic Proficiency: t-Test

Independent samples t-Test was conducted to understand the major areas of difference between the F2F and the ODL learners in terms of their linguistic proficiency. Means of all the variables under study for both the modes are tested for significance. The table value of $t$ for $df = 92$ are 1.98 at 0.05 level and 2.27 at 0.01 level. Based on Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances, wherever the significance was found to be less than or equal to .05, values for ‘Equal variances not assumed’ is considered.

Table 7: Independent Samples t-Test -Significant (p< .05) results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.2.Cloze Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>7.272</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.3.Interview Score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.739</td>
<td>71.146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The t-Test results showed marked difference between proficiency scores of the F2F learners and the ODL learners in both cloze and personal interviews.

There was significant difference in the language proficiency score of cloze test for F2F (M=2.25, SD=1.1) and ODL (M=1.72, SD=0.70) learners. The F2F learners had performed better than the ODL learners in the cloze test. Similarly, the performance in personal interviews for F2F (M=2.43, SD=1.22) and ODL (M=1.16, SD=1.26)
conditions show how the F2F learners had performed better in personal interviews. Thus, in both the tests of linguistic proficiency, the F2F learners outperformed the ODL learners (see figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3: Difference in Cloze Scores**

![Figure 3: Difference in Cloze Scores](image)

**Figure 4: Difference in Interview Scores**

![Figure 4: Difference in Interview Scores](image)

The ODL learners also appeared to be very weak in spoken skills in English. This could be because the ODL mode had failed in improving their language skills. Also, these learners got minimal interaction with peers and teachers which suggests that the counselling sessions that form part of the optional component of the ODL mode needs to be taken more seriously. Though the learners are given audio-video components to aid in their language learning, they are supplementary to the course and not taken seriously. Benson (2013: 132) cites two research that has suggested the incorporation
of activities and opportunities that greatly recognizes the role of ‘interaction’ in language learning (Hurd, Beaven and Ortega 2001:353). A strong case has been made about the importance of ‘peer-peer dialogue’ and how language “acquisition occurs in interaction” and how “peer collaborative dialogue mediates second language learning” (Lewis 2003: 16). We need to think about the possibilities to incorporate more practical and interactive sessions for the ODL learners. On one hand, it will reduce learner isolation and anxiety and on the other hand, these learners will get more opportunities to learn the language in an interactive manner.

t-Test thus supports the result we had obtained by means of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data in section 4.1. From the t-Test we can conclude that there was significant difference between both the groups of learners in terms of English language proficiency.

PART B

4.2 Covariance of Linguistic Variables and Social, Social Psychological Variables among F2F and ODL Learners

The following section discusses the significant covariance of linguistic variables with social and social psychological variables. We have considered only those variables that seemed to have statistical significance to the learners’ linguistic performance in the proficiency tests. The correlations significant at .01 and .05 levels are discussed. The correlation of the F2F learners’ sociolinguistic variables is discussed below.

Covariance of Linguistic Variables and Social, Social Psychological Variables among the F2F learners

The variables which showed significant correlation with proficiency scores in both interview and cloze were selected for analysis. The correlation tables for both cloze test and personal interviews with social and social psychological variables show near total similarity. This is because of the high correlation between the variables of cloze and personal interviews. It is only in the case of variables of sex, total domain, total media and instrumental motivation that the correlations for cloze and personal interviews are not similar.
Table 8: Significant correlation of social, social psychological and linguistic variables among F2F learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cloze Score</th>
<th>Interview Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v.Sex</td>
<td>.349 .05</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.6.Age of learning English</td>
<td>-.344 .05</td>
<td>-.350 .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.8.Type of School</td>
<td>.483 .01</td>
<td>.378 .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.9.Medium of School</td>
<td>.432 .01</td>
<td>.370 .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.12.Father’s Education</td>
<td>.404 .01</td>
<td>.456 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.13.Mother’s Education</td>
<td>.372 .05</td>
<td>.390 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.14.Family Domain</td>
<td>.408 .01</td>
<td>.385 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.17.Total Domain</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>.311 .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.18.Total Media</td>
<td>.331 .05</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.20.Instrumental Motivation</td>
<td>-.333 .05</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.28.Authoritarian Attitude</td>
<td>-.314 .05</td>
<td>-.308 .05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation table for social, social psychological variables and proficiency scores showed the following significance among the ODL learners.

Table 9: Significant correlation of social, social psychological and linguistic variables among ODL learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cloze Score</th>
<th>Interview Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v.4.Sex</td>
<td>.402 .01</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

115
Let us now look at the significant variables that seemed to have influenced the learners’ performance in the linguistic proficiency tests of cloze and personal interviews in both the modes. We have also done cross-tabulation of variables that showed correlation.

### 4.2.1 Sex

Many studies have found sex to be an important variable in linguistic studies. In Chapters 2 and 3 we have discussed how the variable of sex had an important role in sociolinguistic studies. Majority of these studies had explored the mechanisms of language change. However, studies on second language acquisition have not given enough importance to sex differentiation in linguistic proficiency. We have also seen how in the western context, the female learners have outperformed the males. This had been attributed to women’s appropriation of the prestige variant and the desire to be included in centres of power. In second language/foreign language situations also girls seem to have outperformed boys. Sahgal (1992) had found the same pattern in her study as her subjects were members of the affluent society who were more likely to have accepted the western linguistic pattern of behaviour. However, other studies in the Indian context had shown male learners to be better achievers in English. Studies by Khanna and others (see Chapters 2 and 3 for details) had a more middle class sample where males got a privileged education. As a result, they tended to do better in English. The study by Sahgal (1992) was an exception as it looked at a more affluent sample where females had access to and were influenced by western thinking.
From the correlation matrix for F2F learners, we can see the following relations:

i) The variable of sex (v.4) showed positive correlation with cloze score (v.2) (r=.349, p<.05) suggesting better performance by the males in the cloze test. 10 out of 11 males scored above 33% marks in cloze compared to 22 out of 33 females who scored above 33% marks. 11 females out of 33 scored less than 34% marks in the cloze test. The data shows that 63.70% of the male learners managed to score above 50% marks in cloze compared to 21.20% of female learners who scored above 50% marks in cloze test. The boys performed better in cloze tests.

ii) The interview scores did not show significant correlation with the variable of sex. This indicates the spoken skills of both males and females were more or less similar.

Figure 5: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Sex (F2F)

The correlation matrix for ODL learners showed positive correlation between sex (v.4) and cloze score (v.2) (r=.402, p<.01) indicating that male learners did better in cloze test as was the case of F2F learners. 62.1% female learners had scored 33 marks or less in cloze compared to 14.3% of male learners. This could be attributed to the fact that more male learners (65%) from the ODL came from English medium schools. Compared to this 76.9% of female learners were from Malayalam medium schools. This is typical of the Indian middle class where boys get better schooling which in turn means schooling in private and English medium schools.
Figure 6: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Sex (ODL)

As in the case of the F2F learners, the variable of sex did not show any significant correlation with the interview score of the ODL learners.

Thus, among both the F2F and ODL learners, the variable of sex emerged as a predictor for success in English. In both the groups male learners performed better than the females in cloze. Both the groups of learners came from middle class families where boys are given preferential treatment. This gets reflected in the male learners’ performance. Research on parental discourse on their children’s education (Sancho, 2012) has shown willingness to educate sons so that they can find gainful employment and become eventual caretakers. Among the Indian middle class, we know how sons are seen as assets who would take care of the family eventually. So investment in sons’ education is considered pragmatic whereas daughters would be married off and parents would hesitate to spend more on their education. Our data corroborates this view. This could be because our sample is reflective of the typical middle class community.

4.2.2 Age of Learning English

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the variable of age has received a lot of attention in second language acquisition. Many studies (see Chapter 2) have concluded that age is an important variable in second language learning. “Ongoing research in L2 acquisition must account not only for the typical decline in L2 attainment with age but also for the native likeness that late learners are manifestly capable of. To do so adequately will require clear-eyed and open-minded attempts to integrate biological, cognitive, experiential, linguistic, and affective dimensions of L2 learning and
processing” (Birdsong n.d: 37-38). Our study takes into account affective and social dimensions including age.

**Figure 7: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Age of Learning English (F2F)**

In the case of F2F learners, the inverse correlation of proficiency scores with the variable of the age of learning English (v.6) point towards the fact that early introduction to English leads to better proficiency in English.

i) 63.64% of the F2F learners were exposed to English before the age of five. Those who had scored more than 50% marks in cloze (n=12) had begun learning English when they were younger than 5 years of age. The low scorers in cloze, that is, those who had scored less than 34% marks were introduced to English when they were more than 5 years old (n=9).

ii) 46.4% of the F2F learners who had scored more than 50% marks in interview had been introduced to English before 5 years of age. No student who was introduced to English at an advanced age of ‘11 years and above’ managed to score above 50% marks in the spoken test.
In the case of ODL learners,

i) The variable of age of learning English (v.6) inversely correlated with cloze score ($r=-.301$, $p<.05$) which suggested that those learners who were introduced to English at a younger age performed better in the cloze test. Only 38% of the ODL learners were introduced to English when they were below five years of age. 26.3% of the learners who scored more than 50% marks in cloze began learning English before five years of age. No one among those who had learnt English after ‘11 years and above’ scored more than 50% of marks in the cloze test.
Figure 9: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Age of Learning English (ODL)

Bar Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>v.6. Age of Learning English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 years and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

v.2. Cloze Score

i) The variable of age of learning did not show any significant correlation with the learners’ interview score. We have seen how majority of the ODL learners (62%) had begun learning English late in life (6 years and above). Research has shown that it is difficult to learn the spoken skills of a language with proficiency as we age. Mother-tongue influence can restrict effective learning of the phonetic sounds of the second language. The interview samples of the ODL group showed a great deal of mother-tongue influence in their speech.

Among both the F2F and ODL learners, the variable of age of learning English showed significant correlation with their proficiency scores. Our study supports the lateralization hypothesis which posits that maximum language learning takes place before a child attains the age of five. Krashen (1986: 16) had shown how lateralization “correlated with the growth of mental abilities underlying language….” Thus, younger learners seem to have an edge over older learners when it comes to language learning. Both our sample groups show that for better proficiency in a language, the learner should be introduced to it at an earlier stage. This can be done preferably along with the acquisition of the mother-tongue. This has implications for policy makers for the implementation of English language teaching at an appropriate age.
4.2.3 Schooling

The learners’ school background was analyzed in terms of the type and medium of instruction. The types of school identified were private, semi-government/aided and government schools. The private schools are known for better quality of education and infrastructure. They provide more opportunities for learning to take place. Private schools are mostly English medium and English is introduced early in these schools. These schools have better library facilities, access to audio and video learning materials and provide the learners with ample formal and informal contexts for learning. Sancho’s (2012: 222) study had showed “that in Ernakulam private English medium schools catering to the middle classes are increasingly orienting their educational missions (...) towards the production of competent middle class subjects for the global economy.”

Many of the semi-government/aided schools are also conducive to learning as they provide adequate input in the form of instruction and extra-curricular activities. Some of the government schools on the other hand are known for their lack of committed teachers, good infrastructure and instruction. It is therefore obvious that better schools, i.e, private schools contribute to better English language proficiency.

In the case of F2F learners, the positive correlation of proficiency variables with both type (v.8) and medium (v.9) of school point towards the favourable environment provided by private English medium schools in the learning of English. 75% of the learners were from either private or semi-government/aided schools which tend to give importance to English language learning.

i) The correlation of cloze test with the type of school (r=.483, p<.01) suggested that learners from private schools performed well in cloze test. 47.7% of the F2F learners were from semi-government schools and 27.3% were from private schools. The learners who scored more than 50% marks in cloze (n=11) were educated in semi-government or private schools.

ii) Likewise, the correlation with personal interview (r=.378, p<.05) indicated that learners from private schools also spoke better English. Just as with the cloze scores, 25% (n=11) of the learners who scored more than 50% marks in interview were from semi-government/aided or private schools.
iii) The correlation of cloze with medium of instruction (r = .432, p < .01) indicated that learners from English medium schools performed better in the cloze test. 43.2% of the F2F learners were from English medium schools. The learners who managed to score more than 50% marks in cloze test (22.72%) were all from English medium schools.

iv) Likewise, the correlation of medium of instruction with personal interview (r = .370, p < .05) suggested that those from English medium schools spoke better English. 23.80% F2F learners who scored more than 50% marks in interview were from English medium schools.
In the case of ODL learners,

i) The type of school correlated with cloze \( (r=.378, p<.01) \) which suggested the role played by private schools in the acquisition of English. Among the ODL learners, 50% were from semi-government schools. Compared to the 27.3% of F2F learners from private schools, only 16% among the ODL learners were from private schools. 14% of the ODL learners scored above 50% marks in cloze and they were from either semi-government or private schools. No one from the government schools or BPP scored more than 50% marks in cloze.

ii) The type school also correlated with interview \( (r=.374, p<.01) \). 21.42% of ODL learners scored more than 50% in interview. They were either from semi-government/aided or private schools. As in the case of cloze test, ODL learners from government schools and BPP did not score more than 50% marks in the interview.
Medium of schooling correlated with cloze (r=.330, p<.05) which showed how English medium schools helped in acquiring English language skills. 48% of ODL learners came from English medium schools. Of these, 20.83% of learners had scored more than 50% marks in the cloze test. Compared to this, only 7.7% of learners from Malayalam medium schools were able to score more than 50% marks in the cloze test.
iv) The medium of instruction correlated with interview (r=.324, p<.05) suggesting how those from English medium schools had better spoken skills in English. 21.42% of the English medium educated learners were able to score more than 50% marks in interview. No one from Malayalam medium schools had an interview score of more than 50% marks.

Looking at the correlation and cross-tabulation for the proficiency scores with the type and the medium of school for both the groups of learners, we can conclude that the type of school and the medium of instruction at school are very important variables that have an effect on second language acquisition of English. Private and English medium schools seemed to equip their learners with competency in English. This is true in the case of both F2F and ODL learners.

4.2.4 Parents’ Education

Parents’ education is a very important indicator of second language proficiency of the learner. We have already seen how in Kerala the rate of literacy and education is high. Better educated parents tended to have wards that did well in the proficiency tests. This could be because educated parents would take active interest in their children’s academic progress and provide them with a supportive environment. Talking about the parenting practices and discourse in the context of Kerala and Ernakulam in particular, Sancho (2012: 223) reports about parents “intervening in their children’s education ‘directly’ (e.g. school choices, entrance coaching, and the enforcement of rigorous studying regimes at home) aimed at enhancing their children’s individual prospects as well as the family’s overall status.” This is true of the Indian context where parents play a proactive role in their children’s education.

Better educated fathers would mean better income levels, possibility of better schooling and exposure towards democratic and liberal world views and all of these in turn point towards better opportunities for the acquisition of a second language.
Likewise, better educated mothers would contribute to their children’s academic and holistic development. The women in Kerala are also highly educated and sometimes even more educated than their spouses. Devika (2007) talks about how mothers are central to the discourse of preparing their children for the competitive global economy. Children usually interact more with their mothers. The early learning and socialization of a child occurs mainly at the hands of the mother. An educated mother would invariably help in her children’s schoolwork and contribute towards language learning. She would know the importance of education and the added benefits of learning English. As a result, her children would perform well in the proficiency tests.
The correlation matrix for the F2F learners showed the following results.

i) The correlation of father’s education (v.12) with cloze score ($r=.404, p<.01$) suggested that children with educated fathers had performed well in the cloze test. Among the children of educated fathers (graduation and above), 61.53% had scored more than 50% marks in cloze test. Compared to this, only 19.35% learners with fathers with only school education scored more than 50% marks in cloze.

ii) In the same manner, the correlation of interview score with father’s education ($r=.456, p<.01$) is indicative of children of educated fathers doing well in spoken English. We found striking similarity between
interview scores and cloze scores of learners with educated fathers. 61.53% learners with educated fathers had scored more than 50% marks in interview. This shows the consistency of learners in the performance in both the tests. Only 24.19% of learners with fathers who had only school education scored more than 50% marks in interview.

iii) The correlation of mother’s education with cloze score ($r=.372$, $p<.05$) showed how educated mothers contributed to their children’s performance in cloze scores in a positive manner. 25% of the mothers were either graduates or professionals. 63.63% of F2F learners with educated mothers had scored more than 50% marks in cloze. Compared to this, only 21.21% of learners with less educated mothers scored more than 50% marks in the cloze test.

iv) Educated mothers also tended to have children with better spoken skills in English ($r=.390$, $p<.01$). Educated mothers would provide their children with more opportunity to learn and practice English in the family domain.

On comparing the correlation scores between both the proficiency scores and mothers’ education, we can see that spoken skill had greater correlation with significance level of .01 compared to that of cloze score. Mothers’ education appeared to contribute more to the spoken aspect of English. 70% of learners with educated mothers scored more than 50% marks in interview. On the other hand, only 25% of learners with mothers who had only school education scored more than 50% marks. This could be because educated mothers may speak more English with their children and provide them with more interaction and opportunities of exposure to spoken English.

In the case of ODL learners, parents’ education did not show any significant correlation with the proficiency tests. The parents of ODL learners were comparatively less educated. When parents are not well educated, they may fail to contribute directly to their children’s education and overall achievement. Also, these parents may not be able to provide them with an environment where their children could use English along with the mother-tongue. However, they tend to send their
children to private schools as they look up to private and English medium schools for social mobility and success in life.

4.2.5 Domains of Language Use

The claimed use of language in various domains of interaction is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The learners were asked about their choice of language in various domains of interaction. The domains studied were that of the family, college, the outside and total domains of interaction. The family domain consisted of parents, siblings and relatives. The college domain included the classmates, teachers and the administrators. Interaction with shopkeepers, doctors and people met during travels defined the outside domain.

These three domains were analyzed at two levels. That is, the individual components were studied along with the average score for each domain. See chapter 5 for the descriptive statistics on learners’ claimed use of both English and Malayalam in the different domains of interaction. In the case of the F2F learners, the family domain and total domains of interaction showed significant correlation with linguistic proficiency scores. The various components of the domains did not seem to have direct influence on the learners’ proficiency scores.

In the case of the F2F learners, the use of language in the family domain (v.14) showed correlation with both the proficiency tests of cloze and personal interview.

**Figure 18: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Family Domain (F2F)**
Among the F2F group,

i) 59% learners claimed to use more Malayalam in the family domain and they did not score more than 50% marks in the cloze test. The correlation matrix showed positive correlation between the variables of use of language in the family domain (v.14) and cloze score (v.2) (r=.407, p<.01). This meant those who used more English in the family domain tended to do well in cloze. The use of more English in the family domain would mean more informal contexts to learn and improve one’s language. 50% of F2F learners who claimed to use ‘Both English and Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally English’ had scored more than 50% marks in cloze. The family domain is an informal domain where the learners can communicate without any fear and anxiety of making mistakes. Also, it is the domain where the learners are least self-conscious. Using English in such an environment can have positive impact on language learning.

ii) The variable of ‘use of language in the family domain’ correlated with interview (r=.385, p<.01) suggesting those who used more English in the family domain had better spoken skills in English. 50% of learners who used ‘Both English and Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally English’ scored more than 50% marks in interview. Compared to this, only 30.55% learners who used ‘Always Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally Malayalam’ could score more than 50% marks in cloze. This could be attributed to the practice these learners received in using the language in a more relaxed and informal setting. Use of English at home allows for more meaningful reinforcement of learning at school. It also shows the value of informal contexts of learning.
iii) The variable ‘language use in total domain’ (v.17) showed positive correlation with interview score (r=.311, p<.05) indicating how those who used more English in the total domain tended to have good spoken English. 40% of learners who used either ‘Both English and Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally English’ scored more than 50% marks in the interview compared to 33% learners who used ‘Always Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally Malayalam’ in the total domain and scored more than 50% marks. These learners got more opportunities for meaningful ‘output’ along with the adequate ‘input’ received from their peers and teachers through both formal and informal encounters. This is in addition to the opportunities provided by the family domain.
Figure 20: Cross-tabulation of Interview scores and Total Domain (F2F)

Among the ODL learners, the variables of use of language in various domains of interaction did not show any significant correlation with the proficiency tests. The descriptive statistics for the ODL learners’ claimed use of language in different domains is given in chapter 5.

These learners did not have scope for meaningful ‘input’ and ‘output’ in terms of speaking English with their peers and teachers. Their parents were also less educated so they did not have the opportunity to use English in informal settings. They seemed to be deprived of an environment conducive to learning English.

We can conclude that the use of more English in the family and total domains of interaction seemed to help in acquiring proficiency in English among the F2F learners. The ODL learners on the other hand, did not appear to be influenced by their use of language in various domains.

4.2.6 Media

We analyzed the learners’ claimed language of media exposure and its effect on their proficiency scores. Different components of the media were explored. The learners’ media habits in terms of their television viewing, reading newspapers, magazines and novels, the use of cell phones, listening to radio, songs, and watching
movies were studied. The individual media components did not seem to have influence on the learner’s proficiency in English in both the modes of study.

In the case of F2F learners, the variable of total media (v.18) correlated with cloze score (r=.331, p<.05) which suggested how those learners who read/watched more English media performed well in the cloze test. 40% of learners who preferred media in ‘Both English and Malayalam’ or ‘Occasionally English’ scored more than 50% marks in cloze. Only 14.28% learners who used ‘Occasionally Malayalam’ in their media habits scored more than 50% marks in cloze. Overall, media exposure in English seemed to help the learners in acquiring English. Use of more English media suggests the learners’ own motivation and interest in acquiring English in informal contexts.

**Figure 21: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Total Media (F2F)**

In the case of ODL learners, the language of media exposure did not show any effect on their English language proficiency. We have already seen how they were not enthusiastic about reading. 8% of them did not read novels at all. 30% of the ODL learners enjoyed reading novels in “both English and Malayalam” and 36% of them claimed to read novels “Always (in) Malayalam.” 66% of them reported listening to radio in “Always Malayalam.” In the use of telephones, 44% of them used “Always Malayalam.”

The ODL learners appeared to approach the English language with an instrumental orientation so they could have overlooked the various media components as a means of learning English. Learners who look only at those aspects of a language which they
deem ‘useful’ could fail to appreciate and learn from the opportunities of learning provided by various forms of media in English.

Thus media, which has appeared as an important variable in many studies, did not come across as an important variable influencing second language acquisition in our study.

4.2.7 Attitude and Motivation

Affective variables have been shown to have significant effect on language learning as seen in Chapters 2 and 3. Social psychological variables like attitude and motivation play an important role especially in second language acquisition/learning. We have also seen how attitudinal, motivational and linguistic proficiency variables are interrelated. In Chapter 2 we have seen how psychological variables were of ‘marginal significance’ in second language situations in non-native contexts, whereas Sahgal (1992) had shown how the variables of authoritarianism, ethnocentrism and attitude towards people based on the languages they spoke (based on the Bogardus scale) played a major role in second language acquisition/learning.

In the case of F2F learners, the following correlations were observed:

i) Instrumental motivation (v.20) correlated inversely with cloze score (v.2) 
\( r = -0.333, p<0.05 \). This suggests that learners who approach English with purely utilitarian motives do badly in English. 71.42% of the F2F learners who were strongly instrumental in their language attitude scored below 50% marks in cloze. This shows that a language should be learnt in its totality. Our aim was to see if the learners had a particular orientation in their approach towards English and if they had a dominant approach, and whether it showed any influence on second language proficiency. Someone with an instrumental attitude may try to learn only those aspects of a language which he/she may deem useful. The finer aspects of the language may be overlooked and even ignored by such learners.
ii) Authoritarianism (v.28) correlated inversely with cloze score ($r=-.314$, $p<.05$) and interview score ($r=-.308$, $p<.05$). 80% of the learners with authoritarian leanings scored less than 50% marks in cloze test. This indicated that learners who were rigid and undemocratic did poorly in the second language, i.e. English. To learn a new language, one has to be open and flexible. People with authoritarian leanings tend to be strict believers in conformity, rules and regulation and focus on forms and structures. This kind of an attitude is not conducive to the learning a new language.
iii) The learners’ attitude towards groups based on the language they spoke as measured by the Bogardus scale, did not show any significant correlation with the proficiency scores.

In the case of F2F learners, instrumental orientation and authoritarian attitude seemed to affect their proficiency in English adversely.

In the case of ODL learners,

i) Ethnocentrism (v.27) showed inverse relation with cloze score ($r=-.331$, $p<.05$) which showed that learners with ethnocentric attitude did not do well in cloze. 68% of the ODL learners had reported ethnocentric attitude. Only 0.08% of ethnocentric learners scored in the range of ‘51 -67%’ marks in the cloze test. No one among them scored more than 67% marks in cloze. We can say that those who were ethnocentric would not have an open and healthy attitude to a language which they did not consider as their own.

Figure 24: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Ethnocentrism (ODL)

ii) Authoritarianism correlated negatively with cloze ($r=-.301$, $p<.05$) which showed that those with undemocratic attitude performed poorly in cloze. 60% of the ODL learners claimed to be authoritarian in their attitude. Out of these, only 0.06% learners scored in the range of ‘51 – 67’ % marks in cloze. There was no one among them with a score more than 67% marks.
As already discussed with reference to the F2F learners, authoritarian learners are restricted in their approach to language learning. This means that to learn a language successfully one has to be open and flexible.

**Figure 25: Cross-tabulation of Cloze scores and Authoritarianism (ODL)**

![Bar Chart]

In the case of ODL learners, their ethnocentric and authoritarian attitudes seemed to hamper their performance in English. To learn a second language successfully in all its totality, one has to be open, flexible and accommodating. Those who are rigid and inflexible in their attitudes fail to ‘go the distance’ and learn a second language successfully.

Thus, in both the cases, authoritarian attitude came across as a common limiting factor in the learners’ second language acquisition. The F2F learners were also limited by their utilitarian approach to their learning of English. In the case of ODL learners, their ethnocentric attitude also contributed to their low performance in English.

Among both the groups of learners, the variables of sex, age of learning English, type and medium of school and authoritarian attitude seemed to have direct influence on their proficiency in English. Among the F2F group, in addition to the variables already mentioned, variables of parents’ education, use of language in the family domain and the total domains of interaction and exposure to media seemed to affect their performance in English in a positive manner. The variables of instrumental orientation and authoritarian attitude appeared to limit their learning of English. Among the ODL group, the variables of ethnocentrism and authoritarian attitude seemed to hamper their proficiency in English.
Another significant and interesting finding is that major variables like the use of language in the outside and college domain, affinity towards people based on the language they used, learning styles like Field Dependence/Field Independence and learner autonomy did not seem to have a direct correlation with the learners’ English language proficiency in both the modes. The finding that the variable of learner autonomy did not seem to influence the ODL learners is quite significant given the importance accorded to learner autonomy in the Open and Distance learning system. These learners had claimed to be autonomous in their learning of English but it did not translate into proficiency in the language.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we have analyzed the proficiency scores and the interplay between social and social psychological variables with the proficiency scores among both the F2F and the ODL learners. We have also studied the views and opinions of the learners on a variety of issues concerning their learning of the English language. We have also analyzed the spoken interview of both the sets of learners and tried to understand the factors that differentiate these two sets of learners. We have seen how the F2F learners performed better in both the proficiency tests compared to their ODL counterparts. The ODL learners were found lacking in overall linguistic proficiency and their spoken skills were way below the basic requirement for comprehension.

In the next chapter we will try to understand the social profile of the learners along with the social psychological variables that define both the F2F and the ODL learners. We have already seen how these two sets of learners differed in their linguistic proficiency and have explored the variables that seemed to influence their proficiency in English. It would be interesting to see how these two sets of learners differed in their social and social psychological profile.