Review of Literature

1. Culture and SLA
Christopher L. Spackman from Ohio Dominican University has explored the relationship between culture and second language acquisition in the paper titled Culture and SLA published in a TESOL journal.

The paper emphasizes the need to learn culture in order to learn language as they are inseparable. Since culture is experienced through language learning a second language requires learning the linguistic aspects of the target culture. Second language acquisition is second culture acquisition.

2. Culture in Language Learning and teaching
This paper was jointly written by Bilal Genc and Erdogan Bada from Cukurova University, Turkey. It was published in The Reading Matrix Vol. 5, No. 1, April 2005. The main focus of the paper was the effect of the culture class on ELT students of the university.

This study was especially relevant to the research undertaken by me as it dealt with the effect of a culture class in reducing the culture shock which would be felt by students who have the prospects of travelling abroad.

3. The importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom
This thesis was written by Dimitrios Thanasoulas, a member of TESOL Greece and the AILA Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy. The paper was mainly concerned with the contribution and the incorporation of the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom. The main premise of the paper is that effective communication is more than a matter of language proficiency and that, apart from enhancing and enriching communicative competence, cultural competence can also lead to empathy and respect toward different cultures as well as promote objectivity and cultural perspicacity.
4. **Culture and the ‘good teacher’ in the English Language classroom.**

This paper was published in the ELT journal, volume 61/4 October 2007 and was written by Colin Sowden. He is the Director of the international Foundation Course at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. The paper elucidates how the teacher has returned to centre stage, but as a more informed, articulate, and empowered professional.

5. **Strangers in stranger lands: Language, Learning, Culture**

The paper was jointly written by Hong Li, University of Missouri at Columbia, Roy J. Fox, University of Missouri at Columbia and Dario J. Almarza, University of Missouri at Columbia. The paper appeared in the International Journal of Progressive Education, Vol. 3 No.1, 2007.

This study investigates international students’ perceptions of the issues they face using English as a second language while attending American higher education institutions.

6. **Culture Shock and The Problem of Adjustment To New Cultural Environments**

This was an editorial written by Dr. Lalervo Oberg, an anthropologist in the Health, Welfare and Housing Division; United States Operations Mission to Brazil. In this editorial he talks about the problems faced by international students in American universities and gives tips to handle the situation.

7. **Language learning and awareness of personality type in Chinese settings**

*by Alastair Sharp, Ph.D.*

Alastair Sharp is an Associate Professor of English at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Reading, UK and has also studied at the universities of Nottingham, Birmingham, and Wales. This article will identify MBTI preferences among a group of Chinese university students studying English in Hong Kong.
sand suggest that a knowledge of personality type is important for both teacher and student in maximizing learning success.

8. **Language Learning Motivation among Iranian Undergraduate Students**

This article was written by Zahra Vaezi from the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China

The aim of this study was to describe and examine Iranian's undergraduate students' integrative and instrumental motivation toward learning English as a foreign language. In the study, 79 non-English major students from the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) were selected to complete a questionnaire reflecting their motivation for learning English. In order to determine the students’ tendency towards the two kind of motivation a modified 25-item survey was administered to undergraduate students in a university located in east of Iran. The results have shown that Iranian students had very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English and they were more instrumentally motivated.

9. **Motivation as a Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition**

This paper was written by Jacqueline Norris-Holt(Nagoya, Japan) and it explores Gardner's socio-educational model and the significance of motivation as a contributing factor in second language (L2) acquisition. Motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language.
BOOKS REVIEWED


From the books reviewed the following theories and trends were gleaned:

THEORIES AND TRENDS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Language teaching as a profession gained ground in the early twentieth century. But the concept is not a new one as seen in the study of classical languages like Greek and Latin. Grammar schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth century taught grammar through the rote method of learning. Translations were done with the use of parallel linguistic texts and dialogue. Once students gained proficiency with basic rules they were introduced to the advanced study of grammar and rhetoric. Lapses in knowledge were often dealt with in a very stringent manner often with brutal punishment. Such a method surely could not have been popular as learning for
children in such schools must have had a deadening effect. This lead to a decline in the learning and teaching of Latin but the methodology persisted.

With the advent of modern languages the teaching methodology of learning grammar rules by heart cast its shadow on the new languages. Learning to communicate in the target language was not the main objective. Abstract rules of grammar and translation of disconnected sentences was the order of the day. The same applied to the study of foreign languages. This was the Grammar Translation Method and it dominated language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s.

Towards the mid-nineteenth the Grammar Translation Method was rejected as it did not fulfill the objective of learning a foreign language, although it was easy on the teacher, the student was often frustrated and developed a disenchantment with language learning.

The next method which took shape gradually was the Structural method wherein learners were taught the most basic structural patterns which occurred in the language. The Frenchman F. Gouin, a well-known reformer of the mid-nineteenth century used situations and themes as ways of organizing and presenting oral language. He also used gestures and actions to convey the meanings of utterances.

By the 1880s English language teaching began to take on a scientific approach. The discipline of linguistics was revitalized. Many practical-minded linguists such as Henry Sweet in England, Wilhelm Vietor in Germany and Paul Passy in France reformed the ideas of ELT which resulted in the establishing of a new science- Phonetics- the scientific analysis and description of the sound systems of languages. The proponents of Linguistics emphasized that speech and not so much the written word was the primary form of language.
The foundation of The International Phonetic Association took place in 1886, and its International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was designed in such a manner that the sounds of any language could be accurately transcribed. This lead to emphasis on the spoken language wherein phonetic training was provided to inculcate good pronunciation habits. An inductive approach to grammar was adopted, phrases and idioms were taught through conversation texts and dialogues and vocabulary was taught through establishing associations with the target language and not the native language. Even before students were introduced to the written language it was important for them to hear it. Words should not be taught in isolation. They must be presented in the context of sentences and so also sentences be placed in the relevant context.

Gradually this lead to a formation of principles on the study of language. These principles provided the theoretical foundations for a systematic approach to language teaching which reflected the beginnings of the discipline of applied linguistics—that branch of language study concerned with the scientific study of second and foreign language teaching and learning. As yet, these ideas had not attained the status of a method. But they pointed towards the formulation of implementable design for teaching a language. At the same time a new vein of interest was emerging to develop principles for language teaching out of naturalistic principles which are similar to the principles seen in first language acquisition. This ultimately led to what has come to be called the Direct Method.

The Army Method just like the Direct Method depended on the intensity of contact with the target language rather than any basis of methodology. This methodology proved the efficacy of an intensive oral based approach.
In 1939, the University of Michigan developed the first English Language Institute in the United States; it specialized in the training of teachers of English as a foreign language and in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Charles Fries, director of the institute, was trained in structural linguistics, and he applied the principles of structural linguistics to language teaching. Fries and his colleagues rejected approaches such as those of the Direct Method, in which learner are exposed to the language, use it, and gradually absorb its grammatical patterns.

The approach developed by linguists at Michigan and other universities became known variously as the Oral Approach, the Aural-Oral approach, and the Structural Approach. It advocated aural training first, then pronunciation training, followed by speaking, reading and writing. Language was identified with speech, and speech was approached through structure.

Communicative Language Teaching (CBT) marked the beginning of a major paradigm shift in language teaching in the twentieth century. This method is based on the theory that language is communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as “communicative competence”. Hymes coined this term in order to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky’s theory of competence. It was Chomsky’s view that

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky 1965: 3)

Chomsky focused on the abstract abilities that speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language whereas Hymes defined what a speaker needed to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community.
Another theory of communication favorably looked upon is Halliday’s functional account of language use. He described seven basic functions of language that are fulfilled when children learn their first language: using language to get things, to control behavior of others, to create interaction with others, to express personal feelings and meanings, to learn and to discover, to create a world of the imagination and to communicate information.

The exponents of CLT were of the opinion that learning a second language was similar to acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions. A more pedagogically influential analysis of this theory is propounded by Canale and Swain (1980), in which four dimensions of communicative competence are identified: Grammatical competence which is what Chomsky refers to as linguistic competence and what Hymes intends by what is “formally Possible”. Sociolinguistic competence refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the communicative purpose of their interaction, discourse competence refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the doping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication.

A new philosophy of learning was proposed by Tracy Terrell, a teacher of Spanish in California. This approach grew out of his experiences and observations during his classes and it incorporated the “naturalistic” principles researchers had identified in studies of second language acquisition. He called it the Natural Method. This approach gained credence due to the support given by Krashen.
Task-Based Language Teaching

The logical development of Communicative Language Teaching has been the method of Task-Based Language Teaching. This method used tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in its curriculum. Certain principles govern this way of teaching and they are

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.
- Activities in which language is used for carrying our meaningful tasks promote learning.
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Tasks are considered as useful modes for applying these principles. This method proposed the notion of “task” as a central unit of planning and teaching. There is no classified definition of task but one can take to understand that a task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language such as finding a solution to a puzzle, assembling a simple machine, answering or making a telephone call and so on.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

In contemporary theory of language learning and teaching is imperative that the identity of the learner be taken into account as it addresses the ways in which he understands his relationship to the social world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how the learner understands possibilities for the future.

The conditions under which language learners speak read or write the second language never remain static. They are subject to change influenced by relations of power in different sites: learners who may not be valued in one site may be esteemed in another. The identity of the language learner is construed as being multiple, a site of struggle and subject to change. For this
reason, every time learners interact in the target language they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation. Although the conditions of language learning are dynamic, social contexts and structural conditions cannot be determined. Through human agency, learners who speak from the identity of their mother tongue struggle to reframe their relationship with their interlocutors and claim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak, thereby enhancing language learning.

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Second Language acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language. The additional language is called a second language (L2), even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired. It is also commonly called target language (TL), which refers to any language that is the main aim or goal of learning and in this study it is English that will be considered as the second language.

There are several approaches to the study of Second Language Acquisition and they can be broadly classified under these three categories by which they are influenced:

1. Linguistic

2. Psychological

3. Socio-cultural

**Differences in learners.** From a psychological perspective one can consider why some language learners are more successful than others. The focus, then will be on the learners
themselves and the factors that will be taken into consideration are: age, sex, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning strategies.

**Age**

It is commonly believed that children are more successful L2 learners than adults, but surprisingly the evidence for this is equivocal. There is a critical period for first language acquisition: children have only a limited number of years during which normal acquisition is possible. Beyond that, physiological changes cause the brain to lose its plasticity, or capacity to assume the new functions that learning language demands.

**Sex**

There seems to be a general notion in western cultures that females tend to be better language learners than males, but this belief is not substantiated by concrete research evidence and may be a social construct, based on outcomes which reflect cultural and sociopsychological constraints and influences.

**Aptitude**

The assumption that there is a talent which is specific to language learning has been widely held for many years. The following four components were proposed by Carroll (1965) as underlying this talent, and they constitute the bases for most aptitude tests:

- Phonemic coding ability: It is the capacity to process auditory input into segments which can be stored and retrieved.
- Inductive language learning ability and grammatical sensitivity: they are both concerned with central processing.

- Associative memory capacity is importantly concerned with how linguistic items are stored, and with how they are recalled and used in output.

The concept of language-learning aptitude is essentially a hypotheses that possessing various degrees of these abilities predicts correlated degrees of success in L2 acquisition.

**Motivation**

Motivation largely determines the level of effort which learners expend at various stages in their L2 development, often a key to ultimate level of proficiency.

The most widely recognized types of motivation are integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is based on interest in learning L2 because of a desire to learn about or associate with the people who use it, or because of an intention to participate or integrate in the L2-using speech community, in any case, emotional or affective factors are dominant. Instrumental motivation involves perception of purely practical value in learning the L2, such as increasing occupational or business opportunities, enhancing prestige and power, accessing scientific and technical information, or just passing a course in school.

**Cognitive style**

Cognitive style refers to individuals’ preferred way of processing: i.e. of perceiving, conceptualizing, organizing, and recalling information. Unlike factors of age aptitude and motivation, its role in explaining why some L2 learners are more successful than others has not been well established, but extravagant claims have sometimes been made which need to be
viewed with skepticism and caution. We do know that, whatever the relation of cognitive style to success, it involve a complex (and as yet poorly understood) interaction with specific L2 social and learning contexts.

**Personality**

Personality factors are sometimes added to cognitive style in characterizing more general learning style. Speculation and research in SLA has included the following factors, also often characterized as endpoints on continua. As with cognitive styles, most of us are somewhere in between the extremes.