

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will review literature related to classroom-centered research, diary studies and perceptual studies.

#### **2.2 Classroom-centred Research**

Classroom-centred research is defined as research centred on the classroom, as distinct from research that concentrates on the inputs (the syllabus, teaching materials, etc) or outputs (e.g. learner's test score) to the classroom (Allwright and Bailey (1991). It is a cover term for a whole range of research studies on classroom language learning and teaching.

Modern classroom research began in the 1950s mainly to address issues in teacher training for example, to find out what constitutes effective teaching. Many research tools have been developed to this end. One of these is an observation sheet developed by Flanders (1970) and named the FIAC (Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories). FIAC later modified by Moskowitz(1976) and named as 'Flint -Foreign Language Interaction' and used as a research tool in teacher training, was used to help teacher trainees find out how well their teaching behaviours matched patterns that are thought to be most effective. Many experiments were carried out to determine which methods were superior.

Later classroom-centred research was used to study techniques of teaching and eventually the processes of teaching. Classroom interaction research was then carried out by researchers with two different viewpoints, the sociological viewpoint and the linguistic viewpoint.

Those with sociological orientation looked at lessons as socially constructed events. The focus now no longer remained on the teacher but on interaction among all participants within the classroom. One research in this area is Allwright's study on how teachers and learners jointly determine each learner's level of participation in classroom activities (1983). Those with linguistic orientation viewed the classroom as a setting to study language acquisition. It was claimed that the differing orientations are complementary and when merged, can provide valuable insights into classroom language learning. Nonetheless it became evident that the research tools which were developed for teacher training were not necessarily appropriate for other types of research for example classroom-based research. Other analytical tools were developed for example surveys, transcription methods, discourse analysis and self-report procedures as research techniques.

Classroom observation has been categorised into a number of categories such as those described by Wallace (1991) - system-based/ethnographic/ad hoc procedures, Hopkins (1993) - systematic/structured/focused/open observation and Selinger and Shohamy (1989) - binary structured/open distinction. Bailey and Allwright (1991) argue that whatever happens in the classroom is crucial to language learning because they determine what learning opportunities learners get. They conclude that learners do not learn directly from the syllabus. Rather, they learn partly, from whatever becomes of the syllabus and they can learn from other things

that happen too. They also argue that the happenings in a language classroom can best be described as three outcomes - "the input provided for learning, the 'practice opportunities' provided, and the effects on the 'receptivity' of the learners (1991:23). The only way we can investigate these outcomes is to embark on classroom research. Bailey (1991:157) defines 'receptivity' as follows:

"... a state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language, somebody else's language".

Allwright states that language classroom research "treats the classroom not just as the setting for investigation but, more importantly, as the object of investigation. Classroom processes become the central focus" (1983:191).

Long (1980) defines classroom research as "research, all or part of whose data are collected in classrooms".

Nunan (1992) emphasizes the importance of context in understanding behaviour. He writes;

"If we want to find out about behaviour, we need to investigate it in the natural contexts in which it occurs, rather than in the experimental laboratory. If the context is the classroom, then research within that context is language classroom research."

Chaudron (1988) identifies four traditions in second language classroom research. They are psychometric studies, interaction analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic analysis. Psychometric studies typically involve the use of the so-called experimental method with pre- and post-tests for both control and experimental

groups. Interaction and discourse analysis involve the use of analytical observation schemes. Interaction analysis focuses on social meanings while discourse analysis focuses on linguistic aspects of interaction. Ethnographic studies, according to Chaudron, does not strive for objectivity or neutrality, but offers interpretive analyses of the events occurring in the classroom (ibid). It has been argued that interaction analysis and discourse analysis do not represent distinct traditions of classroom research. Rather they are viewed as methods of data collection and not traditions. If this is so, then Chaudron's four methods of tradition become just two - the psychometric and the ethnographic. This closely mirrors the distinction made between qualitative and quantitative methods, which in itself is often claimed as an over simplistic distinction.

Ethnography has strong support as an approach to classroom research in general (Wilson 1977). Description is a key technique in ethnography. McDonough and McDonough (1997) categorize ethnographic studies into two types namely 'macro-ethnographic' which focuses on large scale settings like whole schools or even whole cultures, and 'micro-ethnographic' which focuses on the classrooms and the relationships and events within it. Description, in ethnographic studies, aims to produce a 'thick' rather than 'thin' data (Geertz, 1973). 'Thick' description is a comprehensive, as possible, description of individuals, interactions, behaviors and settings.

Observer roles with ethnographic studies have also been described in various ways. Wolcott (cited in Johnson, 1992) categorized the roles as active participant, privileged observer and limited observer, while Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) categorized the roles as complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer.

Watson- Gegeo (1988) suggested that ethnography can serve practice in two ways which are firstly, ethnographic techniques of observation and interviewing can be applied to teacher supervision and feedback, whether in initial teacher training or in staff development. Secondly, ethnography can help teachers make a difference in their own classrooms. To summarize this section I wish to quote Bailey (1991):

“When learners keep journals of language learning experiences in formal instructional settings, the resulting diary studies fits the tradition of language classroom research as described by Allwright (1983), Bailey (1985), Allwright and Bailey (1991), Brumfit and Mitchell (1990), Chaudron (1988), Gaies (1983), Long (1980,1983), Mitchell (1985) and Van Lier (1984, 1988, 1989). The diary studies are a form of empirical (data-based) research, enhanced by introspection, in the tradition of naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1978; Lincoln and Guba, 1985)”

## 2.3 Diary Studies

### 2.3.1 Diary Studies as a Research Tool

Diary-writing is a pervasive narrative form (McDonough and McDonough (1997)). Diary studies were originally used in psychotherapy as a research tool (Murphy O'Dwyer, 1985). O'Dwyer mentions that the technique was developed by Ira Progoff to elicit self-awareness and that it can be applied to various contexts, including education. Among others, the diary is used in many fields such as history, literature, anthropology, sociology, psychotherapy and also in education and English language teaching. In the latter two, the diary is increasingly used as a tool of research. It is commonly used by those interested in qualitative research in the naturalistic inquiry tradition.

Naturalistic inquiry is a research method in which naturally occurring events are studied. It differs from experimental methods in that it is conducted without the need to control variables. It is also devoid of intervention commonly found in experimental methods. Lincoln and Guba (1985) differentiate this approach from the experimental approach.

They come up with five axioms of naturalistic inquiry:

1. Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic.
2. The knower and the known are interactive and inseparable.
3. Only time-bound and context bound hypotheses are possible (in contrast to the positivist desire for time-free and context-free generalizations).

4. It is impossible to distinguish causes from effects since "all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping".
5. Inquiry is value-bound (in contrast to the experimentalist notion that legitimate inquiry must be value free, which is, in itself, a value statement. (Lincoln and Guba (1985:36-38))

Naturalistic inquiry encompasses different sorts of investigations including ethnography, ethno methodology, some discourse analysis and some case studies (Bailey, 1991). Bailey (1989) who has written extensively on the use of diaries and journals in second language teaching and learning, suggests that diaries can help us capture some of the complexities of the language classrooms. Through diaries we can study cognitive, interactive and affective variables in play. The research question of most diary studies is "What factors are important in my language learning?" (Bailey, 1985:117). These variables cannot be observed through observation instruments of interaction analysis where classroom behaviour is observed and the different types of student and teacher activity are classified, using a classification scheme.

According to Bailey (1985:115) the questions of interest in diary studies are:

"... how do learners utilize the input they receive? How do they process feedback from teachers and peers? How does the teacher's behavior influence their language learning and their attitudes? What cause some to participate more actively than others? More importantly, why are some learners so much more successful than others".

Parkinson and Howell-Richardson (1989), in an article entitled "*Learner Diaries*" mention, at that point in time, that interest in learner diaries is very recent, having been aroused by publications such as Bailey's in 1983, which shows how different the views of learners about classroom processes and out-of-class learning are from the teachers and researchers. Although awareness of such differences has always been available, the evidence from the diaries helps reveal them in a new way which is more learner-focused.

In his introduction to the book "*Readings on Second Language Acquisition*", H.D. Brown(1994) describes quantitative and qualitative approaches to doing research. Some words pointed out as associated to quantitative approach are deductive, controlled, obtrusive, interventionist, reductionist, product-oriented and generalizable. Words associated with qualitative research include inductive, subjective, uncontrolled, naturalistic, unobtrusive, descriptive, process-oriented and ungeneralizable. Brown further differentiates the terms as follows:

"Quantitative research is deductive, in that it starts with a theory or a hypothesis and then uses data to test it, whereas qualitative research is inductive, in that it collects data through observation and then comes up with a theory to account for the data. The *theory first* approach seeks to obtain data that provide proof and test hypotheses; the *data first* approach looks for hypotheses that can explain the data collected or the facts observed."(page 3)



Brown later describes the views of others about the differentiation between quantitative and qualitative research. Nunan, among others, feels that there exist clear distinction between the two with quasi-experiments on one end, and ethnography on the other. In between these two polars are various research methods namely, formal experiments, interviews and questionnaires, schemes for observing classes and individuals, introspective methods such as diaries, discourse analysis, case studies and ethnographies. In his introduction to the chapter on *"Introspective Methods"* Nunan writes:

"One of the problems confronting the language researcher is that a great deal of the hard work involved in language development and use is invisible, going on in the head of the learner." (Nunan, 1992).

He goes on to describe the development of language research from that which was dominated by behaviourist psychology to shift of focus on cognitive processes underlying human performance and ability. It begins to be widely accepted that to understand what people do we need to understand what they think. A few introspective methods are described. These include think-aloud techniques, anagram tasks, diary studies and retrospection. Nunan concludes that introspective methods are becoming increasingly popular. He claims that diaries, logs and journals have a great deal to offer foreign language learning research. These can be kept by both teachers and learners. They may be used as the main data collection tool, or as a supplement to other tools.

Diary studies provide rich insights into the psychological, social and cultural factors in language development. They are used for research and also for teacher education.

Some of the benefits of diary studies (based on Porter et al. 1990) are:

1. Students can articulate problems they have with course content and get help.
2. Diaries promote autonomous learning. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
3. Through the exchange of ideas, pupils can build confidence and understand difficult materials and generate original insights.

### **2.3.2 Definitions and Descriptions**

Diary studies as a subset of the naturalistic inquiry paradigm has been defined in many ways. Some of the definitions and descriptions are given below.

Bailey and Ochsner (1983:189) define a diary study as follows:

“A diary study in second language learning, acquisition or teaching is an account of a second language experience as recorded in a first-person journal. The diarist may be a language teacher or a language learner - but the central characteristic of the diary studies is that they are introspective: The diarist studies his own teaching or learning. Thus he can report on affective factors, language learning strategies, and his own perceptions - facets of the language learning experience which are normally hidden or largely inaccessible to an external observer. The diary studies are thus first-person case studies - a research genre defined by the data collection procedures: A language learner (or teacher) keeps an intensive journal using introspection and/or retrospection, as well as observation, typically over a period of time.”

Bailey and Oschner (1983) recommend a five-stage procedure in using diaries for research. The steps are:

1. Get an account of the diarist's personal learning history.
2. Revise the data collected for public consumption.
3. Identify patterns and significant events.
4. Interpret important factors in language learning.
5. Discuss factors.

Diaries are first-person accounts of language learning or teaching. They are often categorized as ethnographic or introspective research. Diary studies is a form of qualitative data collection in second /foreign language acquisition research. The steps taken in diary studies include keeping a journal, rereading the entries to ensure there is no omission and rereading the entire journal to look for recurring patterns (Brown, 1994).

Seliger and Shohamy(1989) claim that development of research in metacognitive process has brought about renewed interest in keeping learners' diaries which document experiences and conscious thought processes while in a language classroom. Such diaries might include the author's feelings during the actual language lesson but recorded after class, attitudes to language learning, attitude toward the teacher, self-analysis of the methods used for practising the language and so on. The diaries, though subjective, can raise interesting questions for further controlled research. In diary studies, there is no preconception or deduction of what we should observe or record. Instead, diaries are kept without focusing on any particular aspect or question.

McNiff, in her analysis of data collection methods, cites the surveys of Walker (1985) - *Doing Research* and Hopkins (1985) - *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*. Both texts describe various traditional methods: field notes, audio tape recording, pupils diaries, interviews and discussions, video tape recording, questionnaires, sociometry, documentary evidence, slide/tape photography, case study. Hopkins describes each method in detail. Pupils' diaries are described as follows:

1. They can provide direct feedback from the students' perspective.
2. Pupils are required to keep notebooks or files on their responses to their lessons.
3. Teachers may give points to consider, but there should be little constraint on the pupils as to what they should write.
4. Pupils should be encouraged to give open and honest comments without fear of reprisal.
5. Permission must be sought prior to any form of publication of the diaries. (McNiff, 1988)

Parkinson and Howell-Richardson (1989) administer their diary studies as follows:

1. The diaries consist of one A4 sheet (two sides for each day).
2. The diaries are filled over a specified period.
3. The diaries consist of mainly short headings/questions with plenty of blank space for the answers.
4. Students fill in the sheets.
5. The sheets/diaries are collected daily.

6. The diaries are reviewed by either other teachers or by the researchers.
7. The diaries are then analysed and categorised .

In the book *"Diary of a Language Teacher"*, Joachim Appel (1995) describes diary writing as a lonely pastime. He describes his diaries as "subjective perceptions and impressions of everyday life at school - in short, experience". He further writes:

"Diaries are a risky genre to write. They are subjective, biased and always risk being vain. Their author is caught at a moment in time and lacks detachment. The outcome of what is described is open and there is no hindsight. Once written down, all those false impressions and misjudgments are there to stay."

Nonetheless, he claims that the views elicited from the diaries are insightful to the language teacher in that they show the complexities of school practice and they give a picture of individual development and change.

## **2.4 Descriptions of Some Diary Studies**

Most diary studies in the second language acquisition literature are conducted by applied linguists and language teachers. They document their own experience at learning a second or a foreign language. For example, Bailey (1983) documents her attempts to study French. She finds two affective factors i.e. competitiveness and anxiety to be highly significant in her experience learning French. She also analyses the diaries of other learners. For example, in her study of eleven learners' diaries she analyses what the learners reveal about competitiveness and anxiety (Bailey 1983). Schmidt and Frota (1985) study their attempts to learn

Portuguese while in Brazil. The importance of affectivity is evident. Asher (1983) studies the diaries kept by a group of American adolescents learning French she supervised on a trip to Europe. Brown (1983, 1985a, 1985b) through a diary study and participant observation, investigates the differences between older and younger language learners focusing on their requests for inputs. Grancolas and Soule-Susbielles (1986) use the diary entries of teacher trainees of French as a foreign language as a research database.

Bailey (1991) states that language learning diaries can be divided into two groups: (1) those in which the diarist and the analyst are the same person, and (2) those in which the researcher analyzes journals kept by other language learners. Matsumoto (1987) names these as "introspective" and "non-introspective" diary studies respectively. Note that these terms are used only to refer to the data analysis stage and not to the data collection phase of the research. Some studies which can be categorized in Introspective category are F.Schuman's and J. Schuman's (1977) diary studies of their efforts to learn the Parsi and Arabic language, Bailey's (1980) study of her effort to learn French, Jones' (1980) diary study of the social and psychological factors which influenced her learning of the Indonesian language, and Henze's (1981) study related to the language learning strategies she used to learn Arabic.

Examples of non-introspective diary studies are that done by Matsumoto (1989) who studied the diary of a 19-year old Japanese learner who studied English and Bailey (1983) who studied eleven learners, mostly teacher and linguists who studied different target languages. Other examples of non-introspective diary studies are those conducted by Brown (1983, 1985a and 1985b) who studied 36 learners of Spanish and lastly, Ellis (1989) who studied two adult learners learning German.

Three diary studies are described below. Each description will cover the objectives/aims of the study, the research methodology employed, the findings and conclusions of the study.

#### **2.4.1 Study No. 1: Socializing with the Teachers and Prior Language**

##### **Experience: A Diary Study by Cherry Campbell (1996)**

This study is an example of a traditional first person diary study. The researcher studied her own language learning experience when learning Spanish for the first time. There were four main sections (setting and participants, data collection, findings and related studies) in her study which followed the format of comparing her findings from her journal with that of other language learning journals.

The setting of her experience was Cuernavaca, Mexico. She was a language teacher enrolled in a local language institute. The duration of the course was two months. She lived in with a Mexican family, studied during the week and did some traveling and sightseeing during the weekends. The school had about a dozen teachers with about twenty to twenty-five students. The class size was small, with two or three students meeting with one teacher for four hours daily. Classes rotated weekly so students could meet with new teachers each week. The curriculum focused on syntactic and semantic forms and centered around communicative activities. Most of the students were American and a few were European. The teachers were native Mexican. The researcher had studied French and German in high school. She had always wanted to study Spanish and was further encouraged when an opportunity to study in Mexico arose. Keeping a language-learning diary was influenced by an interest in a series of diary studies produced by researchers from her university (Bailey 1983; Jones 1977; and Schumann and Schumann, 1977). To avoid being

treated differently should her peers know that she was a language teacher, Campbell disguised her identity. She pretended that she was a composition instructor and a graduate student in creative writing. It provided a good excuse for the large amount of time she spent on writing in her journal.

Data collection included a compilation of previous language learning history, opinions about what she thought was important for her in language learning, her motivation for learning the language, her choice of school and a few other impressions. The bulk of the data was made up of her daily journal entries and a few letters she sent to Los Angeles. The average length of her daily entries were three to four pages of her notebook. Entries were made once or twice per day. The entries for the first month were very complete. However, the entries for the second month were not as regular. She occasionally missed writing the entries and on one occasion did not do so for a two-week period. In total, she had seventy-one separate entries in the journal, written on thirty-nine days during the two-month period. She wrote about her thoughts, feelings and experiences in and outside of the classroom. She wrote about her relationship with her friends. The journal was later edited into a 225 typewritten pages. Her findings summarized how she felt she had fared in her venture in learning Spanish as compared to learning German. She also wrote in detail about how she perceived her learning experience vis-à-vis prior language experience and the language learning experience of others. She concluded that prior experiences, backgrounds, abilities and attitudes are important elements to be considered in predicting learning. She wrote at length about the social influence on language learning; about how she went at great length to interact with the native speakers in various contexts as she had experienced success in learning German through social interaction. She also analyzed her observations from the perspectives



of a learner, a researcher and a language teacher. In her analysis she related the trends in her data to her previous experience learning German in Germany. In both cases, Campbell's opportunities to socialize in the target language outside of class were perceived as more important than her in-class learning. By sharing her experiences she gave us the opportunity to see her experience from a learner's eyes.

#### **2.4.2 Study No. 2: Diary Studies as a Teacher Awareness Tool(1989)**

This study was conducted by Araya Maurice at Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Thailand. The diarist was the researcher/teacher herself. The course was English for Academic Purposes II for second year political science students at Chulalongkorn University.

The procedures adopted followed that developed by Proffitt which included seven main elements namely:

1. Background details
2. Daily record
3. Primary editing
4. Preliminary Analysis
5. Selection of issues to focus on
6. Final analysis
7. Preparation of the final report.

Araya identified three issues which arose from her diary entries to be discussed. She categorised them as:

1. Problems that the teacher tried to tackle,
2. One problem realized but not dealt with, and

3. Teacher's personal insight and comment about herself, the student and teaching as a whole.

The problems she identified were inadequate introduction and lack of context, confusion felt by students over the way she communicated with them and the fact that she rushed through the materials in order to cover three units before the mid-semester examination. The one problem not dealt with was the problem of lateness. The teacher generally ignored the latecomers which later led to her feeling "some distance" between them.

Her personal insights and comments focused on her observation of students' reading behavior and also her thoughts on how to revise the materials.

She concluded her paper by sharing a final thought where she mentioned "being a teacher is as easy or as difficult as one would like it to be". She noted that we could lose sight of the bigger picture when we only focus on the smaller picture. As such we need a mirror to help us look back and reflect and to use as a guide for the future. She claimed that diary study is one way she has tried and found useful.

Although the study did not include students feedback of the course and thus seems like a unilateral interpretation of the classroom process, it has given an insight on the usefulness of the diary study in helping the teacher/researcher reflect upon her own practice.

### 2.4.3 Study No. 3: First Impressions: Beginning New EFL Classes (1998)

This classroom research project was conducted by Kathleen Bailey. The study was carried out at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). The database for her study included the teacher's diary entries, the learners' diary and students' responses to open ended questions. The objective or focus of the study was to find out how teachers and students start new courses. She wanted to find out what teachers and learners do on first meetings of a class and how do these shape the interaction in the days and weeks to come. She made two assumptions; one, first impressions are important, and two, the interaction among teachers and students during the early days of a class sets the stage for the duration of the course. The participants involved in the study were mostly first year students at the university. Bailey characterized their English language proficiency as intermediate or lower-intermediate. The class was a learning strategies course emphasizing speaking and listening. She taught the course for two semesters, the autumn semester of 1996 and the spring semester of 1997. Her journal data include entries made during both semesters. She taught different groups of students for each of the semester. She postulated three research questions:

1. How do teachers set the desired tone (the atmosphere, the social climate, etc.) of the class in the earliest meeting?
2. How do teachers establish the desired participant structures (the turn-taking system, their expectations for students' oral participation, group and pair work routines, etc.) in the earliest class meetings?
3. How do teachers convey to students their expertise as teachers of the skill(s) or subject(s) on which a given course is based?

She investigated the issues using her teaching journal as data and also her learners' journals. The entries for the teacher's journal were made after every class, soonest possible, using a word processor. She wrote anything that impressed her or issues concerning the lesson, her preparation, the students' responses, unfinished work and also the three research questions she postulated. The audience of the journal was herself. The data she reported on consist of the journal entries made during the first four weeks of the autumn semester, 1996 (sixteen class meeting with data entries in seventeen single spaced pages) and the first four weeks of spring semester, 1997 (sixteen class meetings with nineteen single-spaced pages). The first week of each term was emphasized. The students kept two types of diaries namely a dialogue journal and a more focused journal entry. Bailey interacted with the students through the dialogue journal by responding to their entries once a week. In the more focused journal entry, pupils were asked open-ended questions about their first impression of the class, how the teacher established the class atmosphere, the students' perception of the teacher's expectations for students' participation and how the teacher conveys expertise to the students.

Her findings from the teaching journal were:

- a. The entries for the first four weeks document details related to establishment of tone and setting the participant structure.
- b. Not much was mentioned about conveying her expertise to the learners.
- c. There were numerous mentions of frustrations with time pressures, repeated incidents of falling into the "Vocabulary Explanation Trap", and that she sometimes felt over-supplied but under-prepared. (1998: p 95)

In her analysis of the students' entries Bailey observed that the atmosphere and affective variables are indeed important. She wrote:

"Many of the students did remember what we had done to create a positive training environment. Several commented on the role of their classmates in this process. Their connection of positive affect and their willingness to speak provides indirect support of Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (See e.g., Krashen 1982 and 1985.)" (1998 p.110)

Bailey concluded the study with the following claims:

- a. The students' first impressions support the notion that that input, practice opportunities and receptivity are indeed "co-produced outcomes" of classroom interaction.
- b. The teaching journal both documented and led to her development as an EFL teacher.

Overall the study is well researched. Her analysis of the journals is thorough and can provide insights on first impressions in a language classroom.

#### 2.4.4 Comparison of the Three Studies Described

A comparison of the three studies above can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2.1 Comparison of Studies Described**

Study	Type	Duration	Focus	Findings	Conclusions
No.1	First person analysis of learner's diary	Two months	Language learning experience when learning Spanish for the first time	Prior experiences, backgrounds, abilities and attitudes are important elements to be considered to predict learning.	Opportunities to socialize in the target language outside of class were perceived as more important than her in-class learning.
No.2	First person analysis of teacher's diary	One semester (Nov-Feb)	The use of diary study as a teacher awareness tool	The diary study helped her identify problems in class – inadequate introduction, lack of context, and personal insights	The diary study is a useful tool for teacher reflection.
No.3	First person analysis of teacher's diary and second person analysis of learners' diaries	8 week (Four weeks at the beginning of two consecutive semesters)	How teachers and learners start new courses – what they do during the first meetings and how do these influence their interactions later	Evidence of establishment of tone and setting of participant structure. Not much mentioned of conveying expertise to learners. Numerous mentions of frustrations. Atmosphere and affective variables are important.	Students' first impressions support the notion that input, practice opportunities and receptivity are indeed co-produced outcomes of classroom interactions. Writing teaching journal led to development as EFL teacher.

The above comparison illustrates that the diary study method can be used to conduct research on various aspects of language learning and teaching.

## 2.5 Studies on Learner's Perceptions

As the focus of language learning shifts from emphasis on the teacher to the learner, more and more studies about learners are carried out. The learner takes center stage and different aspects of learning and the learner are explored by researchers and practitioners alike. These studies have various aims. One common aim is to identify more systematic approach to language curriculum development. Some factors which have been studied include the attitudes, expectations, and perceptions of learners regarding various issues related to teaching and learning. Some examples of such studies are described below.

Alcorso and Kalantsis conducted a study on the perceptions of adult ESL learners in relation to classroom processes and activities. They asked learners to nominate what they felt were the most useful parts of their language lessons. . The five most favoured activities are (a) grammar exercises, (b) structured class discussion and conversation, (c) copying written materials, memorizing and repetition work, (d) learning activities using cassettes, and (e) reading books and newspapers. The least useful parts, according to the learners, are (a) excursions with the class, (b) communication tasks and problem solving, (c) using audio visuals, TV, video, (d) drama, role play, songs and language games, and (e) writing stories, poems and descriptions.

The perceptions of students about what they thought were useful parts of the lessons show that learners favour what could be termed traditional learning activities over less traditional ones. Alcorso and Kalantsis deduced that:

“There seemed to be a common view about the importance of grammar across respondents with different levels of English and

from diverse educational backgrounds. ... In explaining their preferences, the learners said they saw grammar-specific exercises as the most basic and essential part of learning a language.”

(1985:43)

Alcorso and Kalantsis also found out that learners, in general, were of the opinion that dance, singing and games are a waste of time.

In another study carried out by Willing (1985), the learning preference of over five hundred learners were investigated. His findings were almost similar to that found by Alcorso and Kalantsis. He found out that there were certain activities which seemed to be almost universally popular. The popular activities were pronunciation practice, explanations to the class, conversation practice, error correction and vocabulary development. Unpopular activities included listening to and using cassettes, student self-discovery of error, using pictures, films and video, pair work and language games.

Nunan (1986) conducted a follow-up study using an adaptation of Willing’s instrument to find out the perceptions of teachers. He found mismatch between learners’ and teachers’ views of what was important in the learning process. He found that while the teachers accept the value of communicatively oriented activities, learners place greater value on ‘traditional’ learning activities.

Nunan (1989) suggests one explanation for the conflict between the intentions of the teachers and the learners is that ‘learners are simply not let into the picture’. He goes further to suggest that the effectiveness of any language



programme will be dictated as much by the attitudes and the expectations of the learners as by the specification of the official curriculum. He states:

“The assumption that there is one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning is questioned, and it is hypothesized that learners have their own agendas in the language lessons they attend.” (1989: p 177)

Nunan argues that no curriculum can claim to be learner-centred unless the learner's subjective needs and perceptions relating to the processes of learning are taken into account. Thus in a language classroom, there is a need to find out students perceptions and this study aims to do that.

## **2.6 Studies on Affective Factors**

Affective factors or affect relates with aspects of our emotional being (Arnold and Brown, 1999). It is generally assumed that affective factors influence second language learning. Arnold and Brown (1999) point out two important reasons for understanding affect in language learning. The two reasons are firstly, attention to affective aspects can lead to more effective language learning. Secondly, focusing on affect in the language classrooms reaches beyond language teaching as the relationship between affect and language learning is bi-directional where attention to affect can improve language teaching and learning and language classroom can, in turn educate learners affectively.

Bloom (1956) outlines five levels of affectivity namely receiving, responding, valuing, organization of values into a system of beliefs and internalization and integration of the belief systems. Bloom's taxonomy was devised

for educational purposes but it has been widely used for a general understanding of the affective domain in human behavior.

Scovel (1978) borrows the concept of “vedana” (feelings) in developing a broad definition of affective factors states:

“Affective factors are those that deal with the emotional reactions and motivations of the learner, they signal the arousal of the limbic system and its direct intervention in the task of learning.” (ibid, p.131)

Brown (1987) writes at length on the cognitive and affective domains of language learning. He defines affect as follows:

“Affect refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behaviour, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact (1987; p 100).

The personality factors which fall within the affective domain include self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion and motivation.

Arnold and Brown (1999) looks at a wide spectrum of affect-related factors which influence language learning. Affect within their context, is considered broadly as aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour. Arnold and Brown also note that the affective side of learning is not in opposition to the

cognitive side and cannot be separated from each other. They claim that the relationship between affect and language learning is bi-directional, as attention to affect can improve language learning and teaching and conversely, the language classroom can contribute significantly to educating learners affectively.

Damasio (cited in Arnold & Brown, 1999) identifies five major emotions under which others are subsumed: happiness, sadness, anger, fear and disgust. Goleman (1995) groups the emotions in basic categories: anger, sadness, fear, enjoyment, love, surprise, disgust and shame. Affective aspects include both positive and negative emotions. In language learning and teaching it is important to overcome problems caused by negative emotions and to create and use more positive emotions.

Interest in affective factors in education is not new. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century writers like Dewey and Montessori have already written about them. Much later the concern about affective factors are voiced by Stevick, Rinvolucri and other proponents of Humanistic Language Teaching who are constantly searching for ways to enrich language learning by incorporating the affective dimensions of the learner (Arnold and Brown, 1999). All empirical research on affect in language learning usually are conducted in the form of correlation studies. One such study is that done by Gardner, Smythee, Clement and Glicksman (1976) who studied more than a thousand high school children and compared their self-report survey with four measures of French achievement.

Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) conducted an affect-relevant study of adult learners applied to course planning. They found that better learners look to their own experience as a resource, set learning objectives in consonance with their self-concept, process through several channels and have learnt how to learn. As

learners, they are influenced by their feelings and do not learn when anxious or stressed. Learning for them is more effective when it is personally relevant and when information is presented through different sensory modes.

In analyzing the data for this study, affective elements will be identified and described. Further references to the affective domain will be made in the section on findings. The deliberate decision to use diary study as a method to look into the affective elements in the classroom should help us determine what factors and variables are actually dominant or at least present in the English Proficiency class being researched. To triangulate the analysis of the data , it will also be analysed by an inter-rater.