

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AN EXPLORATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTICS AS A SCIENCE: TOWARDS SECOND LANGUAGE STUDY**

#### **3.1. PROLOGUE**

The debates around the real nature of the phenomenon to be studied in Linguistics brought about countless theories. Bloomfield, Saussure and Chomsky are among the prominent contributors to these debates. Their theories precipitated the various attempts to develop Linguistics as a discipline independent from psychology, philosophy and philology. The fundamental differences inherent in these theories provide both the basis and catalyst that advanced this discipline to its current form and beyond. Grammar based on Greek logic was the initial focus of language study. This is a normative discipline with a limited scope. Its object is to establish rules that distinguish between correct and incorrect forms of language (Van der Waldt:1992:3). However, it lacks scientific approach and is detached from language itself.

Next appeared classical philology. Its initial phase does not consider language as its sole object. It initially sought to correct, interpret and comment upon written text. In most cases its study led to an interest in literary history, customs and institution. The only occasion a reference to linguistics is made, is only for the express purpose of comparing texts of different periods, determining the language peculiar to each author, or deciphering and explaining inscriptions made in archaic or obscure language (Sampson:1980:18). The fact that it follows written language slavishly without considering what Sampson (1980:13) calls the “living language” resulted in its lost of credibility. Its substitute, comparative philology, regards its research as a branch of natural sciences, particularly biology. Accordingly, language-families, languages, dialects and idiolects correspond to the biologist’s classification into genera, species, varieties, and individuals (Van der Walt:1992:5). In

other words languages obey the same biological laws that operate in the animal and vegetable kingdoms (Sampson:1980:20). Therefore, languages and language-families, like species, compete with one another in a struggle for survival (Van der Walt:1992:4). Although it had the potential benefit of opening up new fields, the comparative philology, which was later called the comparative school, didn't seek out the object of linguistics either.

The behaviourist perspective on language study masterminded by the likes of Bloomfield dominated linguistics for some time until it was fiercely criticised for turning language study into a mechanical enterprise. This criticism stems from the behaviourists' emphasis on the stimulus-response approach and reinforcement as the key elements of language learning. Bloomfield was instrumental in devising a descriptive linguistics. With Chomsky's transformational generative grammar, which marks what is hitherto heralded as the Chomskyian revolution, out went Bloomfield's descriptivism, and in came the mental structures ripe for theoretical and empirical investigation (Altmann:2001:44). The profound insight and explanatory clarity it offers to linguistics theory sustained its popularity to the detriment of Bloomfield's descriptivism.

Although Saussure's semiotic approach to language took the centre stage and provided an interesting perspective to linguistics, it was overshadowed by the Chomskyian revolution. However, Saussure and Chomsky converge on a number of points, namely: an innate linguistic faculty; parole/langue and competence/performance; the notion of linguistic universals; universal grammar exemplified in universal human faculty. The notion that language is hierarchical is a common denominator for Saussure, Chomsky and Bloomfield. Saussure expresses it in terms of a system of signs as opposed to Chomsky's computational system. Bloomfield approaches it in terms of the structural levels namely phonological, morphological and syntactical levels. Furthermore, Chomsky's idea of phrase structure grammar where lexical entries are represented by signs echoes

Saussurean's arbitrary sign. The most significant point that binds the three theorists together is a common misconception that language is a fixed entity whose objective analysis is possible. This misconception emphasizes the pedagogical framework in which language is learnt from grammar books and dictionary. Notably, such a misconception has a tendency of overlooking the sense that language is in flux and that language speakers are responsible for the changes and renewal. Undoubtedly, Chomsky pioneered a theory of grammar which laid a strong foundation for first language acquisition theory. It is out of the theoretical rubric crafted by the likes of Chomsky, Saussure, Bloomfield, Sampson and others that the discipline called Theoretical, Formal or General Linguistics emerged. However the following quote is a precursor of a new branch of linguistics currently referred to as Applied Linguistics. It reads:

*The true general theory of language is that there is no general theory of language; the only features common to all languages are predictable consequences of principles belonging to other established disciplines, so that there is no room in the intellectual arena for an independent theoretical subject called "general linguistics" (Sampson:1980:241).*

For the Applied Linguists a language study that is merely preoccupied with theorising language, as practised by General Linguistics, is deficient. An Applied Linguist therefore contends that the theoretical exposition of linguistics as a science should include the application of both linguistic theories and useful insight emanating from other disciplines to engage linguistically mediated social issues that are of academic nature. Language teaching in formal education and training, functional literacy, academic support in a language used as a language of learning are among the "practical realities" or issues to engage (Kroes:2002:1).

Although Applied Linguistics is currently in vogue, another branch of linguistics called Applied Language Studies is lately making inroads in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape. The Centre of Applied Language Studies in Southern Africa (CALSSA), a centre established by academics at the University of Cape Town, is behind the movement towards Applied Language Studies (ALS). Its main contention is that the major drawback of Applied Linguistics is that it is too academic oriented since it does not delve into the broader social issues. Hence CALSSA's resolve is to adopt an Applied Language Studies mode to offset the weakness just cited. Its views Applied Language Studies as disciplines that:

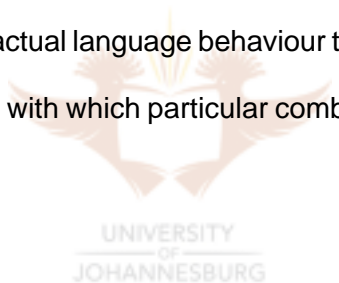
*Interpret, extend, and apply linguistic theory. Such studies draw on knowledge of and about languages, their acquisition, learning and teaching, in order to promote their use across sociolinguistics and socio-cultural barriers in a wide range of contexts. In so doing, ALS ... [generates] its theoretical framework of languages in contexts of use through research, teaching and evaluation of the effectiveness of such application (CALSSA:1998:1).*

It advances its scope of operation by providing its expertise "on request, to address social and practical issues and problems concerning the status, role and use of all languages in South Africa's multilingual society in its wider Africa context" (CALSSA:1998:1). The Critical Language Awareness perspective, as an expression of Critical Discourse Analysis, is a realm that exhibits the overlapping *modus operandi* of the two contemporary schools of thought-- Applied Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. Further, it is an approach to language that is critical in nature. Moreover, it offers its critical reflection to both the contexts of Applied Linguistics (Academic) and Applied Language Studies (Academic and Wider social issues) so that the examination, interpretation, extension and application of linguistic theories, and the adaptation of insights from other disciplines, reflect how language is used to either disclose or conceal the complexity of representation. It is the conviction of the current researcher that by adopting a Critical Language Awareness perspective as its focal point this study attempts to contribute to the contemporary debate on the development of Applied

Language Studies, particularly within ESL context. Such an attempt is the key towards understanding how and why language is used to endorse particular decisions and practices among numerous possibilities. At this point we leave this brief outline hoping that it sets the needed groundwork to raise and develop more pertinent issues as an attempt is made, in the next section, to trace how the paradigms shifted constantly over the years resulting in the continuous re-conceptualization of language study as a science and the role of language up until the paradigmatic stage of CLA perspective.

### 3.2. PAROLE VERSUS LANGUE

Among the sets of dichotomy on which the Saussurean conception of language is structured is parole versus langue. Parole is the actual language behaviour that leads to an account of language use including the relative frequency with which particular combinations or forms are used in actual speech. In fact, it is the:



*executive side of language that involves both the combinations by which the speaker uses the code of the linguistic system in order to express his thoughts and the psycho-physical mechanisms which permit him to externalize these combinations (Culler:1976:30).*

Langue on the other hand, is what one assimilates when one learns a language. It is a set of forms established as a result of the speaker's use of speech in collectivity (Culler:1976:29). As a grammatical system it is a coherent and analysable object which must be the linguists' primary concern. Sound production does not form part of langue. It forms part of the parole-- which is a substance not a form. Sound changes therefore take place outside the linguistic system with external factors affecting the parole. These changes are conditioned by the system (langue) because according to Saussure (Cited by Culler:1976:86) the system seeks a different state. He envisages language as both a structure of mental operation of individuals who use it and a structure

of the communicational process by means of which a community functions as a cultural entity (Culler:1976:85). It is ultimately supra-individual in the sense that it is vested in the society and depends, for its existence, on the external social relations. The individual's mind projects an imperfect reflection of a language system. The distinction between parole (speaking) and langue (language system) separates what is individual from what is social, what is essential from what is ancillary or accidental (Saussure:1986:14). To separate this is to strategically isolate the object of linguistic investigation.

Chomsky finds similar distinctions in competence and performance. The collectivity aspect of langue tallies with Chomsky's sense of universal grammar. The fact that a society reflects a complete knowledge of a language implies that individual members within a society possess a common language system-- a system that is universal. Observable from this discussion is that the linguistic paradigm operational during the Saussurean era marks an embryonic attempt to contextualise language study within the society and its individual members. The foundation for the shifting paradigm from the way language study is conceived towards how language is used in the society could be traced here. Rudimentary as it appears, the root of Critical Discourse Analysis and its mode of expression, Critical Language Awareness, could also be traced back to the Saussurean explication of the parole versus langue dichotomy. The conflictual unity expressed by the interplay between this set presents a strong potential for the development of the CDA mode.

### **3.3. COMPETENCE VERSUS PERFORMANCE**

Chomsky demonstrates the crucial link between psychology and linguistics through the mentalistic

nature of his conception of the term competence. This also strengthens the view that there is a biological basis for language use. Thus language is a system represented in the mind or brain of a particular individual (Chomsky:1988:36). The mental representation of language is in the form of the finite rules and principles which form what is called Internalized Language (I-Language). The I-language in Chomsky's own words "is some element of the mind of the person who knows the language, acquired by the learner, and used by speaker-hearer" (1986:22). This element serves as the native speaker's linguistic knowledge, mental or internalised grammar. The linguistic knowledge is not a skill but a state-- a state of knowledge represented in the mind (Moore and Carling:1986:13). All these constitute what Chomsky terms competence. This line of thought maintains his basic conviction that linguistic theory is mentalistic since it is more concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual speech behaviour (Moore and Carling:1982:13). No wonder, the quest of his formal linguistic analysis is to explain rather than describe the nature of language and the manner in which language is acquired through his account of competence, as reflected in deep structure and underpinned by linguistic universals. The fundamental issue is that certain abstract principles pertaining to the grammatical structure of human language in general is genetically encoded in the brain (Love:1990:67).

It is due to this innately structured *faculte de langage* -- language system-- that infants come into the world primed to acquire a language. The uniqueness of language should not be viewed as a reflection of God's will in the creation of man, but instead, as evidence that random mutations have endowed humans with the specific capacity to learn human language, though science can give us no idea how and why (Chomsky: Cited by Christensen:2001:23). Beside the fact that humans' speech organs are physiologically structured for speech production, this common genetic linguistic inheritance provides yet another solid ground as to why humans other than animals use language to communicate. The initial stage of language faculty is a system of "fundamental principles" with associate "open parameters" (Chomsky:1980:140).

The crucial point is how the distinction between these principles and open parameters relates to language acquisition. This is a critical point in that it provides the basis for an account of how it is possible for the initial stage of the language faculty to satisfy two apparently conflicting conditions:

*On the other hand, the initial state must be sufficiently accommodating for it to be possible in principle for the child to acquire any one of the wide variety of structurally different human languages. On the one hand, it must be sufficiently restrictive for it to be possible for the child to acquire, on the basis of limited evidence, the specific language of the speech community to which he belongs (Love:1990:69)*

These genetically determined fundamental principles provide for the plasticity to acquire any language, whilst the open parameter makes it possible to acquire some specific language, by a process of “fixing the parameters” on the basis of linguistic experience (Love:1990:69). Alongside competence, Chomsky brings forth the concept called performance. He refers to it as the actual use of language in a concrete situation (Matthews:1993:209). It is also referred to as the External Language (E-language) in the sense that its product -- utterance -- is independent of the properties of the mind and brain. Grammar in this sense is a collection of descriptive statements concerning the external language -- the actual or potential speech events. Notably, performance characterises knowledge of language as a practical ability to speak and understand (Chomsky:1986:9). The occurrence of the term ability has two senses. The first sense refers to the actual use of a language -- by implication performance. This can improve or decline and can be inadequate to determine the consequences of knowledge (Chomsky:1986:10). The second sense refers to competence. It remains stable and is intuitively based in that it is present even if one is unable to detect what it entails in concrete cases.

By inventing these concepts, competence and performance, Chomsky assumes that underlying the



native speaker-hearer's language use -- performance -- there exists a body of immutable, independent and uniform linguistic knowledge which he calls competence. From this assumption, one could say that performance reflects competence. Yet, Chomsky refutes this stance. For him performance can reflect competence only in idealization (1965:4). His highly idealised notion of what constitutes language suggests that he is surreptitiously internalising prescriptivism in that the data that would not conform to his ideal, or that would be considered ungrammatical, are disregarded.

It is important to note that Critical Language Awareness is an expression that confirms the creativity aspect of the human mind – as identified by Chomsky in his theorization of competence. Although mentalistic in approach, his rubric on creativity can be linked to the concept critical. Set within the current paradigm in which the society is conscious about how language is used, it is reasonable to argue that creativity is crucial in order to adopt a critical view on how language is used and to engage the discourse adopted. CLA, grounded on Critical Discourse Analysis, should therefore consider Chomsky's conception of language, particularly his explication of competence, as one of its pedigree. The object of the next section is to acknowledge the fact just mentioned, and then proceed to examine cardinal issues behind language acquisition.

### **3.4. A THEORY OF GRAMMAR VERSUS A THEORY OF ACQUISITION**

A theory of grammar, or language, is an embodiment of a set of principles that underlies language. Innately structured, these principles are universal to all living languages. Hence the term universal grammar (UG). Acquisition is the process through which language data are captured into the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) “black box” to produce a grammar (Cook:1995:200). The LAD

examines the incoming data to establish an appropriate grammar, among the alternative grammars, the data reflects. Schematically represented, the LAD is as follows:

**Figure 3.1. *The LAD model*** (Cook:1995:200)

The UG adds crucial features to this model in the form of input, contents of the black box and the properties of the resulted grammar. Grammar is viewed in terms of principles and parameter, which are purpose-designed to account for first language acquisition. The crucial point is that principles are immutable regardless of the actual language involved. Listening to the surrounding language a child observes patterns and realises that the language operates in one way rather than the other (Ingram:1989:64). In doing this, he fixes the parameter, yet maintaining the principles. In accordance with the theory of language, the final grammar is not determined by a series of stages of acquisition. What is implied here is that acquisition is almost rapid in that the child's grammar becomes adult-like the moment the parameters are established (Ingram:1989:64). Contra UG, language acquisition accounts for the stages the child undergoes to reach adult grammar. The existence of series of stages obliges acquisition theory to offer some explanation regarding the structure of each stage and the manner in which each stage develops. Two vital components are discernable within this theory. The first component is the set of principles that enables a child to formulate a rule of grammar and change it over time. Here the central point is on the nature of the child's rule system -- competence factors (Ingram:1989:64). The second addresses the psychological processes the child uses to learn a language. These are the performance factors

that revolve around the child's comprehension and production of language (Ingram:1989:64). It is concerned with "what is done when proficiency is put to use" (Taylor:1988:166). Within the context of comprehension, performance is an efflux of both the child's establishment of meaning from language data, and cognitive restrictions that temporarily impede development. In production, these factors offer some kind of explanation as to why the child's spoken language may not reflect his linguistic competence. They also describe the mechanism the child may use to achieve the articulation of his own perception (Ingram:1989:64).

### **3.5. VOCABULARY GROWTH**

The vocabulary acquired by the child as he grows falls within two sets, namely the receptive and the expressive vocabularies (Mwamwenda:1995:162). The latter refers to the words that the child uses in everyday conversation. The former however, are words which the child understands but is unable to use. This is a set of words that is larger than the expressive vocabulary in both children and adults, because it also includes the expressive vocabulary. As Mwamwenda (1995:62) puts it, one might know some English words, for instance, but might be unable to use them correctly if required to do so. The child's vocabulary increases with age and exposure to language.



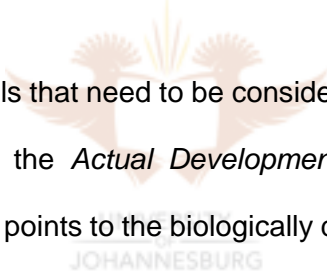


**Figure 3.3. *The Vocabulary Growth Rate of a Child*** (Adapted from Mwamwenda:1995:163)

The increasing vocabulary growth rate enables the child's speech to change from egocentric to social. It is estimated that at the age of three about 50% of the child's speech is egocentric whilst the other 50% is social (Mwamwenda:1995:164-65). A language learning environment that enriches the learners' vocabulary is ideal for the implementation of the Critical Language Awareness perspective. The CLA perspective flourishes even better if the vocabulary is used within correct grammatical sentences as learners attempt to use and comment on how language is used. This could be within their language classroom, social, political, religious, economic contexts.

### **3.6. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COGNITION**

Language development and cognitive growth in humans occur in accordance with the general biological pattern of growth. The brain capacity of the child grows as he matures. The improving quality of his intellectual or reasoning ability is indicative of the growing capacity of his brain. Of course, this growth is influenced by the child's direct exposure and response to other humans, their ideas, situation and objects in his environment (Davey:1999:86). The symbiotic interplay between language and thought is the driving force behind the child's linguistic and cognitive growth. The former pairs are interwoven inseparably. Language is the vehicle of thought whilst thought gives substance to language. Phrased alternatively, language releases a child from dependency on immediate and concrete experience to a more abstract realm. Upon conversion to an internal speech, it organises the child's thoughts and thus becomes an internal mental function (Davey:1999:90).



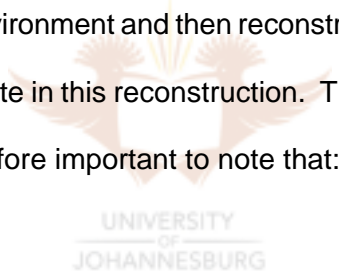
Vygotsky (1986) identifies two levels that need to be considered in determining a child's state of the mental development, namely, the *Actual Development level* and the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. The first level points to the biologically determined mental functions already achieved by a child. The second level, however, refers to the potential or possible mental development of a child, which is why this level is sometimes referred to as the *Zone of Potential Development*. The *ZPD* ceases to be one, the moment it represents the current identifiable mental development. It thus becomes the actual mental developmental level. The ultimate destination of this seemingly linear developmental process is the abstract reasoning level. Learning in general takes place in the *ZPD* (Vygotsky: Cited by Davey:1999:87). There is a strong likelihood that language acquisition and development are carried out in this level.

The *Language Support System (LASS)* provides the social world that is matched to the *Language Acquisition Device (LAD)* in some regular way (Bruner:1987:76). It is the *LASS* that helps the child to navigate across the *ZPD* to full and conscious control of language. It is this continuous

navigation across the *Actual Developmental Level* and the *ZPD* that signals a point where a language teacher could effectively introduce CLA mode. Mental development begins within an individual and directs itself outwards (Piaget:1959). What it means is that an individual's intelligence is inborn and its maturity is determined by the biological process of growth (Piaget: Cited by Davey:1999:88).

Vygotsky proposes that the development of mental functioning presupposes a specific social nature and process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them (Resnick and Nelson-Lee:1998:148). This time mental development starts from the social environment and directs itself inwards. Learning is something that starts outside of a child, in the society, and is transferred within him (Davey:1999:89). What happens inside him is initiated by people around him.

The child observes the external environment and then reconstructs his experience and internalises it. Language and thought collaborate in this reconstruction. The society serves as the determiner of mental development. It is therefore important to note that:



*In each sociocultural context, children participate in both formal and informal instructional exchange that brings about their adaptive functioning within those contexts. Through reciprocal processes of social interaction, children develop a system of cognitive representation as interpretive frameworks and make a commitment to the common value system and sets of behavioural norm promoted in their sociocultural context. This process of socialization thus incorporates the acquisition and use of knowledge, ways of thinking and reasoning with the knowledge. These, along with language, are the cultural tools that might be said to constitute intelligence (Resnick and Nelson-Lee:1998:148)*

The most important issue at the moment is not to argue for or against either of the two opposing theories presented by Piaget and Vygotsky, but to combine the two theories. The combination of

the two offers a balanced and clearer picture with regards to mental development. The aftermath of this balanced position is the conception that intelligence is the product of the relationship between a child and the environment. The internal mechanisms from each of these components meet, condition and recondition each other as they drive the process of development. So it is not helpful to disregard the contribution of either of the two. Suffice is to say that both the external environment and the child are jointly responsible for cognitive and linguistic development.

A child's exploration as he matures represents what Bruner terms *Discovery Learning* (cited by Du Toit:1999:67). The child's attempts to make sense of the world around him passes through pre-determined cognitive developmental stages, namely, the inactive mode, the iconic mode and the symbolic mode. Piaget identifies similar stages in, sensory-motor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational and formal operational stage (cited by Du Toit:1999:55). Reaching the highest stage, the symbolic or formal operational stage, depends on how well developed one's language skills are. The child is confronted by a myriad of confusing experiences that might appear meaningless. Feuerstein's theory of *Mediated Learning* comes into play as people around the child assist him in making the seemingly confusing experience more meaningful (1990:108). Their input might be consciously or unconsciously organised in a form of the Ausubelian concept of *Advanced Organisers* (Cited by Du Toit:1999:68). Such a support system scaffolds the child's learning experience and enhances his cognitive and linguistic development. It is therefore important to note that *LASS*, *LAD*, *ZPD* and the *Actual Developmental Level* are the crucial concepts that give CLA perspective a cognitive base. Upon this base *Mediated Learning* and *Advance Organizers* assist in the implementation of the CLA perspective.

### **3.7. KRASHEN'S THEORY ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Krashen proposes a theory of language acquisition that consists of five hypotheses, namely,



Acquisition/Learning, Monitor, Input, Natural Order, and Affective filter. The theory attempts to explain the essence of second language acquisition. Since this study is set within an ESL context the second language acquisition background gives the needed understanding and the challenges with regard to how Critical Language Awareness can be implemented. The relationship between the five hypotheses is captured by the following sketch. The sketch collapses Krashen's production and acquisition diagrams into one.



**Figure 3.4. *Krashen's Hypothesis*** (Cook:1995:210)

### **3.7.1. ACQUISITION/LEARNING HYPOTHESIS**

According to the Acquisition/Learning theory a second language is either learnt or acquired. The process of second language acquisition is as unconscious as the one in the first language context (Cook:1995:52). There is generally no conscious awareness that a language is being acquired. However, a "feel" of correctness, intuition so to speak, is unconsciously cultivated in that a grammatical violation can be identified without pointing out the exact rules that are violated (Krashen and Terrel:1988:26). Hence acquisition is always associated with implicit knowledge. The process of language acquisition itself involves the naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding and through using language for meaningful communication (Davies:1999:91).

Conversely, language learning entails a conscious exertion to grasp the rules of a given language. It refers to knowing about a language. That is explicit knowledge of rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them (Krashen and Terrell:1988:26). Mostly, language learning occurs in second language environment and is limited to learners who are capable of understanding the rules -- age could be one of the determining factors (Cook:1995:52). Its manifestation is twofold: spontaneous and guided.

Spontaneous learning takes place in the course of everyday communication free from systematic and intentional intervention (Klein:1999:9). A typical scenario is that of “the missionary or social anthropologist who attempts to master a language of a hitherto unknown tribe relying on his social intercourse without the benefit of any sort of guidance” (Klein:1999:9). A language classroom situation is typical example of guided learning. The acquisition-learning distinction is summed up as follows:

ACQUISITION	LEARNING
Similar to child's first language acquisition	Formal knowledge of language
"Picking up" a language	"Knowing about" a language
Spontaneous	Spontaneous and guided
Subconscious	Conscious
Implicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Formal teaching does not help	Formal teaching helps

**Figure 3.5. The Acquisition-Learning Distinction** (Adapted from Krashen and Terrell:1988:27)

### 3.7.2. THE NATURAL ORDER HYPOTHESIS

The major argument of this hypothesis is that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order (Krashen and Terrell:1988:28). Some are acquired early whilst others are acquired late. Some may be acquired in groups, several just about simultaneously. The significant point is that acquirers may not acquire grammatical structures in exactly the same order. The average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for an English Second Language child or adult is however, represented as follows.



**Figure 3.6. *The Order of Acquisition of Grammatical Morpheme*** (Krashen and Terrell:1988:29)

### **3.7.3. THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS**

This hypothesis claims to explain the relationship between the linguistic input exposed to a learner and language acquisition. The value of the input is determined by the degree of its comprehensibility. To be useful to the acquirer, the input must neither be too difficult nor too easy.

The acquirer starts by operating at his level of linguistic competence, called *i*, progressing towards unfamiliar linguistic terrain called *i+1* (Cook:1995:53). Krashen and Terrell (1988:33) eloquently sum up this point:

*When someone talks to [the acquirer] in a language [he has] not yet*

*acquired completely (including [his] first language if [he is] a child) so that [he understands] what is said, the speaker casts a net of structures around [his] current level i. This net includes many instances of [his] i+1 (1988:33).*

The speaker rough-tunes his speech to adapt to the acquirers' current level of understanding. This adapted speech is characterised by:

*Exaggerated pronunciation; facial expression; a slower speech rate; and increasing/alternating volume; frequent use of pauses; gestures; graphic illustrations; question and dramatization; sentence expansion; rephrasing; repetition; restatement and simplification; prompting; completing made by the acquirer; use of Yes or No instead of the Wh-questions; and other changes that make messages more comprehensible to anyone with limited language proficiency (Davies:1999:93).*

The acquirer is thus provided with a simple code that facilitates second language comprehension which emerges and develops as growing competence in the second language increases (Davies:1999:93). The onus is on him to further make comprehension possible. Besides the speakers', there are other clues he relies on which are based on his immediate situation and context, extralinguistic information, and knowledge of his surrounding world. The four main assumptions held by this hypothesis are that:

*This hypothesis relates to acquisition, and not to learning; second, people acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond the current level of competence. The ability to speak fluently cannot be taught directly; rather, it emerges independently in time, after the acquirer has built up linguistic competence by understanding input. Fourth, if there is a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input I+1 will usually be provided automatically (Davies:1999:92).*

The major claim of this hypothesis lies within the following points: People speak to children acquiring their first language in special ways, *motherese* is the oft-cited example; people speak to second language speakers in a special way, teacher-talk for instance; second language learners often go through an initial Silent Period; the comparative success of younger and older learners reflects provision of comprehensive input; the more comprehensive input the greater the second language proficiency; lack of comprehensive input delays language acquisition; teaching methods work according to the extent that they use comprehensible input; immersion teaching is successful because it provides comprehensive input; bilingual programmes succeed to the extent that they provide comprehensible input (Cook:1995:56-58).

#### **3.7.4. THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS**

Although comprehensible input is an essential prerequisite for language acquisition it is hardly sufficient on its own (Krashen:1982:66). Hence a need for something more than input is imperative. The acquirer, for instance, must understand the relevant parts of the input. Somehow a mental blockage that impedes the acquirer to use, to the maximum, the comprehensible input he receives for language acquisition occurs (Cook:1995:53). It is this mental blockage that is called the affective filter. Its existence depends on the psychological state of the acquirer. If on the one hand, he is less motivated, less confident or anxious, it is probable that the filter is up and therefore comprehensible input is unable to pass through. If on the other hand, motivation and self-confidence are high and anxiety is minimized to extinction, the affective filter is lowered to allow comprehensive input to pass through (Cook:1995:54). The lower the affective filter the better it is for language acquisition. An affective filter that is high does not engender a conducive situation for language acquisition.

### 3.7.5. THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS

The crucial claim made by this hypothesis is that conscious learning has only one function, it monitors or edits the output. Monitoring is a twofold phenomenon: It might take place before or after the actual utterance (Krashen and Terrell:1985:30). It uses learnt knowledge as a quality check on speech originating from acquired knowledge (Cook:1995:52). The extent to which the learner uses the monitor depends on several factors:

*tasks that focus on form rather than meaning, such as fill-in-the-blank task, will encourage Monitoring; the personality of [acquirers] varies between those who under-use Monitoring, over-use Monitoring, or use Monitoring optimally (Cook:1995:53).*

Furthermore, the Monitor can be successfully used if the learner knows the rules of the target language, and has enough time at his disposal to choose and apply the learned rules. The crucial point to make is that an over-used Monitor has a greater chance of inhibiting output. Since its emphasis is on quality, correct rules or linguistic accuracy, the learner's language proficiency will determine both the amount and quality of the sentences constructed.

### 3.8. EN ROUTE TO THE SECOND LANGUAGE VIA INTERLANGUAGE: REALITY OR MYTH?

It is believed that en route to second language proficiency a learner constructs an approximative system of language or grammar, which consists of elements of his first language and the target language. This is an interim language system that falls between his first language and the target language (Selinker: Cited by Brown:1994:204). It is a system that is based on his best attempt to maintain some kind of order and formulate a sort of a structure as he tries to make sense of the linguistic stimuli around him. It heralds a transitional competence of the target language. This sort of idiosyncratic dialect is called an interlanguage (Ellis:1991:47). Interlanguage symbolises a series of evolving interlocking systems which forms the learners' built-in syllabus (Ellis:1991:47).

The concept itself occupies a central position in second language acquisition studies and is so well entrenched that the validity of its existence can never be anything but reality. The crucial question, though, is what characterises interlanguage development? Let us attempt to address this question by discussing two sets of findings: the Vector model of second language learning; and second language involves restructuring of knowledge.

### **3.8.1. THE VECTOR MODEL OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

This model of interlanguage development advocates that the learner's second language skills follow a one directional linear progression from less to more. The learner gradually accretes more knowledge of the target language and gradually becomes more skilful as exemplified by an increase in his comprehension speed and production (Young and Perkins:1995:144). The common sets of new knowledge involved in the process of accretion are vocabulary and conventionalised language. Accretion of this knowledge leads to a chronic development of some cognitive variable, namely procedural skills in the form of speed processing and comprehension (Young and Perkins:1995:145). These are crucial cognitive skills needed for the successful implementation of the CLA perspective.

### **3.8.2. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING INVOLVES RESTRUCTURING KNOWLEDGE**

The gradual accretion of new knowledge or a monotonic increase in processing speed within the development of interlanguage is a dynamic process. The new information interacts with the existing knowledge resulting in a reorganisation and transformation of the whole subsystem of knowledge (Young and Perkins:1995:145). The reorganisation of the linguistic knowledge fits into three-phased model of cognitive reorganisation. The first phase is characterised by the learner's resolve to match the target language input as closely as possible. Each linguistic input is stored separately.

The learner relates the stored linguistic input to the second phase. Incorrect grammatical formulations of the target language, over-extended generalization and the likes occur. Second Language Acquisition researchers, Applied Linguists and Psycholinguists call this phenomenon Language Errors. A distinction is often made between an error and a mistake. This distinction is based on the Chomskyan dichotomy of competence and performance. Figure 3.7 is an attempt to plot the distinctions under discussion.

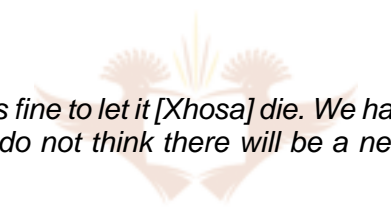


**Figure 3.7. *The Error-Mistake Distinction*** (Ellis:1994:58)

The utterance of a learner becomes erroneous as exemplified by a consistent breach of the rules of a target language. Such a consistency implies that his level of competence is low. Ellis (1994:58) proposes three sources of competence errors, namely, transfer; intra-lingual; and unique. A learner transfers his first language habits to his second language repertoire. The transferred habits might be incompatible with the target language's. They interfere with second language learning and thus disrupt the process (Brown:1994:90). Fossilized or not, they negatively affect his competence. Hence negative transfer. There are instances where the first language habits are compatible with the target language resulting in a positive contribution to second language development. Such are cases of a positive transfer. Intra-lingual errors reflect the general traits of rule learning such as "faulty generalisation, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which the rules apply" (Ellis:1994:58).



Unlike in Europe and America negative transfer is a perennial problem in the developing world, including South Africa. Poor first language programmes and the inferior status associated with first language are contributive to this problem. The English-functional argument, discussed in earlier in chapter two, is in operation here. Communities in the developing world believe that English, used by the indigenous people as a second language, is the vehicle of modernization, civilization and ultimately wealth. The access that this language gives can never be afforded by their first language, the argument goes. Insofar as the preparation of their children's entrance into the economic world, these communities invest their entire trust in English (Macdonald and Burroughs:1991:30). Such sentiments are entrenched to a point of permanence. De Klerk (2002:9) observes the same sense of inferiority towards the first language as she interviewed parents during her research:



**Respondent 1:** *It is fine to let it [Xhosa] die. We have never teach our son any Xhosa. I do not think there will be a need to be a Xhosa-speaker later on.*

**Respondent 2:** *I do n't know if it is worth it - if you get educated in Xhosa, up to tertiary level- what then? Who can you communicate with? Nobody else will understand you. It is for home use but it is not that good for being used elsewhere. It is more like a home appliance.*

**Respondent 3:** *I do not see it taking me anywhere else; Xhosa, it cuts you off.*

Coupled with associating first language instruction with substandard education, Bantu Education particularly in the South African context, these kinds of comments step up the mounting call for the English only movement. Considering the financial implication of such a move, such a route will be disastrous in the developing worlds that are already in a poor financial state. Further, the premise of the comments quoted is in direct conflict with the additive multilingualism approach advocated by C2005 (Revised National Curriculum Statements:2002:4). The consequence to this premise is subtractive bilingualism in which learners lose the command of both their first language and the

target language. Moreover, the line of thought championed by the above quote justifies governments' and private sectors' non commitment to fund any project that aims at developing first languages in these communities. It should be noted that first language instruction prospers if the community is proud of their language so much so that the language is given the status that stimulates its growth (Macdonald and Burroughs:1991:30). Unfortunately, this is not the case in the context under discussion. It is widely believed that a sound and solid first language instruction lays a good foundation that is conducive to a better second language acquisition. The fundamental conviction is that the thinking skills and ability to acquire and use other languages develop from the first language (Macdonald and Burroughs:1991:28). There is a strong likelihood within a context that ignores the importance of the first language in education that issues such as negative transfer or mother tongue interference will never be minimized in second language teaching. Chances are that fossilization of the negative first language habits will intensify, thus complicating second language learning further. It is, however, important not to dismiss errors as mere interference that only indicate a learner's incorrect language use. They serve three significant purposes: They provide information about how long a learner has learnt the target language; how much he has learnt; and they also serve as a device by which a learner discovers the rule of the target language (Ellis:1994:48). In fact, they indicate that a learner is experimenting with the language and refining the system that he has learnt (Johnson and Morrow:1981:67).

A learner commits mistakes the moment the occurrence of flawed linguistic habits is inconsistent. These habits are mere mistakes that have nothing to do with his competence, but have everything to do with performance. They are, according to Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:93), the aftermath of "a slip of a tongue or a pen". Underlying such habits is the question of tiredness, loss of concentration and even hastiness, all of which result in processing problems and incorrect use of communication strategies. The learner's engagement in trial and error exercise as he tries to make sense of the often clashing and conflicting language systems yields knowledge that is initially

declarative. The structures of declarative knowledge are conscious and slowly accessed (Young and Perkins:1995:146). They are, however, transformed into an unconscious and quickly accessed proceduralized knowledge. Such knowledge is accessible for on-line tasks like fluent speech which is achievable through countless practice (Young and Perkins:1995:146).

### **3.9. COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES: A LEARNER'S MEANS OF SURVIVAL**

The development of interlanguage is a cataclysmic event that is inevitable to a second language learner. The errors and mistakes he commits are an indication of his attempt to cope with the situation presented to him. They reflect the different levels of his second language development. Of course, the learner utilises communicative strategies appropriate to his context and need in order to survive the seemingly uncomfortable eventuality. The learner and his interlocutor are involved in a shared communicative enterprise that requires joint mutual attempts to find common ground on meaning in a situation where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared (Tarone:1980:420). It behoves the two interlocutors to compromise some linguistic rules, structure and lexicon for the sake of effective communication and intelligibility. An ability to adopt a Critical Language Awareness perspective becomes crucial for effective interaction with fellow learners and with the challenges brought about by the school texts and other related activities. The learners' adoption of different learning strategies is indicative of CLA perspective in action. The learners thus use their latent ability to employ a Critical Language Awareness mode in order to understand and handle their educational tasks. A language programme that adopts a CLA mode refines the learners' comprehension and critical ability-- the significant markers that facilitate their current study progress and beyond. The processes underlying this adaptation are equally crucial to consider in order to get a concise picture regarding the confusion, frustration and success experienced by the learners. Numerous communicative or learning strategies have been proposed, but only three are discussed here. They are Tarone's social strategies, Faerch and Kasper 's psychological

strategies and Poulisse's compensatory strategies.

### **3.9.1. TARONE'S SOCIAL STRATEGIES**

The basic argument of these sets of strategy is that if a learner is confronted with a communicative problem he resorts to the following tactics as coping mechanisms: Avoidance; paraphrase; conscious transfer; appeal for assistance; and mime. Avoidance takes place in two forms: the original idea or topic is avoided; the intended message is abandoned mid-way (Cook:1995:120). The learner paraphrases because he, voluntary or otherwise, decides to resort to the resources of the target language to express himself. The usual tendency is to compensate for the unknown form of the target language. This involves approximation, word coinage and circumlocution (Cook:1995:120). The strategy of consciously transferring the first language habits into the target language involves literal translation and language switch. For this to succeed the learner's knowledge of his first language and his ability to interact effectively have to be good (Cook:1995:121). Sometimes a learner appeals for assistance by requesting to be provided with a word or concept. The appeal might be in a form of a question. Miming can be manifested by shaking one's head sideways as a sign of disagreement or disapproval, for instance.

### **3.9.2. FAERCH AND KASPER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES**

The operational premise of these strategies is that communication strategies are potential conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Faerch and Kasper:1983:81). The strategies grouped under this heading are divided into two, namely achievement and avoidance strategies. Achievement strategies seek other possible routes to solve problems faced by a learner. Achievement is realized by adopting cooperative strategies or non-cooperative ones. Cooperative strategies involve direct

or indirect appeal for help from other persons. A learner who operates within the context of non-cooperative strategies attempts to get solutions on his own without any assistance from anyone whatsoever (Cook:1995:123). Such a learner relies on code-switching, foreignising and interlanguage strategies. The latter includes: substitution; generalization; description; exemplification; word coining; and restructuring (Cook:1995:123-4) The non-linguistic strategies used are miming and sound imitations. Avoidance strategies however, refer to instances where a learner avoids a linguistic form that he has not mastered.

Both Tarone, and Faerch and Kasper include avoidance, cooperative strategies, word coining and code-switching in their respective strategies. This agreement suggests that communicative or learning strategies have a universal format. The two major strategies complement each other. Faerch and Kasper give a detailed account of the non-cooperative strategies --an issue that Tarone never mentions. Tarone's emphasis on the central role of the hearer and the speaker brings in an interactive dimension -- a point never considered significant by Faerch and Kasper. The key to her strategies is mutual interaction. The nucleus of Faerch and Kasper's strategies is individual problem solving (Cook:1999:124).

The major points of criticism of the two major sets of strategies is that they concentrate exclusively on linguistic form that results from a strategy rather than on the process that leads up to it (Poullisse:1989:79). Such an assumption constitutes what Bialystock (1990:82) calls the modularity fallacy. Their scope of operation is limited to description. A comprehensive communicative strategy has to reach beyond description to prediction and explanation that is based on processes rather than on a mere linguistic realization (Kellerman *et al*: 1990:164). The next strategies attempt to off-set these fundamental flaws.

### **3.9.3 POULISSE'S COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES**

The fundamental starting point of these strategies is that a second language learner compensates his lack of appropriate second language form in mental lexicon by resorting to two processes: Conceptualization or Alternative Linguistic Formulation (Cook:1995:125). Respectively, these processes are called conceptual archistrategy and linguistic archistrategy. A learner relies on both his conceptual and linguistic knowledge to compensate for the missing links. The conceptual archistrategy consists of two types of strategy: Analytic strategies which involve a conceptual analysis of the originally intended concepts, and holistic strategies which mainly comprise the selection of a different concept which is sufficiently similar to the original one to convey the speaker's intended meaning (Poulisse:1990:61-62). Key to the linguistic archistrategy is morphological creativity. The speaker formulates new words, by applying his knowledge of second language morphological rule to an existing word, for example "picturize" for "picture" (Poulisse:1990:62). One type of strategy may be embedded within another, thus yielding a distinction between superordinate and subordinate strategies (Cook:1995:127). The communicative or learning strategies discussed are indicative of the learners' attempt to cope with their studies. If learners are critically aware of how language is used to present their learning tasks and how they could use it to facilitate their learning, the coping mechanism mirrored by the learning strategies discussed could be facilitated with reasonable ease. This could lead to the learners' improved comprehension and engagement with their study tasks and other life challenges. Hence Critical Language perspective is needed to bring the learners' critical awareness of how language is used for a multitude of purposes.

### **3.10. INTERVENTIONS: A QUEST TO BETTER SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING**

With nothing but good intention second language scholars and researchers thought and proposed measures that could render second language teaching effective. At the centre of their deliberation

was their dire need to posit areas where they can intervene to facilitate a better second language teaching. The seemingly effortless process of first language acquisition and the resultant fluency displayed by first language speakers had been a subject of envy among second language educators and researchers alike. This envy motivated scholars to research first language acquisition hoping that whatever they learn could be used in second language learning environment. The research produced invaluable insight. Among these are the Contrastive Analysis and the Error Analysis hypotheses. The two hypotheses are the subject of the next subsections.

### **3.10.1. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS**

The origin and purpose of the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis were purely pedagogical (Ellis:1991:23). The operation principle of its strong form is based on the conviction that the chief impediment of second language learning is the interference of the first language system. It is therefore incumbent upon the teacher to compare and contrast the two languages in order to predict and then prevent any interference in the form of errors. The proponents of Contrastive Analysis are of the opinion that instances where interference is predicted should be free of difficulty since one could transfer positively all other items in a language (Brown:1994:193). Within the context of the stronger version of Contrastive Analysis the aim of second language teaching is to overcome the effect of first language interference on second language (Kilfoil and Van der Walt:1997:14). The weaker form of Contrastive Analysis claims to be only diagnostic and it is based on the assumption that not all errors are the consequence of interference (Ellis:1991:24). This form of Contrastive Analysis calls for a collaboration with Error Analysis. This collaboration follows two steps: First errors are identified through Error Analysis and then Contrastive Analysis establishes which errors to put down to differences between the first and second language (Ellis:1991:24).

This form attempts to soften criticism levelled against the stronger version of Contrastive Analysis. It agrees with Dulay et al.'s (1982:144) assertion, based on experimentation, that the majority of grammatical errors cannot be ascribed to first language interference. Nonetheless, this weaker version does not stand on strong ground either. Its resolve to engage in lengthy comparison of both first and second language simply to confirm that errors suspected of being interference errors are indeed so, is a weak argument (Ellis:1991:24). Contrary to Contrastive Analysis, Duly et al (1982:146) discovered that positive transfer is not a sure case because learners commit errors regardless of the existence of similar structure in their first language.

A point of contradiction is observable within the chief aim of Contrastive Analysis. It regards some errors as positive at the same time its mission is to prevent and eradicate errors. If positive errors are regarded as such, what is the point of devising a teaching programme aimed at eradicating them (Ellis:1991:33)? It is arguably unsatisfactory to refer to these language habits as errors if they serve a positive role. Perhaps a more appropriate term is needed, to capture this concept, instead of calling it positive errors. Furthermore, Contrastive Analysis' hard-nosed campaign to prevent and eradicate errors never considered instances where second language learners avoid language forms that are difficult for them. This gap implies that these forms are never evaluated, and as such render the findings of Contrastive Analysis' suspect.

The Skaggs and Robinson (cited by Ellis:1991:31) hypothesis postulates that chances of interference are greater when there is a certain degree of similarity, but eases when the learning task possesses neutral resemblance. The task at hand should be to precisely specify what constitutes crucial similarity measures, so that accurate prediction regarding the time of interference is made. Contrastive Analysis never attempted such a complex task of balancing psychological and linguistic factors (Ellis:1991:35). Regardless of all these valid criticisms Contrastive Analysis should never be dismissed as irrelevant to language teaching. Its founders should be credited for initiating



a movement that serves as a precursor for the development and refinement of second and language teaching in general.

### 3.10.2. ERROR ANALYSIS

Similar to Contrastive Analysis, the main goals of this hypothesis are pedagogic: errors provide crucial information that could help in sequencing items for teaching or devising remedial exercises (Ellis:1991:51). The important task is to examine errors emanating from all possible sources. Such an examination reveals some kind of system that operates within a learner (Brown:1994:206). To establish this system, the following procedure is of paramount importance: Select a corpus of language; identify the errors; classify them; give an explanation; and finally evaluate the errors (Ellis:1991:52). This procedure is perceived to be providing a methodology appropriate for the study of learners' language and process of acquisition (Ellis:1994:49). Ellis (1991:52) asks two pertinent questions that can serve as useful criteria to evaluate the tenability of Error Analysis:



*What light can the study of learners' errors throw on the sequence of development-- interlanguage continuum-- through which learner pass? What light can errors shed on the strategies that the learner uses to assimilate the rules of L2 (1991:52)?*

To a certain extent Error Analysis tries to meet these criteria. Its attempts are beset with problems, though. One of the main contributions of Error Analysis is the linguistic errors produced by second language learners. Unfortunately, these errors cannot explain the sequence of the learner's linguistic development. In order to do this, both idiosyncratic and non-idiosyncratic linguistic forms need to be examined -- a point ignored by Error Analysis (Ellis:1995:52). Another important information provided by Error Analysis is the psycholinguistic errors produced by second language learners. The only thorny issue is the classification of errors into developmental and interference. As indicated earlier the sources of errors cannot be limited to two. A word of caution is needed

when it comes to paying too much attention to the learners' errors. One can be so pre-occupied with identifying and categorising errors that the correct utterances go unnoticed (Brown:1994:206). The emphasis on grammatical accuracy might overlook the fact that second language teaching is not the product of error-free speech and writing but the attainment of communicative competence (Roos:1992:58). Teaching within the framework of Error Analysis is characterised by an overemphasis of data production at the expense of comprehension (Brown:1994:204). This is an unfortunate development considering the fact that the goal of language teaching is to develop all four basic skills-- listening, speaking, reading and writing. The most significant contribution made by Error Analysis though, is that it highlighted the fact that errors are not necessarily undesirable interference but are a guide to the inner workings of language development (Ellis:1994:53). This pendulum swing is the turning point in second language teaching and it will be a pity if any critique of Error Analysis fails to acknowledge this important contribution.



### **3.11. BASIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS (BICS) AND COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (CALP)**

The two hypotheses are an extension of the distinctions made by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa's (1976) on what they label Surface Fluency and Conceptual-Linguistic Knowledge respectively. In the mould of Surface Fluency, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills are required for everyday interpersonal context. They are fundamentally developed in informal situations such as the family, on the street and among peer groups and friends. These skills have an effect of stressing group membership. Generally, the situation in which they develop is tied to the context in that a number of the group's shared assumptions are understood rather than overtly expressed (Cummins:1988:97). The linguistic forms used are highly predictable and mostly signalled by personal pronouns particularly you and they, tag questioning soliciting the agreement such as wouldn't it, aren't they (Fromkin and Rodman:1998:133). Language is aesthetically and elaboratively used, with a strong emphasis on the manner of saying, rather than on the clear logical

analytical way. Language use is cognitively and academically undemanding. There is a general perception that these skills are accessible to working class, second language and minority language children. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, with its strong affinity to Conceptual-Linguistic Knowledge, is required in tasks where learners have to manipulate or reflect upon the surface features of language outside immediate interpersonal context, as in school tasks and language tests (Appel and Muysken:1992:105). By the same token these skills are used, needed and required by formal situations like school and university during formal debates, and academic discussions and writing. The individual's unique nature as a person is central. Contra BICS', these skills are context independent in that the conveyance of meaning does not rely on extra-linguistic cues like facial expression or sets of commonly shared assumptions. Hence they are cognitively demanding. Speech within the context of CALP, is marked by the use of a relatively high proportion of subordinate clauses, passive verbs, adjectives, uncommon adverbs, conjunctions and pronouns (Fromkin and Rodman:1998:133). The emphasis is on using language to analyse, synthesize, evaluate and interpret thoughts involving abstract ideas. The demand to know and use these skills is made by both the society in general and the formal institutions in particular. The latter expects the learners to possess these skills lest they fail to live up to the educational expectation of what a bright or successful learner should be like (Fromkin and Rodman:1998:137). Hence CALP is seen as an essential requirement for education progress itself.

It is postulated within linguistic circles that CALP is the linguistic repertoire displayed by the middle class society (McLaughlin:1985:184). The fact that middle class parents value education encourages them to check the educational progress of their children and teach them how to use language operating within formal context. From the onset these children are taught at home to use the language to communicate meaning, solve problems, control of social interaction and convey ideas (McLaughlin:1985:185). By the time they go to school they already know the importance of analytical structure of a language. It is due to this fact that such learners perform well at school.

Bilingual education succeeds if learners have cognitive academic language skills to work in a context reduced cognitively demanding situation. Learners with conversational skills typical of school expectation may appear ready to be taught second language -- in this case Middle class learners. Conversely, the working class, minority and language learners in the developing world, by virtue of possessing BICS only, struggle to learn the second language. This struggle is compounded by the fact that these learners do not have sufficient second language vocabulary, let alone the syntactic know-how to facilitate learning, basically because their exposure to the target language is limited to the classroom. The point that CALP is alien to them breeds confusion, frustration and failure. Their failure and poor academic record are linked in manner which suggests that the fault lies with the language.

Appel and Muysken (1992:107) argue that these learners could do better in the second language provided they are taught through the medium of their first language so as to develop adequate cognitive skills before full weight is given to second language acquisition. Operating from the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) perspective as opposed to Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP), one could argue that the common underlying proficiencies of a bilingual language learner work symbiotically to create a conducive springboard for the development of the two languages -- the first and second language. Hence this mutual alliance allows the transference of the academic and literacy-related skills from first to second language (Appel and Muysken:1992:106). Such a possibility augurs well for future success of these learners. Bernstein (1987:119) contends that the working, minority and second language learners from the developing world are not necessarily linguistically deprived. It is just that their linguistic style is different to the one perpetuated by the school. They have two varieties of the language and the school emphasis on one points to narrow range of stylistic form open to them. In view of the essence of BICS and CALP it is safe to argue that these concepts are linked to the problems posed by semilingualism in language teaching. A semilingual is anybody who speaks two languages but both at a lower level than a monolingual

native speaker. Since two languages are involved it is widely assumed that this concept should be worded as “double semilingualism” (Appel and Muysken:1992:107). Instead of viewing it as part of a deficit theory -- blaming learners for their low academic achievement -- semilingualism should be seen as a warning against the neglect of the first language (Skutnabb-Kangas:1976:89). With the advent of curriculum 2005, language teaching aims at, among other things, the development of the learner’s critical awareness to language.

The scenario just painted in this section points to the difficulties facing both ESL teachers and learners. The ESL teachers are obliged to recognize that CALP is the preferred discourse of the classroom that must be taught to the learner for their academic success and it is the proficiency that would assist the implementation of the CLA perspective. However, they must understand that BICS is a reality in an ESL class and the sensible way to approach this situation is to capitalize on the Common Language Proficiencies of both the first and second language. One possibility could be to identify the common underlying academic and literary skills of the two languages, and set second language tasks that would activate and further cultivate these skills. The language tasks that could be considered are the ones that create an awareness with regard to language conventions as prescribed through CALP whilst at the same times examining the manner in which language is used to validate and invalidate CALP and BICS respectively. The most important idea would be to initiate learners into politics of language. This could be a possible foundation necessary for the development of critical language awareness.

### **3.12. CONCLUSION**

The inception of linguistics or language as a scientific field of study was characterised by diverse and competing theoretical expositions. These theoretical expositions are tied to the operational paradigm of each epoch. Hints of a language pedagogy that views language as a discourse that

needs critical attention through the expression of Critical Language Awareness mode are traceable in each theoretical exposition. The Saussurean distinction of parole and langue, and the Chomskyian explication of competence and performance indicate the vestigial drive towards the contextualization of language study within the society and its individual members. It is from this drive that the pendulum swing towards an awareness of how language is used within the society by different sectors of the society, as necessitated by the changing paradigms, could be discerned. Pondering the relationship between language and thought, and language and learning opened way for an inquiry into the acquisition and learning of first and second language.

Emanating from such an inquiry are branches of linguistics such as Applied Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. Each of these branches attempts to apply the linguistics theories. The latter apply these theories on academic related issues. The former redefines the latter by incorporating both the academic and the wider social issues. Inherent within the two branches is the adoption of Critical Discourse Analysis through the expression of CLA perspective. Of great importance is the fact that the learners' vocabulary and cognitive insight of the target language rules are imperative for the successful implementation of a CLA perspective. Hence an exegesis made in this chapter on CALP and BICS attempts to highlight the point that an ESL language programme that adopts the CLA perspective is meaningful if: The two concepts are interrogated; and if a balanced consideration of the two concepts is made. This study places a high premium on the CLA pedagogy that takes into account these points. At the same time, it holds that, the CLA perspective should be an integral part of ESL teaching and learning. Phrased alternatively, language learning and teaching becomes meaningful if framed within the CLA perspective. The next chapter sketches the roots of Critical Language Awareness.