Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

'The habit of reading for pleasure is not indigenous to many countries'... (Morris, John).

2.0 Introduction

Studies conducted by Eisterhold (1990:88) and Elley (1984) suggest that reading helps in the attainment of proficiency. The latter's study of Fijian students show that insufficient exposure to written materials was responsible for their low proficiency.

Nuttal (1982) suggests that the best way to attain proficiency is to go and stay among the speakers of the language. This is not feasible for the vast majority of language learners (L2). The next best way is to read extensively in the language, as the language input in the classroom is limited. The language input a student receives in the English classroom is limited and insufficient to provide the learner with an adequate language environment, but extensive reading will transfer the quantity of input dramatically.' (Nuttal. 1982). Krashen (1984) also states that the development of writing ability and second language proficiency occur in the same way: via comprehensible input, ('input language which contains linguistic items or spoken that are slightly beyond the learner's present linguistic competence.' Krashen 1985) with a low affective filter. He goes on to say that writing competence is largely due to 'self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure'.
Elley and Mangubhai (1983: 56) say that 'good story books can provide strong intrinsic motivation for young people and an emphasis on meaning rather than form' is necessary to get learners involved. A study conducted in Egypt on adult economists enrolled for an ESP writing course showed that those exposed to extensive reading wrote better than those who did not. These students had no direct exposure to English through travel or social contact. Schleppegrell (1984) who conducted this research showed that his findings revealed marked writing abilities in his students who read extensively. A similar experiment in Hong Kong by Law (1987) gave the same results. Several studies show that better writers read extensively outside the classroom. These studies were conducted by three researchers. Jonopoulos (1986), Elley and Mangubhai (1983), Hafiz and Tudor (1989), 1990), Tudor and Hafiz (1989). Janopoulos in 1986 studied seventy-nine ESL graduate students of seven language groups. They were subjected to a 1-hour writing sample and all completed questionnaires that gave information about their reading time per week in both their mother tongue and English. The writing samples were evaluated on a 4-point scale by two trained raters. Results showed a strong correlation between reading and writing. Elley and Mangubhai (1983) conducted similar tests on Fijian students., They were exposed to simplified readers and results showed gains in oral and written production.

Hafiz and Tudor (1989) and Tudor and Hafiz (1989) studied ESL students in the United Kingdom. The students were aged between ten and eleven. Those students who read simplified readers (of the Heinemann, Longman, and Macmillan series) showed significant progress in both reading and writing skills.
and revealed this by tests conducted by the National Foundation for Education research for proficiency in English. A similar study conducted in Pakistan by Hafiz and Tudor (1990) on fifteen and sixteen year-old secondary school students revealed that those who read graded readers (of the Collins, Heinemann, and Longman series) showed proficiency in writing skills compared to those who did not receive such input.

‘There seems to be a prima facie case for effectiveness of a reading-saturated input-oriented approach to develop writing skills and general ESL proficiency’. (Tsang Wai-King. 1997)

2.1 Theoretical Background

This study hinges on primarily two theoretical frameworks, namely that of Stephen D. Krashen and Noam Chomsky. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985), which forms part of a theory of second language acquisition is used to support and explain that extensive reading (Bamford, 1984) will lead to better writing, which means that learners have extensive reading as an avenue to attain grammatical competence without having to be taught grammar. The learner’s ability to learn/acquire this competence is based on Chomsky’s ‘Innate Ideas’, ‘hypothesis’ or ‘innate principles of language acquisition (1965). ‘innate ideas/hypothesis – a theory held by some philosophers and linguists which says that human knowledge develop from structures, processes, and ideas which are in the mind at birth (ie are ‘innate’). (Richard et al 1985). Though Chomsky’s innate ideas were for first language learning or acquisition, ‘innateness’ does not
disappear and it is just as good for learning a second or a foreign language. Studies conducted by Hafiz and Tudor (1989) in the U.S, U.K and Pakistan reveal this. Students who read simplified readers and graded readers exhibited significant gains in an essay writing test as compared to those who received no such exposure.

2.2 Theoretical Framework for grammatical competence/proficiency

For this research, two theoretical frameworks have been used; one by Krashen (1985) and the other by Chomsky (1965). And I have added my own hypothesis, the Habiaesthetic Hypothesis. The word ‘competence’ should not be understood in the Chomskyan sense, but should rather refer to proficiency or to the meaning as implied in the general sense of the word. Chomsky (1965) uses the term ‘competence’ to refer to a person’s internalized grammar.

2.3 The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis which forms the central part of the second language acquisition consists of five hypothesis, (Krashen 1985).

2.3.1 The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis

According to this hypothesis, there are two ways of developing second language skills: ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’(Krashen 1985). The former is a subconscious process while the latter is a conscious process and the learners rephrase learn the language, formally Krashen states this is ‘similar, if not identical’ to
'Chomsky's distinction between "cognize" and "know" (Chomsky 1975 pp164 – 165).

2.32 The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that we learn a language in a predictable order, that is the acquisition of the rules. This order in which rules are acquired are different from the order of simplicity that is adhered to in formal classroom teaching. Other researchers have shown that 'informal' acquirers who were exposed to the second language almost all outside the language classes did not show any difference in their order of acquisition from those who had their exposure in their second language classroom.

2.33 The Monitor Hypothesis

This hypothesis shows the difference in production when acquisition and learning are used. In the former case, our 'acquired competence from our subconscious mind' is used for utterances. Learning which is consciously achieved serves as 'an editor, or Monitor'. We fall back on our 'learning' to correct our utterances, be it speech or writing. In this way, a lot of time is used for editing, and research conducted by Hulstijn and Hulstijn in 1984 revealed that 30% more time is taken with 14 % less information transmitted by adult learners. This is a problem in communication.

2.34 The Input Hypothesis:

This hypothesis states that humans acquire language in only one way, that is by receiving 'comprehensible input'. This means that the learner needs to
understand the input, the message. Krashen states that 'we progress along the natural order by understanding input that contains structures at our next "stage" - structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence. (When we move from i, our current level, to i + 1, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing i + 1; ... We are able to understand language containing unacquired grammar with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence."

'Input Hypothesis has two corollaries:

Speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly but 'emerges' on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input.

If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order - it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

'To be more precise, input is the essential environmental ingredient. The acquirer does not simply acquire what he hears - there is a significant contribution of the internal language processor (Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device: LAD). Not all the input the acquirer hears is processed for acquisition, and the LAD itself generates possible rules according to innate procedures (e.g. "operating principles" (Slobin 1973)).
The `extensive evidence’ for the Input Hypothesis and the suggestion by (Chomsky 1975) that `the language acquisition device operates in fundamentally the same way in everyone’, ... and extends it to second language acquisition (Krashen 1985) are the two ideas which I propose to use for my research into extensive reading and grammatical competence.

2.35 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen says that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient. The acquirer should be `open' or receptive to the input, if not there will be a mental block and this prevents acquisition. This mental block Krashen calls the `Affective filter'. When the acquirer is unmotivated, under stress, tired, anxious or suffers from any other problems, he will experience this mental block. This condition will prevent the acquirer from fully utilising the input, the LAD may not be operational if not achieved. On the other hand, when the filter is down, he is highly receptive, there is no block and the LAD functions normally resulting in acquisition.

2.4 Evidence for The Input Hypothesis

There is much evidence to support Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Caretaker Speech (the simple speech used by mothers, fathers, babysitters etc when they talk to young children who are learning to talk.), Teacher talk (simplified talk to make the learners understand ) and Foreigner talk (speech by native speakers which is slower and the pronunciation of words made intelligible to non-native speakers ) are all cases where acquisition is made easier because of `simplified’ input. This simplification works in several ways and aids comprehension.
However, it must be noted that the Input Hypothesis "does not predict that "simplified" caretaker speech is necessary for acquisition." (Krashen 1985).

Faltis (1984) states that there are differences in the caretaker speech, especially so in other cultures, where there is no "simplified" input. Mothers in Guatemala rarely expand their children's utterances (Harkness, 1971). Similarly, Ochs (1982) found that Samoan mothers do not provide expansions. Heath (1982) studied working class Black American Community. Here, adults respond only to non-verbal behaviour of young children. They do not involve children in conversation until they can make themselves understood. Neither do adults simplify their language. Faltis (1984) suggested that the Input Hypothesis should be reconsidered in the light of this cross-cultural evidence. However, Krashen says that this is valuable data in support of "comprehensible input containing i + 1, structures slightly beyond the acquirer's current state of competence." Slobins (1975) concludes:

"Children in all cultures learn to speak according to universal timetable ... yet parental practices differ widely in regard to feedback and expansion. Furthermore, children in many cultures receive their primary speech input from other children. Therefore it seems that the major role of input is to provide examples of meaningful utterances in a communicative situation, leaving it to the LAD or LAS (Language Acquisition System) to figure out the structure of the language without explicit tuition or guidance from adult speakers." (p.292).

The input Hypothesis also accounts for the silent period, a period noticeable in child second-language acquisition. This phenomenon is normal, as the child is
building up competence. However, when adults resort to production at an early state, they tend to fall back on first language rules when a second language rule is needed in production but is not available as Newmark put it, first language influence is a result of ignorance and can be cured by acquisition. Krashen (1985).

Two interesting cases are reported when the acquirer is silent for a period of time and then communicates quite freely. Robert Rodriguez, a Spanish who in his autobiography (Rodriguez 1981) tells his own experience. He grew up in Eacrameno, California and spoke only Spanish at home, but at school everything was in English. For the first six months he said nothing in class and his teachers got worried. His parents were consulted and they were advised to use English at home. A few weeks after the switch, Rodriguez began to answer and participate in class. According to second language acquisition theory the silent period is something common among non-English speaking children in an English speaking situation. Several other case histories and the theory suggest that Rodriguez would have begun to speak in English after sometime even without the language switch at home.

The other, an even more interesting case is that of Richard Boydell, an English child. Born with cerebral palsy, he suffered from severe speech defects. He learnt to read with the help of his mother and listened to conversations and enjoyed them even though he could not participate in them. Boydell was educated at home and when he would study on his own, he read books and listened to the radio and television. At the age of thirty, he was given a POSSUM
typewriter. Using it he produced his first letter and according to Fourcin (1975) it was 'elegantly phrased'. The Input Hypothesis has an explanation for Boydell's sudden production after a period of silence. He has over the years during his silent period built up a competency. This was due to the input —listening and reading.

The Input Hypothesis and the affective filter Hypothesis explain second language acquisition in children and adults. Data from research studies indicated that older children and adults acquire second language faster, whereas young children do better in the long run. The hypotheses explain that older children and adults get more comprehensible input and therefore perform better. Younger children, on the other hand do better in the long run due to their lower affective filters.

Formal instruction appear to help second language acquisition in some, but not so in others. The Input Hypothesis explains this phenomenon on the basis of comprehensible input. Language instruction helps when the primary source of input is from the classroom. This is true of young children whose worldly knowledge is incomprehensible, that is, they come to the classroom with hardly any schema. As a result they build up from scratch what they get from the class. Classroom instruction is less helpful when the students are advanced and know about the world around them and have access to input from the outside. The latter students have schema and views regarding the world and language.
Studies related to exposure and its effect indicate that the more exposure there is, the greater the acquisition. If, on the other hand, the situation does not provide comprehensible input, the progress is weak.

Other studies in support of the Input Hypothesis are the research comparing methods, Immersion and Sheltered Language Teaching, Bilingual Programmes, and the Reading Hypothesis. In all the above studies, it was found that what matters is the comprehensible input. The last study, which is related to the Reading Hypothesis is given in detail as this is more relevant to the present research topic and case study undertaken at Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur. Several studies in this field show that there is a strong positive correlation between reading and writing style. Good writers, it was found were the ones who read extensively for their own interest or pleasure. Krashen (1984) and Smith (1983) show that 'writing competence comes only from large amounts of self-motivated reading for pleasure and/or interest. It is reading that gives the writer the "feel" for the look and texture of good writing'.

However, Several studies, especially those by Elley et al. (1976) Smith (1982a) and Krashen (1984) fail to show that there is any clear relationship between the study of grammar and the ability to write. (Krashen 1984).

2.5 Evidence against The Input Hypothesis

Though the above arguments are for the Input Hypothesis there are several arguments against the hypothesis and Krashen has been subjected to what is commonly known as Krashen bashing. Studies by Nelson (1973) reported that
there is a 'positive correlation between rate of acquisition and social interaction'. (Krashen 1984). In the same study, he reported a negative correlation between rate of acquisition and time spent watching television. Similar reports are available from other researchers in other projects namely, 'The Heidelberg Project (cited in Schumann 1978b)' (Krashen 1984) regarding the acquisition of German. However, Krashen does not claim that a strong Interaction Hypothesis is necessary for second language acquisition. If so, then, the silent period experienced by acquirers cannot be accounted for. Besides, there are cases, where young and old have acquired languages by listening to the radio, watching television and by reading books. My own experience, that of friends like Govind Menon in a remote village in Kerala (cited in Chapter One) and my son, a ten year old boy who is able to speak a little Hindi with no other Input except by watching Hindi movies shown on TV2, TV3 and metrovision, give strength to the hypothesis.

Studies conducted by (Gary 1975; Postovsky 1974) on the 'success of methods de-emphasize production' (Total Physical Response and Natural Approach)', (Krashen 1984). A strong Interaction Hypothesis cannot account for all the above studies and their results. Another possible argument against the Input Hypothesis, is the Output Hypothesis. This is a version of the strong Input Hypothesis with acquisition theoretician claiming that second language competence develops via output practice in communicative situations: when he experiences communicative success, his hypothesis about the rule is confirmed; if this happens often enough, the rule is acquired. If the performer fails to
communicate using a given rule, his provisional hypothesis is disconfirmed.’ (Krashen 1984).

Brown and Hanlon (1970) provide evidence against such a communicative competence based on output practice in communicative situations. Their study of parent-child conversations, and responses did not show such a relationship. Brown and Hanlon conclude that parental approval and disapproval of the child’s utterances ‘cannot be the forces causing the child to relinquish immature forms and adopt adult forms’.

Another problem which this hypothesis cannot explain is in the cases where language acquisition takes place with little or no production at all. The Output Hypothesis predicts that by merely listening to the radio or watching television acquisition will not be achieved / will not take place. Studies by Lenneberg (1962) and Fourcin (1975) prove otherwise.

I have a brother who did not speak for a long time until we all thought he was dumb. One day, my maternal grandmother took him to her house and one cold evening began to give him a hot bath, but as the water was too hot for him, he suddenly spoke. He told her the water was too hot for him. All were very happy because we knew then, he was not dumb after all. He was an extremely introverted child, hid behind doors when visitors came home, and spoke very little. Today, he is still reserved, but speaks, writes and presents himself well in public. In this case too, the Output hypothesis cannot explain such linguistic behavior. A child, or an adult may choose to speak or not to speak. He/she may be trying out his/her linguistic competence internally without any outward
display. We have not yet fully understood the complex LAD/LAS or linguistic black box/computer (as I would call it) and therefore are not in a position to answer many of the riddles, confronting language learning/acquisition. Every language learner/acquirer is unique and his/her linguistic ability is also different. Some are good language learners, others are not. A small number may require very little input, while others may require a great amount of input. How a mixed group would respond to the same input for the same duration of time, will tell a lot about their individual needs. But one thing is certain: all will learn/acquire a language, but at their own pace provided that they are normal and do not suffer from any deformities, which will hinder learning/acquisition.

Some studies, namely by Briere (1966) and Sheldon and Strange (1982) show that second language production can precede perception. What they may be saying by this is that, their subjects are able to produce/mimic sounds from languages like Arabic, French and Vietnamese. Briere’s subjects were native English speakers. Contrastive analysis, this is the comparison of the linguistics systems of two language; (Lado 1957; James 1980) predicted that such productions would be difficult for English speakers:

Sheldon and Stranges, ‘subjects were Japanese students of ESL in the United States and produced/mimicked the r/l proficiently. Briere’s subjects underwent a training programme which did not include the listening to such sounds. Instead, some of their subjects were ‘taught to pronounce American/r/ and l/l sounds by explicit reference to articulatory parameters rather than to auditory cue ...’ (Sheldon and Strange 1982 p.254). All the subjects obtained good scores on
production tests by utilising conscious learning. However, their perception scores were not that high, perhaps because this needed more time for processing which made rule use difficult. Gass (1984) reported similar results of ESL adults students who produced voiced and voiceless stops which were close to English norms. Such production is nothing but mimicry which parrots can perform. Language learning/acquisition is quite a different process which requires input, utilises the innateness of the subject and produces utterances/output which are different from the input.

A strong opposition to The Input Hypothesis is the strong interface position held by Sharwood-Smith (1981) who opposes the view that “learned competence cannot directly 'become' acquired competence” (Krashen 1981a; 1982a.). This view if true, implies that the Input Hypothesis is wrong. According to this view, second language skills develop by conscious learning and practice. This, it is argued precedes acquisition.

However, Krashen and Pon (1975) argue that there are cases of hard-working, intelligent and highly motivated ESL students who have advanced in English and possess conscious knowledge of English grammar. These subjects can perform when sufficient time is given and the focus is on form. But they display at times that they have actually acquired certain rules only.

Another argument I can think of as a teacher of English and a learner of French at University, is that such conscious knowledge hinders smooth communication. It is a tiring attempt to construct sentences, while consciously making sure that they conform to the rules learnt. When the input is insufficient,
construction is made in L1 first, and then sentences are reconstructed using the limited L2 (both grammar and lexis). A weaker interface position is of the view that 'learning becomes acquisition' and is 'an alternative route'. Several scholars support this view. By this is meant that there are two ways to acquisition: one by comprehensible Input, and the other by conscious learning. However, there is no real evidence to support this view. On the other hand, there are problems with this view: one is that, it fails to explain the care taker speech, the simple speech used by parents, baby-sitters etc, when they talk to young children who are learning to talk. (Snow & Fergason 1977), the silent period, the success of methods that used comprehensible Input and the reading hypothesis. Natural order (refers to the natural order hypothesis) states that, children acquiring their first language acquire linguistic forms, rules and items in a similar order. For example, in English, children acquire progressive – 'ing', and plural 's' and active sentences before they acquire third person 's' on verbs, or passive sentences. This is said to show, a natural order of development' (Brown 1973; Dulay & Burt 1974). The fact that it goes against the natural order and that the natural order is independent of the teaching order are other evidences against this weak interface position. Some people, language teachers and linguists feel that learning precedes acquisition. This view can be challenged. We do not know the extent of input between the two, namely learning and acquisition. The other, is that learning a rule with insufficient comprehensible input actually hinders proficiency in the language.
There is another view, that is, the weaker interface position which believe that 'acquisition can be indirectly aided by learning' (Krashen 1982a.) Here the performer's own output serves as input for his language acquisition. This option appears to have limited use. The performer's own output serving as input does not seem very efficient, especially in the case of the second language learners/acquirers.

It has been claimed that most second language acquirers 'fossilize', (second/foreign language learners acquire incorrect linguistic features and these become permanent part of the way they speak or write. Aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary range, and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in second or foreign language learning. Fossilized features of pronunciation contribute to a person's foreign accent' Selinker 1977) which means that they fall short of native speaker proficiency. Second language acquisition theory accounts for this phenomenon. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen 1985) explains that 'insufficient quantity of input', and inappropriate quality of input contribute to the acquisition of incorrect forms. The affective filter, (which selects one variety of speech as a model for learning a language, (Dulay, Burt & Krashen 1982), the output filter and the acquisition of deviant forms are the reasons for fossilization.

As stated earlier, insufficient input may be a problem for second language acquirers. Some subjects may need very little input as pointed out, and these are the good and fast language learners. I observed a tender girl of four who could use the passive forms correctly. She would utter sentences like 'The baby needs to be fed'. The subject is a Malaysian girl of Malaysian parents. There
are others of her age exposed to the same linguistic environment, who can't use English with such complex structure and grammar. This, then raises questions regarding how much and for how long, comprehensible input should be available for a subject to acquire a particular level of competence. My ten-year old son too displayed some level of competence although being exposed to 'insufficient quantity of Hindi. Another reason given by Krashen to counter fossilization is that the subject may be exposed to 'inappropriate quantity of input,' and the example he cites is that of a gas station attendant who is exposed to limited input with little variation in vocabulary and structure. An interesting case in the same profession is found at the Caltex gas station at Bandar Sri Damansara. A Bangladeshi gas station attendant works there and I was quite surprised at his fluency in Bahasa Malaysia. My curiosity led me to question him further about his background. He had come to Malaysia two years ago and has been working at the gas station ever since. He has had very little input at his workplace. But I do not know of the input he has had in other places, especially the place where he stays. These workers normally stay together in groups and when they are with their own kind, they speak their mother tongue.

Krashen's (1984) explanation for fossilization using the affective filter and the 'lack of need' approach can explain why many Malaysian students feel that they have no real 'need' to learn/acquire the English language, and need not pass the Language in the SPM. Once a lecturer from the Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore complained that her students did not seem to regard language classes
as important for their technical subjects. This is also a case where the `need' to attain proficiency was lacking and it may in turn lead to fossilization.

Exposure to deviant forms can also cause fossilization. There are two situations for this: one is the classroom environment where the teacher, a non-native speaker might be a non-proficient provider of second language input; the learners will therefore be exposed to an English riddled with errors. Stevick (1982) has suggested that such deviant forms enter in `permanent storage'. Higgs and Clifford (1981) describe another situation where a deviant variety can be acquired. This occurs in informal environments, namely in `the streets', where the performer to meet his communicative needs, exceeds his second language competence, resulting in a great deal of incomprehensible input. To cope with his/her demands the performer resorts to communication strategies for survival. Somehow, he manages to get his message across by strategies, body language, first language rule application and memorized phrases and sentences. Such happenings have taken place in the past and I believe is taking place today too. Pidgins and intermediate forms develop as a result of such deviant forms.

There are other objections to the Input Hypothesis, namely that it is not practical for classroom application, and that such an approach would take a long time. Sharwood-Smith (1981) states: `It may be “naturalistic” to learn languages in a purely intuitive manner, but how long will it take to amass a sufficient amount of implicit knowledge and the appropriate skills for using it?' According to Krashen, research `shows consistently that acquisition-type methods, methods that provide large amounts of comprehensible input which encourage a low
affective filter, are in fact more efficient than approaches that focus on conscious grammar. My language teaching experience and the observations I have made (as mentioned in Chapter One) point to one conclusion: that listening to good input results in good speech (that is good language with good grammar and style), and reading good books result in good writing. Children especially, display this within a very short time.

Lydia White (1986) in her paper ‘Against Comprehensible Input: the Input Hypothesis and the Development of Second—Language Competence’ argues that there are a number of problems with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis ... Firstly, by concentrating on meaning and context, he misses out the fact that certain aspects of a grammar development in the learner are largely internally driven, and independent of context or meaning. Secondly, he overestimates the role and benefits of simplified input. Thirdly, Krashen feels that we can never really be sure what input is relevant to what stage, but this is due to the impression of his formulation: once one incorporates a detailed theory of language, it is possible to come up with a theory to identify precisely what aspects of input trigger development. Finally, there are circumstances where the second-language (L2) input will not be able to show the learner how to retreat from certain non-target forms: the input hypothesis is geared towards handling additions to intermediate grammars, rather than losses'. Though in principle she agrees with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, she has her reservations regarding the learner's ability to 'bring about change' with his present level of grammatical competence interacting with the new input. The second issue she raises is that

29
of 'i', the learner's current level. Instead of i+1, the learner may end up with i-1 if he is exposed to forms of simplified input. In addition, she adds that 'in the absence of any explicit theory as to what the prior knowledge of the learner consists of, we lack any indication of precisely how the Input Hypothesis works'.

Her final observation is that, 'as far as the second language learning situation is concerned, there are a number of situations where comprehensible input, as defined by Krashen necessarily cannot lead to change in a learner's grammar'. According to this line of argument, 'the learner's current grammar (I) acts as a filter on the input, (Gleitman et al. 1984; Newport et al 1977; Shipley et al. 1969; Roper 1982; White 1982), that is, it rejects the input which contains 'i' + 1 because his present knowledge 'i' cannot interpret i + 1. She asks how is it possible to understand structures that the performer/learner has not yet acquired. A hypothetical case where 'contextual factors' may cause change is given to illustrate the active/passive structures of English. The learner's present knowledge 'i' does not have passive voice knowledge 'i + 1'. White argues that it would be difficult for the learner to interpret

'John was kissed by Mary'
as 'Mary kissed John', because his word order allows for structures of SVO type only. At best he would interpret it as 'John kissed Mary'.

It is argued that only non-linguistic context helps in such constructions but do not indicate how they should be replaced. White states that the Input Hypothesis alone cannot explain how a particular rule is acquired, in this case the passive. She asserts that 'the driving factor for grammar change is that the input is

30
incomprehensible, rather than comprehensible. That is, interpreted in terms of a grammar 'i' without a passive rule, a sentence like The book (was) read (by) John is garbage.

2.6 Further Evidence for the Input Hypothesis

White's argument against the Input Hypothesis appears to be logical and convincing, but my experience and observation of children and learners are quite different. As Krashen (1985) states that, grammar is in the input and if sufficient input is available, learners tend to attain proficiency. This means grammatical competence too. How else can I explain the little girl's ability to use complex structures using the passive voice. Perhaps White has chosen the wrong structures for her argument. In the case of relative pronouns which appear in clauses, learners may have difficulties. For example:

a. One of the boys is/was/has ...

But

b. One of the boys who are/were/have ...

I feel learners may have to be exposed to a lot of comprehensible input before they can acquire such grammatical competence. A little learning perhaps may help for those who read extensively. However, after long exposure, performers will be able to see the semantic difference between (a) and (b) based on meaning, rather than trying to explain in vain grammatically, that (a), the subject is 'one' and in (b) it is 'boys'.

31
Furthermore, the use of prepositions and, phrasal verbs cannot be taught because they don't make sense. How to explain the differences like the following: 'on' the bus, but 'in' the car. Then there is 'on' the house. Only by exposure can these differences be understood. One will have to know the language well, not about the language, before one can acquire competence in the above parts of speech and structures. The best way probably is good exposure with the right kind of input. A week ago, my ten year old son remarked 'Acha, it's a stupendous idea'. I sprang to my feet and asked him from where he had got the word. He has been reading a cartoon series called 'A Calvin and Hobbes Collection by Bill Watterson'. We are sometimes pleasantly taken aback when we hear of our children's linguistics ability. They are capable of using correctly structures which we ourselves had not used at their age.

What appears as incomprehensible at first, later becomes comprehensible. This is evident from the output of our children and learners, I acquired competence in my mother tongue after being exposed to it. Today I am able to use complex structures in speech, even though I did not learn them formally. There was a time, when I was baffled by the speed, vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation of Malayalam, a tongue twisting language, which Mohanan K.P. (1990) calls "a phonetician's paradise". Have I not moved from incomprehensibility to comprehensibility? Later at a varsity election, I spoke in Malayalam and won. Krashen might be right when he says that 'we do not need to focus on structures not yet acquired, but ready to be learnt, because they will be in the input anyway ...'.
2.7 Chomsky's innate ideas/hypothesis (1967)

Noam Chomsky's Innate Ideas (refer to pg 12) go back to the seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophers. They were the rationalists and empiricists. Both the rationalists and the empiricists believed in mentalism. The relationship of 'thought, language and speech' and to what extent the mind is involved divided the rationalists and the empiricists. All mentalists agree that there is a mind, but they disagree when it comes to how knowledge and ideas (innate) got there (that is in the mind). Rationalists believe that those ideas were there at birth whereas the empiricists say they are there entirely through experience.

2.7.1 Chomsky's Rationalism

According to Chomsky, recent linguistic research has given support to three views associated with rationalism: that 'beneath the observed and superficial diversity in the natural languages, Chomsky is of the view, that humans are born with minds that contain innate ideas/faculties/knowledge which are of different areas. One such area is the Language Knowledge Area, and Chomsky calls it the LAD (the Language Acquisition Device). Chomsky believes that this faculty is independent of other knowledge. Chomsky has repeatedly asserted that intelligence and logic are not needed for language acquisition. This latest knowledge or innateness has to be activated by input or experiences from the outside world. It is non-functional or operational until such time. The LAD functions as a provider of a particular grammar to anyone who is exposed to any particular language. If, say, a child is exposed to English sentences as input the
LAD then constructs a grammar of English in the child’s mind. According to Chomsky, LAD provides the basic ideas for forming the particular rules and lexical items of any grammar, and it also provides the ‘operational means, according to which, over time, such an outcome may be achieved.’ These ideas or properties of LAD are referred to by Chomsky as Universal Grammar.

Chomsky (1967b) classifies innate ideas into three classes to form LAD. They are the (i) substantive ideas (ii) formal ideas and (iii) constructive ideas (Steinberg, 1982) ‘The substantive ideas are those that appear in relations or are manipulated by operations i.e. phonetic, syntactic and semantic features. The formal ideas are those which express relations or manipulations, i.e. the Base Rule and Transformation Rule functions. For example, in Base rules, which have the form A -> B + C, e.g. S -> NP + VP, the elements A, B and C are the substantives ideas, which the relationship of --→ --- + --- is the formal idea.

In Transformational rules, which has the form X => Y/Z i.e. some structure X changes in some way to a different structure Y, under a certain condition Z, the formal idea is ---=> ---/ --- where => can represent any of a number of changes (deletion, addition, substitution, permutation). The combination of substantive and formal ideas provide the basis for the construction of any grammar of a language.

The third class of ideas, the constructive ideas are those that construct a particular grammar of a particular language with the help of substantive and formal ideas. The particular language is the input. Chomsky does not however, tell us how this innate ideas are activated, for example, when particular language
units, say, the verb, the preposition or the noun are experienced. Chomsky, it is argued does not go into the details of LAD either into its contents nor its functions. There are obvious reasons as to why Chomsky does not go into details. If the LAD was a physical entity like the heart or liver, its anatomy can be described and its physiology studied in a laboratory. Right now, all we know is that man learns/acquires a language just the way a bird takes to the air, and fish to water. We do not know yet, how some birds build intricate nests, and some insects perform complex dance steps before mating. Do they too, have innate ideas for doing what they do which puzzle us? If these activities cannot be studied directly in a laboratory, they can only be studied indirectly by examining what is known and proceed to discover the unknown. For acquiring a language Chomsky argues that intelligence and logic are not necessary, but to study these innate ideas/LAD, their detailed composition, that is their anatomy/contents and their physiology/functions, it would require more than ordinary intelligence and logic. Chomsky's transformational grammar is a small step in that direction. But this too has raised questions, rather than answers. Just because we do not have answers to certain questions, it does not mean that they do not exist. We do know from experience that there is a language faculty or LAD which gives man the ability to acquire a language and communicate using it.

From observation, I find that everybody has this innate faculty and that this innateness varies from individual to individual, that there is a degree of innateness which distinguishes a good language learner from a not-so-good language learner (provided all other variables remain a constant).
This kind of difference we find in a family where the children of the same parents display differing abilities in their linguistic performance. Just as people show differences in their abilities to run, to sing or do some other activities, they show similar differences in their linguistic abilities. This probably could be due to differences in their innate capabilities, which may be due to some genetic differences, certain genes showing degrees of prominence in certain individuals. Steven Pinker (1994) in his book 'The Language Instinct' notes that 'Specific Language Impairment (SLI) runs in families, and if one member of a set of identical twins has it, the odds are very high that the other will, too. Particularly dramatic evidence comes from one British family, the K's recently studied by Myrna Gopnik (1994) and several geneticists. The grandmother of the family is language-impaired. She has five adult children. One daughter is linguistically normal, as are this daughter's children. The other four adults, like the grandmother, are impaired. Together these four had twenty-three children, of them, eleven were language-impaired while twelve were normal. The language impaired children were randomly distributed among the families, the sexes, and the birth orders ... the geneticists working with Goptik noted that the pedigree suggests a trait controlled by a single dominant gene, just like pink flowers on Gregor Mendel's pea plants.' Mendel's experiments with pea plants showed dominant and dormant genes.

The above may one day be an area which probably would provide the answers to our present day problems related to language learning/teaching.
Artificial intelligence, neuroscience, genetics and mathematics may supply the answers we are looking for.

2.8 Habiaesthetic Hypothesis

And lastly, I would like to suggest a hypothesis, that should help relate the two: The Input Hypothesis and The Innate Hypothesis. I would like to call it the Habiaesthetic Hypothesis. The word 'Habiaesthetic' is coined from two words: 'habit' and 'aesthetic'. Like 'innateness', man has a tendency to form habits, good and bad. He also has aesthetic sensibility. This hypothesis posits that man has a tendency to acquire certain tastes, habits or hobbies that display his aesthetic sensibility. He has been involved in various activities from his earliest time on this planet. His undying thirst for Art, music and other forms of cultural activities has resulted in wonderful monuments, works of Art, literature and music. He asked questions and wanted answers. He wanted to know what lay beyond his shores. This led to discoveries and conquests. Then he wanted to record everything he did. Thus began reading and writing. Then he began to read for pleasure even before the printing machine was invented. As stated earlier in Chapter I, man enjoys stories. Small children want to be told stories so that they can go to bed. This tendency of wanting to know about something or somebody is found even among illiterate people. Gossip or rumour mongering is nothing but talking about other people, their lives and matters relating to them. Long ago, people spent time listening to stories when they went on journeys, especially on pilgrimage. Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' and Boccaccio's 'Decameron' were
stories told by people while they were travelling. Chaucer was a 14th century English poet, whose 'The Canterbury Tales' consists of tales told by pilgrims on their way and back from St. Thomas Beckett's shrine at Canterbury. Each pilgrim told four stories, two while going and two while returning.

Boccaccio was a 14th century Italian story-teller and poet whose 'The Decameron' is considered to be the most celebrated collection of short stories in the world. In this, ten young people decide to spend some time in the countryside, and to pass time, each decide to tell a story.

If we are able to provide interesting reading materials for our learners, they may get hooked on to reading very soon. This, we find happening, in homes where reading story books is encouraged. The teaching of language, then becomes easier and the acquisition of grammar automatic. The stories, or whatever materials that are interesting become the input.

2.9 Conclusion

This research undertaking then rests on the Input Hypothesis, the Innate Hypothesis and the Habiaesthetic Hypothesis which lends support to the Input Hypothesis, in that, it will help to lower the affective filter by the emotional involvement of the learners with enjoyable and entertaining input.

Theodore L. Harris, the former President of the International Reading Association puts it aptly by stating that 'Reading is a creature of society'. It is an activity we have to cultivate in learners and get them emotionally interested.