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Errata

p 208 para 1, 4th sentence: "discusses" for "discuses"

Learning English in Urban Sri Lanka
Social, Psychological and Pedagogical Factors Related to
Second Language Acquisition

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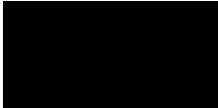
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2003

Declaration

This thesis, presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Ethical clearance was sought for conducting the research and granted by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research involving Humans at Monash University on 04 April, 2001 (Project 2001/052).

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Date: 21.08.2003

Abstract

This thesis addresses the social, psychological and pedagogical factors that affect second language acquisition. The case of learning English as a second language in Sri Lanka was chosen for study. The thesis is based on quantitative and qualitative empirical research carried out from May 2001 to December 2001 in the city of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. The sample was selected from among Grade 9 students (14 years old) of four 'prestigious/privileged' government schools (that is, schools in the top group of schools described as the IAB category). The sample consisted of 366 students, their parents, eight English teachers and the principals of the four schools. Additional information was gathered from government institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Examinations and the National Institute of Education (NIE).

The principal social factor considered was social class. It has been assumed that the students' social class background would be indicated by characteristics such as income, parental education, father's occupation, language spoken at home, tuition class attendance and age at which English learning commenced. M.W. Apple's theory (1976, 1996) about the relationship between education and social class was adopted for studying the relationship between these class characteristics and English acquisition. The socio-educational model introduced by R.C. Gardner (1985b) was adapted to facilitate the study of students' motivational and attitudinal characteristics. Finally, pedagogical factors were examined to see the extent to which communicative language teaching, a particular language teaching approach devised for teaching English as a second language, was implemented in Sri Lanka. Students' level of English acquisition was determined by averaging their English marks for two school term-tests.

The findings related to students' social class identity confirmed that students from an upper social class background showed higher levels of English acquisition.

However, it was revealed that even in these so-called 'prestigious' schools, only a minority of students came from families with characteristics such as English-speaking parents and large family incomes. It was clear that even in these 1AB schools the majority of students depend on the school for learning English.

Contrary to initial expectations, the findings of this study showed that the students were highly motivated to learn English. However, higher motivation in itself did not result in higher levels of English acquisition for all students. The impact of social and pedagogical factors seemed significant as well. Further, students who were motivated to learn English for instrumental reasons, such as better education and employment, achieved higher levels of English acquisition than those motivated by integrative reasons, such as becoming friends with English-speaking Sri Lankans.

Finally, the study revealed several issues related to classroom pedagogy that seemed to inhibit students' English fluency. Classroom conditions, such as course and examination requirements, teachers' lack of English proficiency, students' reluctance to speak English in the classroom and the kind of authority exercised by the teacher were seen to hinder the communicative objectives of the language course.

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Introduction

Sri Lanka has a long history of being exposed to the English language since the days of the British colonisers. During the British colonial era, English was taught only to those who could afford to 'buy it'. That is, the schools in which education was provided in the English medium levied fees which prevented the poor social classes of Sri Lankans from receiving a comprehensive English education. This historical situation has continued to place English in an elitist position, even in the years after independence. Post-independence policies of restoring the indigenous languages as national languages of the country and of making English equally accessible to every Sri Lankan have not been completely successful in removing English from its elitist position. Therefore, even in 21st century Sri Lanka, English is still looked upon as a 'tool' in the hands of the country's elite classes. A good command of English continues to be an indispensable qualification for anyone who aspires to join the elite class.

Successive governments of post-independent Sri Lanka have placed considerable importance on propagating English fluency among Sri Lankans. This continues to be the declared government educational policy as in recent years more than ever, the country's need for English-speaking citizens has come to be realised. As educational policies of recent years have focussed on the creation of individuals capable of steering the nation towards ethnic harmony and modernisation (De Mel, 2001), the teaching of English to all Sri Lankans in school has become a major concern in this regard. Research such as that undertaken in this thesis becomes significant within these historical and contemporary conditions. The findings made in this study regarding the micro aspects of the phenomenon of learning and teaching English in Sri Lanka may provide useful insights for improving educational policy in regard to English education, as well as the quality of the English course offered by schools.

This study focuses on social, psychological and pedagogical factors that are related to the learning of English in a sample of students chosen from four 'prestigious/privileged' government schools in Colombo. Colombo was chosen for study because of commonly made claims that the city holds a privileged position in comparison to other geographical areas in regards to education in general. Furthermore, because of the claims made concerning the relative success of the English program in Colombo schools of the IAB category compared to lower category schools, four IAB schools were chosen for the field study. The thesis examines the 'extent' of privilege experienced by students in these schools in regards to learning English.

The research question that guided the study of social and psychological factors is as follows:

What relationship exists between English language acquisition on the one hand and family socio-economic status and student motivation on the other?

Research objectives related to classroom conditions and pedagogy were addressed through the following questions:

- i. How is communicative language teaching implemented in Sri Lankan English language classrooms?
- ii. What classroom conditions militate against or support the teaching of English in the schools studied?

The sample of study included 366 Grade 9 (14 year old) school students, their parents, their English teachers (8) and their school principals (4). The level of English acquisition was measured by averaging marks obtained by students for English at two school term-tests. The research questions involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative information. Collection of data was carried out through questionnaires, interviews and observations.

A Note on the Term 'Second Language'

The term second language is usually defined in relation to concepts like 'first' or 'foreign' language. In the definition of the expression 'second language', researchers use three different perspectives. The first perspective defines English as a second language if it is learned in school in a society where English is the 'normal' (or main) language (for example, Spanish immigrants learning English in the USA). Under such conditions, the learners normally have substantial exposure to the language in their social world (Allwright, 1996: 213; Ellis, 1996: 215; Hird, 1995: 22; Lattey, 1994: 83). The second perspective defines English as a second language if it has a 'visible' presence in the society where people of different linguistic backgrounds use it as a *lingua franca* or link language (for example, India) (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 5; Ellis, R., 1999: 11-12; Skela, 1998: 94). For these researchers English is a 'foreign' language if it is taught as a school subject in a society where it is not a widespread medium of communication outside the schools (for example, learning English in Japanese schools). The third perspective states that the term 'second' is generally used to refer to any language other than the 'first' language (Ellis, R., 1999).

English in Sri Lanka can be defined as a mixture of these definitions. It is taught in school, and the school curriculum treats it as the second language of students. English is not a widespread medium of communication within or outside most schools but it does have a visible presence in Sri Lankan society. Policy makers and the leaders of society consider it the *lingua franca* among speakers of the two local languages spoken in the country (Brann, 1985), although the numbers using English as the link language would constitute a minute proportion (Russell and Savada, 1990). Furthermore, it is the language learned by most Sri Lankans as the language other than the first language (Udagama, 1999). Therefore, the place of the English language in Sri Lanka, from any of the three perspectives discussed above, is a 'second' language.

Thesis Outline

The thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapter 1 examines the historical position of English and its contemporary consequences in Sri Lanka. This chapter outlines the historical process of how English became the medium of communication among the elites in Sri Lanka. The chapter shows that the English language added another dimension to a country that was already divided along ethnic, linguistic, religious, class and caste lines. It argues that the stratification caused by this language still exists in Sri Lanka despite various measures taken to promote the indigenous languages.

Chapter 2 reviews theoretical approaches relevant to the study. Firstly, M.W. Apple's (1996) theory of the relationship between social class/power and education is examined, followed by sociological theories that discuss the potential social functions of English in a developing, multi-ethnic country such as Sri Lanka. The translation of these social functions into student motivation is then considered. Accordingly, R.C. Gardner's (1985b) socio-educational model of second language acquisition, which discusses student motivation, is reviewed. Finally, the communicative approach to language teaching against which the success of classroom pedagogy will be measured is explained.

Chapter 3 discusses international research on the social, psychological and pedagogical factors that are the concern of the present study. Studies dealing with students' socio-economic background, attitudinal and motivational characteristics, aspects of communicative language teaching and English acquisition are examined.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology utilised in this study. The research question, the nature of the sample, and the methodologies adopted in collecting the quantitative and qualitative data, as well as issues of reliability and

validity of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods pertinent to the present research are examined and discussed.

Chapter 5, the first of the data analysis chapters, presents the findings regarding students' socio-economic background and examines how this background influences their English acquisition. The data analysis shows that though students of Colombo schools *may be*¹ in a socially advantaged position compared to students from other areas, only a minority of these students come from families which display the socio-economic characteristics that are most favourable for English acquisition. Based on this finding it is pointed out that even in these so-called 'privileged' schools of Sri Lanka, the majority of students rely fundamentally on their school English language program to improve their English proficiency.

Chapter 6 analyses data related to attitudinal and motivational characteristics of the students. The findings refute the commonly made claim that Sri Lankan students are less motivated to learn English. The survey shows that students hold positive attitudes toward learning English and are highly motivated. The data analysis further shows that students who are instrumentally motivated towards learning English perform better at English examinations compared to those integratively motivated.

Chapter 7 examines the classroom teaching of English in the schools of the sample. Analysis of the observation notes taken during English lessons and interviews with the teachers and principals show that certain characteristics of the education system and of classroom practices of both teachers and students hinder the implementation of a communicative classroom in these schools.

¹ Due to the fact that the sample did not contain students from other geographical areas of Sri Lanka, it is not possible to refute the claims that students of Colombo schools are generally privileged.

Chapter 8 presents the study's conclusions and discusses their implications, and suggests ways of improving classroom pedagogy. Further suggestions are made for future research.

Chapter 1

English Language Education in Sri Lanka

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as the country is officially known, is an island of 65,610 square kilometres situated 29 kilometres away from the south-eastern coast of India (Russell and Savada, 1990: xv). The estimated population of Sri Lanka was 18.7 million in 2001 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2001)¹. Sinhalese are the majority ethnic group accounting for 74% of the population while the Tamils constitute 18%, Muslims (Moors) 7% and other ethnic groups (Eurasians, Malays, the aboriginal Veddas) 1% (Russell and Savada, 1990: xvi). People belonging to some of these ethnic groups are again sub-divided according to religion, language spoken, caste, region of origin and of course, social class background. Taking only the large communities into consideration, the Sinhalese speak the Sinhala language and the Tamils and the Muslims speak the Tamil language. There are small proportions in all these three communities who are Sinhala-Tamil bilingual. English is spoken in educated circles which include about 10% of the total population² (Russell and Savada, 1990: xvi).

The greatest problem faced by the nation during the past two decades has been the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict which developed into a devastating civil war, retarding economic and social development of the country. The current education policy, in its attempt to find a solution to this problem, gives priority to the creation of tolerance among children from different ethnic groups. The importance of 'teaching' ethnic tolerance has been largely realised since the early 1990s (De Mel, 2001). A

¹ The last full census of population was taken in 1981. Civil war conditions have prevailed in the North and the East of the country, and no complete enumeration of the people living in this part of the country was made after 1981. According to the 1981 census, the population of the country was 14,847,000 (Department of Census and Statistics, 1997).

² The figure 10% should not be taken as anything more than a rough guess about who can effectively communicate in English. The actual proportion could well be much less.

further goal of education in Sri Lanka is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and technical skills required for the modern employment market (Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 11 and 13; De Lanerolle, 1991: 4; De Mel, 2001; National Education Commission, 1997: 11 and 17; Wijesinha, 2001). Educational policies of recent years have placed great importance on the teaching of English as an appropriate means of achieving both these goals. The English language, therefore, has played and continues to play a distinctive role in the country's development. The sociology of the use of English in Sri Lanka, today, and sociological factors affecting its teaching and learning are all closely linked to the country's modern history commencing from the period of British colonial rule. The status attached to the English language in contemporary Sri Lankan society has had its origins in the importance it acquired during this period, firstly, as the language of colonial administration and then as the language of Sri Lankan elites.

This chapter addresses the historical context for the issues studied in this thesis. The chapter takes a chronological approach to discussing the English language in Sri Lankan society opening with a description of the educational policies of the country during the British colonial era. Following will be a discussion of the language and educational policies of independent Sri Lanka which focussed on promoting the vernaculars and an equitable system of education. It is noted that the beginnings of these policies can be traced to the last two decades of British rule, when Sri Lankans were enjoying facilities of partial self-government. The chapter will then examine the extent to which these post-independent educational policies have been able to realise their objectives. Finally, the status of the English language in contemporary Sri Lanka will be examined.

Educational Policies under the British Colonisers (1796-1948)³

Sri Lankan society has traditionally depended mainly on religious institutions for educating the young (Ames, 1967: 24-25; Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 53). The coming of three European colonial rulers to the island, the Portuguese (1505-1656), Dutch (1656-1796) and British (1796-1948), changed the importance attached to this traditional education. Ever since the coming of the Portuguese, western education has been limited to higher class, affluent Sri Lankans (Goonaratne, 1968: 3). For the Portuguese, education was a means of converting locals into their religion. The Dutch, similar to their predecessors, implemented a government-organised school system, mainly for evangelical purposes, that provided a free and compulsory vernacular education for lay people. These two European rulers were not interested in introducing their languages to the locals (Jayasuriya, 1976: 24-25; Jayaweera, 1971: 151; Kearney, 1967: 52; Walatara, 1965: 3).

During the British colonial period, the English language, the language of the colonial master, was naturally the official language of Sri Lanka. They established a more organised education system⁴ involving both English and the vernacular languages. As well as establishing a class of English-speaking locals who could be used as intermediaries between the colonial rulers and the indigenous people, the aim of the British was religious conversion. By the early years of the nineteenth century, therefore, Christianity and the English language had become the primary routes for higher education and social mobility under the British rule (Ames, 1967: 31-32; Chandraprema, 2001a; Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 52; De Silva and De Silva, 1990:10; De Souza, 1969a;

³ Although the period 1796-1948 is called the British period of Sri Lankan modern history, during the first few years of this era, 1796-1802, the East India Company managed the coastal areas of the country. These coastal areas were made a British colony in 1802 and the whole country came under British rule only in 1815.

⁴ The education system has been moulded into its present structure on the foundations so laid by the British (Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 53).

Dharmadasa, 1992: 32; Goonaratne, 1968: 8; Jayasuriya, 1969:65, 1976: 480; Jayaweera, 1971: 153, 1973: 465-467, 1974:20; Kearney, 1967: 56-57; Nesiah, 1945; Wasala, 2002; Wickramasuriya, 1976: 17-18).

The social value placed on the English language in contemporary Sri Lanka is largely related to the British education system which for the first time introduced a European language to a minority of Sri Lankans. Some schools established by the British, known as the 'superior schools' (Jayasuriya, 1976: 67), provided an education in the English medium. These schools levied a fee, and therefore, the education provided by these schools was restricted to the privileged minority who could afford to buy it: the economically privileged Sri Lankans (De Souza, 1969a, 1978: 37; Wickramasuriya, 1976: 17). It was impossible then for the poor, lower class Sri Lankans to reach the higher standard of life that competence in the colonial master's language permitted. Running parallel to the English medium schools were the 'vernacular schools' which offered an education free of charge for children who could not afford an English medium education (De Alwis, 1969: 977). These were schools with very little financial support from the government. There was also a social stigma attached to these vernacular schools (De Alwis, 1969: 978; Jayaweera, 1973: 465-466). These two types of schools, the English medium and vernacular schools, served the political needs and evangelical purposes of the colonisers, respectively (Dharmadasa, 1992: 29; Jayaweera, 1971: 160-164).

Under the British, education, if it had any affiliations to the colonial language, was subject to fee levying. For example, in schools where the medium of education was either vernacular or bilingual, a fee was levied from the students when they commenced learning in the English medium or learning just the English language as a subject (Jayasuriya, 1969: 4-5, 1976: 475-476). This link created between the English language and economic status established a class-based education system which created a privileged minority and a disadvantaged majority based on the medium of education (De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 10; Fernando, 1987: 57; Jayasuriya, 1976: 88;

Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 54; Kearney, 1967: 55; Udagama, 1999: 7). This class-based education system introduced by the British added a new dimension to the social stratification of Sri Lanka: 'a language-based socio-economic inequality linked to two different cultural paradigms, British and Sri Lankan' (Fernando, 1987: 57). The English language began to be labelled an 'elitist language' and the Sri Lankans educated in it formed a new middle class stratum. The Sri Lankan middle class which came into being during colonial rule was a mixture of all ethnic groups and all castes (Fernando, 1976: 343). This new class stratum was more or less the result of English education and the Anglicised way of life promoted by English medium schools. The path opened by the English language to elite status created new opportunities for those Sri Lankans who were the victims of the traditional social system. For example, it offered members of lower castes the opportunity to move away from a caste system based on a hereditary structure of occupations towards a class system based on education, public sector or commercial employment and wealth (Chandraprema, 2001a; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 10; Dharmadasa, 1992:189; Fernando, 1976: 343-348, 1987: 57; Goonaratne, 1968: 50; Kandiah, 1981: 63).

The 'elitist' nature attached to the English language as a consequence of the British education system developed two potential roles for the language within Sri Lanka. First, the English language played a significant role in preventing the emergence of separate ethnic consciousness among the local elites during the country's struggle for independence. The multi-ethnic Sri Lankan elites linked by the colonial language functioned as a united force against the colonisers. The English language, by functioning as the medium of communication between the British colonisers and the Sri Lankan elite class, helped in the gradual process of constitutional bargaining through which the latter managed to acquire independence from the former (Goonaratne, 1968: 8; Gooneratne, 1992; Jayasuriya, 1976: 45; Jayaweera, 1973: 461; Kearney, 1967: 52-53; Wasala, 2002). Subsequently, during the immediate post independence period, the English language continued to function as a language that linked the Sri Lankan elites of various ethnicities. This stage of history established the

'link' (integrative) role of English in Sri Lanka. Second, the class connotations attached to the English language developed an 'instrumental' value for the language by making it a necessary factor for upward social mobility within and outside Sri Lanka. Consequently, the English language has continued to function as the 'language of modernisation' linking Sri Lanka with the rest of the world. These two potential roles of the English language became major concerns of post-independent language and educational policies of the country.

Post-independent Language Policies

The national language policy adopted by the elites of independent Sri Lanka was largely related to two characteristics of the elites, their ethnic and class background. The elites of Sri Lanka formed a mixed group consisting of individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds belonging to the affluent social class strata of the society (Kearney, 1975: 742; Gunasingam, 1999: 181). Therefore, language policies brought forward by these elites had strong ethnic and class connotations. Their ethnic affiliations made them favour the vernaculars as the national language for the independent nation while their class background encouraged them to retain English as a privilege of the upper classes.

For these elites, English was the mode of daily communication and vernacular languages were only used in the simplest and the most intimate forms of social intercourse with frequent borrowings from English. It was the English language and the western-oriented cultural background of these ethnically diverse elites that gave them their cohesion and socio-cultural identity as a class (Fernando, 1996: 490-491). During the independence struggle, the common goal (independence), the common class background (upper class) and cultural orientation (western) of the Sri Lankan politicians of different ethnicities contributed immensely to maintaining the unity of the movement (Kandiah, 1984: 122-125). These politicians were distinct from the masses in that their cultural practices were more 'British' than indigenous

(Amarasekera, 1990: 7-8; Fernando, 1987: 48; Jayaweera, 1973: 465 and 473, Khubchandani, 1977; Wickramasuriya, 1976). They were 'western' to the extent of holding disparaging attitudes toward the vernacular languages and native customs, and were not capable of appreciating vernacular literature⁵ (De Silva, 1986: 70; Dharmadasa, 1992: 33-34 and 117-121; Fernando, 1976: 342; Gooneratne, 1992: 6; Passe, 1948: 9 and 15). For these reasons, they were isolated from their local culture and, therefore, the masses (Gooneratne, 1992: 17; Jayaweera, 1973: 467).

In their attempt to develop as potential leaders of independent Sri Lanka, this elitist group of westernised Sri Lankan politicians had to adopt measures of identifying with the masses of the country. The vernacularisation of the country's language policy was one of their first attempts in that direction. The fact that English continued to be the official language of independent Sri Lanka was argued to have made the country 'linguistically a colony, though geopolitically it was a nation-state' (Fernando, 1996: 486). The political movement which focussed on replacing English with the vernacular languages in post-independent Sri Lanka is known as the *Swabasha*⁶ movement. The *Swabasha* movement, which originated for the first time in the 1920s, was a united effort by both Tamils and Sinhalese to get the vernacular languages to replace English as the official language (Gunasingam, 1999: 9; Jayaweera, 1973: 473-474; Navaratna-Banda, 2000; Ram, 1989: 35; Wickramasuriya, 1976).

During the early stages of the *Swabasha* movement in the 1920s, the segregation of the British rulers/administrators, the vernacular educated and the segment of the English educated who were in favour of vernacularisation of language

⁵ Such attitudes are visible even in some contemporary academic writings. For example, Fernando (1996: 492) states that 'indigenous theatre, particularly the Sinhala, were *poor quality* (my italics) melodramas or folk drama associated with magico-religious rituals'. This statement is based on a comparison of Sinhala traditional drama with classics of Western drama. These two are not comparable. What she calls 'poor quality' is the original quality of these forms of drama. This is the quality still seen in this type of drama even today, when a form of Sinhala drama has emerged with the influence of the western model.

⁶ Meaning one's own language and in the Sri Lankan context, both Sinhala and Tamil.

policy, affected the success of the movement. Firstly, the concerns raised by the anti-western, vernacular educated elites were ineffective because they did not have links with the English-speaking administration (Jayaweera, 1973: 474; Nissan and Stirrat, 1990: 34; Ram, 1989: 80-81). Secondly, the arguments raised by the section of the English educated Sri Lankan elite class who were actively involved in restoring the vernaculars to its rightful place, were ignored not only by the British rulers but also by the remaining segment of the English-educated Sri Lankan elites (De Alwis, 1969: 976-977; Wickramasuriya, 1976: 18). Even after independence, with greater power vested in Sri Lankan politicians, it took approximately a decade for the vernacularisation issue to come to the fore as a national issue. A class of elites, similar to those who were active during the early stages of the *Swabhasha* movement (1920s), followed the attempts of their predecessors, and for the first time, in 1956, succeeded in making changes to the language policy (Wickramasuriya, 1976: 29).

In the late 1950s, the *Swabhasha* movement, which was initially a united effort of all ethnicities, gradually started to take the form of a Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarian movement (Navaratna-Banda, 2000, 2002). It developed, in principle, as a force against all *English-educated* Sinhalese, Tamil and Christian elites (Gooneratne, 1992: 16; Ponnambalam, 1983: 103). In reality, however, the Tamils began to perceive this movement as specifically targeting them. They were more vulnerable to a policy which favoured the Sinhala language as the national language of the country because they held a comparatively larger number of high-ranking elitist posts (Navaratna-Banda, 2000: 117, 2002: 62; Ponnambalam, 1983: 103). Those fears that developed among the Tamils regarding potential risks to their social position were not at all groundless. For example, in their knowledge of English, the Tamils were educationally in a more advantageous position than the Sinhalese. This comparative position agitated the Sinhalese (Fernando, 1996: 493; Gunasingam, 1999: 10 and 183; Heitzman, 1990: 107-108; Nayak, 2001: 133; Ponnambalam, 1983: 103-104; Ram, 1989: 84) and motivated their politicians to change the status quo in the country's

education and language policy (Chandraprema, 2001a; Dharmadasa, 1992: 241-242; Nayak, 2001: 134; Piyadasa, 1984: 75; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 4).

At this stage of the country's history when the language issue was emerging as a national concern, the Sinhalese politicians of post-independent Sri Lanka, though cherishing English as the language of their 'class', were willing to respond to popular demand in order to remain in power (Kandiah, 1984: 122-125). In the attempt to mobilise the masses and secure political power, the use of ethnic symbols was a common practice of politicians in post-independent Sri Lanka (Shastri, 1994: 211). For example, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the pioneering figure of nationalist politics of this era, was an Oxford-educated Anglican-Christian who later converted himself to Buddhism, perhaps more for political expediency than for any reasons of religious conviction (Ram, 1989: 38). This change in religious affiliations made by many politicians of the era was quite understandable in a society where as many as 70% of the population was Sinhala-Buddhist.

In the 1956 election, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike⁷ mobilised the Sinhalese majority with a promise of restoring to the Sinhalese and the Buddhists their rightful place in Sri Lankan society (Spencer, 1990: 2). Among his promises was that of making Sinhala the only official language of the country (the 'Sinhala only' promise as it is widely known). In contrast to the western identity of his opponents in the United National Party (UNP), Bandaranaike stood for revival of national culture. Consequently, the vernacular educated, the rural intelligentsia, the peasantry and parts of the urban poor rallied behind Bandaranaike's coalition, the People's United Front (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna- MEP), in the 1956 election (Gunasingam, 1999; Manor, 1989; Spencer, 1990). The MEP won the election with an overwhelming

⁷ Bandaranaike was earlier in support of the Sinhala-Tamil language resolution of 1944 (Ponnambalam, 1983: 95) but later changed his stance after breaking away from the then government of the United National Party (UNP). He, then, formed his own party: the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

parliamentary majority and subsequently the 'Sinhala only' Act (formally, the Official Languages Act No. 33 of 1956) was passed in parliament (Nayak, 2001: 136-138).

From the 1956 election campaign onwards, an era of majoritarian and populist party politics commenced in Sri Lanka, promising 'more power to the masses' (Ponnambalam, 1983: 94). This has had significant impacts on issues pertaining to the question of the country's 'official language'. For example, the 'Sinhala only' Act subsequently led to an almost immediate round of ethnic violence which occurred at regular intervals triggered by language and other divisive issues. There are many historical, political, economic, geographical and religious reasons⁸ behind the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, but the language issue was the most salient since 1956 (Fernando, 1996: 505; Gunasingam, 1999: 9-10; Manor, 1989: 261-262; Navaratna-Banda, 2000, 2002; Neier, 1996: 31; Nissan and Stirrat, 1990: 35-36; Piyadasa, 1984: 65; Ponnambalam, 1983: 102-104; Ram, 1989: 81-82; Seekins, 1990:201-203; Shastri, 1994: 211; Spencer, 1990: 2; Wilson, 2000: 83-84).

Since the ethnic riots of the late 1950s, there was a change in the language policy to permit what was called 'reasonable use' of the Tamil language for specified purposes [Tamil language ('Special Provisions') Act No. 28 of 1958]. This did not satisfy the Tamil community who wanted their language recognised as a national language along with Sinhala (Nayak, 2001: 141-143). Governments which came into power subsequent to the 1960 election, shifted between policies of 'Sinhala only' or 'Sinhala with special provisions for Tamil' till the late 1970s. Each policy shift led to an outbreak of ethnic rioting. Finally, in the 1978 Constitution changes to the country's national language policy were made.

⁸ Among other reasons were a district quota system introduced for university entrance which was disadvantageous for Tamil youth (Jayaweera, 1984: 11); the National flag carrying the lion symbol of the Sinhalese; a large number of Indian Tamils losing their citizenship (1948); the disenfranchisement of Indian Tamils (1949) and repatriation of Indian Tamils (1964) (Nissan and Stirrat, 1990; Ponnambalam, 1983). As research on the subject has been so extensive over the recent past, a reasonably complete bibliography on Sri Lanka's ethnic question might easily fill up 10-12 pages.

Chapter IV (section 18 and 19) of the 1978 Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka specifies the status of Sinhala and Tamil languages in Sri Lanka, using two concepts: official language and national language (Government of Sri Lanka, 1991). Sinhala was considered the sole official language according to the constitution while the status of national language was given to both Sinhala and Tamil. The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1987) changed the above provisions to make both Sinhala and Tamil official languages (Selvakkumaran, 2003). While both Sinhala and Tamil languages continued to be considered national languages, the English language was considered the link language (Government of Sri Lanka, 1991). A link language for inter-ethnic communication is often needed because the bulk of the Sinhalese do not understand Tamil and the bulk of Tamil and Muslim people living in non-Sinhalese-majority areas do not understand Sinhala; hence the position of link language given to the English language in the country's constitution for the first time after independence (Brann, 1985: 31-34). As things stand today, Sinhala and Tamil languages are constitutionally recognised as national and official languages of Sri Lanka (Government of Sri Lanka, 1991). By the time official language provisions acceptable to the Tamil community were introduced, the intermittent ethnic violence has developed into a violent struggle for a separate state for the Tamil community.

While the leaders of the nation were busy shifting between language policies and winning elections, and public unrest and rioting were occurring, a valuable resource left behind by the British, namely the English language, was marginalised. Some analysts even argue that the civil war situation which emerged after 1983 was a consequence of neglecting the important cultural function of English and ignoring its Sri Lankan speakers as 'agents of national unity' (Gooneratne, 1992: 21). However, a complex socio-politico-economic phenomenon such as the ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka cannot be explained in such simple terms. In the late 1980s, Sri Lankan politicians began to realise the importance of Sri Lankan youth acquiring a good command of a world language such as English. Consequently, in 1987 (the Thirteenth Amendment to

the 1978 Constitution) English re-entered the Sri Lankan language policy as a 'link language' (Ratnayake, 2000a). This constitutional reform has been interpreted as a realisation of the importance of having a class of English-speaking Sri Lankans who could function as a link between the two ethnic groups (Gooneratne, 1992: 27). It was expected that making English the link language of the country would improve motivation for learning English, not only for higher educational purposes but also more generally, for better developmental prospects (Brann, 1985: 34). But giving English a place in the Sri Lankan constitution in itself has not succeeded in bringing back the English language into the Sri Lankan social scene. Decades of attempting to 'do without English' have created several problems for the successful implementation of the policy of reintroduction of English into Sri Lankan society. A major problem in this respect is the paucity of individuals proficient enough to enter and sustain the English teaching profession. Teacher-training programs have been commenced, but it appears that it will take a long time for a satisfactory solution to emerge.

Post-independent Educational Policies

Political developments in the country, as it moved gradually towards independence during the latter part of British rule, had their impact on education. While retaining the island under their control, the British introduced a new constitution in 1931 which granted Sri Lanka a state of partial self government with a State Council elected through universal adult franchise (Rupasinghe, 1990a: 15). The executive authority was placed in a Board of Ministers comprising ten Ministers. Seven out of these ten Ministers were chosen from among the (Sri Lankan) elected members of the State Council. Education was one of the portfolios placed under such a Minister. That minister was C.W.W. Kannangara (Diyasena, 1983: 64).

The beginnings of a new era in the field of education were seen in the first half of the 1940s. Educational policies brought forward by the Sri Lankan politicians since the early 1940s have aimed at creating equal opportunities for every Sri Lankan

irrespective of their social class standing. These policies were mainly in opposition to the class-based education system introduced by the British. The country's educational policies still continue to be formed around similar orientations. In the early 1940s, C.W.W. Kannangara introduced a wide range of educational reforms that aimed at creating an equitable system of education in Sri Lanka. His educational reforms emanated from a 1944 report of a committee he appointed to inquire into the then prevailing education system. This Special Committee on Education (also known as the Kannangara Committee) pointed out that having two types of schools based on the media of instruction was a major defect of the then contemporary system of education in Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya, 1969: 65-66). This committee initiated the ideas of free education, and education through the vernacular media. Free education from kindergarten to university for all Sri Lankans was established in 1945 with compulsory teaching of English as a subject within the school curriculum (De Souza, 1969c; Diyasena, 1983: 65-67; Jayaweera, 1984: 6; Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 54; Ruberu, 2001; Rupasinghe, 1990a: 15). The policy of converting education to the vernacular media was implemented in 1953 and by 1960 the entire secondary education curriculum and the social sciences and humanities courses in universities were in the vernacular medium (Chandraprema, 2001b; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 21; Lo Bianco, Sivagurunathan and Sivakumaran, 2000: 4; Rupasinghe, 1985: 82). The establishment of English medium 'Central schools'⁹ in regional towns and rural areas, to provide a free, English medium education for children of intellectual promise, irrespective of their parents' income or social standing, was another policy innovation aimed at creating an equitable system of education (De Alwis, 1969: 979; Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 54; Udagama, 1999: 7, 35 and 55; Usvatte-aratchi, 2002).

These policies provided the student population with better opportunities of

⁹ These schools were later made, like most other formerly English medium schools, vernacular medium schools. The intention of educating capable rural children in the English language was thus abandoned.

acquiring an education irrespective of their economic status and knowledge of English (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 9; De Zoysa, 1990: 59; Fernando, 1961: 170; Gamage, 1987: 47; Gunawardena, 1990a: 53-54, 1991: 80; Jayaweera, 1988: 6-7; Rupasinghe, 1990b: 74-75; Walatara, 1978: 13-15). Policies such as free textbooks (Diyasena, 1983: 108; Gunawardena, 1988: 4; Udagama, 1999: 28-34), free mid-day meal and free uniforms to all school children (Diyasena, 1983: 108; Udagama, 1999: 28-34), financial assistance from the government (scholarships, bursaries etc.), free medical and dental services and subsidised student transport (Diyasena, 1983: 108; Udagama, 1999: 28-34) helped to improve this situation in later years.

Inter-country correlations between income levels and literacy rates is usually taken to indicate the high 'outlier status' of Sri Lanka (See Isenman, 1980). This implies that Sri Lanka '...has obtained a higher stage of social development in respect of many social indicators than one would predict it to have on the basis of its relatively low per capita income' (Lakshman, 1997: 216). Educational policies described above have contributed to this as well as to an increase in the number of educated persons and professionals in Sri Lanka (Jayaweera, 1970: 24, 1984: 6; Kearney, 1975: 737). These policies ensured that academically inclined, able children would receive a higher education if they desired so (Gamage, 1987: 47; Gunawardena, 1990a: 53-54, 1991: 80; Rupasinghe, : 74-75). Though these policies resulted in a high literacy rate and large numbers of highly educated individuals, they have not been able to create a truly equitable system of education in Sri Lanka. Socio-economic background of individuals still acts as a hindrance to higher education and upward social mobility (Gunawardena, 1990b: 78; Jayaweera, 1984: 7).

Schooling in Contemporary Sri Lanka

The educational goal for the nation as stated in the 1978 Constitution is 'the complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels' (Government of Sri Lanka, 1991 cited in

Udagama, 1999). But as the means for achieving this goal have not been provided adequately for every section of the society, the Sri Lankan nation has failed to fully realise this goal (National Education Commission, 1997: i; Udagama, 1999: 87). Policies of the post-independence period implemented in pursue of this goal, were not adequate to produce a completely equitable system of education. Several problems in the school system seem to obstruct the objectives of an equitable system of education.

The 13 years of formal school education in Sri Lanka has three major segments: primary (years 1-5), junior secondary (years 6-11) and senior secondary (years 12-13) (Russell and Savada, 1990: 105; Udagama, 1999: 39). Education is compulsory till age 13 (Russell and Savada, 1990: xvii). However, there are two terminal points in the process of formal school education, one optional and the other compulsory. The optional one occurs at around age 16, when a student takes the first national examination, the General Certificate of Education-Ordinary Level (GCE-O/L). The compulsory terminal point is around age 19 when those who have gone through school without a break, are able to take the school-terminal national examination (which is also the university entrance examination), the General Certificate of Education-Advanced Level¹⁰.

The public education system continues to provide education, free of tuition or any other major fees, to all those who are admitted to schools, universities, technical colleges etc. There are 10,338 government-funded schools on the island. In addition to these government schools, there are 78 private fee-levying schools (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2000). The curriculum of these private schools is similar to that of government schools and is also taught in the vernacular media (Russell and Savada, 1990: xvii; Udagama, 1999: 38). However, by levying a fee for admission, these private schools attract children of affluent backgrounds. Consequently, their English competency is usually higher than that of students in government schools (Balac and Aamot, 1999).

¹⁰ These two examinations will be called O/L and A/L respectively from this point onwards in the thesis.

A phenomenon of increasing significance after the 1990s is the establishment of the so-called 'international schools' that provide an education in the English medium and train students for foreign, mainly British examinations. These fee-levying schools also cater to the affluent, upper social classes (Udagama, 1999: 38).

Added to the above school-divisions are divisions within the government school system. The government schools are divided into four categories (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 10; Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 57; Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 1997):

1. Type 1AB (schools with all streams that include arts, science and commerce in the A/L classes)
2. Type 1C (schools having only arts and commerce streams in the A/L classes)
3. Type 2 (schools having classes from year 1 to O/L only)
4. Type 3 (schools having classes from year 1 to year 5 or year 8)

Of the 10,313 government schools that functioned on the island in 1998 there were 600 1AB, 1,936 1C, 3,722 Type 2 and 4,055 Type 3 schools (Department of Census and Statistics, 1999: 258).

The type of government school a given student attends is largely determined by his/her social class background (Rupasinghe, 1990a: 27). Children from more affluent backgrounds enrol mostly in 1AB schools, while Type 2 schools cater mostly to children of deprived backgrounds in both urban and rural areas (Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 53). The 1AB schools are the most sought after whereas in fact it is the Type 2 and 3 schools that cater to the majority of the student population (Udagama, 1999: 40-41). Parents prefer to send their children to 1AB schools because pupil performance is better in these schools than the other categories of schools. This is due to the better facilities and better qualified teachers available in these schools (Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991: 74; Koelmeyer, 1990: 14; Udagama, 1999: 59).

Within this classification of public schools, a sub-category, *national schools*¹¹, is identified. These are mostly located in urban areas. Except for these national schools, provincial governments manage all government schools described above. National schools are managed directly by the central government. These schools are considered 'prestigious', or 'privileged', because they have the best physical and human facilities (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 10). Of the 10,120 government schools in 1997 most national schools were of the 1AB type (224) with also a few 1C type (9) schools (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 1998: 17).

English fluency of a Sri Lankan has become a crucial qualification in the private sector-oriented job market of contemporary Sri Lanka (discussed later). The divisions between private and public schools and within public schools in Sri Lanka advantage a certain segment of students particularly in their levels of English fluency. Children educated in the high-class urban government (1AB) schools and private schools today are usually exposed to English in their home background (Lalprema, 2001). The addition of the 'international schools' to the stock of schools has contributed to further disadvantaging the majority of government school students in the job market. These students who are exposed to English in their intimate social circles, perform well in terms of gaining higher qualifications in English and automatically become the better candidates for the high ranking jobs. A more recent innovation in a few better-equipped public sector schools, especially 1AB schools in urban areas, is the

¹¹ The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka names a school 'national' when it fulfils the following criteria (Wickremasinghe, 1990):

1. The school has 2000 or more students
2. The A/L science classes have a total of 200 or more students
3. Percentage of students eligible to enter university at the A/L examination of the preceding three years is $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ or above per year
4. Availability of sufficient buildings and furniture for all students
5. Availability of sufficient facilities for technical subjects
6. Availability of sufficient laboratory facilities for all students in A/L and O/L classes
7. Annual income from Facilities and Services Fees to be over Rs.15 000
8. Acceptance of the school by the community as one of the best schools in the area
9. The school should be supported by a strong School Development Society
10. The school should be supported by an active Past Pupils' Association

introduction of English medium instruction, aiming to train students to sit the national examinations in the English medium. This is a significant shift as English medium instruction was abandoned in government schools a few decades ago (Daily News and The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2001). If this policy is successful in achieving its objective, it will further advantage the already advantaged (Madapatha, 2001). The knowledge of English, therefore, continues to be an asset held by the elite classes of the society who use it to acquire and enjoy positions of privilege (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 38; Usvatte-aratchi, 2002).

A further division in the current system of education is the urban-rural dichotomy. The problem of urban-rural differences that affects the entire education system also affects the English program (De Silva and De Silva, 1990:25). Characteristics of rural society and the rural education system leave rural schools in a disadvantaged position compared to their urban counterparts (Fernando, 2001). Even among urban schools there is a distinction between 'privileged' and 'deprived' schools and the deprived urban schools are not very different to rural schools (Rupasinghe, 1990a: 18-19). Problems that disadvantage rural schools are of two types: poverty and traditional and/or negative attitudes to education and to students (Baker, 1988a, 1988b, 1989a, 1989b). Firstly, poverty related problems are of two types. They are, poverty of the family and poverty of the rural school environment. The first will be dealt with in detail later in the thesis (See Chapter 3). Poverty in the school environment is related to shortage of funds that lead to inadequate physical facilities in rural schools (Baker, 1988b: 378-379; Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in the Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 9-10; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 14; Diyasena, 1983: 91; Jayasuriya, 1976: 476; Jayaweera, 1984: 9; National Education Commission, 1997: i). These physical inadequacies of rural schools, coupled with economic difficulties and lack of exposure of students to English in the home background, hinder the improvement of English fluency among these students (Kandiah, 1984: 130-131; Karunaratne, 1990, 1993; Walatara, 1974). Secondly, traditional and/or negative attitudes affect rural schools negatively at both macro and micro levels (Baker, 1988b:

378-379). At the macro level, higher-ranking educational officers are of the opinion that the poor are not worthy of a 'good' education. Similarly in the school, principals and teachers hold such attitudes. These attitudes result in a lack of teachers for rural schools (De Souza, 1969b; Goonetilleke, 1983: 17; Hilton, 1983: 3 and 7; Jayasuriya, 1969: 69; Kandiah, 1984: 130; Rupasinghe, 1985; Usvatte-aratchi, 2001; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 3), rapid teacher transfers and high levels of teacher absenteeism (Canagarajah, 1993: 610-611, 1995a: 177; Goonetilleke, 1983: 17; Hilton, 1983: 3 and 7; Jayaweera, 1988: 10; Rupasinghe, 1985: 83). At the micro level, negative attitudes held by parents regarding education do not facilitate the school learning of the students (See Chapter 3).

A further problem with the education system of Sri Lanka is its politicised nature. Educational decisions of the past few decades have been extremely politicised (Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in the Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 10 and 195; De Silva, 1966; Goonetilleke, 1983: 17; Ruberu, 2001; Udagama, 1999: 82-83; Vicziany, 1995: 43). Introducing some change in the system has become common with every change of government, or sometimes even with the change of the person holding the education portfolio with the government unchanged (National Education Commission, 1997: ii). This politicisation affects the curriculum, teaching profession and even improvement of school conditions making it very difficult for teachers and students to keep up with the changes. It also continues to disadvantage certain segments of the student population.

Social Consequences of English Language Usage in Contemporary Sri Lanka

Even after theoretically restoring the native languages as official languages of the country and of education, the influence of the English language has not left the Sri Lankan social scene, completely. The bilingual elite of Sri Lanka, because they could not function effectively in vernaculars, managed to hold on to English in their social

spheres even after independence. Though, theoretically, official matters have to be transacted in vernaculars (Government of Sri Lanka, 1991), at the highest bureaucratic levels, official business still continues to be carried out in English. English, therefore, continues to remain a symbol of prestige for the higher classes of society (De Souza, 1969d; Fernando, 1996: 494; Kandiah, 1984: 121-122 and 125). It is still associated with wealth, knowledge and power (Canagarajah, 1993: 604, 1995a: 175; Fernando, 2001; Kandiah, 1979: 85), and communicating in English brings a certain status in society and provides a sense of prestige to its speakers (Fernando, 1976: 344; Walatara, 2001). Walatara (2001) calls this 'English for prestige' or 'prestige English'.

Nevertheless, free vernacular education has made it possible for Sri Lankans with little or no knowledge of English to join the ranks of the middle class. But their inadequate knowledge of English has denied them access to most things, such as high ranking decision-making jobs in private and public sectors enjoyed by their fellow class members with greater English competence (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 37; Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 33; Dharmadasa, 1992: 246; Fernando, 2001; Fernando, 1987: 49; Fernando, 1991: 111; Government of Sri Lanka, 1990: 77; Weeraratna, 2002). Lack of English proficiency disadvantages a Sri Lankan individual in two ways even if he/she holds credentials to claim being 'educated'. Firstly, it disadvantages an individual by making it difficult for him/her to access 'knowledge' that is available in English and not in vernaculars and consequently obstructs his/her chances of reaching a better standard of education (Chandraprema, 2001a). Secondly, lack of English proficiency obstructs his/her chances of reaching higher-ranking jobs in the job market.

With private sector-oriented development having been given an important position under the economic policies of the late 1970s, lack of English fluency came to be seen as a hindrance not only to national development but also to *personal* development (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 7). Prior to the late 1970s, when the government sector and public corporations were important in providing employment

opportunities, and economic policies were of the import-substitution type, those who obtained higher levels of education were able to also secure good careers, irrespective of their knowledge of English. The private sector desires to recruit individuals who have, along with characteristics such as discipline, a capacity for teamwork and initiative, communication skills in both the mother tongue and English (Gunawardena, 1990a: 60-63; Kandiah, 1984: 141-142; National Education Commission, 1997: i). Currently, the government education system is largely criticised for not providing cadres of individuals with such skills to suit the demands of the job market (ILO report 1971 cited in, Dickens and Lang, 1995:620; Faraj, 1988: 9; Isenman, 1980: 249; National Education Commission, 1997: i; Vicziany, 1995: 37). The English language in Sri Lanka, therefore, continues to both advantage and disadvantage particular social groups in the country, especially in the fields of higher education and employment.

The problems encountered by the *educated* who are *not English-fluent* are exemplified by experiences of university graduates, especially those in disciplines such as social sciences and humanities. These students have been selected for studying in the university through an extremely competitive process on the basis of their results in the university entrance examination, namely the A/L examination. But within the university, even if education is provided in the vernacular medium, those who are not proficient in English are disadvantaged because they are unable to learn independently through library research¹² (Wickramasuriya, 1974: 3-5). These individuals, after graduation from the university, are further disadvantaged in the job market as suitable employment is not available to them due to their lack of English proficiency (Chandraprema, 2001b, 2001c; Ratnayake, 2000d; Wickramasuriya, 1991: 143). Consequently, the English language has led to the creation of internal divisions *within* the educated class of contemporary Sri Lankans.

¹² Along with the vernacularisation of education, intensive English courses have had to be developed in universities since the 1960s to meet the English language needs of university students (Canagarajah, 1993; Hilton, 1983; Rupasinghe, 1985).

The divisions within educated Sri Lankans are not limited to the differences between those proficient and non-proficient in English. Such divisions are also linked to how English was learned and the type of English spoken by an individual. The emphasis placed on equity in the system of education has reinforced respect for academic learning in post-independent Sri Lanka. Consequently, decades after independence, there emerged a sub-class within the English-speaking middle class who were also educated-bilinguals. They learned English by means of getting access to education as a result of the educational policies introduced in the 1940s. But they were different from the 'English-speaking' segment of the middle class in that they had not adopted English as their first language. They were a class of educated Sri Lankans who were proficient in English, yet proud of their vernacular language and its literature (Fernando, 1987: 55). This sub-class of Sri Lankans that entered the middle class added a further dimension to the linguistic stratification introduced into Sri Lankan society by the English language. Sri Lankans came to be divided into social groups based on the type of (*Sri Lankan*) *English*¹³ they spoke. Styles of pronunciation, influence of the vernacular on the spoken English and domains in which English is spoken have become indicators of whether a person has learned English at home since childhood or acquired it at a later stage, especially through school (Fernando, 1989: 121). If a person is recognised as falling into the latter category it usually reflects on him/her as a negative class-marker (Canagarajah, 1993: 604 and 616, 1995b: 201; Fernando, 1976: 348-359; Hanson-Smith, 1990: 30; Parakrama, 1995: 84-86).

¹³ With the increase in the numbers of Sri Lankan speakers of English who learnt English out side of home, there developed a version of English different to 'standard English'. This is called *Sri Lankan English*. The English language in this case has been adapted to suit the indigenous culture. The version of English currently taught to school and university students is Sri Lankan English (See De Souza, 1969a, 1969e, 1969f, 1969i; DeStefano, 1990; Disanayaka, 2002; Fernando, 1991; Goonetilleke, 1983; Halverson, 1966; Kachru, 1976; Kandiah, 1965, 1979, 1981; Passe, 1948; Ratnayake, 2000b; Wasala, 2002).

The prestigious social position attributed to the English language, therefore, continues to divide the Sri Lankan nation into several segments leading to tensions among these groups. The socially dominant place held by the English speakers is still resented by most vernacular speakers, as was the case during colonial times. This is a clear indicator of the language-based social 'divide' that exists. The vernacular speakers would argue that though English should be learned and used for instrumental purposes, it should not be used in daily social interactions 'unnecessarily' to replace the vernaculars (Jayaweera, 2001: 2; Weeraratna, 2002; Welikannage, 1999). These 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' uses of English are represented by two words: English as a 'tool' and English as a 'weapon'. English as a tool represents the instrumental value of the language while English as a weapon represents the social status and power placed on the language (Jayaweera, 2001). Every Sri Lankan irrespective of ethnic, religious, linguistic, class, caste or regional background wants to learn English for acquiring the advantages of social status and power (Ratnayake, 2000c; Weeraratna, 2002). But the difficulties encountered by the bulk of Sri Lankans in learning English have resulted in an ambivalent attitude towards the language, an attitude of 'love and hate' (Goonetilleke, 1983: 14). They 'love' the language for the advantages it *could* bring and hate it and its speakers for the difficulties encountered in acquiring these advantages (Fernando, 1987: 55-56).

The resentful attitudes held by certain segments of Sri Lankan society toward the English language and its speakers have resulted in humiliating the language and its local speakers. Such attitudes can be summarised in two Sinhala colloquial words, *Kaduva* (sword) and *Kalu suddo* (black-whites or, as the Indians used the expression, *brown sahib*). The word *kaduva* originated in the speech of rural or semi-urban children studying in government school. This has been analysed as an expression of the frustration they felt in having to sit in the 'almost useless' English classes they were obliged to attend (Kandiah, 1984: 117-118; Lalprema, 2001). To them it means the difference between success and failure in life (Gooneratne, 1992: 20; Hanson-Smith, 1990: 29). According to English being a *kaduva*, those who are competent in English

are said to be using that competence to 'cut down' those who have no such competence in the competition for higher positions in society (Chandraprema, 2001a; Gooneratne, 1992: 20; Goonetilleke, 1983: 14; Government of Sri Lanka, 1990: 77; Ratnayake, 2000c; Usvatte-aratchi, 2002; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 3 and 4, 1991: 143). *Kalu suddo* refers to the English-speaking Sri Lankans who try to imitate the cultural practices of western societies (Lewin and Little, 1982: 18).

The introduction of English to Sri Lanka corresponded with the loss of its independence to the British. The English language, therefore, is likely to arouse in the minds of many Sri Lankans, negative connotations, such as defeat, subjugation, humiliation and oppression (Kandiah, 1984: 120). Kandiah (1984) argues that the origins of common Sinhala expressions such as *kaduva* and *kalu suddo*, ridiculing as well as showing hostility to the English language can, therefore, be traced to this historical fact. These expressions, derogatory of English, however, do not seem to be targeting the colonial rulers who subjugated the Sri Lankans by means of their language. They are resentfully targeting the elite class of Sri Lankans who continue to preserve English and its advantages in their social spheres (Tully, 1997). A disadvantage of these resentful attitudes may be that it also develops a fear in those who want to learn and practice English: a fear of being laughed at (Canagarajah and Saravanapava, 1993).

Conclusion

From the colonial days institutions of formal education have been the major means of imparting knowledge of English to the Sri Lankan society. A dual system of formal education emerged during the British period. One set of schools in this dual system catered to the needs of the children of British expatriates, descendants of earlier European settlers and members of local upper classes. Education in these schools was provided in the English medium. The other set of schools served the needs of the rest of the local community. These schools used the vernaculars as the media of instruction

and had extremely limited facilities to assist with the learning of English as a second language. These circumstances contributed to the establishment of the English language as the 'language of the elite' in Sri Lankan society. The elitist character attributed to English still remains within the society even after the vernacularisation of the country's language and educational policies.

Historically, the English language has shown its 'potential' to fulfil two functions in the Sri Lankan society. Firstly, its value as a link language suggests that it could function as a common medium of communication between different ethnic groups living in Sri Lanka. Secondly, the instrumental value attached to the language within and outside Sri Lanka has made the English language a requirement in the development process of the country. The latter function further develops into a factor of social mobility within Sri Lanka. These two functions of the English language have played an important role in determining the country's post-independent educational and language policies.

The necessity of a link language to ensure harmony among ethnic groups is largely recognised by the present education policy of Sri Lanka. After many years of unsuccessful teaching of English in schools, education policies are now focussing on teaching 'Sinhala for Tamil students' and 'Tamil for Sinhala students' as a solution to developing a link language in the country. The attempt here has been to transfer the potential link function of English to the vernacular languages. So far, this new policy has not been successful (See Lo Bianco, Sivagurunathan and Sivakumaran, 2000). The link language function of English is, therefore, still emphasised, in addition to its function in global communications. The universal trend of English being affiliated with such areas as development, technology and trade can also be seen in Sri Lankan society. There is, therefore, the focus again on teaching English from primary level in government schools. In the early 2000s English medium teaching has also been reintroduced in a smaller number of national schools.

Policies have been formulated to spread English among all social levels of Sri Lanka as a means of making its instrumental advantages available to all Sri Lankans. However, by continuing to be the language of the upper social classes of Sri Lanka, English has not succeeded in becoming a 'language of the common man'. Educational policies directed at teaching English as a second language have failed, making it available to only those who can learn it in their home environment. Consequently, the English language is still a characteristic of higher social classes. This situation continues to disadvantage the majority of Sri Lankans who are either from vernacular-speaking families or from under-resourced government schools.

Chapter 2

Relevant Theoretical Issues

This chapter examines the various theoretical perspectives which have been used to guide the formulation of this thesis. Social factors that are pertinent to teaching and learning of English in Sri Lanka are discussed from two theoretical perspectives. Firstly, the relationship between education and class structure is discussed. Secondly, theories that discuss ethnicity and nationalism, as well as ideologies relevant to the choice of language education policies and language usage in multi-ethnic, developing countries are reviewed. Following this Gardner's (1985b) theory of the psychological factors relevant to second language learning, in particular, student motivation and attitudes is outlined. Finally, communicative language teaching, a particular pedagogical approach to the teaching of a second language, is described.

Social Issues

Sri Lankans learn English in secondary school as a subject within a larger curriculum. Therefore, the social class factors that affect students' school learning in general also affect their English learning (See Chapter 3). The current study is guided by the theoretical contributions made by Apple (1976, 1996) in analysing this aspect of English acquisition.

Class and Education

The role played by education in reproducing social inequalities within a society and the interconnection between ideology and curriculum were considered by Apple in his work on social class and the school curriculum (Apple, 1976: 210). Drawing on neo-Marxist writers such as Young, Bourdieu and Bernstein, Apple (1992, 2003) focuses on how in capitalist industrialised societies the education system contributes

to the reproduction of social inequalities. Consequently, the education system is seen as 'the result of a continuing struggle between and within dominant and dominated groups' (Apple and Weis, 1983a: 19).

Apple's 'culturalist' approach analyses the education system by focussing on the interrelations within and between the economy, politics and culture. Accordingly, culture is viewed both as a 'lived experience' and as a 'commodity' (Apple, 1986; Apple and Weis, 1983a). The reproductive role of education is analysed as it is related to both these aspects of culture. Consequently, class, according to Apple (1982c), is not just an expression of a person's financial or occupational position. It is also something that is 'lived'. That is, one's class position is *also* seen as a cultural expression that affects a person's language, style, intimate social relations, wishes and desires (Apple, 1982c: 92). The present research adopts this definition of class and attempts to identify the relationship between social class and students' level of English acquisition.

The creation and maintenance of 'ideological hegemony' is a key concern of Apple's approach. Ideological hegemony, a concept borrowed from Gramsci, refers to the process by which the ideas and beliefs of 'the powerful' are socially established in a manner that legitimises the differential levels of power held by different groups in a particular society (Apple, 1982c: 29; Apple and Weis, 1983a: 16-17; Burke, 1999). These powerful groups establish their beliefs and practices as the 'proper (or legitimate)' ideology for the society by which they subject the less-powerful groups to a pre-existing social order (Apple, 1982b; Apple and Weis, 1983a). Apple and Weis (1983a) argue that the school and the wider educational system play a vital role in promoting ideological hegemony by which it advantages some groups in society, especially the rich, whites and males. For example, the decision taken by the Kannangara Committee in the 1940s to teach all Sri Lankans English as a second language can be seen as an attempt to establish elitist views of education on the population as a whole even when facilities for the successful carrying out of such a

proposal were not available in all parts of the country. Theoretically, though the proposal seemed egalitarian, in practice, it led to further inequalities in Sri Lanka (See Chapter 1).

Reproducing Social Inequalities through Education

While agreeing that the economy is the most influential social force, Apple (1982a: 6-7, 1986: 17) rejects the classical Marxist analysis which posits everything as *completely* determined by the economy. Apple (1986) goes beyond economic determinism (or reductionism) and analyses society as made up of three interrelated 'spheres': economic, cultural and political. Consequently, ideology formation, according to Apple, occurs within each of these spheres under three 'dynamics' (or elements): class, race and gender. It is argued that to completely understand the role played by schools in society (more specifically in ideology expression and formation), this complex network between and within these spheres and dynamics need to be analysed (Apple, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1986, 1990, 2000, 2001, Undated; Apple and Weis, 1983a: 21-25).

Schools are a state apparatus through which a multitude of economic, political and cultural pressures from the competing social segments of class, race and gender are mediated and transformed (Apple, 1983b). This is most clearly evident in the curriculum and the textbooks used in schools (Apple, 1976, 1980, 1982b, 1982c, 1983b, 1986; Carlson and Apple, 1998). The curriculum and textbooks preserve and distribute what is perceived as 'legitimate knowledge', that is, knowledge that 'we all must have' (Apple, 1990: 63-64). This legitimate knowledge, according to Apple (1978, 2000, Undated), is the knowledge of the economically and politically powerful new petty bourgeoisie in society. They, by planning and publishing a *common* curriculum and textbooks for all students, manage to establish an education system that reinforces their industrial, military and ideological needs (Apple, 1980, 1982b, 1982c, 1983b, 1986, 1988, 1990). This helps them to further establish their powerful

position in society and create barriers for the less-powerful (Apple, 1990, 2000). That is, those individuals who do not have the socio-economic background to help them keep up with this common 'legitimised' curriculum will eventually drop out of the system leading to the exacerbation of class, gender and race inequalities in society.

According to Apple (1996, 2001, 2003, Undated), schools, through this complex process of reproducing class, gender and racial meanings, becomes a purchasable commodity in capitalist societies: a 'market product'. The product is evaluated by data produced by the state. That is, the state produces data tables based on each school's academic results and creates a hierarchy of 'good' and 'bad' schools (Apple, 1988). Each school's 'price' is decided accordingly. This gives the 'consumers' (namely the parents) the opportunity to choose the school to which they want to send their children. 'Consumer choice' will ensure that the good schools will gain more students and the bad schools will disappear eventually (Apple, 2001). The free market forces work to allow the rich to choose the good schools while the poor have no option but to choose the bad schools which are under-funded and decaying (Apple, 1988, 2001). The Sri Lankan government education system, which supposedly attempts to create an equitable system of education, but currently identifies a hierarchy of schools, is a classic example¹ (See Chapter 1).

Middle class affluent parents who have become quite skilled in exploiting market mechanisms are the most advantaged in this capitalist culture. Affluent parents have the economic, social and cultural capital to ensure that their children gain admission to the best schools. Furthermore, the school curriculum, by legitimising the knowledge of 'the powerful' favours children coming from such affluent backgrounds (Apple, 2001). This is evident in Sri Lanka, where most parents

¹ In Sri Lanka, the market forces which Apple discusses, are somehow kept under control through a nominally free education system. However, education cannot be said to be truly free of rich-poor biases.

prefer to send their children to 1AB schools (Udagama, 1999). Apple (2001) argues that the material resources available to these students further promote their social position and help them advance through the formal education system. In contrast, the poor living conditions experienced by poor students continue to inhibit their opportunities at getting a good education or may even force them to drop out of school altogether (Apple, 1996). Rural and urban deprived schools in Sri Lanka exemplify this point (See Chapter 1). Furthermore, the sorting of students by achievement in the classroom replicates the class divisions in society as a whole.

Apple (1982c, 1986) extends his theory beyond the reproduction of social inequalities to the reproduction of class struggles in schools. Teachers and students, if they want, can choose not to work within the curriculum frame provided by the school. For example, teachers could totally ignore the textbook and teach what they think is pertinent to the students. Similarly, students can choose not to pay attention to the teacher in the classroom. Apple (1982c: 96-108) explains the process of student resistance in the school by analysing two studies carried out by Willis (1977) and Everhart (1979).

These studies, according to Apple (1982c), illustrate how students gather around similar class interests in 'working out' the school system. Both studies identified two categories of students, namely the *lads* and the *ear'oles/kids*. The *lads* basically reject not only the overt curriculum of the school but also the hidden curriculum. They do not pay attention in class and do not comply with tacit teachings such as punctuality and neatness. The *kids*, on the other hand, are the ones who listen to the lesson in the classroom, the ones liked by the teachers and the ones who seem to realise the importance of credentials, technical knowledge and educational authority (Apple, 1982c: 96-98). The indifferent attitude taken by the *lads* is an unconscious realisation that, as a class, schooling will provide them with only meagre opportunities for upward social mobility. It is their response to the social conditions they live out everyday. By refusing to engage in the mental labour that is required by

school, these *lads* reinforce their cultural position as manual workers of the future (Apple, 1982c: 99). The *kids* too are not in complete compliance with the school system. They are just good at working out the system while engaging in activities that promote their class interests; therefore, they are considered 'smart' by their peers and teachers. The activities of the *kids* are also seen as a reproduction of the corporate production process. In the corporate production process one's cultural capital is not usually challenged if minimum requirements of production are met. The *kids* are in training for this (Apple, 1982c: 107-108).

As shown earlier, the various education and language policies in Sri Lanka have contributed to continuing social divisions in the country, not only along class lines, but also along ethnic lines (See Chapter 1). The education system both replicates and maintains class divisions. Language also plays a role in this process. The ethnic inequalities in Sri Lanka come to the fore with the social role of English. Therefore, issues of social cohesion, ethnicity, nationalism and modernisation become relevant considerations.

Language, Ethnicity and Social Cohesion

Theories discussing the role of English in multi-ethnic developing countries focus on two potential social functions that English could fulfil in these countries. Firstly, it is argued that English could function as a link or integrative language between various ethnic groups within a state-boundary and those who speak different languages. Secondly, these developing nations need English for instrumental reasons of keeping up with the global economy, science and technology, that is, the modernisation process. These macro issues are beyond the scope of the present study. However, they are pertinent to the motivational issues relevant to learning English. This section will focus on two issues: ethnicity and nationalism, and ethnic diversity and the role of language.

Ethnicity and Nationalism

An ethnic group is a collectivity within a large society. The ethnic group has three main characteristics: common ancestry, shared past and common culture (Eriksen, 1996: 29; Fishman, 1996c: 63-64; Geertz, 1996: 43-44; Handelman, 1977: 190; Horowitz, 1975: 114; Isaacs, 1975: 29-30; Liebkind, 1999: 140; Nash, 1996: 25-26; Parsons, 1975: 56-57; Schermerhorn, 1996: 17; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 40-41; Weber, 1996: 33; Yoshino, 1992). Fishman (1988a) distinguishes between three 'aspects' of ethnicity, namely paternity, patrimony and phenomenology. Paternity refers to ethnicity being acquired from one's parents. Patrimony refers to traits and behaviour patterns that express ethnicity. The phenomenological aspect of ethnicity refers to the meanings a person attaches to his/her descent-related being (paternity) and behaviour (patrimony) (Fishman, 1988a: 25-32). Therefore, ethnicity is essentially a boundary marker which leads its members to recognise the difference between 'us' and 'them' (White, 1978: 149).

The strong human desire 'to belong', to a family, to a culture or to a country could have some ethnic element/component (Ellis, D.G., 1999: 143; Glazer and Moynihan, 1970: 18). This desire can be manipulated by showing that there are benefits or losses through ethnic identification (Fishman, 1972a: 10; Isaacs, 1975: 35). Manipulation of this desire can direct various movements in various political directions (Fishman, 1996c: 68). Nationalism is one such direction (Eriksen, 1993: 6).

Nationalism tends to have ethnic affiliations attached to it. Similar to ethnicity, nationalism attempts to bind its adherents as a culturally unique entity while aiming at statehood (Connor, 1996: 69-70; Eriksen, 1993: 6, 14, 39, 99 and 118, 1996: 30; Fishman, 1968b: 41, 1972b: 182, 1972d: 224-225). Ideally, nationalism, by joining culture and politics, gives people of different social levels/strata a sense of belonging to one group. Therefore, strong, aggressive

nationalism has the ability to subdue class and ethnic differences (Bell, 1975: 163; Eriksen, 1993: 102).

Most societies of the contemporary world consist of a combination of ethnic groups, that is, they are plural societies. Under such conditions nationality (represented by territorial boundaries, for example, American, Indian) does not necessarily coincide with ethnic identity (Bell, 1975: 153-154; Parsons, 1975: 58-60). Therefore, nationalist movements of most new (developing) nations face the problem of ethnic heterogeneity and disruptive ethnic conflicts. The conflicts between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka demonstrate this situation. Nationalist movements of these new nations move through two stages, namely nationalism *for* (prior to) independence and nationalism *after* independence. It is usually the elites who lead the nationalist movements of these developing countries at both these stages. These elites, though diverse in ethnicity, hold similar social status and interests. Their western-oriented culture makes them more class-conscious than ethnicity-conscious (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 497-501). Retention of the colonial language is part of this orientation (Canagarajah, 2000: 126-127; Fishman, 1972a: 17, 33 and 59, 1982: 16, 1996b: 624; Kachru, 1986: 7-8 and 14; Parsons, 1975: 80-81; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 450) and is one expression of ideological hegemony discussed by Apple. For example, the language policy promoted in Sri Lanka in the 1940s that made English a compulsory school subject advantaged the children of the elitist class for whom English was a 'home language' while it disadvantaged a majority of rural and lower class students (See Chapter 1).

Prior to independence, having a common enemy (the colonisers) led to unity between the elites and the masses of those countries affected by colonisation (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 462). But those who join together in realising a common political objective (for example, independence) usually tend to disperse along ethnic lines with the fulfilment of that goal (Das Gupta, 1968: 18-19; White, 1978: 140). Under such conditions competition for dominance among ethnic groups begins. The

result of this competition often is ethnic conflict (Bell, 1975: 160-161; Eriksen, 1993: 49; Fishman, 1999: 154; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 443).

Ethnic Diversity and the Role of Language

As communication remains a necessity for group formation and cohesion, language is a key element of ethnicity and nationalism (Das Gupta, 1975: 470; Ellis, D.G., 1999: 143; Fishman, 1968a: 6, 1996c: 65; Gudykunst and Schmidt, 1999: 1; Nash, 1996: 25; Parsons, 1975: 54 and 60; Safran, 1999: 83; Schermerhorn, 1996: 17; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 446-447; Spolsky, 1998: 57, 1999: 181). In South Asian developing nations indigenous languages and colonial languages play distinctive roles in the pre- and post independence nationalism.

Prior to independence, the colonial language unites the *national* elite class across ethnic boundaries and also links them with the colonial administration. This link function of the colonial language becomes crucial in negotiations for independence. During this period the colonial language also unites similarly motivated individuals across state boundaries; for example, the Sri Lankan independence movement was largely influenced by a similar independence movement in India (Canagarajah, 2000: 125; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 449). This can be seen as the impetus for the emergence of English as a national and international *link language* in post-independent South Asian histories.

The significance of colonial and ethnic languages shifts after the achievement of independence. The elites, in order to pose as potential leaders in the new independent nations and to win the trust of the masses, begin to familiarise themselves with the ethnic practices of their fellow ethnic group members (Canagarajah, 2000: 125-126; Kachru, 1983: 23; Safran, 1999: 82). Familiarising one's self with the vernaculars is a primary attempt by the elites in this respect (Bell,

1975: 163-164; Ellis, D.G., 1999: 157; Fishman, 1972a: 9-10 and 45-50, 1994: 92 and 96, 1996c: 65-67; Parsons, 1975: 60-61; Pennycook, 2000a: 51-53 and 56; Phillipson, 1999: 95; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 447; Weber, 1996: 36). Therefore, in the nationalist movements of formerly colonised nations, vernaculars and colonial languages play a role in national unification and in the maintenance of class divisions, respectively.

In ethnically plural societies, where competing ethnic groups try to establish their ethnic identity as the 'model for the nation', the choice of a national language is a challenging task for leaders of post-independent states. Different ideologies can underpin how languages are viewed in ethnically, linguistically and culturally plural independent nations, of which Sri Lanka is one example. These ideologies can result in different uses of indigenous languages and 'imported' languages such as English. Three such ideologies can be identified:

1. Assimilation: Policies favouring the language of the dominant ethnic group (for example, Sri Lanka in late 1950s when Sinhala was the only national and official language of the country)
2. Amalgamation: Policies favouring a language of wider communication such as English
3. Cultural Pluralism: Policies that combine vernaculars with a language of wider communication (for example, the policy that underpin the approach to English teaching in schools of contemporary Sri Lanka)

Assimilation and amalgamation² are considered integrative policies while cultural pluralism is more separatist than integrative. Amalgamation and cultural pluralism are policies favoured by ethnic minorities while assimilation is a policy favoured by

² Horowitz (1975: 116) terms these two types as assimilation and calls the first 'incorporation' and the second 'amalgamation'. Nevertheless, the meanings given to each term are the same as those applied by Newman (1973).

the ethnically dominant group (Newman, 1973: 67-70)³.

Nations with an assimilationist policy choose one indigenous language as the national language and use a language of wider communication, such as English, only for the efficient transition towards modernisation⁴ (Fishman, 1972c: 198-201). Assimilationist policies stress that all groups must conform to the mores, life-styles and values of the dominant group (the group with more political power) and identify with it (Danesi, 1985: 98; Eriksen, 1993: 103; Liebkind, 1999: 145; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 471 and 479). Such attempts succeed only under conditions of minimal political competition among linguistic/ethnic groups (Das Gupta, 1968: 23; Schiffman, 1999: 439). In other instances the result of such attempts could be the worsening of ethnic conflicts (Neier, 1996:31; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 460). Sri Lanka in the late 1950s, with its government passing a 'Sinhala only' language bill, exemplifies this. In the eyes of the Tamil minority, this language policy was not very different from the colonial policy of imposing the language of the colonial masters on the subject people (International Federation of Tamils, Undated: 5; Ponnambalam, 1983: 103) (See Chapter 1).

Policies of amalgamation stress a combination of ethnicities forming a group different from any of the original ethnic groups, that is, an amalgam. It is seen as a form of 'acculturation'⁵ without assimilation' (Rosenthal, 1960; Shibutani and Kwan, 1965: 479). The new group, though different from its constituent groups, is a hybrid of them all. Unlike assimilation which focuses on the superiority of one group, amalgamation strives to absorb good attributes of all groups (Newman, 1973: 53-67).

³ Newman (1973) explains these three policies by means of three formulae. If A, B and C are different ethnic groups,

A (dominant group)+B+C=A (Assimilation/Incorporation)

A+B+C=D (Amalgamation)

A+B+C=A+B+C (Cultural Pluralism)

⁴ Fishman calls nations with this type of language policy 'uni-modal nations'.

⁵ Acculturation is the process of acquiring the culture of another ethnic group.

States with such policies, because they do not have concerns of ethnic authenticity, tend to adopt the language of their former colonisers as their national language⁶ (Fishman, 1972c: 192-197).

Cultural pluralism stresses the peaceful coexistence of different cultural groups without assimilation or amalgamation. It is expected that each group, while retaining its cultural practices and values, will learn to live in tolerance with other cultures. Selection of one indigenous language over others as the national language under these ethnically plural circumstances benefits one group at the national level. Therefore, in order to avoid such situations these nations usually adopt a combination of a language of wider communication with indigenous languages. The ideal citizen of these nations is multilingual, with each language having clear functional boundaries⁷ (Fishman, 1972c: 203-205). Ideally, under such policies every group gets to keep its language, be proud of it, and also live in peace with other groups.

Some former British colonies have continued to retain English as their national language, even after independence, as a means of avoiding ethnic conflicts that could develop if one indigenous language was chosen over others (DeStefano, 1990: 61-63). Such language policies are justified by arguing that English does not have the ethnic, religious, caste and regional markers that are native to the local contexts of these developing nations (Canagarajah, 2000: 126; Crystal, 2000: 76; Eriksen, 1993: 117; Fishman, 1972a: 72-75 and 82; Kachru, 1986: 8-9; Rubal-Lopez, 1996: 51). However, in some other formerly colonised countries, such as Sri Lanka, where the English language is linked to a different type of inequality, this has not been the case (Fernando, 1987: 47). In the Indian subcontinent, English has elitist connotations (Das Gupta, 1975: 474-475; Tully, 1997). This situation has led these nations to adopt a multilingual (cultural pluralistic) policy that acknowledges both

⁶ Fishman calls this type of nation 'A-modal nations'.

⁷ Fishman calls such nations 'multi-modal nations'.

English and indigenous languages (for example, India, Pakistan) (Mathew, 1997: 168). For instance, the Sri Lankan language policy of 1956 which bestowed privileges upon the Sinhalese triggered ethnic rioting in the country. The national language policy has since been replaced by a multilingual policy devoid of any ethnic bias (See Chapter 1).

Language and Social Mobility

English is the first language of many economically and politically developed powerful western countries. Therefore, it is often argued that people in developing countries must be fluent in English in order to advance in business, science and technology. This *global* position acquired by English has given that language an instrumental value within and outside South Asian developing countries. Two factors contribute to making a language an international language: military power and the economic strength of its speakers (Crystal, 2000: 5-8). English has both factors. Britain established English through its military power (colonialism) and the USA (with both military and economic power) contributes to the maintenance and spread of its international strength (Crystal, 2000: 53 and 117; DeStefano, 1990: 54-55; Fishman, 1988b: 130, 1996b: 628; Kachru, 1986:1-4; Phillipson, 1992: 23-24, 1999: 96-103; Rubal-Lopez, 1996: 52-54; Spolsky, 1998: 75; Tollefson, 1991: 82). In addition, considering the number of mother tongue and second language users of English, and the importance attached to the language in the international spheres of business, science, technology (including information technology), music and film (Crystal, 2000; DeStefano, 1989, 1990) English can be seen as the international/global language *par excellence* (Conrad, 1996: 21; McKay, 2000: 7; Tollefson, 1991: 81). Its spread has taken it to a position where no nation can afford to ignore it as an 'imperialist tool' (Fishman, 1996a: 8).

English is spreading at an incredible speed in former British and American colonies, and other countries, despite attempts by many nationalist movements to protect their indigenous languages (Fishman, 1982: 19, 1987: 8-9, 1996b: 639). Most analytical frameworks which attempt to understand this global position of English have constantly seen it as something spread by colonisers (Fishman, 1996b: 639; Tully, 1997: 157-158). Such frameworks view English as something that causes harm to other languages, and as something making way for global capitalism (Pennycook, 2000b: 108; Phillipson, 2000). But despite these possible harmful effects of English, the world still relies on it for knowledge and for international contact. The importance of English as *the* 'instrumental language' (Schiffman, 1999: 440-441) is increasing in the developing countries with the realisation that very little can be done in the vernaculars (Fishman, 1972a: 84; Sridhar, 1994: 629). Therefore, the choice made by people in countries of the developing world to learn English is inevitable and is independent of their colonial past (Chandraprema, 2001a; Kachru, 1986: 7; Pennycook, 1998: 76 and 103).

Another issue for developing nations is that the international value of English as the language of science and knowledge has established it as the language also for better education and better employment within developing nations. The discussion of the 'mathetic' function of English (Prabhu, 1994) as a world language (that is, the function that involves a basic need of the mind: the need to make sense of the world one lives in) emphasises the importance of English as a source of knowledge (De Lanerolle, 1991: 5-6; De Silva, 1978: 45; Hanson-Smith, 1984: 26; Kandiah, 1995: xxii; Prabhu, 1994: 55-57). In developing countries, not knowing English makes it a disadvantage for those in pursuit of knowledge, even if the language of formal school instruction is not English (Chandraprema, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Crystal, 2000: 101, 112 and 116; Fishman, 1972a: 31-32 and 80; Goonetilleke, 1983: 13-14; Siriwardena, 1990: 5; Spolsky, 1998: 65; Tollefson, 1991: 82-83). For example, Sri Lankan undergraduates in social science and humanities with proficiency of English are advantaged because of their ability to do independent library research (See Chapter

1). Therefore, in the Indian sub-continent, English has established itself as the preferred language for a good career, higher education, social status and modernisation (Brann, 1985: 34; Chandraprema, 2001b; Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in the Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 13 and 16; Crystal, 2000: 10-11, 14 and 101; De Souza, 1969d; Fernando, 1976: 348; Fernando, 2001; Gudykunst and Schmidt, 1999: 2; Kachru, 1978: 36, 1982: 3, 1982, 1986: 1; Kandiah, 1995: xxii; Khubchandani, 1977: 93; Pandit, 1978: 106; Perimbanayagam, Undated; Ruberu, 2001; Silva, 1997: 110-112; Siriwardena, 1990: 4; Spolsky, 1977: 12, 1998: 77; Sridhar, 1982; Tully, 1997: 159; Vicziany, 1995: 46; Weeraratna, 2002; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 3-4). The indigenous languages may also help individuals in upward social mobility, but English would do this more frequently and more effectively. For example, it is argued that the vernaculars of Sri Lanka have not adapted adequately to serve the purposes of modern science and technology (Piyadasa, 1984: 63-64). Therefore, those competent in English become better achievers in the fields of science and technology.

Within developing countries the importance attached to English as the language for better education and employment is so significant that it has led to internal conflicts. People of the rural/traditional sector of these countries may not have the same opportunities as those in the urban/modern sector to learn English (Tollefson, 1991). This disparity of opportunities in the two sectors creates barriers against the advancement of those from the traditional sector. This situation also reflects the ideological hegemony discussed by Apple (1982c). The feeling of being denied the benefits of English experienced by traditional sector leads to resistance and struggle in developing countries (Tollefson, 1991: 84-85 and 97). For instance, the 1971 and 1988/89 the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurgency movement in Sri Lanka was organised by Sinhalese *educated* rural youth who saw themselves as being deprived of many things that urban high-class people have had access to. A strong point raised by them was the that lack of English knowledge disadvantaged

most 'educated' rural people in the job market (Gooneratne, 1992: 16; Kearney, 1975; Government of Sri Lanka, 1990).

Psychological Issues: Attitudes, Motivation and Language Learning

The two potential social functions of English within South Asian developing societies suggest two types of motivation for learning English. Firstly, its function of integrating people of different ethnicities within a state boundary suggests the development of an integrative motivation. Secondly, its function of providing links with the rest of the world in terms of trade, science, technology and knowledge suggests the development of an instrumental motivation. That is, these functions translate into attitudes toward and motivation for learning English as a second language in these countries. A number of researchers (See Gardner, 1988b) have theorised and empirically demonstrated the influence of attitudes and motivation towards learning a second language from a variety of perspectives. In discussing these motivational aspects of learning English the present study relies on the socio-educational model of second language acquisition introduced by Gardner (1985b). Gardner's model takes up these two kinds of motivation: the integrative and instrumental.

Motivational Orientation and Motivation

Motivational orientation and motivation are two interrelated, yet independent concepts introduced by Gardner (1985b). Motivational orientation refers to the goal identified by a language learner for learning a language (Gardner, 1985b: 50-51, Undated: 9-10). It is, according to Gardner, evident in the reasons stated by a learner for learning a language. These reasons are classified into two categories, namely integrative and instrumental. Based on these two types of reason Gardner identifies two kinds of motivational orientation: integrative and instrumental. A person with an integrative orientation learns the second language with the purpose of meeting and

communicating with individuals that speak the language as a first language (namely, the second/target language community). An instrumentally oriented person learns a second language with the purpose of making use of the practical value attached to the second language in education and employment (Gardner, 1985b: 11, Undated: 10; Gardner and Lambert, 1959, 1972; Gardner and Smythe, 1981: 511-512; Gardner, Smythe and Brunet, 1977: 244). For example, a Sri Lankan learning English for the purpose of becoming part of the English-speaking Sri Lankan social circle is learning English for integrative reasons (hence integratively oriented). Similarly, a Sri Lankan learning English with the purpose of finding a better job is learning English for instrumental reasons (hence instrumentally oriented).

Motivation, according to Gardner (1985b), is goal-directed, effortful behaviour shown by an individual. Unlike motivational orientation, motivation comprises three elements. They are: effortful behaviour towards learning the language, a desire to learn the language and attitudes toward learning the language (Gardner, 1985b: 50-54, Undated: 9-10; Gardner and Smythe, 1975: 224). These three elements of motivation, according to Gardner's (1985b: 51) model, are represented by the concepts of motivational intensity, desire to learn the target language and attitudes toward learning the target language respectively.

In the statistical model introduced by Gardner (1985a), motivational orientation and motivation are represented by two indexes, namely motivational orientation index and motivation index. In regards to the motivational orientation index, first, learners are asked to indicate their 'level of agreement' (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) to statements describing integrative and instrumental reasons. Each of these levels of agreement is attributed a mark. For example, in the present study students who 'strongly agreed' with a statement was given 5 marks while those 'strongly disagreeing' got only 1 mark (See Appendix C). Aggregating these marks obtained by a language learner for instrumental reasons and integrative reasons gives that individual's instrumental orientation index and

integrative orientation index, respectively. Similarly, the motivation index is the aggregated score of motivational intensity, desire to learn the target language and attitudes toward learning the target language. The motivation index shows the *levels of motivation* displayed by a language learner (Clement, Smythe and Gardner, 1978: 689; Gardner and Smythe, 1981: 520; Lalonde and Gardner, 1985: 404).

The motivation index and motivational orientation index, when examined in relation to each other, show the type of motivation shown by a language learner. For example, an *instrumentally oriented* learner of the English language is learning English with the intention of using that knowledge for better education and better employment opportunities. But an *instrumentally motivated* individual, in addition to showing an instrumental orientation, will show a high aggregate on motivational intensity, desire and attitudes toward learning English (Gardner, Undated: 10). Therefore, based on the type of motivational orientation shown by a student, motivation is classified into two categories, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation.

Motivation and Attitudes

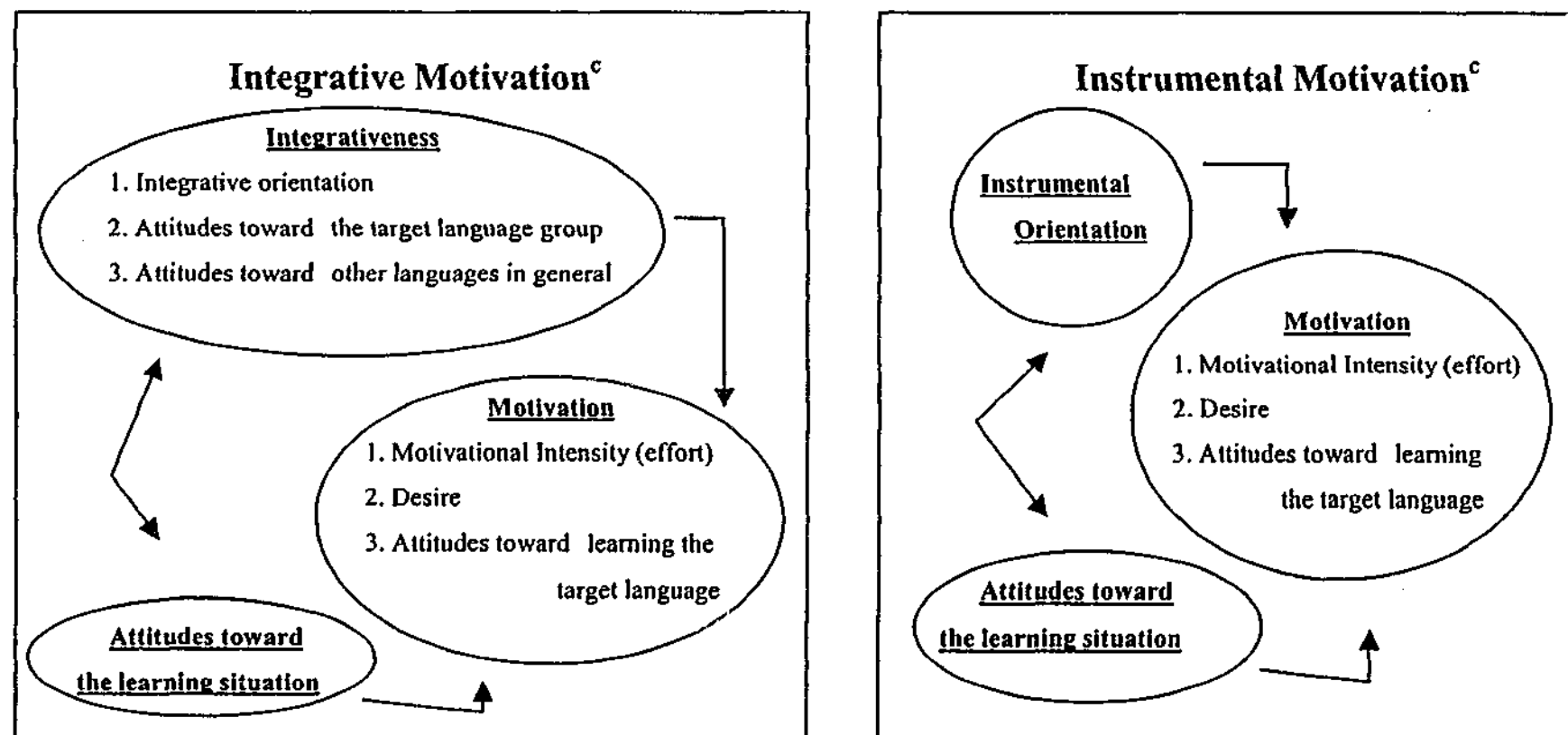
In addition to the attitudes toward learning a second language that form a constituent part of what Gardner defines as motivation, there is another set of attitudes that affect motivation to learn the second language (Gardner, 1985b, Undated; Gardner and Smythe, 1981). These attitudes are:

1. Attitudes toward the learning situation
2. Attitudes toward the target language group
3. Attitudes toward other languages in general

These attitudes influence motivation directly or indirectly through their effect on other variables discussed below. The first type of attitude affects motivation directly. Attitudes toward the learning situation refer to attitudes held by a learner toward

his/her language teacher, language course and learning atmosphere (Gardner, Undated: 16). This first set of attitudes affects both *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. However, according to Gardner (1985b: 60-61), attitudes toward the target language group and attitudes toward other languages in general only impact on integrative motivation. These two attitudinal variables do not have any impact on instrumental motivation. In conjunction with integrative orientation, these two latter types of attitudes form the variable 'integrativeness'. Integrativeness, according to Gardner and his colleagues, reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to become part of the target language community (Gardner, Undated: 12; Gardner and Smythe, 1981: 520; Gardner, Lalonde and MacPherson, 1985: 404) (See Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1^a: Key variables and their components of the two types of motivation^b



^a Figure 2.1 is adapted from a similar figure presented in Gardner (Undated).

^b All the variables, according to Gardner (1985a), are calculated as 'indexes'. However, in this figure the word 'index' has been omitted due to inadequacy of space.

^c In these schematic representations major variables falling under each type of motivation are in bold letter and are underlined. Their components are given as 1, 2 and 3 where relevant. The arrowheads point to the influence of one variable over another.

Other Factors Influencing Second Language Acquisition

The socio-educational model of second language acquisition, though mainly focussing on motivational and attitudinal variables influencing second language learning, also points out the importance of other psychological and social factors that may have an impact on the learning process. These other factors can influence second language acquisition directly or indirectly through their influence on motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 9).

Parental support is one of the 'other' variables that influences language acquisition through its influence on motivation (Gardner, 1985b: 110; Gardner and Clement, 1990: 505). Gardner differentiates between an 'active role' and a 'passive role' played by parents in affecting their child's second language learning. In the first category, parents actively encourage their child while monitoring his/her language learning. In the latter category, the influence of parents is indirect in that their support is a function of how they feel about the target language group. Gardner claims that if parents hold positive attitudes about the target language group, this would positively influence a child's language acquisition. In both types of parental support the impact on student's language acquisition can be positive as well as negative.

Gardner points to classroom anxiety⁸, intelligence and language aptitude of learner as other important psychological variables that influence language acquisition (Gardner, 1985b, Undated). For example, he claims that under formal school teaching conditions where the second language is taught as part of a larger curriculum, students' level of intelligence and language aptitude would be vital

⁸ Researchers have shown that excessive levels of language classroom anxiety obstruct successful language acquisition (See Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1994; Tobias, 1986).

factors (Gardner, 1985b: 18 and 24; Gardner and Lambert, 1959: 272). Though Gardner and his associates have conducted various empirical studies on these other psychological factors, they have not been incorporated in the present study.

Criticisms of the Socio-educational Model

Two major criticisms have been directed at Gardner's socio-educational model. Firstly, the ambiguities in defining the concepts 'integrative' and 'instrumental' have been commented upon. It has been pointed out that interpretations of integrative and instrumental orientations towards second language learning vary (Clement and Kruidenier, 1983; Ely, 1986b: 28; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991: 58-59; Strong, 1984: 4). It has been argued that interpretations of the two orientations largely depend on 'who learns what in what milieu' (Clement and Kruidenier, 1983: 288). In the case of considering 'travel abroad' as a reason for learning a language, this has been interpreted both as instrumental and integrative by different researchers. For example, for students learning English in India 'travelling abroad' has been described as an instrumental goal (Lukmani, 1972) while for students learning French in England 'travelling abroad' has been defined as an integrative goal (Burstall *et al.*, 1974, cited in Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991).

A second criticism is that the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation do not capture the full range of motivation found in language learners. For example, Ely (1986b: 28) reports that there exists a 'requirement motivation' (as in the language being a required subject in a curriculum). Accordingly, it is argued that students may simply want to study the language to fulfil overall course requirements. Similarly, other studies have shown that students learn a second language simply because they 'like it' or for 'pleasure' (because they enjoy learning it) (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Djigunovic, 1998).

Other criticisms aimed at the model are related to the Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) introduced by Gardner (1985a) for measuring the motivational variables discussed in the model. As this method has been used in the present study, these criticisms will be discussed in the following chapter along with other methodological issues pertinent to this study.

Pedagogical Issues: Communicative Language Teaching

The previously discussed integrative and instrumental national requirements of South Asian developing countries point to the need for citizens to be fluent in English. Therefore, the English language needs to be taught in these countries in a manner that emphasises the linguistic rules of the language, while developing confidence in the learners to communicate in the language. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) involves a teaching strategy that aims to create such English users. The communicative approach was introduced as a solution to the problems associated with teaching of English in many developing nations which usually result in large numbers of students leaving school without an adequate knowledge of English (Allen and Widdowson, 1979: 123-124; Widdowson, 1979a: 49, 1979c: 117). Sri Lanka falls under this category of nations (Chandraprema, 2001c; Committee Appointed by the Honourable Minister of Education, 1971: 69; De Silva, 1978: 44; Fernando, 1991: 108-109; Goonetilleke, 1983: 16; Hilton, 1983: 5; Jayaweera, 1984: 16; Ratnayake, 2000a; Ruberu, 2001; Weeraratna, 2002). In Sri Lanka, the current school English language program recommends the 'communicative' teaching of the language, focussing on instrumental goals (National Education Commission, 1997: 14; National Institute of Education, 1999: 1 and 4-5; National Institute of Education [Undated(a)]: 4-5; Lo Bianco, Sivagurunathan and Sivakumaran, 2000: 9).

Definition of Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching places its focus on teaching language 'in use'. Proponents of this approach, while emphasising the importance of developing 'linguistic competence' in a learner, place greater emphasis on 'communicative competence' (Allen and Widdowson, 1979: 124; Johnson, 1979: 193; Littlewood, 1981: 3; Nunan, 1989: 12; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 156 and 159; Widdowson, 1979a: 53, 1979b: 71; Wilkins, 1979b: 93). Linguistic competence refers to knowledge about the basic rules of a language (for example, grammar and lexis) which a person needs to know in order to use that language (Bachman, 1989: 252). Communicative competence refers to skills other than linguistic which helps learners to place their linguistic knowledge in the social world. For example, communicative competence gives the individual an ability to decide the best thing to say in a particular situation. Therefore, ideally it is expected that communicative teaching of a language would enable an individual to say the best thing in a particular situation in a grammatically correct sentence.

The communicative approach is based on the principle that teaching for communicative competence will automatically cater for all but a small part of linguistic competence (Allwright, 1979: 168). That is, it is argued that teaching how to use a language will automatically teach most of the linguistic rules pertinent to that language. The concept of 'communicative competence', as it is sometime interpreted, does not suggest a teaching approach that focuses solely on oral communication. It places importance on all four skills of learning a language, namely: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Canale and Svain, 1980: 2-4 and 27; Ellis, 1996: 214; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 172; Thompson, 1996).

Basic Principles of Communicative Language Teaching

In achieving the above communicative objectives of language teaching, proponents of the communicative approach recommend several strategies to be used in a language program. These are: the use of a notional syllabus, use of a variety of teaching material, task-based teaching, reasonable use of the mother tongue in the classroom and a pupil-centred teaching approach.

The Syllabus: Most crucial for communicative teaching is a notional language-teaching syllabus. Notions are concepts that can be expressed through language (Ur, 1991: 178). A notional syllabus is based on forms of language that will be most valuable for the learner as determined by curriculum designers. It focuses on the grammatical means by which the relevant notions can be expressed while considering the communicative value of everything that is taught (Clyne, 1986a: 9; LinguaLinks Library, 1999; Savignon, 1991: 263; Wilkins, 1979a: 84-85 and 90).

Instructional Material: The communicative approach involves three types of instructional material: text-based, task-based and *realia* (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 168). Text-based teaching refers to the use of a textbook in the classroom for teaching and for classroom activities. Task-based teaching involves a variety of games, role-plays, simulations and any other form of classroom activity that reinforces target language communication in the classroom. The final category of material, *realia* refers to 'authentic' teaching material such as newspapers, signs and posters. According to the proponents of communicative teaching *realia* is a vital classroom tool in the attempt to teach language 'in use' (Canale and Swain, 1980; Peacock, 1997: 146; Widdowson, 1996). In order to familiarise students with real-life situations in which they would have to use the language in future, it is pointed out that these materials should be taken from the cultural context in which students have to communicate in future (Clarke, 1989; McKay, 2000).

Task-based Teaching: Of the three instructional materials discussed above, task-based teaching occupies an important place in communicative language teaching. Classroom tasks (activities) are the main means of teaching the 'use' of language to the students (Thompson, 1996). It is expected that these classroom tasks would enhance opportunities for students to develop almost natural communicative skills that will be useful in the future (Brumfit, 1979: 188-189; LinguaLinks, 1999; Nunan, 1989: 41). Such classroom tasks become vital under conditions of language teaching where learners have little or no exposure to the target language outside of the classroom (Brumfit, 1984: 90; Newmark, 1979: 163). For such learners, the classroom may be the only opportunity they have for not only target language learning but also target language practice. Therefore, the communicative approach allows language teachers to use a wide range of tasks in the classroom as long as they engage learners in some sort of target language communication (LinguaLinks Library, 1999; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 165).

Based on this principle, classroom tasks are largely divided into two categories, namely: pre-communicative and communicative (Littlewood, 1981: 85-86; Nunan, 1989: 41-42). Pre-communicative tasks, on the one hand, involve students in practising linguistic rules without actually requiring them to use this knowledge for communicative purposes. Most activities found in textbooks fall under this category. They include drills and question-and-answer practices. Two types of pre-communicative tasks have been identified. When such activities pay at least some attention to the functional meaning of a linguistic rule they are called quasi-communicative activities while those concerned purely with practising linguistic structures are called structural activities. Communicative activities, on the other hand, engage learners in using the knowledge they practised at the pre-communicative stage for actual communication. Such activities are also of two types. Those activities that expect learners to perform a communicative task by focussing purely on grammatical accuracy are called functional communicative activities while

those that require learners to produce grammatically accurate and socially appropriate speech in a given situation are called social interaction activities.

According to communicative language teaching, the most effective classroom tasks will have a 'gap' of information. Students would have to fill this gap by communicating with another person who holds the information (Johnson, 1979: 201; Klippel, 1984: 4; Nunan, 1989: 64; Pica, 1988: 76; Richards and Rodgers, 2001:27). Most conventional classroom techniques, such as repeating after the teacher, lack this information gap and fail to capture students' interest. Such activities are dealing with information already revealed in the classroom. Therefore, in Johnson's (1979: 201) words, 'the existence of doubt is an important prerequisite' of communicative activities. The primary form of such activities is called information-gap activities. For example, if one student holds a puzzle and another student holds the answers to the puzzle, they need to communicate with each other to solve the puzzle. A more advanced form of such activities is called opinion-gap activities. These activities involve students in, for example, exchanging their opinion about an issue common to all of them (Ellis, 1997: 38; Klippel, 1984: 4). Information-gap activity gives very little or no opportunity for learners to state their own meanings whereas opinion-gap activities request learners to state very much their own meanings (Prabhu, 1987: 48-49).

Use of the Mother Tongue: Recent trends in the field of linguistics emphasise that use of the students' mother tongue in language teaching and learning is a 'linguistic human right' of the students (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994; Sridhar, 1994). Therefore, the proponents of the communicative approach have given due recognition to the students' mother tongue in their teaching strategies. Accordingly, the students' mother tongue is considered a *resource* in the language classroom. Translation is seen as a useful pedagogical device and, therefore, a 'reasonable' use of the mother tongue is recommended (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 156; Widdowson, 1979b: 61). Students are constantly requested to take risks, when a teaching situation requires

them to communicate in a language that they have little control over. Such situations could make students feel anxious, uncomfortable and unhappy (Nunan, 1989: 86; Prabhu, 1987: 29). Under such conditions, allowing the use of students' mother tongue could lead to neutralising student-anxiety and lead to better language acquisition.

Pupil-centred Teaching: Communicative language teaching also involves a teaching approach that is more pupil-centred than teacher-centred. A reconstruction of the traditional teacher's role is expected in a classroom functioning under the principles of communicative teaching. Traditionally, a teacher's role was to provide correct models of language and corrective feedback (Littlewood, 1981: 91; Nunan, 1989: 85). Communicative language teaching requires a shift from this teacher-centred approach (teacher as 'instructor') to a pupil-centred approach (teacher as 'facilitator of learning'). A teacher is expected to be willing to put his/her students' learning needs ahead of his/her own behaviour (Britten, 1985b: 220; Brumfit, 1984: 110; Canale and Swain, 1980: 27-28; Littlewood, 1981: 92; Savignon, 1991: 266). The role of the teacher, as expected by the proponents of communicative language teaching can be summarised as follows (Canale and Swain, 1980: 33; Choudhury, 1998: 163; Littlewood, 1981: 92-93; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 167-168):

1. Coordination of the classroom activities in a manner that leads to better communicative ability in students
2. Classroom management to ensure that activities have been satisfactorily organised
3. Function as a language instructor in activities where new language needs to be presented while not intervening in other activities. In the latter type of activities the teacher is expected to observe the students and act as an advisor when necessary or required by students. But, according to Canale and Swain (1980), to be successful as the instigator of communication, the teacher should possess a fairly high level of communicative competence in the target language
4. The teacher should sometimes participate in activities with students

Therefore, the ideal language teacher, according to the communicative approach, is friendly, sympathetic and supportive. (Choudhury, 1998: 163; Littlewood, 1981: 93-94, 1984: 59). It is expected that such a learning atmosphere would also lead to improving student motivation towards learning the language.

Criticisms of Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative approach has been criticised as a teaching methodology that places more importance on communicative competence at the expense of linguistic competence (Swan, 1985a, 1985b). Swan (1985a) argues that a major component of communicative competence required by second language learners has already been acquired at the stage of mother tongue-learning. According to this argument, the linguist functioning under communicative principles is attempting to teach skills already known and irrelevant to the student (Swan, 1985a: 9-10). Swan (1985b: 78) further argues that the notional syllabus used in communicative teaching, by teaching similar notions together even when they are structurally very different has made grammar-learning difficult for learners⁹. In his attempt to criticise the communicative approach, Swan (1985a, 1985b) has failed to see most of its positive contributions to language teaching, especially under conditions where exposure to the language is limited for learners in their personal lives. Under such conditions, though learners may have developed a certain level of communicative competence through their experience with the mother tongue, the classroom could be the only opportunity they have to practise their linguistic knowledge of the second language.

A further criticism of the communicative approach has been based on the problems encountered in adopting the approach in different cultural contexts.

⁹ Widdowson (1985) dismisses Swan's (1985a, 1985b) criticisms as a misinterpretation of the communicative approach. For example, communicative approach does not ignore the importance of communicative competence held by learners as a result of mother tongue experiences (See Canale and Swain, 1980: 12 and 28).

Communicative language teaching is now a global phenomenon. Consequently, it is increasingly realised that the original form of the communicative approach does not apply to all teaching/learning and social contexts equally. Studies have revealed that a 'traditional' type of language program faces various problems when attempting to apply the original version of the communicative approach (See Chapter 3). Traditional type of teaching refers to a language course that teaches the target language for a particular number of minutes per day, on a certain number of days per week within a broader curriculum of other subjects (Fishman, 1977: 95-96; Tucker, 1974: 103). For example, it has been pointed out that teachers under pressure to prepare students for examinations may have difficulties in practising all of the communicative principles discussed above in their classrooms (Savignon, 1991: 266).

Conclusion

The chapter outlined social, psychological and pedagogical theories that are pertinent to learning English as a second language in Sri Lanka. Firstly, the examination of Apple's theory of the relationship between education and students' social class pointed out how the school system advantages students of upper social class background. They manage to remain in the education system and reach higher achievement levels because of the resources available to them. The school curriculum that, in fact, represents the knowledge shared by the upper class further favours these students.

Secondly, sociological theories that describe the potential role of the English language in Asian developing countries such as Sri Lanka were discussed. It has been shown that a language of wider communication such as English which has no obvious ethnic links with the people of South Asian developing countries could function as the national language of these countries. Theoreticians supporting this 'integrative function' of English assume that the English language would be able to unite the various ethnic groups residing in one country. However, the elitist class

background associated with English in these countries does not make this an ideal solution to the problems faced by these countries. Irrespective of whether English is perceived to be an elitist language or not, all sections of the population in these countries need fluency in English in order to move with the global economy, science and technology.

The integrative and instrumental functions of English are related to two types of motivation for learning the language. The integrative value of English relates to an integrative motivation and the instrumental value of English to an instrumental motivation. An integrative motivation motivates an individual to learn English in order to identify with the community who speak the language as a first language. An instrumental motivation motivates an individual to learn English in order to obtain better employment and education opportunities that are enhanced by English fluency.

Finally, the pedagogical approach of communicative language teaching is a relevant consideration in the examination of second language teaching and learning. Communicative language teaching involves a teaching strategy that teaches a language by using it for various classroom tasks. Therefore, a teaching strategy that is less stressful for the learners is recommended in order to make them feel comfortable about using the target language for communication in the classroom. It is expected that teachers be less prominent in the teaching process giving priority to the learning requirements of the learners.

Chapter 3

Review of Empirical Research on Second Language Learning and Teaching

A combination of factors is related to the process of second language learning. These include physiological factors, psychological factors such as attitudes, motivation and anxiety, intellectual abilities and social and pedagogical factors. This chapter looks at international research done on social, psychological and pedagogical aspects of second language learning. The chapter first examines research dealing with students' social class background and their English acquisition, followed by research dealing with students' motivational and attitudinal characteristics and second language acquisition. Finally, research dealing with pedagogical factors will be discussed as they are related to communicative language teaching.

Family Characteristics and Second Language Acquisition

Student's family characteristics contribute to his/her level of second language acquisition. Research has addressed characteristics such as the language spoken in learner's home, age at which the learner has had his/her first exposure to the language, socio-economic variables and their relationship to English acquisition.

Language Spoken at Home and Age at First Exposure to the Language

Opportunities for using the second language in intimate social circles, such as the family, and for learning the language from an early age have been found to positively impact on a student's level of second language acquisition. These two aspects of language learning usually occur together. Research has shown that a majority of

students exposed to the second language at home are also students who have had an exposure to the language from an early age (Clyne, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c).

Language fluency usually results from exposure to the language and opportunities to practice new skills (Clyne, 1986c: 128; Spolsky, 1990: 24). It is argued that, in this respect, the informal conditions of learning and using the language at home brings higher language fluency compared to formal classroom learning (Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999; Spolsky, 1990). Those who speak the second language in their homes from an early age are advantaged because of their ability to differentiate between two linguistic systems, namely first and second language, from an early age (Clyne, 1981, 1986a: 12; Lattey, 1994: 79; Piske, MacKay and Flege, 2001; Spolsky, 1990: 273). A study of primary school learners of German in Australia showed that the children from German-speaking families benefited more from the school language program compared to the rest of the students (Clyne, 1986c). The same study showed that children who started learning German in Grades 1 and 2 show most 'native-like' pronunciation while those who started learning in Grade 4 show most 'foreign-like' pronunciation (Clyne, 1986b). Similar findings have been made in a study of Italian-English bilingual students in the USA (Piske, MacKay and Flege, 2001). A study of kindergarten students learning French in Canada also showed that immersion into the target language from an early age leads to successful language acquisition (Tucker, Hamayan and Genesee, 1976).

Studies carried out in Sri Lanka confirm this relationship between early exposure to the language at home and higher levels of acquisition. Many writers have pointed out that higher school achievers in English have gained their knowledge more from their home background than from school (Committee Appointed by the Honourable Minister of Education, 1971: 72; Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in the Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 55; De Souza, 1978: 39-40; Jayasuriya, 1969: 70 and 74; Kandiah, 1979: 86, 1984: 130; Passe, 1948: 79; Walatara, 1978; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 5; Wickramasuriya, 1981: 12). A survey carried out in

schools in Colombo has confirmed this (Karunaratne, 1993). Findings that support this argument are also found in a study of tertiary level students from the University of Colombo. There it was shown that frequent and predominant use of Sinhala with family and friends lead to students' lack of English fluency (Rupasinghe, 1985).

In Sri Lanka, rural students are disadvantaged with respect to exposure to English in their intimate social circles. For them, not just their home environment, but also their entire social environment gives little or no exposure to English (Canagarajah, 1995a; Canagarajah and Saravanapava, 1993). Karunaratne (1993), in a study based on a sample of students from a disadvantaged area of Sri Lanka (Puttalam), records that students' low levels of English marks is partly caused by the lack of opportunities they have for using English in their homes or elsewhere. These studies confirm that exposure to the second language within the family from an early age could result in higher levels of language acquisition during later school years.

Family Socio-economic Position

Poverty has been found to negatively affect the education of rural Sri Lankans, principally because such families expect children to engage in 'money earning' work rather than education (Baker, 1988b: 378-379; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 25; Diyasena, 1983: 84 and 108; Kandiah, 1984: 130-131). Under such conditions, children are either forced not to attend school or to drop out of school altogether in order to earn money or to help with household chores such as looking after younger siblings while parents are at work (Baker, 1988a). An additional factor that affects such children is malnutrition which inhibits successful learning (Baker, 1988b: 381-386). Furthermore, parents of such families are less educated and are unable to help children with their education in the way in which educated parents could (Baker, 1989b: 149). Attitudes of parents who attribute less value to education, enable students to drop out of school or not enrol at all (Baker, 1988b: 378-379). These

poverty-related aspects of rural Sri Lanka seem to reproduce themselves, leading to low levels of education and English proficiency among the rural population.

Similar findings linking students' educational achievement in general, and those in English in particular, with their socio-economic background have been reported in urban contexts of Sri Lanka. A study of students from 37 schools in Colombo showed that children of parents in high status occupations, with higher educational qualifications and earning higher incomes are successful school learners, including the learning of English, compared to children coming from less well-to-do families (Niles, 1981). These findings have been confirmed by two other studies in the Western province¹ and Colombo (Koelmeyer, 1990; Rupasinghe, 1990b). Researchers specifically concerned with social class and English acquisition in Sri Lanka and other developing countries have confirmed the above described relationship (Lanzas and Kingston, 1981; Rupasinghe, 1985).

Social class background of students also influences the type of school attended by an individual (Noonan, 1976). This further reinforces or inhibits general educational as well as second language achievement levels of students. In developing countries, students of higher social class background usually enter higher status, more cosmopolitan schools (Koelmeyer, 1990; Lanzas and Kingston, 1981; Rupasinghe, 1990b). A study on students from three districts in Sri Lanka has shown that children from affluent backgrounds attend the better government schools (1AB) while children from rural and urban deprived conditions attend schools in lower ranks of the school hierarchy (Type 2) (Karunasekera and Rupasinghe, 1991). Similar studies dealing with urban and rural Sri Lanka have confirmed this (Rupasinghe, 1990a; Walatara, 1974). These studies indicate that in developing countries, family social status coincides with school status (Kandiah, 1984: 129).

¹ The Western province includes three administrative districts. They are: Colombo, Gampaha and Kaluthara.

At least two researchers, however, have pointed out that in certain developing country contexts school conditions are more relevant to educational achievement than family background (Fuller, 1987; Thorndike, 1973). However, neither of these studies completely rejects the importance of family background for successful school learning. They in fact confirm the argument that students' social class background affects the type of school they attend. For example, Fuller (1987) reports that school conditions are more relevant in rural areas compared to urban middle class areas. This could be because families in rural areas, as described previously, do not have the material and knowledge resources to support learning. Similarly, Thorndike (1973) concluded that school factors seem more relevant for students' reading comprehension in developing countries than in developed countries. This too could be because families of developing countries are not as resourced as families of developed countries. Therefore, in the case of developing countries, when family conditions are under resourced the school is more important than the family background for educational achievement.

Another group of writers has shown that both family and school factors are equally important in the Sri Lankan context (Diyasena, 1983; Udagama, 1999). In a study on access to universities, Jayaweera (1984) claims that quality of school and family support are crucial for university entrance in Sri Lanka. The studies considered above indicate that in Sri Lanka both family and school conditions assume great importance for successful learning. However, when family related socio-cultural conditions do not facilitate learning, school factors become important.

Psychological Factors and Second Language Acquisition

Several psychological factors are relevant to second language acquisition. These include cognitive abilities, personality factors, classroom anxiety, attitudes and motivation. According to Gardner (1985b), whose approach to motivation and attitudes has been used in this study, the attitudes that affect second language

acquisition are multifaceted. The present study focuses on two types of such attitudes, namely attitudes toward learning the target language and attitudes toward the target language community. As the present study addresses attitudes and motivation, research relevant to these two factors is discussed below. Firstly, studies dealing with motivation and attitudes in general will be examined. Secondly, studies focussing specifically on integrative and instrumental motivation will be discussed. Integrative motivation develops an interest in a person to learn a language in order to become psychologically close to the community who speaks that language as a first language. An instrumentally motivated individual learns a language with the intention of making use of the economical and educational values attached to the language. The reasons that develop these motivations in language learners are called integrative orientation and instrumental orientation respectively (See Chapter 2).

Motivation and Attitudes toward Learning a Second Language

High levels of motivation and positive attitudes toward learning a second language have been found to result in a higher level of second language acquisition. For example, Djigunovic (1998), in his study with Croatian learners of English, explained that higher language achievers held higher levels of motivation and positive attitudes toward learning English. A number of Canadian studies dealing with kindergarten, secondary school and university French learners have illustrated a similar association between motivation, attitudes toward learning French and French achievement (Clement, Smythe and Gardner, 1978; Gardner and Lambert, 1959; Lalonde and Gardner, 1984, 1985; Randhawa and Korpan, 1973; Tucker, Hamayan and Genesee, 1976). Similar findings have also been made in other learning contexts (Barrera, 1996; Cheng, 1995; Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999; Lalonde and Gardner, 1993; Mansoor, 1992; Masgoret, Benans and Gardner, 2000; Sutarso, 1996; Tremblay, Gardner and Heipel, 2000). Studies that attempt to understand the relationship between attitudes and motivation and English acquisition in Sri Lanka

are scarce. But at least one Sri Lankan study indicates that higher levels of motivation lead to higher levels of language acquisition (Koelmeyer, 1990).

Positive attitudes and higher levels of motivation towards learning a language influence a language learner's behaviour in several ways. For example, a study of university Spanish learners has shown that highly motivated individuals frequently take part in classroom activities, resulting in higher levels of Spanish acquisition (Ely, 1986a). Similarly, studies in the USA, Canada and England have shown that students' desire to continue learning the language improves when they demonstrate higher levels of motivation and positive attitudes toward learning the target language (Bartley, 1970; Clement, Smythe and Gardner, 1978; Massey, 1994). Studies dealing with secondary school learners in Canada have revealed that highly motivated language learners tend to seek opportunities to use the language and as a result are successful at retaining the language knowledge even after the language course has terminated (Gardner, Lalonde and MacPherson, 1985; Gardner *et al.*, 1987; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989).

It appears, however, that motivation for, and attitudes toward learning a second language may not constitute the crucial factors for successful language acquisition under some social conditions. For example, Clement (1986) in his study of Canadian Francophone university learners of English demonstrates that under ethnic majority-minority conditions, minority students who expressed higher levels of self-confidence² in using English showed higher levels of English acquisition. In this study neither motivation nor attitudes were found to have an important influence on language acquisition. In other studies by Clement and his colleagues (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a, 1980; Clement and Kruidenier, 1985), it has been further revealed that motivation, though important, is not as important as self-confidence for successful language acquisition. A study of Japanese university

² The concept 'self-confidence' refers to self-assessment of target language proficiency. Self-confidence is a psychological state, free of anxiety (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a; Lee, 2000).

students learning English confirmed this (Lee, 2000). But at least one study has linked the concept of self-confidence with motivation. A study of Canadian university students learning French showed that highly motivated individuals experienced less classroom anxiety and, therefore, were more self-confident compared to those not so motivated (Lalonde and Gardner, 1984). Similar to the concept of 'self-confidence', another recent study has pointed out that students' 'willingness to communicate' is more important than motivation or attitudes for successful language learning (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998).

Lack of student motivation is a common explanation given by many writers for the unsuccessful results of the school English program in Sri Lanka (Committee Appointed by the Honourable Minister of Education, 1971: 69; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 65; Kandiah, 1984: 132; Ratnayake, 2000c). They view the current O/L examination (See Chapter 1), which does not require a compulsory pass in English, as largely responsible for this lack of student motivation. That is, the current school education system allows students to enter university even if they have failed the O/L English examination as long as they perform well in other academic subjects at the A/L examination. Consequently, students pay very little attention to English. In a study by Rupasinghe (1985), students considered attention paid to other academic subjects in school in order to pass examinations as a reason for their lack of English proficiency. The *kaduva* value attached to English in Sri Lanka (See Chapter 1) also has been considered a probable cause for negative attitudes about and lack of motivation for the learning of English (Canagarajah and Saravanapava, 1993; Kandiah, 1984). It is argued that derogatory words such as *kaduva* and *kalu suddo* used to refer to the English language and its speakers in Sri Lanka may inhibit students' motivation and subsequent level of English acquisition. However, contrary to the suggestion made by these writers, some recent studies have showed that attitudes and motivation are extremely favourable among a majority of school and university learners of English in Sri Lanka (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Perera, 2000; Samarakkody, 2001). These studies have also dismissed the prevalence of the *kaduva*

value among contemporary Sri Lankan learners of English. The majority of studies discussed here, therefore, illustrate a positive association between motivation and attitudes toward learning a second language and language acquisition.

Integrative Motivation to Learn a Second Language

A number of studies conducted by Gardner and his colleagues (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a; Gardner and Smythe, 1975; Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999; Gardner, Smythe and Clement, 1979; Gardner *et al.*, 1976; Glikzman, Gardner and Smythe, 1982; Lalonde and Gardner, 1984; Masgoret and Gardner, 1999) on immigrant communities have found that integratively motivated learners show higher levels of language achievement compared to the ones not so motivated. Similar findings have been reported in studies of foreign students learning English in the USA (Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977; Spolsky, 1969) and Korean students learning English in Korea (Kang, 2000). Behaviours that facilitate language learning such as active participation in the classroom, desire to continue learning the language in the future and willingness to make use of any opportunities to practice and improve language abilities have been recorded as characteristics of integratively motivated individuals (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a; Gardner and Smythe, 1975; Gardner *et al.*, 1976; Glikzman, Gardner and Smythe, 1982).

Related to integrative motivation, according to Gardner's socio-educational model, are attitudes toward the target language group (See Figure 2.1). The majority of studies have shown that these attitudes are positively associated with second language acquisition. Studies on Canadian French learners (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977b; Gardner, Smythe and Brunet, 1977), foreign students learning English in the USA (Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977; Spolsky, 1969) and other learning contexts (Morris, 2001) have confirmed a positive correlation between these two variables. An interesting exception to this pattern is what has been termed 'anti-

integrative' motivation. A study of Mexican American females learning English as a second language in the USA revealed that attitudes toward the target language group has a negative influence on language achievement levels. It has been argued that because of the low social status attributed to Mexican Americans in the USA, as Mexican Americans improve their knowledge of English language, their 'resentment' towards the Americans worsens (Oller, Baca and Vigil, 1977).

Instrumental Motivation to Learn a Second Language

Most of Gardner's and his colleagues' studies (See Gardner, 1988a) are based on a hypothesis that anticipates integrative motivation and (therefore) positive attitudes toward the target language group to produce greater success in second language learning. This hypothesis has been confirmed to some extent in the Canadian context where both French and English are official languages of the country. In such a social context it is reasonable to expect that learners would be interested in integrating with the target language group. However, in several of his studies, Gardner, along with his colleagues (Gardner, 1988a, Undated; Gardner and Lambert, 1972: 15-16; Gardner, Smythe and Clement, 1979), reiterates the possibility of other types of motivational and attitudinal variables being more important to second language acquisition under different social conditions. Gardner explains that in the USA and Canada, the English language has widespread instrumental (economic) value compared to French. Therefore, he claims that participants of his research may not have realised an instrumental value for French in these countries. For them, the instrumental value is more related to English than to French (Gardner and Santos, 1970: 3). Based on this argument he suggests that in countries where a particular target language has obvious instrumental value attached to it, instrumental motivation may be more prominent among learners. In fact, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), in a study of university learners of French in Canada, has pointed out that instrumental motivation could be as important as integrative motivation to successful language learning. Their

conclusion on instrumental motivation was that its influence would be maintained only until the goal is achieved. However, they also suggest that if the instrumental goals were continuous, instrumental motivation would also continue to be effective. This has been confirmed in several studies done in Asian contexts where English has a 'continuous' instrumental value in society.

Kachru (1988: 154), for example, after having analysed a range of studies dealing with English in second language contexts in such environments as Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia, claims instrumental motivation to be the predominant motivational factor for successful English learning in these situations. Lukmani (1972), in her study of Indian high-school students, found that successful English learners were more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated³. These students regarded English-speaking Indians as more successful, modern, independent, cultured and as having a higher standard of living, but did not wish to identify with them. All they wanted were the better conditions of living, which are associated with English. Similar results have been found in other research dealing with Asian learners of English (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Gardner and Santos, 1970; Mansoor, 1992; Sachdev and Wright, 1996).

While in some Sri Lankan contexts students may be more instrumentally motivated, there is evidence that both integrative and instrumental motivation come into play. Two studies dealing with adult English learners in Sri Lanka have demonstrated such results (Perera, 2000; Samarakkody, 2001). These two studies, however, have been inconclusive in regards to which motivation results in greater English acquisition in Sri Lanka. Based on the range of studies discussed here it seems reasonable to expect that an instrumental motivation would be more useful for

³ Lukmani's (1972) study has led to considerable debate because she used the word 'motivation' to describe her findings. Criticism towards this study claims that she was in fact working on motivational orientation and not motivation (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). Therefore, doubt has been cast on the generalisation she makes on motivation when actually she had gathered information on motivational orientation.

successful English language learning in the South Asian region where English has established as the language for better education and employment (See Chapter 2).

Other Factors Relevant to Motivation

According to Gardner (1985b), a range of other factors influence a language learner's motivation. These include academic capability, pedagogical factors, parental support and gender. It is argued that those who are better at learning, therefore, academically capable, are more motivated to learn the second language (Barat, 1994; Djigunovic, 1998; Gardner, Undated; Hernandez, 1998). Djigunovic (1998: 120), in his study of Croatian learners of English, reported that students who have learning difficulties are discouraged from learning. A Sri Lankan study on school learners of English has confirmed that students of less (academic) ability, though motivated, did not have the academic capability to reach higher educational standards through the school curriculum (Koelmeyer, 1990).

The teaching situation contains another set of important factors that could have both positive and negative consequences on a learner's language acquisition. A study of 871 primary schools in the UK found that teaching styles have a more powerful effect on pupil progress than motivation or pupil personality (Bennett, 1976). This has been confirmed in studies carried out in several learning contexts (Djigunovic, 1998; Williams and Burden, 1999; Wright, 2001). Studies addressing the link between students' attitudes, motivation and classroom pedagogy are scarce in Sri Lanka. However, one study has illustrated that in a sample of university learners of English, almost 50% of the sample held negative attitudes toward the English teacher and the learning situation (Perera, 2000). Considering the fact that these students held extremely favourable attitudes toward the target language and the target language group, Perera (2000) concludes that attitudes toward the teacher and teaching situation seem more important for successful English learning in Sri Lanka.

Related to teaching situation are the teacher's attitudes toward the learners and their effect on students' learning progress. Cargile and colleagues (1994) point out that teachers who perceive particular speech characteristic of students as 'poor' may make negative inferences about their personalities, social background and academic abilities. For example, a study of teacher trainees in Canada found that these trainees judged a student's intelligence by his/her voice (Seligman, Tucker and Lambert, 1972). Findings of these researchers have been generally inconclusive on how these teacher-attitudes affect students' performance. However, a study concerning English teachers of Amerindian children, argues that beliefs held by teachers regarding different Amerindian tribes influenced the teachers' behaviour in the language classroom towards children from those different tribes (Gardner, 1968). Another study has demonstrated that teacher's attitudes and subsequent classroom behaviour towards students from different social class strata impact on students' school learning (Rist, 1997).

Other (social) factors considered important for motivation are parental support and gender. In their study with senior high school students learning English in the Philippines, Gardner and Santos (1970) found that instrumental orientation resulted in successful language achievement when coupled with high levels of parental support. A recent study by Gardner and his colleagues confirms this (Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999). Naiman and his colleagues (1978) also describe the importance of parental support for successful language learning. In regards to the relationship between students' gender and language acquisition, certain researchers claim that females are better language achievers than males (Bacon, 1992; Burstall, 1975; Ellis, R., 1999; Grigoryadis, 1989; Morris, 1998). Researchers have identified several reasons that could favour female students in language learning. Among them are the higher levels of motivation and positive attitudes demonstrated by females compared to their male counterparts (Cheng, 1995; Kang, 2000; Randhawa and Korpan, 1973). What is clear from this body of research is that favourable motivation alone does not

bring successful language acquisition. An array of other factors may inhibit successful language acquisition even if students are highly motivated to learn the language.

Pedagogical Factors and Second Language Acquisition

Developments in language teaching over recent decades have been strongly founded on the notion of teaching methodology. Among these language teaching methodologies are the grammar-translation method, direct method, reading approach, audiolingual method, community language learning, the silent way and total physical response (See Mora, 2002). One of the most recent developments is the use of communicative approach.

The Sri Lankan school English language program was based on grammar-translation and direct method. The target language is taught in the students' mother tongue using the grammar-translation method. The direct method, in contrast to the grammar-translation method, teaches the target language in the target language (Mora, 2002; Skela, 1998: 101). After decades of unsuccessful teaching using these methods (De Souza, 1969j; Karunaratne, 1993: 81; Ruberu, 2001; Walatara, 1974; Wickramasuriya, 1981), the Sri Lankan school English language curriculum now uses the communicative approach (National Institute of Education, 1999).

A further issue related to language teaching methodology is that teacher and student behaviour in a language classroom do not completely accord with the expectations of the teaching approach adopted in a particular language course. Teachers' classroom behaviour may be influenced by factors such as their desire to conform with the prevalent teaching strategies of a particular society, methods they experienced as students, their personal perceptions of the teaching profession and their relationship with the students (Chaudron, 1991: 21; Crandall, 2001: 11; Holliday, 1994; Lawton, 1987: 94; Murdoch, 1994; Pica *et al.*, 1996: 64; Prabhu,

1987: 103-104; Reid, 1987; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 32). Students' classroom behaviour, on the other hand, may be influenced by their cultural background and previous educational experiences (Crandall, 2001: 11; Naiman *et al.*, 1978: 4; Pica, 1996: 64; Prabhu, 1987: 82; Reid, 1987). Communicative language teaching strategies of recent years seem to be influenced by the idea that these varying teacher-student preferences need to be harmonised in a 'culture-sensitive' manner for successful learning (Littlewood, 2001; Reid, 1987).

Cultural Appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching

Researchers have identified some problems that obstruct communicative language teaching in certain learning cultures. The cultural appropriateness of the communicative approach, when put into practice in Asian conditions, has been a constant research concern in the field of second language education (Ellis, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Savignon, 1991). Hird (1995), writing of his experiences as an English teacher in China, states that certain characteristics embedded in the teachers, students and the educational system obstruct the successful carrying out of the communicative approach in China. Traditionally, teaching English has been textbook-based with a teacher-centred approach in China. Furthermore, having an examination that is based on the textbook has been interpreted as putting pressure on the teachers to complete the textbook before the examination at the expense of communicative language practice. These traditional practices and language-course requirements, according to Hird (1995), make it very difficult to practice communicative teaching strategies in China. Factors such as having to teach in classrooms with limited resources, large class sizes and low salaries offered to teachers have been identified as worsening these difficulties. A further problem encountered in such classrooms is the difficulty of getting students to engage in target language communication. A study of Japanese university students learning English showed that students tend to depend excessively on the mother tongue when engaging

in learning activities (Fotos, 1994: 326). Other researchers working in other Asian contexts have also concluded that factors such as the above inhibit the successful implementation of a communicative language classroom in these countries (Canagarajah, 1993; Coleman, 1996; Holliday, 1994; LoCastro, 1996; Savignon, 1991; Shamim, 1996).

In order to remedy these difficulties encountered in Asian countries, it is argued, that communicative methods of teaching have to be discovered from within these cultures⁴ (Ellis, 1996). Linguists and researchers have made suggestions in this regard. The use of authentic target language material such as, newspapers, posters and videos in the classroom is seen as one method of attuning the communicative approach to different cultural contexts. Use of authentic material from the target language culture could, however, lead to confusion if the teacher and students come from the same non-target language culture (McKay, 2000). Students may not understand the material and may feel distant from what they are learning and teachers may not be able to adequately explain to students the information found in the material. For example, Karunaratne's (1990, 1993) research in Puttalam and Colombo revealed such difficulties faced by Sri Lankan students and teachers due to western nouns/concepts introduced in the textbook⁵. To avoid such confusion, it is argued that authentic material should be taken from the culture in which the language is being learned, not the target language culture (Kramsch, 1993; McKay, 2000). It has been further pointed out by Peacock (1997), in his study of South Korean University learners of English, that the use of authentic classroom material leads to the retention of high levels of student motivation in the classroom. The studies

⁴ For example, Chinese Confucianism recommends a teacher-centred approach to teaching languages. It is, however, suggested that room for acceptance of a pupil-centred teaching approach can be found in the Confucian proverb which says 'If you give a man a fish you can feed him for one day, but if you teach him how to fish you can feed him for a life time' (Ellis, 1996: 217).

⁵ This research has been concerned with the textbook 'English Everyday', used prior to the one that is used currently in Sri Lankan schools.

described here clearly indicate the importance of adapting the communicative approach to suit the cultural and learning requirements of Asian contexts.

Language of Instruction

Communicative language teaching has been an attempt, among other things, to rectify the problems faced by the direct method. The direct method, teaching the target language *in* the target language, made non-native language teachers feel either defensive or guilty of their inability to match up to native speakers (Harbord, 1992: 350; Swan, 1985b: 82-83). Communicative language teaching, by promoting the use of the target language and a reasonable use of the students' mother tongue in the classroom, attempts to ease the difficulties encountered by non-native teachers (Atkinson, 1987: 242-243). The use of the students' mother tongue in the classroom has been viewed as facilitating teacher-student communication during a lesson, improving teacher-student rapport and facilitating the learning process (Harbord, 1992: 352-355).

A study of English learners coming from a minority community in the USA confirms that students use their mother tongue to assist and tutor one another, ask/answer questions and interact socially. Teachers, on the other hand, use the mother tongue with students to check comprehension, translate lessons, explain activities and interact socially (Lucas and Katz, 1994). Several other studies reporting similar findings have shown that mother tongue usage in the classroom develops students' English acquisition (Canagarajah, 1995a; Coleman, 1996; Pease-Alvarez, 1994). Canagarajah (1995a) concludes that the use of the mother tongue in Sri Lankan English classrooms actually made the classroom more communicative, despite the teachers' and students' lack of English competence.

In spite of these possible positive effects of using the mother tongue in the second language classroom, it has also been argued that excessive use of the mother tongue could hinder successful language acquisition. Such excessive use could lead to problems such as the following (Atkinson, 1987: 246):

1. Teacher and/or students begin to feel that they have not really understood any item of language until it has been translated.
2. Students speak to the teacher in the mother tongue as a matter of course, even when they are quite capable of expressing what they mean in the target language.
3. Students fail to realise that during many classroom activities it is crucial that they use only the target language.

Drawing a line between reasonable use (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) and excessive use (Atkinson, 1987) of the mother tongue in the classroom seems to cause much confusion among Sri Lankan teachers (Karunaratne, 1993; Walatara, 1974). The native languages seem to be the only resort available for these teachers in coping with their lack of English proficiency.

Teacher- versus Student-centred Teaching

Pedagogical trends in general, and more specifically, language teaching trends of the 20th century emphasise the importance of making students take an active part in the learning process. A 1974 study of British secondary school teachers classified teachers broadly into two types based on their orientation to teaching: transmission teachers and interpretation teachers (Barnes and Shemilt, 1974). A teacher who sees his/her task as transmitting knowledge to students was called a 'transmission teacher'. In contrast, a teacher who sees his/her students as active participants in the learning process and is willing to involve the learners in the teaching task and related decision-making processes was called an 'interpretation teacher'. While the first category of teachers is concerned with the product of learning, the latter is concerned with the

process of learning. Communicative language teaching, ideally, requires a teacher of the interpretation type (Kennedy, 1991: 64). But certain learning contexts have been found not to favour such a teaching approach.

In classrooms, especially in the Asian context, the teacher is expected to function as a dominator (Choudhury, 1998: 163-164; Crandall, 2001: 11). It is argued that under such conditions over-emphasis on learner freedom and autonomy could lead not only to a lowering of student effort and achievement, but also to learner dissatisfaction (Bennett, 1976; Ur, 1991: 279). This expectation invariably contradicts the expectations of an *ideal* communicative teaching practice in which the students play an active part in classroom activities. For example, a study of Sri Lankan English teachers showed that these teachers needed to be convinced of the value of pupil-centred oral work, pair and group work (Mosback, 1984: 185).

Language students in Asian countries also have become used to, and therefore, favour teacher-centred classrooms. A study of Tamil tertiary-level students learning English in Sri Lanka revealed that students preferred a teacher-centred teaching approach which gave very little opportunity for students to engage in oral language practice (Canagarajah, 1993). Similar results have been reported in other Asian contexts (Coleman, 1996; Hird, 1995; Shamim, 1996). Coleman (1996) argues that both teachers and students have become used to this 'authoritative' method and are unable to function within another teaching-learning method. Hird (1995), in his analysis of Chinese language classrooms, states that teachers expect students to receive information and that students are happy to learn under such conditions. Shamim's (1996) observation of his Pakistani students has been that they in fact resist communicative innovations to the traditional teacher-centred teaching strategy. These students resisted communicative strategies because such strategies do not necessarily cater for their examination requirements. As examinations approach the students were observed to show signs of wanting to be under some authority from the teacher. Shamim (1996) concludes that the authority structure prevailing in the wider

Pakistani society reinforces a teacher-centred approach. A similar argument is put forward by LoCastro (1996), related to Japanese learners of English who showed similar resistance to practices of communicative language teaching. The learning culture of these Asian countries seems to make students obedient listeners even when they want to adopt a more active role in the English classroom (Littlewood, 2000). The range of studies discussed here further highlights the necessity of adapting the communicative approach to suit the particular learning and social requirements of different societies.

Group Learning

Group and pair classroom activities that involve students in target language communication are considered a key element of successful communicative language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Such group activities facilitate the learning process in several ways. In a study of Japanese-speaking adult learners of English, Pica and her colleagues (1996) discovered that interaction between learners helped them comprehend English input better, get feedback from colleagues and modify their language output. Other researchers have pointed out that group work also improves students' motivation to learn the language (Dornyei, 1997; Dornyei and Malderez, 1997). Reflecting on these positive effects, Asian countries practising communicative language teaching have attempted to introduce such activities to their language classrooms. For example, since the late 1980s the Sri Lankan school English program has taken steps to improve pair and group activities in the classroom. Textbook designing has focussed on this aspect of communicative teaching (Mosback, 1990). However, research has identified some characteristics of Sri Lankan and other Asian learning contexts that obstruct group learning.

In his study with Tamil tertiary level learners of English, Canagarajah (1993) found that students were reluctant to engage in collaborative learning. Students were

afraid to use English due to their fear of being labelled as someone attempting to 'discard their rural identity and pass off as an anglicised bourgeois' by their peers (Canagarajah, 1993). A further problem encountered in conducting group work, especially in developing Asian countries, has been the large class sizes which make the management of group work very difficult (Holliday, 1994: 6). Informal conversations among students during a language lesson, though not part of the lesson, can also be seen as a form of group learning. Such conversations in the classroom, though distracting to a teacher, could be very useful for students (Crandall, 2001: 11; Ur, 1991: 239). They facilitate learning by engaging students in an external exchange of ideas and in an internal monologue (Nicholson, 1999: 34-37). That is, as students engage in conversations with other students, they also internalise certain aspects of learning through such conversation. However, the extreme levels of noise that can be generated when students engage in group activities have been found to discourage teachers from using such activities in their classrooms (Ur, 1991).

Based on the body of research discussed so far, four major problems that obstruct successful communicative language teaching in Asian contexts can be identified. Firstly, the teacher-centred teaching approach gives little opportunity for students to participate in the lesson. Secondly, excessive use of the native language obstructs students' target language communications during group activities. Thirdly, students show a reluctance to engage in target language communication with each other. Fourthly, the textbook and examination related requirements do not facilitate an oral communication-oriented learning process. Adding to these are the problems of inadequate resources, large class sizes and problems related to the teaching profession.

Pedagogy-related Problems in Sri Lanka

The preceding discussion outlined several problems encountered in establishing a successful communicative English classroom in Sri Lanka. In addition to these problems specific to communicative teaching, there is a range of other problems that inhibit English teaching in general.

Attempts have been made to teach English to all Sri Lankan school students since the early 1950s (See Chapter 1). The results obtained by successive batches of students at public examinations, however, have not been impressive. Researchers take this to indicate that the school English language program has been a monumental failure despite the huge investments made in it (De Silva, 1978; Kandiah, 1971: 53; Koelmeyer, 1990: 22). Problems that led to this failure are of two types. One type pertains to the problems that affect the entire school educational program, thus also affecting teaching of English as a subject within the wider school curriculum. Several problems belonging to this category has been discussed elsewhere in the thesis (See Chapter 1). The second type of problems includes issues that are relevant only to the English program.

A problem faced by the entire school education program in Sri Lanka is related to the socio-economic position of the teaching profession (Diyasena, 1983: 91; Gunawardena, 1990b: 89; Hilton, 1983: 13; Passe, 1948: 82; Udagama, 1999: 82-83). Studies of rural and urban teachers found that most teachers are very frustrated because of low salaries, low social status, political interventions and lack of incentives in their job (De Zoysa, 1990; Karunaratne, 1993). This problem has affected English teaching from as early as the 1940s when English began to be taught in every school. Persons competent in English always looked for more remunerative jobs elsewhere and, therefore, the English-teaching profession could only attract

those with minimal language ability due to the low salary and other service conditions offered (De Souza, 1969b; Passe, 1948).

A major problem specific to the English language program is the lack of English proficiency possessed by a majority of the teachers, especially in rural schools. English language teaching in general and communicative language teaching in particular, require teachers who are competent in the language (Britten, 1985a; Canale and Swain, 1980). It has been pointed out that most entrants to English teacher-training colleges and in-service training programs in Sri Lanka are not fluent in English (De Silva, 1978: 49; De Souza, 1978: 39; Kandiah, 1984: 130; Parish and Brown, 1988; Rupasinghe, 1985). Their language knowledge barely improves or does not improve at all by the time they graduate from these colleges (Goonetilleke, 1983:17; Hilton, 1983:7; Karunaratne, 1993: 82; Passe, 1948:82; Udagama, 1999:83; Vicziany, 1995:47). A study of teacher-trainees in two English training colleges, Bolawalana and Peradeniya, revealed that 89% of the trainees agreed that a language teacher's confidence lies in his/her competence in the relevant language and suggested that English language learning should be a priority in training (Murdoch, 1994).

A further problem with the school English language program is the teachers' tendency to adopt outdated grammar translation method and/or direct method teaching strategies in the classroom even when the textbook and the syllabus is task-oriented and communicative (Canagarajah, 1995a; De Silva and De Silva, 1990: 36 and 65; Jayasuriya, 2001; Kandiah, 1984: 130; Karunaratne, 1993; Vicziany, 1995: 43; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 3). A study of English teaching in schools in Colombo reports that no communicative teaching of English took place due to lack of English fluency of teachers, lack of training received by teachers on this approach and lack of creativity shown by teachers in using the textbook (Karunaratne, 1990, 1993).

Conclusion

A range of international research in the field of second language acquisition was discussed in this chapter. It was attempted to categorise the research under social, psychological and pedagogical aspects to teaching and learning a second language. Social factors largely discussed research related to language spoken at home and socio-economic background of students. Research reveals that students who have had an exposure to the second language from an early age through their family tend to be successful language learners. Further, it has been found that children coming from families with high socio-economic status are successful language learners.

Research has confirmed that higher levels of motivation and attitudes toward learning a second language lead to higher levels of language acquisition. It has been revealed that in societies where a language has an obvious integrative value, learners tend to show an integrative motivation towards learning that language. But studies dealing with Asian countries, where English has more instrumental value than integrative, have shown that the instrumental motivation is more prevalent among learners. Research done in both these types of countries has shown the respective motivations to result in successful language acquisition. However, researchers have also shown that higher levels of motivation in itself may not result in higher levels of language acquisition. It has been revealed that other factors such as gender, academic capability, self-confidence, parental support and teaching methods could influence language acquisition through their influence on motivation.

Pedagogical factors that affect language acquisition were discussed from a communicative language teaching framework. Studies have shown that certain characteristics of communicative language teaching are not successfully carried out in Asian contexts of teaching English due to traditional expectations placed on education and circumstance of the relevant learning culture. Among the difficulties identified by researchers are having to teach a textbook, having an examination as the

language course objective, preference of a teacher-centred teaching approach, students' reluctance to communicate in English with each other, excessive use of the mother tongue in the classroom and large class sizes. In addition to these difficulties the Sri Lankan school English language program faces problems related to teachers having a low level of proficiency in English.

Chapter 4

Issues of Research Methodology

The methodology adopted in the present research has been eclectic, comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods. Such a combination of methods was used to provide information about different aspects of English acquisition in Sri Lanka. This chapter presents the research question, discusses the quantitative-qualitative distinction in research, data collection instruments and methods utilised, methods of data analysis and finally limitations of the current research with special reference to issues of reliability and validity.

Research Question and Definitions

The study addressed selected social, psychological and pedagogical factors relevant to English acquisition by middle and upper class students learning in the Sinhala-medium in government schools of urban Sri Lanka. The research focused on the following research questions:

1. What relationships exist between English language acquisition and
 - i. family socio-economic status?
 - ii. student motivation?
2. Classroom conditions and pedagogy:
 - i. How is communicative language teaching being implemented in Sri Lankan English language classrooms?
 - ii. What classroom conditions militate against or support the communicative teaching of English in the schools studied?

Socio-economic factors were defined to include family income, parental occupation, parental education and parental use of English at home with children. Related to these factors is the age at which any given student was first introduced to

the English language, and the practice of attending private tuition classes for English. While these can also be considered as matters related to pedagogy, they are considered in relation to social factors because of their close link with socio-economic status as described by Apple (1982c) (See Chapter 2).

Psychological factors considered were attitudes and motivation of students towards learning English. Types of motivation and attitudes were defined according to the definitions provided by Gardner (1985b) (See Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). Of the attitudinal and motivational factors described by Gardner, the present study deals with only attitudes toward learning English, motivational orientation, motivational intensity, desire to learn English, motivation and attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans (See Figure 2.1).

Pedagogical factors, according to the research objectives of the present study, included any situations that arose and any episodes that took place during the English lessons observed. These included the English teacher's behaviour, students' behaviour, what was written on the blackboard and anything else that happened in the surrounding environment that seemed pertinent to the lesson in progress.

Marks obtained by students for English during the year-end term test of the years 2000 and 2001 were taken as the indicator of students' level of English acquisition. These two examinations were selected because students in all the schools included in the sample sat for the same paper at these examinations. The average of the mark scored for English during these two terms was considered the measurement of the level of English acquisition. These average marks were rated according to the criteria used at the O/L examination. That is:

1. Above 75: Distinction (D)
2. Between 50-74: Credit (C)
3. Between 35-49: Simple Pass (S)
4. Less than 34: Fail (F)

The other variables considered in this study were students' gender and students' academic capability. Academic capability was measured by the average mark obtained by students across all school subjects in the two term tests mentioned above, a method used by former researchers (Cummins, 1980; Djigunovic, 1998; Hernandez, 1998).

Quantitative-Qualitative Distinction in Research

Two major methodological perspectives dominate social science research. Of these, the positivist perspective (experimental/quantitative methods) seeks measurable *facts* or *causes* of social phenomena independent of the subjective states of individuals. Placing strong emphasis on the *objectivity* of research findings, positivist research depends heavily on questionnaires and survey data which are amenable to statistical and quantitative analysis (De Vaus, 1995; Foddy, 1993). The other major methodological perspective in social science research, the phenomenological (exploratory/ethnographic/qualitative methods), is committed to understanding social phenomena from relevant social actors' own perspectives. It is concerned with the meanings people attach to things in their lives and attempts to examine how these people experience their world or life. The phenomenologist seeks understanding through largely qualitative methods and depends on participant observations and in-depth interviews to obtain data for his/her research (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 11; Nunan, 1991: 258, 1992: 3-4).

The question of which research tradition would suit a particular research study is usually considered a decision that needs to be taken by the individual researcher. Each study attempts to collect a unique set of data relevant to the researcher's concerns (Nunan, 1992). The methodology adopted in the present study (combining quantitative and qualitative methods) has been guided by the research questions.

The Sample

Previous studies on English language education in Sri Lanka have pointed out that rural and urban deprived schools face a number of problems related to the physical and human resources necessary for conducting a successful educational program (See Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). The present study has attempted to eliminate these conditions of inadequacy from its sample in order to clearly understand the process of English acquisition under more propitious learning conditions. Therefore, the sample was a purposive sample of schools from Colombo, which is considered the most advantaged area in regards to education (See Chapter 1). Schools belonging to the higher ranks (1AB) of the school hierarchy in Colombo were selected.

Fieldwork was carried out in four 1AB type schools in Colombo. As already noted, 1AB schools are schools that have all the three A/L courses available for study, that is, science, commerce and arts. Of the four 1AB schools selected for the present study, two schools fall under the more advantaged category of national schools (See Chapter 1). The other two schools in the sample were non-national 1AB schools. The sample schools were selected in such a manner as to give equal weight to girls' and boys' schools. In each group, national and non-national, there is one girls' and one boys' school.

The student sample consisted of 187 female students (89 from the national and 98 from the non-national school) and 179 male students (93 from the national and 86 from the non-national school). The sample consisted exclusively of students learning in the Sinhala-medium in school. Students learning in the Tamil-medium were not chosen for the present study because of the researcher's inability to communicate in the Tamil language. The students were from Grade 9 classes, students who are 14 years of age, and two classes from each school were selected for study. In total, eight classes were selected for study. Grade 9 signifies the end of

compulsory education in Sri Lanka. The decision to study students in this grade was based on three assumptions:

1. Students in this grade are facing a crucial stage in their school life.
2. As a result they would have enhanced motivation to learn English.
3. Consequently, teachers' motivation to do a better job would also improve.

Parents of children included in the sample, teachers who taught English to the children in the sample and the principals of each school were also included in the data gathering process. The choice of which ninth grade classes to study the implementation of communicative pedagogy was made on grounds of practicality. Teaching of English in the classes chosen for the sample had to happen at different times to enable the researcher to conduct classroom observations. An attempt was made, as much as possible, to select teachers with different types of training, different levels of experience and gender (See Table 4.1). However, because of the preponderance of female teachers and length of experience clustering between 12-16 years, differentiation was difficult to achieve.

Table 4.1: Description of English teachers in the sample

Name of Teacher ^a	Type of Training ^b	Years of Experience ^c	Gender
Teacher A1	Pre-service training (Peradeniya) and NIE Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language	13	Female
Teacher A2	In-service training (Bolawalana)	18	Female
Teacher B1	College of Education (Pasdunrata)	4	Male
Teacher B2	Pre-service training (Maharagama) and NIE Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language	22	Female
Teacher C1	Pre-service training (Bolawalana)	14	Female
Teacher C2	In-service training (PRINSETT, Colombo)	14	Female
Teacher D1	In-service training (PRINCETT, Colombo)	16	Female
Teacher D2	Pre-service training (Peradeniya)	12	Female

a The schools are given imaginary names in order to secure anonymity. The names given are A (National- girls), B (National- boys), C (IAB- Boys) and D (IAB- Girls). The classes in each school will be called A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1 and D2. Accordingly, teachers are named after the class they taught.

b Peradeniya, Bolawalana, Maharagama and Pasdunrata are training colleges where teachers gain two years of training as residential trainees. PRINSETT (Professional In-Service English-Teacher Training) offers one year of training to teachers already in the teaching profession (Parish and Brown, 1988).

c Number of years calculated up to 2001.

Data Collection: The Instruments and the Procedure

The eclectic methodology adopted in this research required the use of different data collection instruments and procedures to suit the research objectives.

Quantitative Data Collection

Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data in the present study. Questionnaires are considered to be capable of providing a 'snapshot' (Jaeger, 1988,

cited in Nunan, 1992: 140) of prevailing conditions at a single point in time and are utilised in surveys for gathering information on pre-specified aspects of a phenomenon (Nunan, 1991: 257).

Instruments

Three questionnaires were used in this study. One questionnaire was administered to each of the parents (See Appendix A) and the remaining two to the students (See Appendix B and Appendix C). The questionnaire administered to the parents contained questions related to the socio-economic conditions of students' families. Part 1 of the student questionnaire, in addition to questions on the socio-economic conditions of students' families, included questions related to classroom pedagogy. Part 2 of the student questionnaire contained questions related to attitudinal and motivational factors. As a precaution against any language-related difficulties (Foddy, 1993: 41-42), all questionnaires were in the Sinhala language, the medium of education for all students and the mother tongue of most parents. It was expected that students would translate the questions to parents who could not read or write Sinhala.

For the convenience of the researcher as well as the participants, the questionnaires consisted mainly of closed questions. Three advantages of closed questions guided this decision. First, from the researcher's point of view, closed questions provide the benefit of being easier to collate and analyse (Nunan, 1992: 143; Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 174). Second, closed questions have been considered not to inconvenience participants who do not want to write long answers or those with low motivation for answering questionnaires (De Vaus, 1995: 86). Third, it has been argued that these questions do not discriminate against the less talkative or inarticulate respondents (De Vaus, 1995: 87). The second characteristic seemed most relevant to the present study. Open-ended questions would have required a much longer period taken from students' learning time. Getting

permission from the school administration for a longer questionnaire would have been difficult. Similarly, parents may not have cooperated if the questionnaire requested long answers and, hence more time, from them. The questionnaires did, however, provide added space for any participants who wanted to elaborate on their answers.

The questionnaire administered to the parents consisted of questions related to the following (See also Appendix A):

1. The relationship to the students in the sample (mother or father)
2. Language spoken at home with the child
3. Educational qualifications
4. Occupation
5. Amount of English used for official duties in the work place
6. Attitude about the future use of learning English for the child
7. Family income

Part 1 of the student questionnaire gathered data on the following (See also Appendix B):

1. Name
2. Age
3. Class studied in last year (for obtaining examination marks of the previous year)
4. Favourite school subject
5. Mother tongue
6. Religion
7. Number of years spent on learning English in school
8. Whether English was learned before school enrolment and how
9. Attendance at private tuition classes for English
10. Difficulties encountered in learning English at school
11. Types of mass media accessible at home and frequency of accessing them
12. Language in which mass media is accessed

13. Future career plans
14. Plans to continue education beyond O/L
15. Plans to continue learning English beyond O/L
16. Plans to study up to a university degree after A/L

Part 2 of the student questionnaire (See Appendix C) was adapted from the Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) introduced by Gardner (1985a). Gardner (1985b, Undated), in introducing his socio-educational model and the AMTB, reiterates the importance of the social milieu in understanding second language acquisition and recommends adaptations to the AMTB to suit particular characteristics of the learning environment. Based on earlier research and the personal cultural knowledge and experience of the researcher, adaptations were made to the AMTB in order to make it suitable for the Sri Lankan school English language learning context.

Adaptations to the AMTB involved deleting whole sections of the original AMTB and making changes to the original statements to suit the research context. The adaptations made can be summarised as follows:

1. Instead of the Likert seven alternative response format used by Gardner (1985a), the present study used five alternative responses (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
2. Questions on general interest in foreign languages, classroom anxiety, attitudes toward the language course and the language teacher were completely eliminated. Students were not asked about their general interest in foreign languages because this study considers English to be a local mode of communication within contemporary Sri Lanka. It was assumed that English would not fit into the category of foreign languages along with Japanese, French or German, all of which are considered 'foreign' in Sri Lanka. Classroom anxiety was not included because it is not a constituent element of the motivational variables that are the focus of this study (See Figure 2.1). Anxiety, according to

Gardner (Undated), is a separate psychological aspect of second language learning. Attitudes toward the language course and teacher were eliminated because it was assumed that such questions would be controversial in the participating Sri Lankan schools. That is, Sri Lankan school children are *expected* to speak well of their school and teachers. Including questions on these matters in a questionnaire would have raised considerable concern in the school administration.

3. The AMTB introduced by Gardner (1985a) gathers attitudes about French Canadians and European French. It can be argued that a similar study on Sri Lanka should focus on attitudes toward the British and English-speaking Sri Lankans. But because of the assumption made about how English is now a local mode of communication in Sri Lanka, attitudes toward the British were excluded. It was assumed that, in the minds of contemporary Sri Lankans, English would be more associated with upper-class, educated, urban Sri Lankans rather than the British. One study revealed that Sri Lankan students connected English with Colombo and the elites and not with the British (Balac and Aamot, 1999). Several other studies in Sri Lanka and India have considered English-speaking *locals* to be the target language group (Lukmani, 1972; Perera, 2000; Samarakkody, 2001).
4. The number of statements included for each question was also altered in order to make the questionnaire shorter. In the case of some questions, response statements were phrased differently or new ones were added to suit Sri Lankan conditions. For example, for the question on parental support the statement 'My parents send me for private tuition classes' was added because research on Sri Lanka has pointed out that private tuition is an important factor affecting education in general and English education in particular (Parakrama, 1995; Udagama, 1999).

The adapted version of the AMTB used in this study, therefore, gathered information on motivational orientation, attitudes toward learning English, parental support,

attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans, motivational intensity and desire to learn English (See Appendix C).

Procedure

A pilot test of the student questionnaires was carried out with 15 students from the first school in which data collection was carried out (IAB-national, girls' school). These 15 students were chosen from the same grade as the sample but from a different class. Changes were made to the questionnaire based on some queries raised by the students during this test. Further changes were made after completion of data collection in the first school. For example, in the first school students were allowed to remain anonymous when they filled out the questionnaires. But experience in the first school showed that it was extremely difficult to access term test marks of previous years without the students' name. This information had to be collected at a later stage in order to access term test marks. Therefore, questions on students' name and the previous year's class were added to the questionnaire in the subsequent schools.

The questionnaire administered to parents was sent to them through their children in the student sample. On completion, parents sent the questionnaire back to the researcher by the same means. As pointed out by Wray and his colleagues (1998: 170-171), this was the only feasible way of administering this questionnaire as the respondents were spread over a large geographical area. The parents' questionnaire was handed to the students during the first week of data collection in order to allow about three weeks for completion. But getting the questionnaires back was a very difficult task in some cases. Some parents kept on postponing and the researcher had to visit schools even after data collection was completed to collect some of the parents' questionnaires. This was a clear indication of lack of motivation for filling-

in questionnaires, discussed previously. There were 366 students in the sample but parents' questionnaire for only 322 of them were returned.

Both parts of the student questionnaire were administered to the students during school hours and were collected by the researcher on completion. The questionnaires were administered during a time granted by the school (double periods when a teacher was absent from teaching). Completion of the questionnaires took approximately 45-50 minutes of the students' time. The two questionnaires were administered during the third week of fieldwork in the school. This gave the researcher time to socialise with the students in order to make them feel comfortable about answering the questionnaires. The researcher remained in the classroom as students answered the questionnaire as a method of giving students the opportunity of clarifying any unclear points (Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 170-171). Care was taken not to influence their answers when responding to the queries. Out of the 366 students in the sample 356 students completed the questionnaire.

Qualitative Data Collection

Two forms of qualitative data collection were utilised in the present research, namely semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations.

Methods

Interviews, as a data collection method, can be placed on a continuum ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured (Nunan, 1992: 149-150). In an unstructured interview the researcher has very little or no control over the interview and as a result the interview is guided by the response of the interviewee. In contrast, the structured interview is completely under the control of the interviewer who asks a list of questions in a predetermined order (similar to reading out a questionnaire). An

interviewer who plans a semi-structured interview has a general idea of the preferred direction of interview. Here, topics and issues rather than a predetermined set of questions determine the course of the interview.

Many researchers, particularly those working within an interpretive research tradition, prefer a semi-structured format because of its flexibility (Nunan, 1992: 149). Semi-structured interviews give the researcher some control over the interview while giving him/her privileged access to other people's experiences (Nunan, 1992: 149-150). Additionally, such interviews require a definable amount of time from the interviewees, who in this case were either teachers or principals speaking to the researcher during the school interval or at a time when they did not have any scheduled teaching responsibilities. For these reasons, the current study adapted a semi-structured interview pattern.

The interviews with the school principals focussed on the following aspects:

1. Personal thoughts about the two teachers included in the study
2. General attitudes to the ninth graders
3. Nature of support received from the Ministry of Education to improve the teaching of English in the school
4. Nature of support provided through the school for teachers to improve their teaching capacity
5. Various school projects that attempt to help students improve their English fluency.

The interviews with the English teachers focussed on the following aspects:

1. Qualifications as a teacher
2. School attended
3. Teaching experience in previous schools and how it differs from the experience in the present school
4. Opinion about the Grade 9 syllabus and the textbook

5. General attitudes about Grade 9 students
6. Difficulties encountered in teaching English
7. Nature of support received from the Ministry of Education and the school to overcome these difficulties
8. Expectations and goals placed on teaching the ninth graders.

The second type of qualitative data collection method used in the present study was observation. Observation methods are largely adopted in ethnographic studies (Nunan, 1992: 57). Ethnography is based on two kinds of hypotheses. They are: naturalistic-ecological hypothesis and qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis (Wilson, 1977: 247-249). The first kind of hypothesis is based on the assumption that context influences behaviour and, therefore, implies that behaviour should be studied in its natural context. The qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis emphasises that subjective perceptions and belief systems of researchers and participants should be incorporated in the study of human behaviour. Observations allow researchers to study human behaviour in its natural context and incorporate their perceptions with those of the participants. It is argued that if successfully conducted, observations provide the researcher with a more detailed understanding of the study field (Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 187).

Observations can be either participant or non-participant. Participant observation refers to the type of observation done by a researcher who mingles with participants and engages in the daily activities of participants. In non-participant observations, the researcher observes the activities of participants without engaging in them directly (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 16; Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 186). Observations can be further divided into two types, namely focussed and unfocussed. In focussed observations the observer pays attention only to specific aspects of the study field (Nunan, 1991: 256). An unfocussed observer may note down everything that occurs in the research context without limiting his/her attention to a few aspects. Focussed observation has the advantages of not having to explain

all aspects of the phenomena; the focus does not shift according to the fancy of the researcher and it is less time-consuming (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 18). But this also has the disadvantage of ignoring the multi-dimensional characteristics of a social phenomenon.

The present study used non-participant observations to record events during English lessons. Observations had to be non-participant, as the observer had no formal training in the teaching of English. But at certain times the teacher called on the observer to explain certain concepts to the students. At all other times the observer remained strictly a non-participant in the classroom. Socialising with students in the sample occurred outside English teaching time whenever the situation and time permitted. Observations were conducted using an unfocussed format. The observer took notes of a range of incidents in the classroom in addition to those directly relevant to the learning and teaching processes.

Procedure

Interviews were conducted at a time specified by the interviewees as convenient. In the case of teachers, this was usually during a period in which they had no scheduled teaching responsibilities. The researcher conducted the interviews in Sinhala, the mother tongue of a majority of the interviewees and the medium of teaching for the rest. But interviewees shifted between Sinhala and English. Notes were taken during interviews with the eight English teachers and four principals.

The researcher spent one calendar month in each school. It was expected that 20 lessons in each class could be observed during this period. But the actual number of lessons observed in one class was less than 20, a situation caused by teacher absenteeism and various administrative decisions of the school. Note taking was the only method adopted for recording observations. The observer ideally wanted to sit

among or behind the students but the problem of space in classrooms did not allow this. Therefore, the observer sat in front of the class facing the students.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire data. Social and motivational variables were crosstabulated with students' English marks using the computer package SPSS. The relationships between variables were tested to see whether they had occurred by chance or whether a significant relationship existed between them. For this purpose, a chi-square figure was calculated and a relationship was considered significant if the level of significance between two variables was significant at the 0.05 level or 0.001 level (Hickey, 1986: 296; Kranzler and Miller, 1986: 67; Milton, McTeer and Corbet, 1997: 522-523; Mosteller, Fienberg and Rourke, 1983: 245; Moursund, 1999: 86; Pallant, 2001: 121).

Data gathered from parents were used largely for determining the students' socio-economic status. Students were initially divided into 12 social classes based on their family income, father's occupation and father's educational qualifications. Thirty-four students in the sample had to be excluded from this analysis, as their father's details could not be obtained. Four social class categories initially identified were later excluded from the analysis due to the extremely small number of cases (in total 16) falling under them. As a result, eight levels of social class (identified within three broad class categories) were used. Data gathered through Part 1 of the student questionnaire were also used for identifying socio-economic characteristics and pedagogy related issues.

Part 2 of the student questionnaire was analysed in a manner different to that adopted by Gardner (1985a). Firstly, motivational data was grouped (for example,

level of motivation was grouped into five categories: very high, high, medium, low and very low) and crosstabulated with students' English marks. Secondly, as discussed above, chi-square figures were calculated to see whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables. Thirdly, because the AMTB provides interval data, scatterplots were drawn and correlation coefficients (r) were calculated to identify the direction and the strength of the relationship between two interval variables.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The detailed observation notes taken by the researcher during English lessons were analysed with reference to the principles of communicative language teaching (See Chapter 2). Analysis of observation notes was carried out in two stages. During the first stage of analysis classrooms were categorised according to their level of communicativeness. At the planning stage of this research, it was expected that all the important principles of the communicative approach could be used in the evaluation procedure. However, the observation notes revealed the inappropriateness of such a method. For example, diversity of teaching material is an important principle of communicative language teaching. But the data showed that for all teachers at most times the textbook was the only teaching material. Therefore, only two main principles of communicative teaching could be used in identifying different levels of communicativeness. They are:

1. Teaching should be less teacher-centred and students should be given the opportunity to learn independently (Littlewood, 1981). This was evaluated through data related to (1) who was playing the dominant role during a lesson, (2) how strict the teacher was in getting students to engage in learning activities during lessons and (3) how much learning activity was actually engaged in by students. Dominance in the classroom was defined as the extent of talking done by the teacher or students during a lesson. Teacher strictness was defined in

reference to punitive measures and rewards dealt out by the teacher in order to engage students in learning activities. Punishment was either verbal or physical. Finally, learning activity engaged in by students was defined as the levels of conformity shown by students towards teacher's classroom instructions.

2. More attention should be placed on target language communication with a reasonable use of the mother tongue when necessary (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Evaluated in relation to these principles, some classrooms met some of these criteria while others met more. Based on the extent to which classrooms met the communicative criteria, teaching strategies were divided into low communicative (with three sub categories), moderately communicative and highly communicative (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Criteria and definitions used for identifying different levels of communicativeness

Criteria	'Level of' Criteria	Definition
Teacher Dominance	Very high	Teacher does most of the talking and students are only allowed to speak when asked to do so by the teacher
	High	Teacher does most of the talking but students also can speak to the teacher or their peers when they wished to do so
	Moderate	Teacher and students engage in equal amount of talking related to the lesson in the classroom.
	Low	Teacher does most of the talking but the students ignore the teacher and engage in an equal amount of concurrent talking unrelated to the lesson.
	Very low	Students do most of the talking to the extent that the teacher cannot do any teaching in the classroom.
Teacher Strictness	Very High	Punitive measures adopted by the teacher are physical.
	High	Punitive measures are verbal.
	Moderate	Teacher adopts verbal punitive measures only when the students ignore his/her classroom instructions.
	Low	Verbal punitive measures adopted by the teacher have minimal effect on the students.
	Very low	No punitive measures implemented.
Learning activity engaged in by students	Very high	High student conformity to teacher's classroom instruction.
	High	A combination of high conformity and undirected ('hidden') student initiated activity unrelated to learning.
	Moderate	All students engage in learning activities while chatting among themselves.
	Low	Most students ignore teacher's classroom instructions.
	Very low	All students ignore teacher's classroom instructions and engage in 'obvious' non-learning related activities.
Medium of Instruction	Mostly	Using a particular language for more than 50% of lesson time.
	Some	Using a particular language for more than 25% of lesson time.

During the second stage of the analysis of observation notes, it was attempted to go beyond the two communicative principles used in the first stage. The notes were analysed to examine the extent of the implementation of several communicative principles. The analysis was carried out along the following lines:

1. Role of the textbook: Data were analysed to see for what purposes the textbook was used in the classroom and the reasons for such usage.
2. Classroom activities: Data were analysed to see the nature of classroom tasks and the role played by the students' mother tongue during such classroom tasks.
3. Teacher-centeredness or student-centeredness of a classroom: Data were analysed to see the roles played by the teacher and the students during an English lesson.
4. External difficulties: Data were analysed to identify external difficulties (that is, difficulties in the system) that could obstruct successful teaching and learning.
5. Students' social class background and their classroom behaviour: Observation notes, in conjunction with quantitative data related to students' socio-economic background, were analysed to examine how the class structure of wider society was reproduced within the language classroom.

Information gathered through interviews was used to crosscheck the information gathered through observations. For example, the teacher's goal of teaching the students in the sample was crosschecked with their observed teaching practices. Similarly, information provided by the principal on facilities provided by the school for teaching English was crosschecked with observations as to whether, and to what extent, the teachers used these facilities.

Limitations of the Methods Used

Data obtained by means of both quantitative and qualitative methods may pose particular questions of reliability and validity (Foddy, 1993). Reliability is defined as consistency and replicability of a particular research. A study that is reliable should be consistent in its findings and should be replicable (Nunan, 1992: 14). Validity of

research is described as the extent to which a study actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate (Nunan, 1992: 14). Reliability and validity are further divided into two categories each, namely internal and external (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 32; Nunan, 1992: 14-15):

1. Internal reliability: Consistency of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
2. External reliability: Extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study.
3. Internal validity: Interpretability of research.
4. External validity: Extent to which results can be generalised from samples to populations.

Researchers writing on reliability and validity of research agree that attaining absolute reliability and validity is an impossible goal for any researcher working within whatever research model (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982 55; Neuman, 2000 164; Wilson, 1977: 261). The present study is no exception. Issues related to reliability and validity could have affected the present research at the level of both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Limitations of the Questionnaires and Interviews

It is argued that if the researcher's purpose is clear in a particular questionnaire bias may be introduced into respondents' answers in two ways. They may try to answer in the best way that would satisfy the researcher ('courtesy bias') or they may even try to mislead the researcher ('sucker bias') (Saville-Troike, 1989, cited in Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 173). Such answers may not represent the exact thoughts and feelings of respondents. It has been argued that having a variety of research methods could be useful as safeguards against such attempts by participants (De Vaus, 1995: 7). It was expected that the eclectic methodology used in the present study would function as a safeguard in this respect.

A further criticism that could be directed at all the questionnaires used in this study is related to the closed nature of the questions. Open-ended questions may have revealed information whose existence was unknown to the researcher and, therefore, acted as a safeguard against researcher biases (Nunan, 1992: 143; Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 174). Another limitation is related to the method adopted for administering the questionnaire to parents (Wray, Trott and Bloomer, 1998: 170-171). As the researcher was not present at the time of questionnaire completion, there was no assurance that the parents filled in the questionnaires themselves.

The validity and the reliability of the AMTB introduced by Gardner (1985a) has been particularly criticised by other researchers. Researchers studying motivational variables of second language learners have adopted methodologies of two varieties: direct and indirect (Au, 1988; Cargile *et al.*, 1994; Creber and Giles, 1983). In a direct method the intentions of the researcher are easily identifiable while indirect methods make the researcher's intentions less apparent. The AMTB falls under the first category and is largely criticised as giving participants the opportunity to deceive the researcher (Au, 1988). Furthermore, the 'self-report' type of methodology used in the AMTB has been criticised as depending on how a particular individual may interpret a question. These interpretations, it is argued, may vary from student to student and from context to context (Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977: 20). Therefore, Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977) suggest an indirect method such as a *cloze* passage, that is, a passage with some blanks for the subjects to fill in, for gathering data on attitudinal and motivational factors.

There has been a lengthy discussion between Oller and his colleagues (Oller, 1982; Oller and Perkins, 1978) and Gardner and his colleagues (Gardner, 1980; Gardner and Gliksman, 1982; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993) about the validity of the self-report method. Oller and Perkin (1978) point out three sources of negative influences in a self-report questionnaire.

1. The natural human tendency to want to appear acceptable in the eyes of others (approval motive). They argue that the respondents could get a favourable score for such a questionnaire by having been able to correctly guess the views of the author of the questionnaire.
2. When a respondent is asked to rate him/her self he/she may choose the most desirable traits according to his/her view (self-flattery tendency).
3. They also point out the possible tendency of respondents to be consistent in their answers (response-set).

Oller and Perkin (1978) further raise the issue of the questionnaire being successful only if the subjects understand the questions. If the questionnaire is in the first language, it becomes a surreptitious test of intelligence and a test of first language proficiency. If the questionnaire is in the target language, it becomes a surreptitious test of target language proficiency (Oller and Perkins, 1978). According to this analysis whatever language the questionnaire is in, it becomes a surreptitious test of either intelligence or language proficiency.

In response to these criticisms, Gardner and his colleagues (Gardner and Glikman, 1982; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993) state that the AMTB has all three types of validity required in a typical psychological measurement. They are:

1. Predictive validity: A typical psychological measurement should be capable of establishing a statistical relationship between variables.
2. Content validity: A typical psychological measurement should represent the concepts about which generalisations will be made based on the measurement.
3. Construct validity: A typical psychological measurement confirms or denies the hypotheses predicted on a theory which is based on constructs.

However, Gardner (1985a), in one of his articles admits that there is a possibility of students trying to give the most 'desirable' or 'correct' answers to the questions in the battery. Therefore, he warns that the battery should be administered in a way that

enable the researcher to minimize such influences and that scores should be interpreted with caution.

Any test of attitudes and motivation [even a *cloze* passage as suggested by (Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977: 20)] would face problems of reliability and validity as long as it depends on data supplied by the subjects, because attitudes and motivations are individual-specific variables. The adapted version of the AMTB used in the present study is no exception. Based on Gardner's (1985a) suggestions, attempts were made to minimise the possibilities of participants giving the most desirable answer to the questions. However, these attempts were not successful. There are several reasons for this. For example, Gardner (1985a) states that caution should be taken not to administer the questionnaire at times of examination, holidays and special events. While the latter two situations were not a concern in the present study, examinations were unavoidable at least in two of the four schools. As two schools were studied within one school term, the students in the second school in each term had a term-end examination approaching. Gardner (1985a) also states that at least two examiners/researchers should be present while the students answer the questionnaire. This was not practicable in the present study for two reasons. Firstly, as this project was done for the fulfilment of a Ph.D. qualification it was not possible to employ another researcher in the project. Secondly, the crowded classrooms could hardly accommodate one researcher. A third problem encountered in administering this questionnaire in this study was related to the crowded conditions of the classrooms. Gardner (1985a) warns that the AMTB should be administered in a large classroom to allow students to complete the questionnaire privately. In this study, attempts were made to minimise the possibilities of students discussing or looking at each other's answers while filling the questionnaire. But it is difficult to guarantee that these attempts were totally successful. These problems in administering the AMTB to the present sample may have, to some extent, skewed the research findings. Biases in the data which may have been caused by such problems could be identified,

especially in responses to questions about parental support, motivational intensity (effort) and desire.

The data gathered about parental support through the AMTB shows that the measurement may not have been successful in the Sri Lankan context. Sri Lankan children are always taught to respect their parents and this includes talking well of one's parents at all times. This cultural factor and the fact that the questionnaire was administered in school, the place where these values are taught, could have affected the children's responses. This cultural background may have caused the homogenous set of responses received for the question regarding parental support. Motivational intensity and desire to learn English are the other two questions the responses to which indicate such student biases. The data show that students put a very high effort into learning English. Although there is no reason to rule out the possibility of a majority of students being very conscientious, some of the answers given to certain statements in the question are questionable. For example, a majority of the students (55.9%) had said that they 'volunteer answers as much as possible'. But this is not what was observed during lessons. Similarly, 24.5% of the students who mentioned a subject other than English as their favourite subject (Question 3 of Student Questionnaire Part 1) chose English as their favourite subject in the question related to desire in the AMTB. Instances such as these suggest that self-flattery could affect findings of the AMTB in the Sri Lankan context, especially when a question *seemingly* evaluates the respondents or their parents.

Situations such as the above, according to Gardner (2002, pers. comm., 12 November), cannot be necessarily perceived as attempts to deceive the researcher. He argues that a student may believe he/she is volunteering answers as much as possible even if it may not look like that to an observer. According to this argument, in the mind of the student, giving one answer during a period of one month could be the equivalent of 'as much as possible'. The same is argued about the parents. A child may think that his/her parents are doing the best they can, when in fact no such

support is received. Therefore, Gardner (2002, pers. comm., 12 November) argues that these could be mere examples of the conceptual differences of the situation held by students and the researcher. This takes us back to the point made by Oller, Husdon and Liu (1977) regarding problems related to how a question is interpreted by a participant and the answer by the researcher.

One intention of the present study was to check the applicability of the AMTB to the Sri Lankan context. It proved to be minimally applicable. This may have been caused by the particular nature of the present study. Gardner and his colleagues have guaranteed student anonymity with their sole use of the AMTB. But the present study used the AMTB within a larger research project which focussed on many aspects of second language acquisition. Therefore, students' names had to be obtained and the researcher was seen in the school everyday for a period of one month talking to teachers and principal. These two situations may have led students to give the most desirable answers. Furthermore, certain adaptations made to the original AMTB may not have been appropriate. For example, the Likert seven alternative response format instead of five responses, offered in the present study, would have given students more options in choosing the degree of their effort, desire and parental support.

Limitations of the Observations

Of the three types of data collection methodologies utilised in the present study, observations face the most criticisms related to issues of reliability and validity. The major reason for this is that researchers using observations for data collection base their findings on detailed descriptions and analyses of a context or situation. Objectivity of such analysis is largely questioned (Nunan, 1992: 58). It has been pointed out that observers are 'more or less perceptive, more or less biased, more or less objective, more or less experienced etc.' (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 35-36). Furthermore, the natural setting and circumstances which provide the background for

observations are usually unique. Therefore, even the most exact replication may fail to produce identical results. Moreover, the fact that human behaviour is never static and that every individual observer works in a unique manner makes it virtually impossible to replicate exactly the results of observations (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 35-36).

A fundamental problem faced by researchers using observation is related to the behaviour changes that may occur in the participants as a consequence of the observer's presence (observer paradox). It is argued that participants may behave in a different manner to what their behaviour would have been without the observer. Developing a strong rapport with the participants has been considered a safeguard against observer paradox (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 17). In the present study, every possible measure was taken to socialise with the students and teachers in order to make them comfortable with the observer's presence. However, some problems were encountered in this respect. Initially, the teachers were hostile towards the observer thinking that she was affiliated to the Ministry of Education in some way. It took a great deal of explaining by the researcher to convince the teachers that this was not the case. Similarly, the students saw the researcher as a teacher which in their minds meant that she had to be respected. The teachers continued to reinforce this attitude by referring to the observer as a teacher despite the observer's objections. These two situations may have had an impact on participant behaviour.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982: 37-53) explain strategies that can be adopted in order to minimise problems of reliability and validity of observations:

1. Securing internal reliability: describing exactly what participants say and do, having multiple researchers, asking participants to review the researcher's observations, corroboration of findings by other researchers in the field and keeping raw data
2. Securing external reliability: including a detailed description of the status held by the researcher within the participant group, exact characteristics of participants,

social situation of research, constructs and premises and methods of data collection

3. Securing internal validity: providing extensive descriptions of changes that occur within the research situation and participants, describing the sample accurately and participants' explanations of events and longevity in the research site
4. Securing external validity: This is related to the difficulties of generalising findings of one set of observational data based in one community to other communities. This problem is difficult to remedy because certain constructs only apply to a particular group, in a particular culture, with unique historical experiences. However, detailed descriptions of these conditions could be useful for other researchers.

In summary, the suggestions made by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) indicate the necessity of including an extremely detailed account of various research aspects in order to secure observations against criticisms related to reliability and validity. For the present study, detailed descriptions of the research context have been given where appropriate.

Issues of Generalisability: The Sample

A further disadvantage of the present study is related to its sample. Survey research is usually conducted on a particular sample selected from a particular population. It is expected that findings of such a study could be generalised to the relevant population or to similar populations elsewhere. The results of the present study cannot be generalised to the wider student population of Sri Lanka or similar populations elsewhere. This is a consequence of the purposive sample selected for study. Generalisation can be made only with a probability sample (De Vaus, 1995: 390).

Conclusion

The research questions that guided this study, the study sample, quantitative and qualitative research methods adopted and their limitations were discussed in this chapter. The sample for study was chosen from among the prestigious schools in the district of Colombo. Three methods of data collection were used in the study: questionnaires, interviews and observations. The questionnaires were administered to the students in the sample and to their parents. They gathered information on students' socio-economic background, learning difficulties and motivational characteristics. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the principals of the sample schools and the English teachers who taught the students. Non-participant observations were carried out in the English classrooms to gather information on teaching and learning practices.

Issues of reliability and validity that are pertinent to questionnaires, interviews and observations as data collection methodologies also affected the data obtained in the present study. Measures of precaution against such problems were adopted. However, it is difficult to guarantee that these measures have been successful. Furthermore, the purposive sample chosen for study obstructs any possibilities of generalising the findings to the wider Sri Lankan student population.

Chapter 5

Socio-cultural Background and Second Language Acquisition

The effects of students' social class background on their English acquisition are discussed in this chapter. The data analysed in the chapter are mostly quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire administered to the parents and Part one of the questionnaire administered to the students (See Appendix A and Appendix B). Firstly, the analysis in the chapter classifies students into social classes followed by a discussion on the impact of these social class characteristics on students' English acquisition. Secondly, the chapter discusses factors such as language spoken in students' homes and private tuition as an additional source of knowledge and their impact on students' language performance. Thirdly, the chapter discusses students' gender and classroom pedagogy and their association with English acquisition. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the qualitative data gathered in the study and discusses how the school English language classroom reinforces the class structure of society.

Social Class Background and English Language Acquisition

In the present study, some elements of the definition of social class provided by Apple (1982c: 92) are adopted. For Apple, class is something more than just an expression of a person's financial or occupational position. One's class position is also a cultural expression that affects his/her language, style, intimate social relations, wishes and desires. In addition to parental income and occupation, therefore, several other characteristics of students' family background, such as language spoken at home and tuition attendance, are incorporated into the class analysis of this chapter. Students were initially categorised into three principal social classes based on their family income. Later, sub-categories were identified within these three main social

classes based on father's occupation and educational qualification. In total eight social classes were identified.

The students' social class was indicated by the following characteristics:

1. family income¹ (Rupees 15,001+, Rupees 5,001-15,000 and Rupees less than 5,000),
2. father's occupation² (Government, private or non-governmental organisation sector and self-employed or temporarily employed category) and
3. father's educational background (secondary and post-secondary education) (See Table 5.1).

¹ At the planning stage of the research the intention was to use both mother's and father's details in the social class categorisation. Therefore, the questionnaire asked for family income instead of separately asking for each parent's monthly income. Later, when the data revealed that the majority of mothers were housewives, it was decided to eliminate their details from the social class categories. Ideally, father's income alone would have been appropriate for the social class classification. But the data did not have this information.

² Majority of mothers were housewives. Therefore, details of mothers have been excluded from the social class classification. But details of mothers and fathers will be brought into the analysis where appropriate.

Table 5.1: Social class distribution

Social Class ^a	Income (Rupees)	Father's Occupation ^b	Father's educational background	Frequency ^c	Percentage
A++	15,001+	Govt, Private or NGO	Post-secondary	32	11.7
A+	15,001+	Govt, Private or NGO	Secondary	27	9.9
A	15,001+	Self or temporarily employed	Secondary	23	8.5
B++	5,001-15,000	Govt, Private or NGO	Post-secondary	28	10.3
B+	5,001-15,000	Govt, Private or NGO	Secondary	74	27.2
B	5,001-15,000	Self or temporarily employed	Secondary	53	19.5
C+	Less than 5,001	Govt, Private or NGO	Secondary	18	6.6
C	Less than 5,001	Self or temporarily employed	Secondary	17	6.3
Total				272	100.0

a Presented in descending order.

b The hierarchy of social classes in this study has been based on the assumption that the first category of occupations (government, private or NGO) is 'better' than the second category (self or temporarily employed).

c Of the 366 cases in the sample only 272 are included here. Details of 78 fathers could not be obtained and another 16 cases were excluded from the analysis (See Chapter 4).

The data show a positive relationship between social class and students' English acquisition (See Table 5.2).

Table 5.2^a: English marks by social class^b

		Social Class							
		A++	A+	A	B++	B+	B	C+	C
Marks	Distinction 75-100	41.9%	14.8%	30.4%	28.6%	8.1%	5.7%	5.6%	0.0%
	Credit 50-74	35.5	63.0	47.8	53.6	54.1	47.1	27.8	5.9
	Simple pass 35-49	19.4	11.1	13.1	0.0	24.3	32.1	22.2	29.4
	Fail 0-34	3.2	11.1	8.7	17.8	13.5	15.1	44.4	64.7
Total ^c		31	27	23	28	74	53	18	17
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to social class		69.0	60.6	64.5	61.0	51.3	51.2	41.7	30.3

a The criteria given by De Vaus (1995: 162-163) will be used in the presentation of crosstabulation tables throughout this thesis.

All cells will have percentages (not raw numbers) except the total row where the raw number of frequencies is given.

b In all the crosstabulations in this thesis a chi-square was calculated to see whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The calculation of a chi-square requires at least 80% of the cells in a crosstabulation table to produce an *expected frequency* of 5 or more (Milton, McTeer and Corbet, 1997: 522-523; Pallant, 2001: 259). Some variables used in this study violate this assumption when crosstabulated with other variables. In such cases the chi-square will not be mentioned. In other cases the chi-square will be given at the bottom of each crosstabulation table as 'p'.

c Of the 272 cases in Table 5.1, only 271 are included here. English marks of one student could not be obtained.

In each of the top four social classes [except A+ (discussed later)] more than 25% of the students obtained distinctions (See Table 5.2). From B+ up to C a decline in distinction passes and an increase in failures is clearly visible. The means of marks received by students in each social class demonstrate this relationship. Of the 31 students falling under the A++ social class almost 42% obtained distinction level marks for English (See Table 5.2). More than 50% of the students in the A and B (A++, A+, A, B++, B+ and B) social class groupings obtained distinction or credit level marks. This pattern shifts to passes and fails in the lowest social classes. Social class C, does not have any distinction passes, but does have 64% of the students failing in English.

The case of social class A+, which is an exception to the above-discussed trend, requires an explanation. The mean of English marks obtained by students in A+ is less than both A and B++. On the assumption that students' language acquisition is affected only by the social class factors identified here, this exception is explained by the differences between constituent characteristics of these three social classes. The difference between A+ and A is father's occupation (See Table 5.1). Fathers in A+ are employed in the government or private sector while fathers in A are self-employed (social class A does not have any temporarily employed individuals). Fathers in A could be self-employed professionals, such as doctors and engineers, whose English proficiency, as pointed out by Hanson-Smith (1984), is usually higher than the government and private sector employees of A+. Similarly, the difference between A+ and B++ is fathers' educational level. Fathers in A+ have a secondary education while fathers in B++ have a post-secondary education. It is reasonable to expect that fathers with a post-secondary education would have a better knowledge of English compared to fathers with a secondary education. In both these cases, it is possible to argue that the father's proficiency in English would be advantageous to the child's English knowledge. Further analysis of the data will provide sufficient grounds to support this claim.

Subject to the exceptional group of A+ discussed in the preceding paragraph, these findings are consistent with those of earlier researchers who have shown a positive relationship between English language acquisition and student's social class background (De Silva, 1978; De Souza, 1978; Ellis, 1999; Goonetilleke, 1983; Jayasuriya, 1969, 1976; Kandiah, 1984; Walatara, 1974, 1978). However, the social class classification in the present study does not show a perfect, positive relationship with English language acquisition. That is, not all students in the higher social classes reach distinction level, and not all students in the lower social classes fail English. This suggests that factors other than social class, such as motivational factors, linguistic ability, general academic capability, school factors and other socio-

cultural factors not included in the social class analysis here, would also influence students' acquisition of English (Fuller, 1987; Lanzas and Kingston, 1981).

In order to gain a better understanding of how parents' income, education and occupation relate to students' English achievement, the various elements of the social class classification (See Table 5.1) were disaggregated and crosstabulated with students' English language acquisition. Disaggregating these factors gives the opportunity to further compare the findings of this study with those of earlier studies. In the discussion about parent's educational qualifications, details of mothers are brought into the analysis because maternal education has been considered to be a relevant factor in earlier studies (Jayaweera, 1984; Rupasinghe, 1990a, 1990b). Earlier Sri Lankan research has pointed out that children of less educated parents are disadvantaged with respect to achieving higher marks in their educational programs in general, and in English language programs, in particular (Baker, 1988b, 1989a; Gunawardena, 1995; Niles, 1981; Rupasinghe, 1990b; Walatara, 1978). The results of the present study confirm these findings (See Table 5.3 and Table 5.4).

Table 5.3: English marks by father's educational qualifications^a

		Father's education		
		Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
Marks	Fail (0-34)	66.7%	19.0%	10.8%
	Simple Pass (35-49)	0.0	23.8	10.8
	Credit (50-74)	33.3	46.7	43.2
	Distinction (75-100)	0.0	10.5	35.2
Total ^b		3	210	74
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to father's educational qualifications		40.3	51.7	63.7

p<0.001

a In the case of Table 5.3 a chi-square could not be calculated due to the small number of fathers with a primary school education. But removing primary school education from the analysis gives a significant chi-square value (p<0.001), meaning that fathers' level of education is significantly and positively associated with students' English language acquisition.

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 287 are included here. Details of 78 fathers could not be obtained. English marks could not be obtained for one student.

Table 5.4: English marks by mother's educational qualifications^a

		Mother's education		
		Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
Mark	Fail (0-34)	37.5%	18.8%	9.6%
	Simple Pass (35-49)	25.0	22.7	9.6
	Credit (50-74)	37.5	46.3	46.2
	Distinction (75-100)	0.0	12.2	34.6
Total ^b		8	255	52
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to mother's educational qualifications		43.5	52.6	63.8

p<0.001

a In the case of Table 5.4 a chi-square could not be calculated due to the small number of mothers with a primary school education. But removing primary school education from the analysis gives a significant chi-square value ($p<0.001$), meaning that mothers' level of education is significantly and positively associated with students' English language acquisition.

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 315 are included here. Details of 50 mothers could not be obtained. English marks could not be obtained for one student.

A majority of students whose mother or father had only a primary education failed English (See Table 5.3 and Table 5.4). Conversely a majority of students whose parents had a secondary or post-secondary education obtained distinction or credit passes for English. Children of mothers or fathers with a post-secondary qualification obtained a higher percentage of distinctions compared to children of mothers or fathers with a secondary qualification. Both paternal and maternal education has a significant, positive association with students' English language acquisition (See Table 5.3 and Table 5.4).

Similarly, family income also shows a positive relationship with students' English language acquisition (See Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: English marks by family income

		Family income (in Rupees)		
		15,001+	5,001-15,000	Less than 5,000
Marks	Distinction 75-100	27.3%	10.9%	6.2%
	Credit 50-74	50.5	50.0	25.0
	Simple pass 35-49	14.1	23.0	25.0
	Fail 0-34	8.1	16.1	43.8
Total ^a		99	174	48
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to family income		63.5	52.4	41.5

p<0.001

a Of the 366 cases in the sample only 321 are included here. Details related to family income could not be obtained from 44 cases and English marks for one student were not available.

Almost 27% of students in the highest income category (Rupees 15,001+) obtained distinction level marks while almost 44% of students in the lowest income category (less than Rupees 5,000) failed English (See Table 5.5). This highly significant relationship has been found in other Sri Lankan studies dealing with relationships between income and English acquisition and between income and general education (Grove, 1981; Gunawardena, 1995; Jayaweera, 1984; Niles, 1981). A high income places a student in a *materially* advantageous position which facilitates school achievement (Apple, 2001). Access to the Internet is used in this study as an example to demonstrate this argument. In Sri Lanka the Internet is an expensive source of information³ which limits its accessibility only to those who can afford it. The majority of students in all three income levels of this study do not have access to the Internet. But the data show that the percentages of those who have access to the Internet decrease as income decreases. Of the students falling under the three income

³ In addition to the basic hardware, a computer, required for Internet access the billing system in Sri Lanka, telephone time used charged by the minute, makes it an expensive source of knowledge accessible only to those who can afford it.

groups (namely Rupees 15,001+, Rupees 5,001-15,000 and less than Rupees 5,000), 24%, 8% and 6.5% respectively had access to Internet (statistically significant at the 0.001 level). Studies on the link between having access to the Internet at home and student's English acquisition are non-existent. But western countries are increasingly focussing on the Internet as an important pedagogical tool for teaching English⁴ (See Kasper, 2002a, 2002b; Tumposky, 2001; Warschaues, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b). Based on these studies it is reasonable to expect that Sri Lankan students who have Internet facilities at home would benefit from it in improving their level of English fluency. In the present study, the majority (75.6%) of those who have Internet at home, access it in 'English only'. This group of students, compared to those who access it in other languages, obtained a higher mean of 60.2% marks for English.

Based on earlier Sri Lankan research (Jayaweera, 1984; Niles, 1981; Rupasinghe, 1990b) one would expect to see a link between father's and mother's occupation and student's language acquisition. But this link has not been evident in the present study. Father's occupation does not show any significant association with the child's English marks. This is probably a result of differences between the occupational categorisations used in this and earlier research. For example, the list of occupations identified by Rupasinghe (1990b) does not differentiate between government, private or self-employed individuals. The first category in his study is 'professional jobs, managerial positions related to technical jobs and clerical-related jobs'. This category includes jobs from the government and private sectors. The second category deals with 'businesses' (Rupasinghe, 1990b: 86). These differences could explain the disparities in the findings of this and Rupasinghe's study.

The relationship between parent's fluency of English and children's English acquisition was investigated. The extent of English used by the parent for official

⁴ Independent statistics that link the Internet to general education or statistics on the usage of Internet are not found in Sri Lanka.

purposes in his/her workplace was an indicator of his/her English fluency. However, this indicator omitted parents who were fluent in English but did not use English in their workplace. Furthermore, mothers had to be excluded from the analysis because most of them were housewives and, therefore, did not have a 'workplace' external to the home. Despite these possible problems in the methodology, a positive and significant association between father's fluency of English and students' English acquisition was found (See Table 5.6).

Table 5.6: English marks by father's use of English in his workplace for official purposes

		Father's use of English in his workplace		
		50%+	1-49%	None
Marks	Distinction 75-100	23.4%	13.5%	7.7%
	Credit 50-74	48.4	53.8	39.4
	Simple pass 35-49	16.9	15.4	27.9
	Fail 0-34	11.3	17.3	25.0
Total ^a		124	52	104
		100%	100%	100%
Means of English marks according to father's use of English in his workplace		60.1	54.5	47.6

p<0.01

a Of the 366 cases in the sample only 280 are included here. In addition to the 78 fathers whose information that could not be gathered, another 7 were excluded from this table. English mark of one student was unavailable.

Students' English marks significantly increased as the father's fluency of English, as indicated by the extent of English he uses in his workplace, increased (See Table 5.6). Almost 24% of students whose fathers did more than 50% of their official work in English obtained distinction level marks for English. A similar percentage of students whose fathers used no English in their workplace failed English.

The present study confirms findings of earlier researchers on the relationship between certain factors related to student's family background and acquisition of

English. The discussion suggests that aspects of socio-cultural background are positively associated with children's English acquisition. But it was also discovered that only a minority of the students are at the higher end of the social class spectrum. The majority of students fall either in the middle or the lower social class levels. For example, 57% of the students belonged to the B category social classes. A majority of students' fathers (72.9%) and mothers (81%) had a secondary education. The majority of students (54%) were in the middle income category (Rupees 5,001-15,000). Similarly, a majority of fathers (55.5%) either used 1-49% or no English in their workplace. These figures show that in the present sample only a minority of students' families are in social class positions that are *most* favourable for English language achievement.

'Equality of opportunity in education' has been a common slogan in Sri Lanka's political history since the 1940s (See Chapter 1). Researchers have continued to point out that despite this political rhetoric certain social strata of students are disadvantaged as a result of the social (for example, lack of opportunities to speak English outside or even within school) and educational (for example, lack of proficient English teachers in school) facilities available to them (See Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). Students in IAB schools, especially in Colombo, have been considered the advantaged stratum in this respect. The findings of this study show that inequalities created largely by students' social class background exist even in such schools. The minority group considered rich (Apple and Weis, 1983) in wider society is further advantaged within this advantaged school environment.

Language Spoken at Home and English Language Acquisition

In this section the relationship between having English-speaking parents at home and children's English acquisition is discussed. Selected social class characteristics of parents who speak English with their children at home are then examined.

Parental Use of English at Home and English Acquisition

Using English as a 'home language' has been seen to be a characteristic of upper class Sri Lankans (Fernando, 1961, 1976; Silva, 1997: 109-115). Such individuals are usually the ones exposed to the language from an early age. It has also been argued that learning a foreign language from an early age could be advantageous to learners (Clyne, 1981: 69, 1986a: 12, 1986b: 69, 1986c: 128; Ellis, 1999: 201-202; Lattey, 1994). Together, these two factors imply that children from English-speaking families in Sri Lanka are in an advantageous position compared to the rest of the student population (Karunaratne, 1993).

Parents' use of English at home with their children positively contributed to students' language acquisition (See Table 5.7 and Table 5.8).

Table 5.7: English marks by father speaking English at home

		Father speaking English at home	
		Yes	No
Marks	Distinction 75-100	30.0%	14.6%
	Credit 50-74	52.5	44.5
	Simple pass 35-49	15.0	21.1
	Fail 0-34	2.5	19.8
Total ^a		40	247
		100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to father speaking English at home		66.8	52.7

$p < 0.01$

a Of the 366 cases in the sample only 287 are included here. Details of 78 fathers could not be obtained and English marks for one student were not available.

Table 5.8: English marks by mother speaking English at home

		Mother speaking English at home	
		Yes	No
Marks	Distinction 75-100	30.9%	13.6%
	Credit 50-74	55.6	44.8
	Simple pass 35-49	13.5	21.5
	Fail 0-34	0.0	20.1
Total ^a		36	279
		100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to mother speaking English at home		67.6	52.5

p<0.01

a Of the 366 cases in the sample only 315 are included here. Details of 50 mothers could not be obtained and English marks for one student were unavailable.

A higher percentage of children whose fathers/mothers speak English at home obtained distinction and credit passes compared to children of fathers/mothers who did not speak English at home. There is a significant and positive association between these two variables. But only 14% of fathers (40 out of 287) and 11.5% of mothers (36 out of 315) spoke in English with their children at home (See Table 5.7 and Table 5.8). That is, less than 15% of students enjoyed the benefits of having a mother or a father who spoke to them, at home in English.

Social Class and Parental Use of English at Home

Research on Sri Lanka has identified English language usage in intimate social circles to be a class-marker of higher social classes (Fernando, 1976; Silva, 1997). In the present sample, the 14% of fathers who spoke to their children in English at home were in upper level occupations and income brackets, characteristics associated with higher-class status in Sri Lanka.

Firstly, it was revealed that fathers' workplace-related use of English was significantly and positively related to their speaking English with children at home (See Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Father's use of English at home by his workplace-related use of English

		Father's workplace-related use of English		
		50%+	1-49%	None
Father speaking English at home	Yes	27.2%	3.8%	2.9%
	No	72.8	96.2	97.1
Total ^a		125	52	104
		100%	100%	100%

p<0.001

a Of the 366 cases in the sample only 281 is included here. Details of 78 fathers could not be obtained and another 7 fathers were excluded from the analysis.

Earlier studies on Sri Lanka have pointed out that higher levels of English language fluency are required for jobs in the upper levels of the occupation hierarchy (De Souza, 1969g; De Zoysa, 1990; Gunawardena, 1990a, 1991; Hanson-Smith, 1984, 1990). Based on these earlier findings, the present study assumed that higher levels of English usage in the workplace would be an indicator of jobs in the higher ranks of the occupation hierarchy. Therefore, being employed in a job that requires higher levels of English usage was analysed as an expression of higher social class background. This implies that fathers speaking English with children at home are employed in higher-ranking jobs, a characteristic of upper social classes.

Secondly, the data revealed that the father's income had a significant, positive relationship with his use of English at home (See Table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Father's use of English at home by his income

		Father's Income		
		15,001+	5,001-15,000	Less than 5,000
Father speaking English at home	Yes	29.6%	5.3%	11.8%
	No	70.4	94.7	88.2
Total ^a		54	113	34
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

p<0.001

a Of the 366 cases only 171 are included here. 'Employed mothers' were eliminated in this crosstabulation to get a clear idea of the association between fathers' use of English at home and his income. The analysis here is based on the assumption that father's income is the sole source of income in these families.

Fathers employed in higher income-earning jobs seem to opt for the use of English when speaking to their children. In other words, 30% of fathers who earn more than Rupees 15,000 speak in English with their children at home while only 12% of fathers who earn less than Rupees 5,000 speak in English with their children at home (See Table 5.10).

An additional implication of these findings is that high-ranking, high-income earning jobs in Sri Lanka still require a good knowledge of English, an implication that is consistent with the previously mentioned research findings regarding English proficiency and occupational rank. It enhances the instrumental value of the language within Sri Lanka. More than 75% of the students in the sample stated that they wish to take up a professional career in the future, such as that of a medical doctor, engineer, scientist, consultant, accountant, architect, computer scientist, company executive, university lecturer. These professional careers would require a 'sound' proficiency in the English language (De Souza, 1969g; De Zoysa, 1990; Gunawardena, 1990a, 1991; Hanson-Smith, 1984, 1990). The findings made here regarding English language proficiency and occupational rank could have significant effects on how students with such aspirations are motivated towards the learning of English, an issue that will be taken up in the following chapter.

A further factor that seemed relevant in identifying parents who spoke English at home with their children was ethnicity, identified through students' religion and mother tongue. Fathers from minority ethnic groups tended to speak English to their children at home. The association between ethnicity and father's English usage at home was not statistically significant due to the small number of students from minority ethnic groups in the sample. The issue is raised here because of the important implications it has for future research. Non-Buddhist fathers and non-Sinhalese fathers show a higher tendency to speak in English at home compared to the Sinhala-Buddhist majority. Classroom observation notes also show that students who spoke mostly in English during English lessons were mainly Muslim. The greater English fluency of these students could possibly be attributed in part to dominant-subordinate linguistic and religious group relations in Sri Lanka (Schumann, 1986). The Sinhala-Buddhists, the majority ethnic group of the country, may not see a necessity to use a language other than their mother tongue in their intimate relations. But the minority groups may be interested in learning English as a link language and also as a means of achieving a better position in society through the instrumental value of English (See Ponnambalam, 1983). The latter may be more inclined to use English at home as a means of improving their English fluency. A more ethnically diverse sample and a direct measurement of students' ethnicity would have provided a sounder base for drawing conclusions about the relationship between ethnicity and English usage at home.

In conclusion, the preceding discussion suggests that fathers' use of English in their workplace, higher income levels and students' ethnicity are related to speaking English at home. But less than 15% of the students in the present sample had the privilege of having exposure to the English language at home through their parents (See Table 5.7 and Table 5.8). This points to almost 85% of the sample that were dependent on the school language program not only for learning English but also for exposure to the language. This further suggests that a minority group of students coming from higher social class background are advantaged in the education system

(Apple, 1996). These students are advantaged in obtaining higher marks for English in school because they are exposed to the language in their homes.

Age of First Exposure to English and Language Acquisition

Findings related to the age at which students first began to learn English further confirm the importance of the 'home background' for better English acquisition. A majority of students in the sample (96%) learned English from the first year in school⁵. However, 258 of 355 students (73%) learned English before entering school. Of these 258 students, the majority learned English at Pre-school (57%) and a minority by means of private tuition (10%). Only 33% learned it from home. While less than 15% of the students had parents who currently speak to them in English at home, 33% referred to in this discussion includes students with parents who speak English at home as well as those who have engaged in activities that support their children's English language acquisition, such as teaching children English vocabulary since an early age.

Having studied English from an early age, by whatever mean, was found to have a significant, positive relationship with the child's language acquisition during later school years. Data about how English was learned prior to school confirms that being exposed to English from an early age, especially at home, has the strongest impact on student's later English acquisition (See Table 5.11).

⁵ The first 2-3 years would have been basic, oral English. For the batch of students in this sample, formal school teaching of English should have begun in the fourth year in school.

Table 5.11: English marks by how English was learned before it was taught in school

		How English was learned before it was taught in school		
		Home	Tuition	Pre-school
Marks	Distinction 75-100	31.0%	3.8%	11.5%
	Credit 50-74	48.8	53.8	53.4
	Simple pass 35-49	13.1	23.1	21.6
	Fail 0-34	7.1	19.3	13.5
Total ^a		84	26	148
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to how English was learned before it was taught in school		64.7	50.3	55.0

a Of the 366 cases in the study only 258 were included here. In addition to the 10 questionnaires that were not returned, 97 students were excluded from the study. English marks for one student were unavailable.

Students who learned English at home have obtained the highest number of distinctions and lowest number of failures. Students who started learning English at pre-school seem to obtain more distinctions and less fails compared to those who began learning it through private tuition classes (See Table 5.11). The students who began learning English in private tuition classes are likely to have done so after the pre-school age⁶. The students who began learning English at home are, therefore, the ones who were introduced to English language at the youngest age. Conversely, the students who started learning English in tuition classes would have had the latest introduction to the language. The data show that students who were exposed to English from the earliest age possible, that is at home, show better language acquisition at later school years compared to students who learned English for the first time by means of pre-school or tuition classes. This confirms the findings of the previous section regarding the positive effects of having an exposure to the language

⁶ Data related to practices of tuition class attendance does not exist in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this assumption is based on the researcher's general observations.

at home. Furthermore, the findings also show that those who started learning English from pre-school times show better acquisition compared to those who started learning English at a later age in tuition classes (See Table 5.11). These findings suggest that beginning the teaching of English in school at an early age would benefit students more. It puts hope into the new Sri Lankan language policy of teaching English from the first year in school (National Education Commission, Ministry of Education and Higher Education and National Institute of Education, 1998), provided that school-related physical and human facilities required for the success of this exercise are equitably distributed to all the schools of the island.

As has been commented upon by other writers, for example Lalprema (2002), only a small proportion of students in the present sample enjoy a family background that facilitates the learning of English from an early age. If this is so, even among families sending their children to 'good' government schools in Colombo, then it is possible to argue that, compared to the late 19th or early 20th century Sri Lanka (Goonaratne, 1968; Jayasuriya, 1969), the number of Sri Lankans speaking English at home and, therefore, the numbers who are able to begin learning the language through its use in intimate social circles, is diminishing. This points to the likelihood of a majority of students, even in the privileged Colombo schools, being compelled to be solely or mostly dependent on the school language program for acquiring knowledge of the English language. The social conditions of students in Colombo schools, therefore, may be moving in the same direction as those of rural schools in this respect (See Chapter 3). The school has to provide the majority of students with opportunities not only to learn English but also to practise the language.

Learning English and Tuition at School Age

The preceding section showed that private tuition classes are utilised by parents to improve their children's English proficiency from an early age. The popularity of tuition increases as children grow older and their school education becomes more

competitive. Hence, as pointed out by several other researchers (Ekanayake, 1990; Hilton, 1983; Parakrama, 1995; Silva, 1997; Udagama, 1999; Weeraratna, 2002) extra tuition becomes a factor that may have an impact on English language acquisition of Sri Lankan school children.

In the competitive system of education in Sri Lanka, parents expect that these extra classes will help their child achieve better results at examinations. The concept of the tuition class is so popular among parents and students that it is almost impossible to find students who do not attend private tuition classes. In O/L classes, students predominantly seek tuition for mathematics, science and English⁷. The first two subjects are given importance because passes in these are mandatory for continuing school education after O/L. Though a pass in English is not required to proceed after O/L, it is generally considered a difficult subject, as most students do not have opportunities to improve English fluency at home. Furthermore, obtaining a 'better' pass for English at the O/L examination improves an individual's future employability⁸ (Kandiah, 1984; Lalprema, 2001).

A majority of students (80% of the total) regardless of their various social characteristics, such as family income, exposure to English at home and difficulties faced in learning English at school⁹, attend tuition classes for English. The popularity of tuition can be taken to indicate a lack of faith in the school language program among a majority of students (Ekanayake, 1990; Parakrama, 1995). It could be that the school language program is not catering for the higher demands placed by

⁷ In the absence of a comprehensive set of data, impressionistic evidence suggests that this is the commonly found trend.

⁸ A 'better' pass at the O/L examination, that is a distinction, or at least a credit pass, does not always indicate a 'good knowledge of English' (Goonetilleke, 1983). Nevertheless, such a pass reinforces an individual's employability in Sri Lanka.

⁹ The fact that students still complain of difficulties in learning English even when they are attending tuition classes raises doubts about the reliability of tuition as an additional source of knowledge and training (Parakrama, 1995).

students on learning English and, therefore, students turn to other options for learning English which in this case is tuition.

Tuition has a significant, positive impact on the child's English acquisition (See Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: English marks by tuition attendance

		Tuition attendance	
		No	Yes
Marks	Distinction 75-100	11.4%	14.4%
	Credit 50-74	27.1	49.1
	Simple pass 35-49	31.4	20.4
	Fail 0-34	30.1	16.1
Total ^a		70	285
		100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to tuition attendance		46.4	54.7

p<0.01

a Of the 366 cases in the study only 355 were included here. In addition to the 10 questionnaires that were not returned the English mark for one student was unavailable.

A majority of students who attend tuition classes manage to obtain a mark above 50% for English, while a majority of those who do not attend such classes fall below the 50% mark. Tuition in itself, however, does not seem to always result in better English marks. That is, 16% of students who attend tuition still fail the subject (See Table 5.12). Assuming that tuition is the only source of learning available to these students other than the school, the 16% who cannot pass the English examination, even with the help of tuition, and also the 20% (70 out of the total sample of 355 students) who do not attend tuition at all, become the responsibility of the school. If the school English program is so important even for this urban sample of students, one can imagine how indispensable it is to students from non-urban environments.

Gender, Classroom Pedagogy and English Acquisition

Students' gender and classroom pedagogy are also important social factors contributing to students' level of English acquisition. In this section, first, student's gender and its relationship to their level of English acquisition is examined. Second, the relationship between teaching strategies used by teachers, and student's level of English acquisition will be investigated. Issues related to teaching strategies will be discussed further in a later chapter (See Chapter 7). It is attempted here to establish a statistical relationship between teaching practices and students' level of achievement.

Conclusions drawn by previous researchers on the relevance of students' gender to their second language acquisition are largely divided. Some researchers claim that females do better than males (Bacon, 1992; Burstall, 1975; Ellis, R., 1999; Grigoryadis, 1989; Morris, 1998) while others claim males outperform females (Allyson, 2001; Barat, 1994; Hassan, 2001; Scarella and Zimmerman, 1998). Yet others point out that there are no gender differences in levels of language acquisition (Bacon, 1992; Norton and Park, 1996; Piske, MacKay and Flege, 2001; Woolard, 1997). In the present study, English marks obtained by students vary significantly according to gender (See Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: English marks by student's gender

		Student's gender	
		Female	Male
Marks	Distinction 75-100	22.3%	4.5%
	Credit 50-74	54.9	33.1
	Simple pass 35-49	16.8	28.1
	Fail 0-34	6.0	34.3
Total ^a		184	178
		100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to student's gender		61.6	43.3

p<0.001

a Of the 366 cases in the study only 365 were included here. English marks for one student were unavailable.

The majority of females (77.2%) obtained a mark above the 50% level while a majority of males (61.4%) fall below that level. More females obtained distinction level passes and more males failed English (See Table 5.13). While social class factors do not appear to differentially advantage male or female students, gender on its own does appear to be relevant. Gender differences in English marks could be caused by the different social roles attributed to males and females (Ehrlich, 1997), differences in attitudes and motivation by gender (Cheng, 1995; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Kang, 2000; Randhawa and Korpan, 1973) (See Chapter 6) and different learning approaches adopted by males and females (Morris, 1998; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Wiltse, 2001). Observation notes taken during English lessons show females to be more attentive during lessons compared to their male counterparts. Female students also had teachers who were less strict and who used more English in their teaching compared to teachers of male students. These classroom factors may have contributed to the better achievement levels of female students (See Chapter 7).

The teaching strategies observed in this study were evaluated in relation to the principles of communicative language teaching (See Chapter 2). Three primary levels of communicativeness were identified (See Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Levels of communicativeness^a

Communicativeness Criteria	Highly Communicative	Moderately Communicative	Low Communicative		
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Teacher dominance	High	Very high	Very high	Low	Low
Teacher Strictness	Moderate	Moderate	Very high	Very high	Very low
Learning activity engaged in by students	Very High	Very High	High	Low	Low
Medium of instruction	English and Sinhala	Mostly English	Mostly Sinhala with some English	Mostly Sinhala	Mostly English with some Sinhala

^a See Chapter 4 (Table 4.2) for a discussion of the criteria used to define the extent to which teaching practices conformed to communicative principles.

As expected, teaching strategies of individual teachers were significantly related to English marks obtained by students (See Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: 2001 3rd term English marks by teaching strategies of each classroom

		Levels of Communicativeness ^b							
		High		Moderate		Low			
						Category 1		Category 2	Category 3
		A1	A2	D1	B1	C2	B2	C1	D2
Marks ^a	Distinction (75-100)	25.6%	25.0%	28.6%	2.1%	2.4%	0.0%	28.6%	25.5%
	Credit (50-74)	48.8	68.2	59.2	8.5	9.5	27.3	33.3	44.7
	Simple pass (35-49)	18.6	2.3	6.1	34.0	28.6	43.2	11.9	8.5
	Fail (0-34)	7.0	4.5	6.1	55.4	59.5	29.5	26.2	21.3
Total ^c		43	44	49	47	42	44	42	47
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to classroom		62.0	67.6	64.1	31.9	31.6	42.1	53.3	58.2

p<0.001

- a Only marks obtained by students for the 3rd term of the year 2001 is included here because the teacher who taught English in the previous year has been different to the one observed in this study.
- b The schools were named A (National- girls), B (National- boys), C (IAB- Boys) and D (IAB- Girls). The classes in each school were called A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1 and D2 respectively. Accordingly, teachers were named by the name given to the class they taught.
- c Of the 366 case in the study only 358 are included here. 6 students did not sit the term end examination of 2001.

The students, learning from teachers whose approach to teaching was moderately communicative, obtained the highest means of marks. Therefore, from the data above it is clear that in the case of this sample teaching approaches that seem to agree most with the communicative principles do not necessarily bring successful results. For example, the mean score obtained by students of Teacher A2, who is considered most communicative of all teachers, is less than that obtained by students of the two moderately communicative teachers. Implications related to the issues of how applicable communicative teaching is to the Sri Lankan English classroom will be further dealt with later (See Chapter 7).

Reproducing the Class Structure in the English language Classroom

The analysis has shown that the minority of students from upper social class backgrounds are advantaged in learning English in school. Given the elite status of English speakers in Sri Lanka these findings confirm how education contributes to the reproduction of the class structure in society. Though it was difficult to link the observed behaviours of particular students to individual student's class status, the English classroom showed characteristics reminiscent of Apple's (1982c: 96-108) distinction between the *lads* and the *kids*. Every classroom had at least one student who was identified by the teacher as a fluent speaker of English. Except for six students, all of these 18 fluent English speakers were from upper social class backgrounds¹⁰. The teachers' behaviour towards these upper class students established an elite classroom position for them as the smart students, in Apple's (1982c) words 'the *kids*'.

As a consequence of the recognition placed on them by the teacher, the *kids* held a powerful position in the classroom. Teachers gave the *kids* first preference when they wanted someone to answer a question (25.09.2001, Class C2) or read lessons (27.09.2001, Class D1 and 18.09.2001, Class C2). At times, answers written by these students were used as demonstrations for other students (10.10.2001, Class D1). These special preferences and opportunities seemed to further buttress their English-learning process by developing self-confidence about their language abilities. When required to speak in English with the teacher in the classroom, the *kids* did not seem to show the reluctance shown by other students (a factor further discussed in Chapter 7)¹¹. As a result of the classroom position attributed to the *kids* as the smart

¹⁰ These 12 students were from social class A++, A+, A and B++. Data of three students could not be obtained. Of the remaining three, two belonged to social class B while the other belonged to social class C (See Table 5.1).

¹¹ An additional indication here is that self-confidence too seems important for successful second language acquisition as demonstrated by Clement and others (Clement, 1986; Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a, 1980; Clement and Kruidenier, 1985; Lee, 2000).

students the less capable students¹² tended to depend on them for support during lessons. This peer behaviour further facilitated English-learning of the upper class students.

Example 1. Students are assigned a reading assessment. They have to read a passage and answer a few questions. The passage that has to be read is put on the blackboard. It is to be done as an individual exercise. But all the other students of the class are asking Student X¹³ for meanings of words in the passage given. (Observation notes 12.10.2001, Class C1).

This tendency of the less capable students to look up to the *kids* also reinforced the latter's position as the powerful in the classroom. When these less capable students wanted to communicate a message to the teacher regarding something unrelated to the lesson they tended to use the *kids* as their messengers. For example, when Teacher D1 continued teaching even after the English period ended the other students were secretly asking one *kid* to remind the teacher that the period has ended (Observation notes 24.10.2001). Similarly, it was the *kids* who usually made suggestions to the teacher when the students in general wanted to avoid a test (15.10.2001, Class C2) or wanted to re-do the previous day's lesson (13.07.2001, Class B1).

Maintaining their classroom position as the smart students seemed a vital concern of the *kids*' classroom behaviour. Whenever their position was seemingly threatened or challenged by another student they aggressively resisted such acts. Such resistance was more obvious among boys than girls. Brief fistfights and verbal fights were such acts of resistance in boys' classrooms (26.07.2001, Class B2,

¹² The term '*lads*' is not used here because the social class position of these students was difficult to identify, given their large numbers.

¹³ In these examples the students are named by expressions like Student X and Student Y. Conversations that took place in Sinhala are translated into English and put in italics.

16.10.2001, Class C1). Such fights only lasted till the teacher intervened. At times the *kids* were observed demonstrating such acts of resistance towards the teacher.

Example 2. Teacher explains the 6th comprehension question on page 55 of the textbook and asks the students to write the answers to the questions in their notebooks. As the students start writing, the teacher asks them to bring their books to him for correction. Teacher pinches the students' stomachs if their books are not completed. Students express pain by making noises such as 'uuuuii' and 'aaw' (Sinhala expressions of pain). Student Y gets the same treatment.

T: (to Student Y) English speaking is not enough. You have to write too.

Student Y goes back to his seat and starts crying and his friends report this to the teacher. Student Y tells the teacher his stomach is paining because of the pinching.

T: (In Sinhala) *I intended it to be painful.* (Observation notes 20.07.2001, Class B1).

On the following day, Student Y was deliberately giving wrong answers to the teacher's questions, possibly to 'annoy' the teacher. For example,

T: (writes on the blackboard) 'I come to school to learn.' What is the subject (of this sentence)?

Student Y: to

Student Y continued this behaviour for more than 50% of class time until the teacher asked him to 'shut up'. (Observation notes 23.07.2001, Class B1).

The preceding analysis of teacher-student and student-student classroom interactions shows that the students coming from higher social class background are advantaged within the language classroom. These teacher and peer responses seem to further advantage these students' acquisition of higher levels of English proficiency.

Teachers have been shown to behave in a preferential manner to some students (See Chapter 3). As pointed by other researchers, these preferences may be based on characteristics, such as student's voice, appearance and family background, (See Chapter 3), as well as on the student's subject knowledge or classroom behaviour. This range of characteristics can be argued to be social class markers. Furthermore, as the findings of this study have shown, students from higher social class backgrounds were also the better achievers of English.

Conclusion

The non-random nature of the sample studied here does not allow generalisations to be made (De Vaus, 1995: 390). Nevertheless, the findings suggest some important issues. Firstly, they suggest that family social class characteristics have an impact on student's English acquisition. Social characteristics such as parental education, family income, father's occupation and parental use of English at home were found to have significant and positive associations with students' language acquisition. Students from upper class families seemed advantaged not only in society but also in the English classroom. The special attention received by these students from their teachers and other students seem to facilitate their English acquisition.

Secondly, it was observed that even in these superior schools of Colombo only a minority of students come from families that demonstrate upper social class characteristics. For example, only 15% of the students in the sample actually had opportunities to speak English at home. Therefore, the school seems to bear the principal responsibility for teaching English to the majority of students. Thirdly, it was observed that a majority of students attended private tuition classes for English and managed to achieve a better language standard by doing so. But tuition in itself did not always result in better language acquisition for all students who attended such classes.

Chapter 6

Motivation, Attitudes and Second Language Acquisition¹

Motivation and attitudes of students are among important factors influencing the success of any school teaching program (Naiman *et al.*, 1978; Samarakkody, 2001; Spolsky, 1990). The present chapter examines students' motivation, attitudes (toward learning English as well as toward English-speaking Sri Lankans), effort they make (motivational intensity) and their desire to learn English. The method of data collection was an adapted version of the AMTB introduced by Gardner (1985a) (See Appendix C).

The work reported in this chapter regarding motivation and attitudes relevant to second language learning is closely guided by, and at times adapted from, Gardner's (1985b, 1988a) socio-educational model (See Chapter 2). According to Gardner, motivation to learn a language derives from the potential use to which that language can be put. This potential use acts as a motivating reason for learning that language. According to Gardner's model, these reasons are called orientations and two types of orientations are identified, namely integrative and instrumental. Based on these orientations, or reasons, Gardner identifies two types of motivation:

1. Integrative motivation (motivation based on the social uses of the language)
2. Instrumental motivation (motivation based on the economic and educational uses or benefits of the language)

The constituent elements of instrumental and integrative motivations, as defined in the present study, are not the same as what has been described by Gardner in his socio-educational model (Compare Figure 2.1 and Figure 6.1). Certain elements included in Gardner's model have been omitted (See Chapter 4). According

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 8th International Conference on Sri Lankan Studies held in Jaipur, India in November 2001.

to the adapted version of the socio-educational model used in this thesis, instrumental and integrative motivation have the following generic elements:

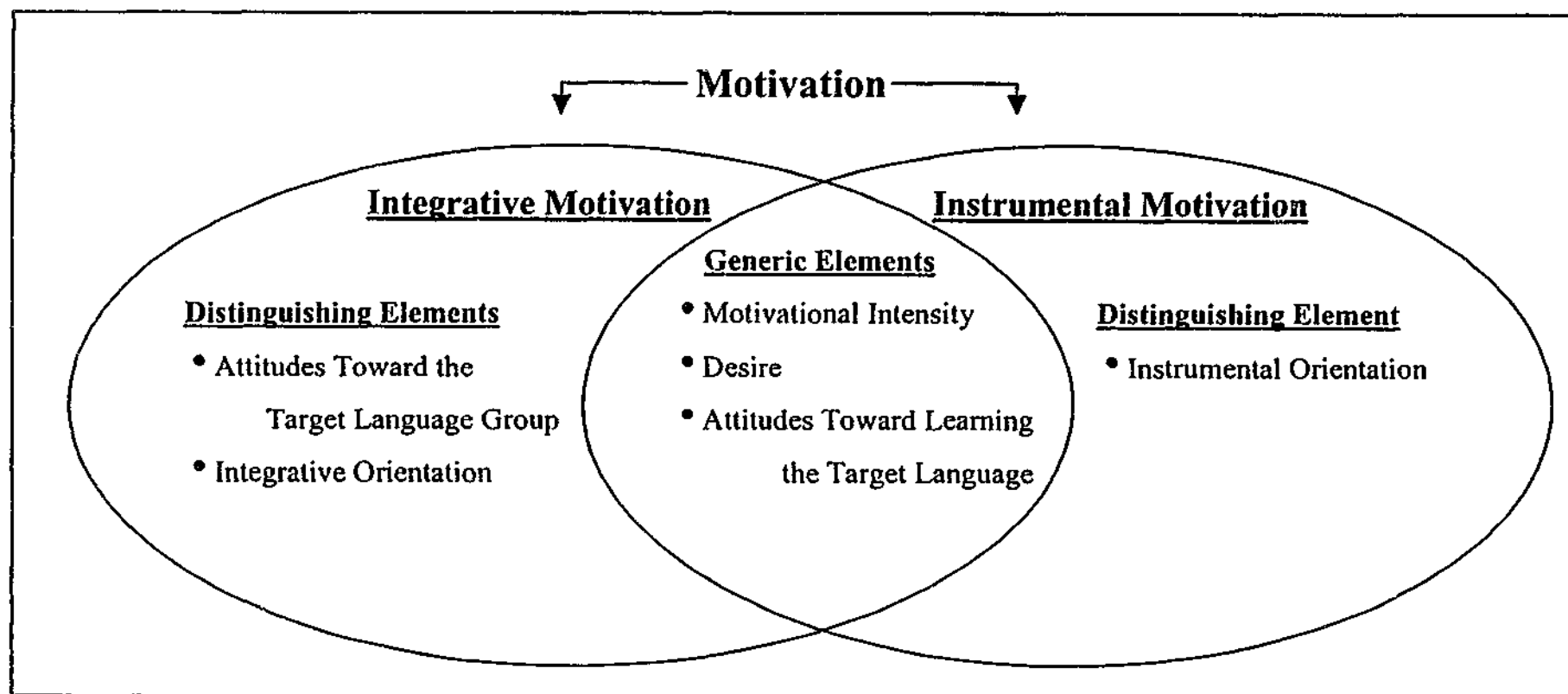
1. Motivational intensity (expressed through selecting the statements that best describe effort put into learning English) (See Section 5 of Appendix C)
2. Desire to learn the language (expressed through selecting the statements that best describe one's interest in learning English) (See Section 6 of Appendix C)
3. Attitudes toward learning the second language (expressed through agreeing or disagreeing to statements that describe the act of learning English as a personal choice made by the student) (See Section 2 of Appendix C)

In addition to these three shared elements, integrative motivation has the following distinguishing elements:

1. Attitudes toward target language group (expressed through agreeing or disagreeing to statements that describe English-speaking Sri Lankans) (See Section 4 of Appendix C)
2. Integrative orientation (expressed through agreeing or disagreeing to statements that describe a desire to learn English in order to integrate with English-speaking Sri Lankans) (See Section 1 of Appendix C)

Unlike integrative motivation, instrumental motivation has only one distinguishing element, namely instrumental orientation (See Figure 6.1). Instrumental orientation was expressed through agreeing or disagreeing to statements that describe a desire to learn English in order to make use of its economic and educational value (See Section 1 of Appendix C).

Figure 6.1: Components of motivation^a



^a Figure 6.1 is adapted from Gardner (undated).

Gardner looked at integrative motivation and instrumental motivation by aggregating all their elements. In this study, a new approach is taken: namely, to consider the relationship between each of the disaggregated elements and English language acquisition.

Motivation: Generic Elements

According to the adapted version of Gardner's socio-educational model used in the present study, only three elements are common to both types of motivation (See Figure 6.1). They are: attitudes toward learning English, motivational intensity and desire to learn English. Aggregate of the scores on each of the above elements reveal the *level of motivation* (Motivation Index) shown by students. Firstly, each of these elements will be discussed, separately, in relation to their individual contribution to English language acquisition. Then the *level of motivation* (Motivation Index) and its relationship to English acquisition will be discussed.

Attitudes toward Learning English

Attitudes toward learning a second language, according to the AMTB introduced by Gardner (1985a), is an indicator of whether students learn the target language because of a personal preference. In the present study, students were asked to indicate their attitudes regarding statements such as: 'I learn English because it is a subject in the school curriculum' and 'I really enjoy learning English' (See Appendix C). Earlier studies have shown that attitudes toward learning a second language has a positive relationship with level of second language acquisition (Barrera, 1996; Cheng, 1995; Clement, Smythe and Gardner, 1978; Gardner and Lambert, 1959; Lalonde and Gardner, 1984, 1985; Randhawa and Korpan, 1973; Tucker, Hamayan and Genesee, 1976). This was confirmed in the present study.

A majority of the students in the present sample reported positive attitudes toward learning English both currently and in the future. With respect to their current attitudes, students' English marks were significantly and positively related to their attitudes toward learning English (See Table 6.1 and Graph 6.1).

Table 6.1: English marks by attitudes toward learning English^a

		Attitudes toward learning English ^b			
		Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Marks	Distinction 75-100	27.7%	15.1%	0.0%	6.6%
	Credit 50-74	61.7	45.9	37.8	28.9
	Simple pass 35-49	8.5	22.5	31.1	28.9
	Fail 0-34	2.1	16.5	31.1	35.6
Total ^c		47	218	45	45
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of attitudes toward learning English		64.7	54.2	43.9	44.2

$p < 0.001^d$

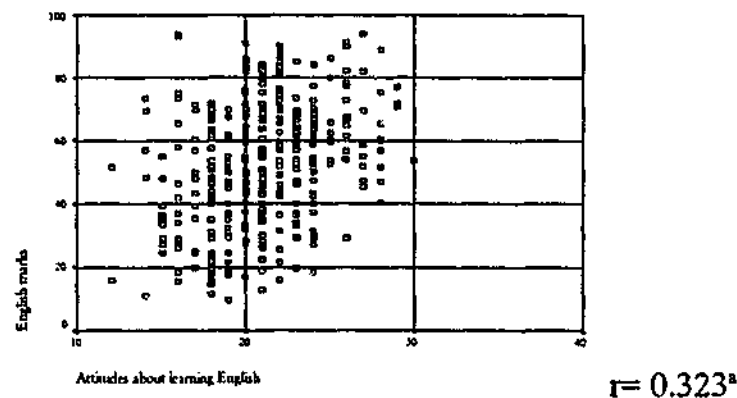
a None of the students expressed very negative attitudes toward learning English.

b The 'level of agreement' was given a mark ranging from 1-5. If the statement was negative (for example, 'I learn English because my parents want me to'), students who strongly agreed were given 1 mark and students who strongly disagreed were given 5 marks. If the statement was positive (for example, 'I really enjoy learning English'), students who strongly agreed were given 5 marks and students who strongly disagreed were given 1 mark. Based on the aggregate mark obtained by each student they were divided into 5 categories: very positive (aggregate score 25-30), positive (aggregate score 19-24), neutral (aggregate score 18), negative (aggregate score 12-16) and very negative (aggregate score 6-11).

c Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

d In all the crosstabulations in this thesis a chi-square was calculated to see whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The calculation of a chi-square requires at least 80% of the cells in a crosstabulation table to produce an *expected frequency* of 5 or more (Milton, McTeer and Corbet, 1997: 522-523; Pallant, 2001: 259). Some variables used in this study violates this assumption when crosstabulated with other variables. In such cases the chi-square will not be mentioned. In other cases the chi-square will be given at the bottom of each crosstabulation table as 'p'.

Graph 6.1: English marks by attitudes toward learning English



a 'r' refers to the correlation between two interval variables. In this study a correlation of 0.1-0.29, 0.3-0.49 and 0.5-1.0 will be considered weak, moderate and strong relationships respectively (De Vaus, 1995; Pallant, 2001).

The students with very positive attitudes obtained the greatest number of distinctions; those with negative attitudes obtained the greatest number of fails. The relationship between attitudes toward learning English and English marks, though positive, is moderate (See Graph 6.1). That is, students' attitudes toward learning English do not strongly impact on their level of English acquisition. This could be a consequence of English being a compulsory school subject. Students *have to* learn English regardless of whether they hold positive or negative attitudes toward learning it. The important finding here is that even under such conditions, students showing positive attitudes achieve higher marks at English examinations.

Attitudes to learning English in the future were similarly positive. Data obtained on students' future aspirations (See Appendix B) confirmed the possibility of most students having positive attitudes toward learning English. The data showed that 79% of the sample intend to continue studying English after completing their O/Ls. Beyond the O/L examination, learning English is not mandatory for these students. Whether students want to continue the study of English or not, then becomes a personal choice. Under such conditions it could be argued that students would not want to continue learning English if they did not have positive attitudes about learning it. Therefore, the present study supports the statements made by

earlier researchers that favourable attitudes are common among Sri Lankans about learning English (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Perera, 2000; Ratnayake, 2000b; Samarakkody, 2001).

Motivational Intensity

Motivational intensity refers to the effort made by students to learn English. It has been found that more effort leads to successful language acquisition (Cheng, 1995; Ely, 1986a; Gardner, 1985b, Undated; Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999). This was only partially confirmed by the findings of the present study, in which indicators of effort included self-reported levels of effort put into homework, actions taken to learn from corrections to English assignments and seeking out opportunities to learn English if it was not taught in school (See Appendix C).

A majority of students who reported either high or medium levels of effort obtained credit passes at the English examination. The relationship identified between these two variables, therefore, is very weakly positive (See Table 6.2 and Graph 6.2).

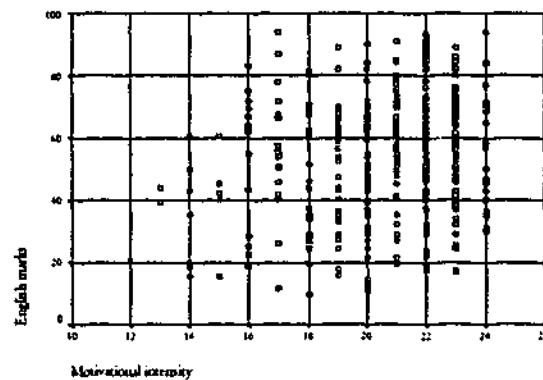
Table 6.2: English marks by motivational intensity

		Motivational intensity ^a		
		High	Medium	Low
Marks	Distinction 75-100	14.8%	7.1%	0.0%
	Credit 50-74	45.2	57.1	25.0
	Simple pass 35-49	22.2	7.2	43.7
	Fail 0-34	17.8	28.6	31.3
Total ^b		325	14	16
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of motivational intensity		53.7	52.7	38.5

a Based on the aggregate score obtained by each student they were divided into 3 categories of motivational intensity: high (aggregate score 17-24), medium (aggregate score 16) and low (aggregate score 8-15).

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

Graph 6.2: English marks by motivational intensity



$$r = 0.205$$

The relationship observed here, furthermore, is not statistically significant. In other words, although a majority of students claim to be making a significant effort, the positive effects of effort are not consistently reflected in their marks. This statistically insignificant, weak relationship could be a result of 'approval motive', that is the natural human tendency to give the best answer for a question in a questionnaire in order to appear acceptable in the eyes of the researcher (See Chapter

4). It can be argued that the students in the present sample self-reported themselves as highly effortful in their attempt to find the best answer out of the three answers given to each statement instead of selecting the answer that best describes their genuine behaviour. However, beyond these difficulties, the weak relationship does suggest that effort alone does not ensure higher levels of language acquisition.

Desire to Learn English

Desire to learn English is the final generic element of motivation to be considered. Earlier studies show that desire to study a language is positively associated with language acquisition (Bartley, 1970; Clement, Smythe and Gardner, 1978; Gardner and Smythe, 1975). This was confirmed in this study, in which desire included indicators such as interest in speaking English in the classroom, making use of opportunities to speak English out side of the school setting and general interest in learning English (See Appendix C).

Students self-reporting high levels of desire to learn English obtained the highest percentage of distinctions and credits in this study while the highest number of passes and fails were obtained by students showing low levels of desire. Students' desire to learn English positively, but moderately, impacts on their English acquisition (See Graph 6.3 and Graph 6.3).

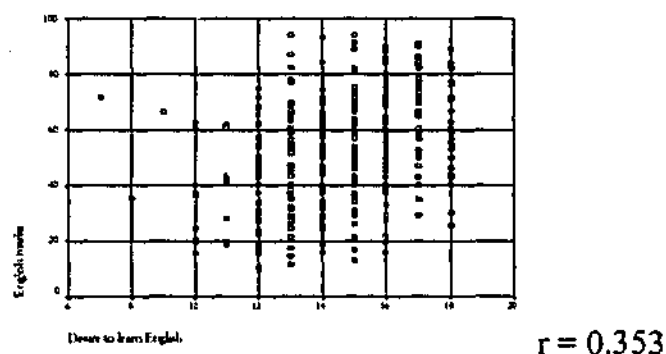
Table 6.3: English marks by desire to learn English

		Desire ^a		
		High	Medium	Low
Marks	Distinction 75-100	16.6%	2.4%	0.0%
	Credit 50-74	47.2	36.6	29.2
	Simple pass 35-49	20.3	29.3	37.5
	Fail 0-34	15.9	31.7	33.3
Total ^b		290	41	24
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of desire to learn English		55.2	44.5	40.9

$p < 0.01$

- a Based on the aggregate score obtained by each student, they were divided into 3 categories of desire: high (aggregate score 13-18), medium (aggregate score 12) and low (aggregate score 6-11).
- b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

Graph 6.3: English marks by desire to learn English



The association observed between desire to learn English and English marks is, furthermore, statistically significant. The moderate association between the two variables could be a consequence of students, *having to* learn English under compulsory school curriculum regulations, irrespective of their desire. Nevertheless, the data confirm that even under such school conditions students who score higher on the variable of desire are, on average, more successful at English acquisition.

The very high levels of desire reported by students is an indication that almost all the students want to learn English irrespective of their current levels of English acquisition. This confirms the remark made by earlier writers about every Sri Lankan wanting to learn English irrespective of whether English is a necessity for their current life or future professional life (Goonetilleke, 1983; Usvatte-aratchi, 2002; Weeraratna, 2002). Consistent with what was described by these writers, a majority of the students in this sample also seemed to hold very high aspirations regardless of the realisability of these aspirations. For example, 91% of the sample stated that they wished to study up to A/Ls and 55% of them intended to study up to a university degree. Statistics of previous years, however, suggest that the likelihood of these students reaching the university level is very low. In the year 1998, for example, only 44.11% of students from the Colombo district who sat the A/L examination managed to qualify for university entrance² (Department of Examinations, 1999: 74). Based on these statistics, and the previously mentioned studies, it can be argued that most of the students in the sample who want to study up to the level of a university degree may not attain this objective and, therefore, may not reach the occupational levels where English is a mandatory qualification. But the very high levels of desire expressed by these students towards learning English could suggest that students, even from as young as 14, are aware of the advantage of knowing English for successful higher education and for finding acceptable employment within Sri Lanka.

Level of Motivation (Motivation Index) and English Acquisition

The data discussed so far reveal that students in the present sample report mostly positive attitudes toward learning English, see themselves as making a very high effort and express high levels of desire towards learning English. The aggregate of

² These are students who have obtained an aggregate mark of 180 or more (out of 400) for the four subjects offered at the A/Ls. Obtaining a mark in this range makes a student eligible to apply for university admission. But the actual cut-off mark for admission into a university faculty is usually higher. This reduces the actual number of university entrants.

these three factors, according to Gardner's (1985b) model, shows the *level* of student motivation. Accordingly, an index is calculated, called the Motivation Index. In the present study, the above three factors, when aggregated, show high levels of self-reported motivation towards learning English (See Table 6.4).

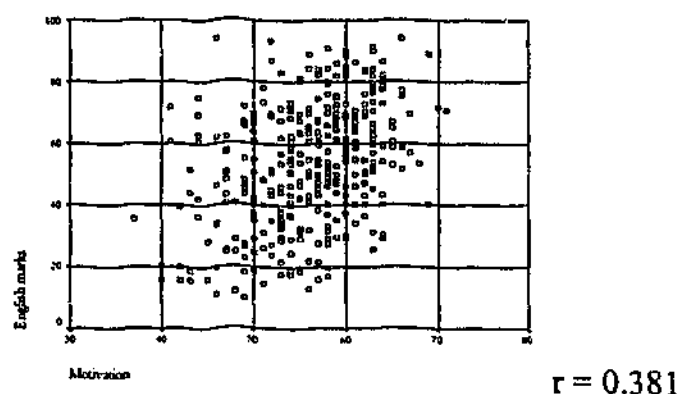
Table 6.4: English marks by level of motivation (Motivation Index)

		Level of motivation ^a			
		Low	Medium	High	Very High
Marks	Distinction 75-100	4.8%	16.7%	9.3%	24.1%
	Credit 50-74	33.3	16.7	43.1	51.8
	Simple pass 35-49	23.8	16.7	25.8	16.1
	Fail 0-34	38.1	49.9	21.8	8.0
Total ^b		21	6	216	112
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of motivation		40.4	48.2	50.2	61.0

a Scores received by students for attitudes toward learning English, motivational intensity and desire were aggregated to calculate their level of motivation (Motivation Index). Level of motivation was then categorised into five groups: very low (20-32), low (33-45), medium (46), high (47-58) and very high (59-72). None of the students in the sample reported very low levels of motivation.

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

Graph 6.4: English marks by level of motivation (Motivation Index)



The majority of students in the present sample report either high (60.7%) or very high (31.5%) levels of motivation towards learning English (See Table 6.4). The numbers of students reporting low or medium levels of motivation are insignificant while none of the students reported a very low level of motivation. The greatest number of distinctions is obtained by students reporting very high levels of motivation, while students reporting medium levels of motivation obtain the most number of fails. The association between motivation and English acquisition, though positive, does not show that motivation is significantly associated with English acquisition (See Table 6.4 and Graph 6.4). That is, though a majority of students have self-rated themselves as highly motivated, these high levels of motivation do not seem to bring high marks for all students. This could be a consequence of the self-reporting method used in this study. The method adopted here seems to have led students to rate themselves high on motivational criteria (See Chapter 4). The data further show that the positive effects of motivation only impacts on students' English marks to a moderate level (See Graph 6.4). This further confirms that high motivation alone does not always result in higher levels of language acquisition. This situation points to the possibility of social and classroom conditions having a stronger bearing than student motivation on the level of language acquisition.

The key finding of the motivational data discussed so far is that these school students report themselves to be highly motivated to learn English. While earlier

studies on Sri Lanka have attributed the inefficiency of the school language program to lack of student motivation (De Silva and De Silva, 1990; Kandiah, 1984; Ratnayake, 2000c; Rupasinghe, 1985), the above discussion demonstrates that this may not be the case at least in the privileged schools of the island.

Type of Motivation

Gardner (1985b) identifies two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. In the case of integrative motivation of the current sample, the distinguishing elements are integrative orientation and attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans³. In the case of instrumental motivation the only distinguishing element is instrumental orientation (See Figure 6.1). Adding the scores of these distinguishing elements to the generic element scores discussed above (that is, the Motivation Index) gives the respective scores on each type of motivation.

Integrative Orientation

Most of Gardner's (Undated) research focussed on immigrant Anglophone and Francophone communities in Canada. Gardner tested their attitudes and motivations toward learning French and English, respectively. Both these languages are official languages of Canada and because of the immigrant nature of these learners, it can be argued that learning French and English was vital for these individuals. They needed to learn French and English in order to become part of, to integrate with, Canadian society. The research by Gardner and his colleagues, therefore, demonstrated the importance of an integrative motivation for successful second language acquisition

³ These two variables, with the inclusion of general interest in foreign languages, according to Gardner (1988a), show the level of *integrativeness* demonstrated by students. However, this study does not use the term 'integrativeness' in its analysis for two reasons: firstly, the study attempts to use as few technical terms as possible in order to keep the discussion simple and easy to follow; secondly, as will be revealed later, the elements of integrativeness do not seem very relevant to the present research context.

(Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a; Gardner and Glikzman, 1982; Gardner and Smythe, 1975; Gardner, Smythe and Clement, 1979; Gardner *et al.*, 1976; Lalonde and Gardner, 1984). A key element of integrative motivation is integrative orientation (goals/reasons), which is measured by looking at whether the students learn the target language with an intention of integrating with the target language group. The above studies by Gardner and his colleagues also demonstrated a positive association between integrative reasons for learning the target language and language acquisition. This positive association was not demonstrated in the present study. In fact, the association observed here was negative (See Table 6.5 and Graph 6.5).

Table 6.5: English marks by integrative orientation

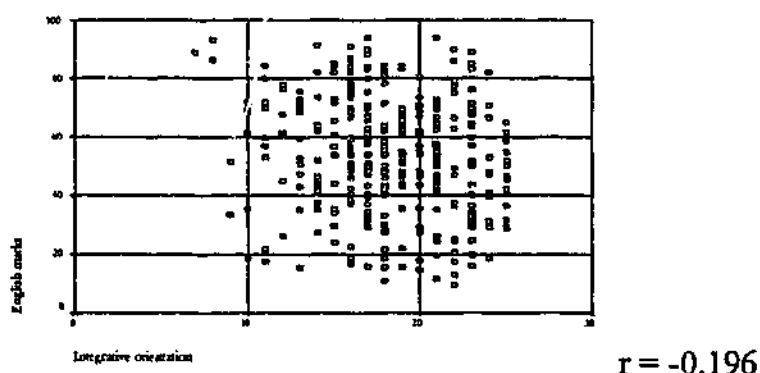
		Integrative Orientation ^a
Marks	Distinction 75-100	10.1%
	Credit 50-74	37.4
	Simple pass 35-49	23.2
	Fail 0-34	29.3
Total ^b		99
		100.0%
Mean of English marks obtained by integratively oriented students		48.1

p<0.05

a Thirty one students who obtained equal ratings on both instrumental and integrative reasons and the 225 student who were instrumentally oriented have been excluded from this table.

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 99 are included here.

Graph 6.5: English marks by integrative orientation



Only a minority of the present sample chose integrative goals over instrumental goals for learning English. Out of the entire sample of 356 students, only 99 students (27.8%) scored more on integrative reasons than on instrumental reasons (See Table 6.5). Of these 99 students 52.5% obtained a mark below 50% for English. Therefore, integrative orientation, unlike in Gardner's studies, was found to have a significantly weak negative association with students' English acquisition (See Table 6.5 and Graph 6.5). These findings support the findings made by earlier researchers dealing with English learning in South Asia (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Kachru, 1988; Lukmani, 1972; Mansoor, 1992; Sachdev and Wright, 1996) and indicate the low relevance of an integrative orientation in the case of a South Asian country such as Sri Lanka.

Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans

'Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans' is the other distinguishing element of integrative motivation. Gardner and his colleagues (Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977b; Gardner, Undated; Gardner, Smythe and Brunet, 1977) claim that positive attitudes toward the target language group positively impacts on language acquisition. But this has not been the case with the present sample in which students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to stereotypes and social status of English-speaking Sri Lankans (See Appendix C).

Data show that attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans are negatively associated with students' English marks (See Table 6.6 and Graph 6.6).

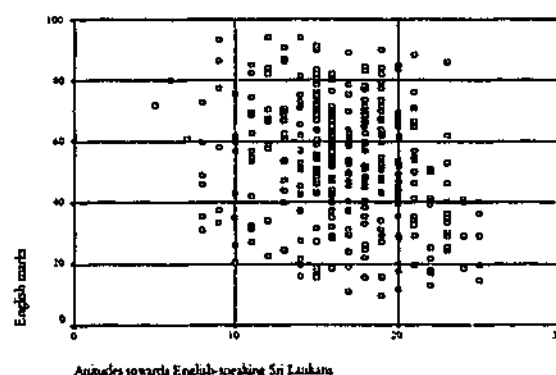
Table 6.6: English marks by attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans

		Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans ^a				
		Highly positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Highly negative
Marks	Distinction 75-100	3.9%	12.8%	19.0%	17.3%	26.7%
	Credit 50-74	31.4	44.8	52.4	53.3	26.7
	Simple pass 35-49	27.5	25.6	16.7	16.0	19.9
	Fail 0-34	37.2	16.8	11.9	13.4	26.7
Total ^b		51	172	42	75	15
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans		42.9	52.7	58.1	57.5	54.6

$p < 0.01$

- a All statements in the relevant question were positive. 'Level of agreement' shown by students was given a mark ranging from 1-5. Students who strongly agreed with a statement received 5 marks while those who strongly disagreed got 1 mark. Based on the aggregate mark obtained by each student they were divided into 5 categories: highly positive (aggregate score 21-25), positive (aggregate score 16-20), neutral (aggregate score 15), negative (aggregate score 14-11) and highly negative (aggregate score 5-10).
- b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

Graph 6.6: English marks by attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans



$r = -0.249$

In the present sample the highest number of failures report highly positive attitudes while the highest number of distinction holders report highly negative attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans (See Table 6.6). The statistically significant relationship between attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans and English marks is, however, very weak (See Graph 6.6). This weak relationship suggests the low relevance of attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans to students' level of English acquisition.

The negative association between attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans and students' English marks is an interesting discovery (See Graph 6.6). In the case of the present sample, the more academically capable students also tend to achieve higher marks in English examinations (discusses shortly). These 'bright' students are the ones holding negative attitudes about English-speaking Sri Lankans. Consequently, these students seem more aware of the ambivalent nature of the social attitudes to English-speaking Sri Lankans. They do not seem to be misled by the positive stereotypical statements given in the questionnaire and seem to be more aware of the elites' attempts to retain the English language as a source of their 'power base' (See Chapter 1). This awareness seems to lead these students to pay more attention towards learning English in order to challenge the elitist social position of the English-speakers. The fact that these students are high achievers in all school subjects indicates that they are also aware of the necessity of not only a sound knowledge of English but also a good education to challenge the social position of those occupying high positions in society⁴. The rest of the student population, on the other hand, seem fascinated by the modern characteristics and positive stereotypes attached to the English-speaking Sri Lankans, a fascination that could be making them ignorant of, or unconcerned about the social position of the English-speaking Sri Lankan community.

⁴ This interpretation has interesting connections to the sub-class of educated-bilinguals that joined the English-speaking class of Sri Lankans as a consequence of the educational policies introduced in the 1940s (See Chapter 1). These students seem to be motivated by similar social conditions.

The above differentiation between the students holding negative and positive attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans could also be attributed to the differentiation made by Apple (1982c) between the *kids* and the *lads* respectively (See Chapter 2 and Chapter 5). In the previous chapter, it was explained that the upper class social status of the *kids* helps them achieve higher standards of English proficiency. Their social class background seems to further advantage them by providing them with an accurate insight into the elitist stratum of society. The social exposure received by these students seem to give them an idea about what is expected of them in the mental labour-related occupations in the corporate production process.

The negative association observed here has interesting connections to a study of Mexican American English-learners in the USA (Oller, Baca and Vigil, 1977). These researchers observed that level of English acquisition increased as the participants' negative attitudes regarding Americans increased. The findings of the present study also suggest the possibility of hostility (Oller, Baca and Vigil, 1977) towards English-speaking Sri Lankans leading to higher levels of English language acquisition. However, these findings contradict earlier Sri Lankan research (Canagarajah and Saravanapava, 1993; Goonetilleke, 1983; Hanson-Smith, 1984; Kandiah, 1984). These researchers have used colloquial Sinhala terms that describe English and its Sri Lankan speakers (such as *kaduva* and *kalu suddo*) in presenting the argument that negative attitudes could lead to low levels of English acquisition. For example, English as a *kaduva* (sword)⁵ in the Sri Lankan context⁶ refers to the English fluency of some Sri Lankans which cuts down opportunities for those who do not have the same level of fluency. It is argued that negative attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans that are represented by words such as *kaduva* could

⁵ Although the term *kaduva* refers to the English language, not its users, it is the users who are indirectly attacked through this derogatory term. A language does not have an innate ability to win a status within a society. It is the users who give it its social value.

⁶ Twenty four students in the present sample had commented that English-speaking Sri Lankans use their knowledge to 'show-off' and look down upon those who do not know English: a clear expression of the *kaduva* value.

inhibit English acquisition of Sri Lankan students (Canagarajah and Saravanapava, 1993).

Further data analysis shows that the students who self-report positive attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans identified more with integrative reasons than with instrumental reasons for learning English (See Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Motivational orientation by attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans

		Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans ^a				r (correlation)
		Highly positive	Positive	Negative	Highly negative	
Orientation	Instrumental	45.7%	68.4%	74.6%	92.9%	0.118
	Integrative	53.3	31.6	25.4	7.1	0.468
Total ^b		45	155	71	14	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

p<0.01

a Those showing same ratings on both instrumental and integrative orientations and neutral attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans have been removed from this analysis.

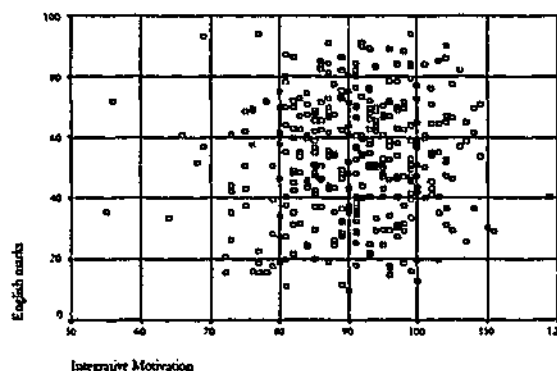
b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 285 are included here.

The majority of students (53.3%) with highly positive attitudes showed an integrative orientation while the majority (92.9%) with highly negative attitudes showed an instrumental orientation (See Table 6.7). Lukmani (1972), in her study with Indian learners of English found that students, though showing positive attitudes toward the English-speaking Indians, did not wish to identify with them. In the present Sri Lankan sample, however, those with positive attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans also show a desire to integrate and identify with them.

Taken one by one the distinguishing elements of integrative motivation were negatively correlated with English language acquisition (See Graph 6.5 and Graph

6.6). But the aggregated score for integrative motivation shows a very weak positive correlation with English acquisition (See Graph 6.7).

Graph 6.7: English marks by integrative motivation



$$r = 0.067$$

The data obtained in this study does not provide sufficient information to describe this shift in the direction of the relationships. The positive association observed between integrative motivation and English acquisition suggests some low level of desire to integrate with the English-speaking Sri Lankans. However, the extremely weak association observed here confirms the low relevance of an integrative motivation for Sri Lankan learners of English. These findings also alert to a problem of the data-gathering instrument used in this study. Integration into the higher classes of Sri Lankan society requires a 'good' education and a 'higher-ranking' job in addition to a fluent command of the English language (See Chapter 1). Therefore, in the final analysis, integrative goals for learning English are related to instrumental goals. The adaptations made to the AMTB do not seem to have recognised this relationship between these two types of goals.

Instrumental Orientation

While not confirmed in the present study, in most of Gardner's studies (Undated) he found integrative orientation to be more relevant to language acquisition than instrumental orientation. But in his 1991 study he pointed out that both instrumental

and integrative orientations contribute to higher levels of language acquisition (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). Similarly, in his Philippines study, he concluded that under Asian conditions of teaching English as a second language, the instrumental value of the language seems to override its integrative value (Gardner and Santos, 1970). Studies by other researchers on South Asian contexts of teaching English as a second language have confirmed the pertinence of an instrumental orientation in these countries (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Kachru, 1988; Lukmani, 1972; Perera, 2000). The present study supported the findings of these researchers.

The majority of students in the present sample (63.5%) reported more instrumental goals than integrative goals for studying English (See Table 6.8). Furthermore, unlike in the case of integrative orientation, the association observed between instrumental orientation and English marks was positive (See Graph 6.8).

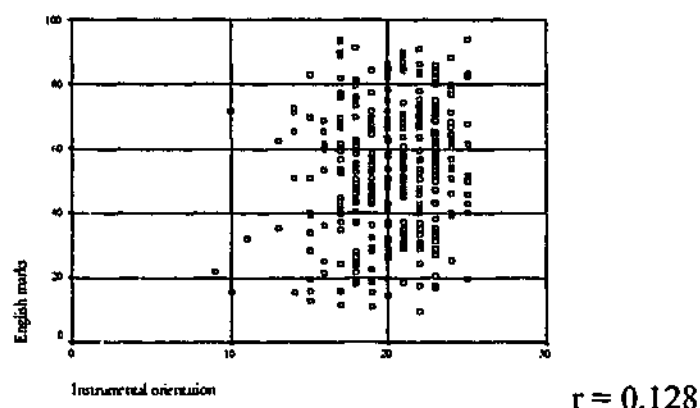
Table 6.8: English marks by instrumental orientation

		Instrumental Orientation ^a
Marks	Distinction 75-100	16.4%
	Credit 50-74	47.6
	Simple pass 35-49	22.2
	Fail 0-34	13.8
Total ^b		225
		100.0%
Mean of English marks obtained by instrumentally oriented students		58.8
		p<0.05

a Thirty one students who obtained equal ratings on both instrumental and integrative reasons and the 99 students who were integratively oriented have been excluded from this table.

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 225 are included here.

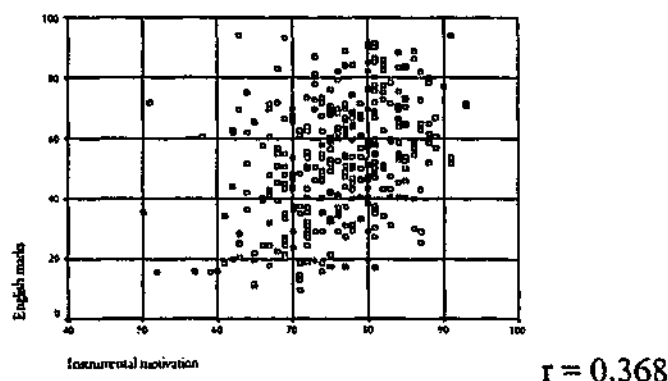
Graph 6.8: English marks by instrumental orientation



A higher percentage of students who identify with instrumental goals obtained more distinction level marks compared to those identifying with integrative goals. The percentage of failures in the case of students showing an instrumental orientation is less than those showing an integrative orientation (Compare Table 6.5 with Table 6.8). These findings indicate that students not only study English for its instrumental value but also are positively motivated by these goals. The correlation between these two variables is, however, weak (See Graph 6.8). Both instrumental and integrative reasons, though having positive and negative effects respectively, do not seem to have a strong association with students' level of English acquisition. This points out that reasons for learning English, whether integrative or instrumental, are less relevant to this sample of students, probably because they *have to* learn English in school due to curriculum regulations.

Combining the scores on the generic elements of motivation (that is, Motivation Index) with the distinguishing element of instrumental motivation, that is, instrumental orientation, gives the students' ratings of an instrumental motivation. These ratings of instrumental motivation when correlated with students' English marks show a positive relationship (See Graph 6.9).

Graph 6.9: English marks by instrumental motivation



The relationship between instrumental motivation and English marks is stronger than that between integrative motivation and English marks (Compare Graph 6.7 with Graph 6.9). That is, in the case of the present sample, instrumental motivation is not only more prevalent but also has a stronger positive effect on students' language acquisition than integrative motivation.

Comparing the Two Types of Orientation and Motivation

Neither of the orientations seems to have a strong impact on students' English marks. That is, integrative or instrumental reasons for learning English do not seem crucially important to students' level of language acquisition in the present study (See Graph 6.5 and Graph 6.8). Students are able to give reasons for learning English when asked; however, these reasons do not seem to represent their actual reasons for learning English in school. As pointed out throughout the analysis, the key reason seems to be the fact that English is a compulsory subject in their school curriculum. This is clear from the fact that a majority of the students (78.1%) agreed with the statement 'I learn English because it is a subject in the school curriculum' (See Appendix C, statement 1 of question 2). This supports the findings reported by Ely (1986b) about a type of motivation that is caused by course requirements, that is, requirement motivation. It is clear that instrumental and integrative motivation do

not seem to identify all aspects of motivation shown by Sri Lankan school learners of English.

The coefficient of correlation between instrumental orientation and the Motivation Index (that is, *level of motivation*) is higher ($r = 0.266$) than that between integrative orientation and Motivation Index ($r = 0.044$). In the Sri Lankan context, therefore, instrumental orientation is more highly related to motivation compared to integrative orientation. In Sri Lanka, the English language bestows on those who know it obvious social, educational and economic advantages (See Chapter 1). Therefore, the analysis above shows that higher levels of language acquisition result in situations where instrumental reasons for learning English have a stronger impact on motivation.

In the present sample, instrumental motivation is moderately related to students' English marks in contrast to the extremely weak relationship found between integrative motivation and English marks (Compare Graph 6.7 with Graph 6.9). Though both types of motivation are positively associated with English acquisition, it is evident that instrumental motivation is more influential than integrative motivation in achieving higher levels of language acquisition. The interesting implication of this finding is that, as in the Philippines study by Gardner and Santos (1970), the instrumental value attached to the English language seems to override the integrative value attached to English in the Sri Lankan context.

Other Factors Affecting Language Acquisition

In his socio-educational model, Gardner (Undated) explains the importance of an array of other factors that are related to second language acquisition in addition to the ones discussed so far (See Chapter 2). Among such factors are parental support, academic capability and gender.

Parental Support and English Acquisition

The influence of parental attitudes on a child's educational achievements, in general, and English acquisition, in particular, has been identified in earlier Sri Lankan research (Baker, 1988b; De Silva, 1966; Karunaratne, 1993). The parents of students in the present study were asked whether they thought English is necessary for their child to have a good future (See Appendix A). A majority of the sample (76.3% of mothers and 69.6% of fathers) thought that it was extremely important for their child's future. But, in contrast to other studies, these positive attitudes were not significantly reflected in the students' language acquisition. The data gathered through the AMTB confirmed this pattern (See Table 6.9).

Table 6.9: English marks by parental support

Marks	Parental support ^a				
	Highly supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Non-supportive	Highly non-supportive
Distinction 75-100	13.7%	14.4%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Credit 50-74	47.1	38.6	0.0	33.3	50.0
Simple pass 35-49	22.1	21.7	100.0	33.3	50.0
Fail 0-34	17.1	25.3	0.0	16.7	0.0
Total ^b	263	83	1	6	2
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Means of English marks according to level of parental support	53.9	50.4	46.5	50.9	60.5

a All statements in the relevant question were positive. 'Level of agreement' shown by students was given a mark ranging from 1-5. Students who strongly agreed with a statement received 5 marks while those who strongly disagreed got 1 mark. Based on the aggregate mark obtained by each student they were divided into 5 categories of parental support: highly supportive (aggregate score 41-50), supportive (aggregate score 31-40), neutral (aggregate score 30), non-supportive (aggregate score 21-29) and highly non-supportive (aggregate score 10-20).

b Of the 366 cases in the sample only 355 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned and English marks for one student were unavailable.

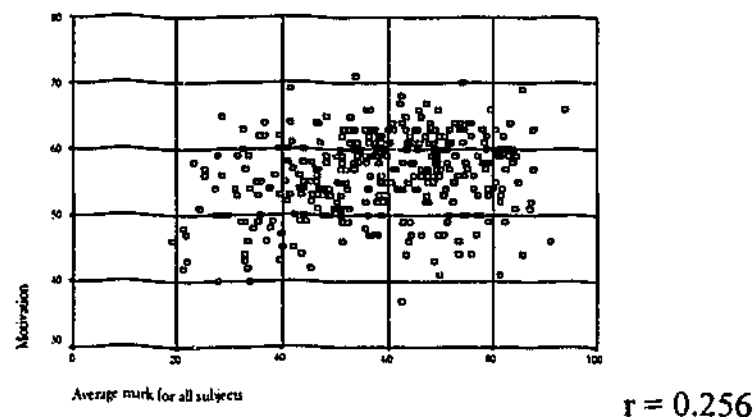
Several studies by Gardner and others (Gardner and Santos, 1970; Gardner, Masgoret and Trembley, 1999; Naiman *et al.*, 1978) have pointed out that parental support positively impacts on students' level of language acquisition. These arguments do not receive support from the present study. In the present sample, a majority of parents, as reported by their children, were highly supportive. But parental support did not seem to have a significant relationship with child's English acquisition (See Table 6.9). It may be that though supportive, parents are not able to provide children with actual opportunities to learn/practise English, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter (See Chapter 5). Such a situation may be caused by the difference between passive and active parental support (Gardner, 1985b). The support received by these students can be identified as passive in that a majority of the parents, though supportive, are not able to teach or even talk English with their children. This shows the importance of a supportive school environment when the home environment seems less supportive towards the students' learning (Niles, 1981; Thorndike, 1973).

Students' Academic Capability, Motivation and English Acquisition

Another psychological factor that could impact on a student's level of second language acquisition is the student's academic capability. Under conditions where a second language is taught as a school subject in a wider curriculum that prepares students primarily for an examination, students' academic capability becomes important. Researchers have found that academic capability impacts on language acquisition indirectly through its effect on motivation (Barat, 1994; Djigunovic, 1998; Gardner, Undated; Hernandez, 1998). It is argued that academically capable students are more motivated to learn the language because of their general ability to do well in school. These findings were only partially supported in this study which considered the average mark received for all subjects offered at the last term test of the years 2000 and 2001 as the indicator of students' academic capability.

Academic capability showed a very weak positive association with students' motivation to learn English (See Graph 6.10).

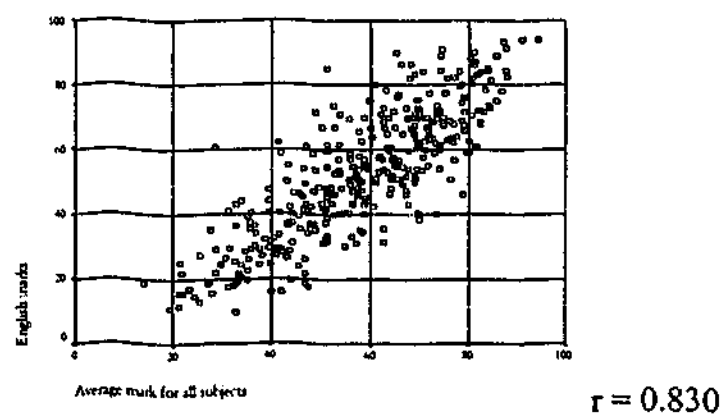
Graph 6.10: Motivation (Motivation Index) by academic capability



Students' academic capability shows a minimum impact on their motivation to learn English. The strong relationship between these two variables observed by earlier researchers was not supported in this study.

Academic capability, irrespective of having a weak impact on students' motivation, however, showed a direct relationship to students' level of English acquisition. It showed a very strong positive association with students' English acquisition (See Graph 6.11).

Graph 6.11: English marks by academic capability



A key finding here is the extremely strong association between students' academic capability and English marks. Academic capability shows the strongest relationship with English acquisition compared to all the other interval data obtained through the AMTB. This suggests that, in Sri Lanka, academic capability is more relevant to students' English language achievement levels than motivational variables. One reason for this situation could be the fact that English is part of a larger curriculum for these students. Students who do well in other school subjects also seem to obtain higher marks for English. This finding is consistent with findings made by Jayaweera (1984). She demonstrates that there is very high probability for academically capable students to obtain high marks for English at the O/L examination. Some other researchers have, however, argued that academic capability is not independent of student's social and psychological background (Gunawardena, 1995; Lanzas and Kingston, 1981). Factors such as parental income and students' motivation to study have been reported to affect academic capability. In the case of the present sample, because the students with greater proficiency in English tend to be of higher social class background (See Chapter 5), it can also be argued that the academically capable ones are also of higher social class background.

Findings related to students' academic capability also show that female students are more academically capable than their male counterparts. The mean score obtained by female students across all subjects was 65.5% while the males obtained a 50.5% mean score. This could be another factor advantaging the female students in regards to their level of English acquisition (See Table 5.13).

Students' Gender and Motivational Factors

In the previous chapter it was revealed that female students achieved higher marks at the English examination compared to their male counterparts (See Table 5.13). Analysis related to motivational aspects discussed in the present chapter revealed that

gender is significantly associated with these motivational characteristics. Female students, compared to their male counterparts, self-report higher levels of motivation and attitudes in areas relevant to English language acquisition.

The preceding analysis showed that positive attitudes toward learning English, higher motivational intensity, higher levels of desire to learn English, instrumental orientation and negative attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans are positively associated with students' English language acquisition. Crosstabulations between gender and these motivational aspects showed that female students obtained higher scores on each of these indexes of the AMTB. Similar findings have been reported by other researchers (Cheng, 1995; Kang, 2000; Randhawa and Korpan, 1973).

A majority of both female and male students held positive attitudes toward learning English. More females than males, however, held positive attitudes, while in the case of neutral and negative attitudes, males out-number the females (See Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: Attitudes toward learning English by gender

		Student's gender	
		Female	Male
Attitudes	Highly positive	19.0%	7.0%
	Positive	62.0	61.0
	Neutral	10.3	15.1
	Negative	8.7	16.9
Total ^a		184	172
		100.0%	100.0%

p<0.01

a Of the 366 cases only 356 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned.

Similarly, a majority of both male and female students reported high levels of motivational intensity (effort) and desire to learn English. However, it was discovered that higher percentages of females showed more effort and desire to learn English (See Table 6.11 and Table 6.12).

Table 6.11: Motivational intensity by gender

		Student's gender	
		Female	Male
Motivational intensity	High	95.1%	87.8%
	Medium	2.7	5.2
	Low	2.2	7.0
Total ^a		184	172
		100.0%	100.0%

p<0.05

a Of the 366 cases only 356 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned.

Table 6.12: Desire to learn English by gender

		Student's gender	
		Female	Male
Desire	High	87.0%	76.1%
	Medium	9.2	14.0
	Low	3.8	9.9
Total ^a		184	172
		100.0%	100.0%

p<0.05

a Of the 366 cases only 356 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned.

Gender is also significantly related to students' motivational orientation. Females, compared to the males, showed a higher tendency towards identifying with instrumental reasons for learning English (See Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Nature of orientation by gender

		Student's gender ^a	
		Female	Male
Nature of orientation	Instrumental	76.3%	61.8%
	Integrative	23.7	38.2
Total ^b		173	152
		100.0%	100.0%

p < 0.01

a The students who obtained equal values on both instrumental and integrative scales were excluded from this analysis.

b Of the 366 cases only 356 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned.

Females were further advantaged in regards to attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans. Though a majority of both males and females show positive attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans, the percentage of females holding negative attitudes outnumber the males with negative attitudes (See Table 6.14).

Table 6.14: Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans by gender

		Student's gender	
		Female	Male
Attitudes toward English-speaking Sri Lankans	Highly positive	8.2%	20.9%
	Positive	47.8	48.8
	Neutral	16.3	7.6
	Negative	23.9	18.0
	Highly negative	3.8	4.7
Total ^a		184	172
		100.0%	100.0%

p < 0.01

a Of the 366 cases only 356 are included here. Ten questionnaires were not returned.

In conclusion, female students showed a higher tendency of identifying with motivational and attitudinal factors that are most favourable for higher levels of English acquisition.

Conclusion

The study, though based on Gardner's Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (1985a), did not overall duplicate Gardner's findings. The differences were mainly related to the distinguishing elements of integrative motivation. This may have been a consequence of the adaptations made to the test battery and/or contextual differences. Most of Gardner's studies took place in Canada with Canadian learners of either French or English. In Canada both these languages are official languages (Gardner, Undated). This is not the case for the Sri Lankan school learners of English. Knowing English brings social advantages for Sri Lankans but not knowing English does not necessarily inconvenience them. Considering these differences, the findings discussed in the present chapter cannot be considered a challenge to earlier findings based on Gardner's AMTB.

Nevertheless, the present findings reveal valuable information regarding the Sri Lankan school learners of English. The study shows that in the case of the present sample and geographical context, Sri Lankan students are highly motivated towards learning English. Earlier researchers have pointed out lack of student motivation as causing the inefficiency of the Sri Lankan school English language program. Possibilities of such a situation were invalidated by the present sample. These findings, however, cannot be generalised to the entire Sri Lankan school population due to the purposive nature of the present sample.

The research indicates that a majority of the students were instrumentally motivated towards learning English. Instrumental motivation had a stronger, positive impact on students' English acquisition compared to integrative motivation. The

relevance of an instrumental motivation for successful English acquisition in the case of a South Asian nation such as Sri Lanka was established by this study.

Throughout the data analysis all motivational variables showed either weak or moderate correlations with English acquisition. This was interpreted as a consequence of English being a compulsory school subject rather than something the students *choose* to study. The strong relationship observed between academic capability and English marks facilitate this interpretation. The students seem to perceive English as any other school subject and, therefore, those who generally perform well in other subjects also seem to do well in English.

Chapter 7

Pedagogical Factors and Language Acquisition¹

This chapter examines the classroom teaching conditions experienced by the present sample of students. The English language syllabus specified for Grade 9 students of Government schools in Sri Lanka states that both grammar and communicative expressions should be given importance in teaching the language (National Education Commission, 1997: 14; National Institute of Education, 1999: 1 and 4-5, 2001: 4-5). The primary objective of the course is success in the O/L English examination which is a 'reading and writing' examination. The syllabus, nevertheless, highlights the importance of preparing students for secondary goals beyond the O/L examination. These secondary goals, national unity and future work opportunities (National Institute of Education, 1999: 2), would require students to develop communicative abilities in English. Therefore, the data analysis in this chapter focuses on the principles of communicative language teaching while acknowledging the primary importance of success at an examination based on reading and writing skills. The actual opportunities given to students in the classroom to independently *produce* language in its written or spoken form are addressed in this chapter. The word, communicative, is used to refer to this aspect of language production.

A fundamental principle of the communicative approach is that learners learn a language through using it to communicate (Brumfit, 1979; Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 172; Widdowson, 1979a). For this purpose, proponents of the communicative approach recommend a less teacher-centred, task-based teaching strategy that focuses on authentic and meaningful target language communication within the classroom

¹ A different version of this chapter has been accepted for presentation at the midterm conference of the ISA Research Committee 04 on Sociology of Education, 'Critical Education and Utopia: Emergent Perspectives for the 21st Century', due to be held in Lisbon, Portugal in September 2003. Another version has been accepted for presentation at the 9th International Conference on Sri Lankan Studies to be held in Matara, Sri Lanka in November 2003.

(Johnson, 1979; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Classroom tasks, the major device of teaching used in communicative language teaching, are expected to provide opportunities for students to *use* the language. A variety of instructional materials/activities are recommended for use in the classroom: namely text-based (the textbook), task-based (games, role-plays, simulations) and *realia* (authentic materials such as magazines, advertisements, newspapers) (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 168-170). Furthermore, the communicative approach does not confine teachers and students completely to their mother tongue or the target language. That is, while paying attention to target language communication this approach allows a reasonable use of students' mother tongue in the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

None of the classrooms observed were *completely communicative* (See Chapter 5). Different levels of communicativeness, identified through the two communicative principles of low teacher-centeredness and use of mother tongue in the classroom, showed that highly and moderately communicative teaching approaches led to higher levels of English acquisition (See Table 5.15). Furthermore, the students themselves experienced difficulties in exploiting the opportunities that should be afforded to them in a communicative classroom. That is, the responses of students about difficulties they encounter in learning English in school showed that a majority (67%) encountered learning difficulties in the school. Data were further gathered from students about which of the four areas of language learning: reading, writing, listening comprehension and speaking, they felt they have most difficulty with. Of the 242 students who stated that they encountered learning difficulties in school, a majority (52%) stated that their difficulties were related to oral skills. Even among the high language achievers, those who have scored distinction and credit passes, 61% thought that speaking in English is the area in which they encounter the severest learning difficulties². The communicative approach to teaching languages, theoretically, has the capacity to rectify this situation (Widdowson, 1979a, 1979b). In

² The data discussed here were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

this chapter the extent of implementation of all the major communicative principles (See Chapter 2) to the teaching of English in Sri Lanka is examined.

Role of the Textbook

Importance placed on the textbook by individual teachers and by course objectives contributed to making the English lessons only minimally communicative.

Textbook = Syllabus

The main function of a textbook is to provide guidance for teachers (Choudhury, 1998). The Grade 9 English syllabus in Sri Lanka specifies a textbook³ that lays out the boundaries of the teacher's task. It is expected that teachers would act freely within these boundaries. For example, teachers are expected to design their own classroom activities and assessments (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 31; Yatawatte⁴, 2001, pers. comm., 28 November). For teachers⁵ observed in the present study, the textbook provided more than mere guidance. It was virtually the sole source of classroom activities, assessments, information, grammar and vocabulary. In other words, it was the only teaching material for teachers and the only source of information and of language practice for students. For teachers and, therefore, students, the textbook *was* the syllabus. A syllabus is a *list* of objectives to be

³ Each unit of the textbook has three sub-units related to one particular theme (for example, Letters, Newspapers, Sports and Seasons). The opening section is a role-play followed by comprehension questions and activities related to the role-play. The remaining two sub-units have a text or a set of short texts also followed by comprehension questions and activities related to each of these texts. The final page of a unit describes the grammar that was used in the unit (National Institute of Education, 2000).

⁴ V. Yatawatte is the Director of the English Unit, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka.

⁵ Teachers will be called by their classroom-name. The classrooms were named A1, A2 (National-girls), B1, B2 (National-boys), C1, C2 (IAB-boys), D1 and D2 (IAB-girls) (See Chapter 4). Hence teachers will be called Teacher A1 (Female), Teacher A2 (Female), Teacher B1 (Male), Teacher B2 (Female), Teacher C1 (Female), Teacher C2 (Female), Teacher D1 (Female) and Teacher D2 (Female) respectively.

achieved and a list of things to be taught in a course. A textbook *suggests* systematic ways of accomplishing these objectives (Ur, 1991: 176 and 183). Therefore, conceptually the syllabus and the textbook do not necessarily coincide with each other. This was not the case in the schools in this Sri Lankan study.

Teachers were very much concerned about completing the syllabus in order to prepare students for school term tests. For them, completing the syllabus meant the completion of the textbook. Five teachers (A1, A2, B1, B2 and D1) expressed their concerns about completing the textbook on time in order to help their students obtain a good pass at the O/L examination. Instances of teachers rushing through a lesson at the expense of improving students' linguistic and communicative knowledge were commonly observed during the present study, especially in the classrooms of Teachers D1 and D2. These two teachers assigned large amounts of textbook-based activities as homework (23.10.2001, Class D1 and 26.10.2001, Class D2) which most students had not completed by the following day; a sign of needing more help from the teacher. Similarly, Teacher A2 was observed attempting to teach at times when the school administration had decided not hold classes (01.06.2001, Class A2). On this particular period, school A was extremely noisy, obstructing any possibilities of conducting a successful lesson. But the teacher insisted that teaching had to be done in order to complete the syllabus. Only five students were seen participating in the lesson. Therefore, for these teachers, finishing the textbook seemed to be seen as the bulk of their responsibility. This observation is consistent with other studies carried out in Sri Lanka (Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in the Schools of Sri Lanka, 1973: 84-85; Karunaratne, 1993).

Another disadvantage of excessive dependency on the textbook was the teachers' lack of lesson preparation. All teachers, in their attempt to teach the textbook, did not seem to prepare for their lessons. They, as a matter of practice, came to the class without any prior preparation, asked students where they stopped in

the last lesson and continued from there. As a result of their lack of preparation, teachers sometimes conveyed incorrect information to students⁶.

Example 1. T: (Explaining the lesson on Sports and Games.) What is an emblem? (No answer.)
(The) place where the games are held. (Some students look at each other.)
(After the teacher leaves the classroom students asked the observer what it meant. When the observer showed reluctance to answer they gave the correct answer in Sinhala.)
(Observation notes 04.10.2001, Class D2).

Example 2. Lesson on Seasons (Textbook page 60).
Teacher reads the lesson. Teacher requests the observer to do the lesson because she does not have confidence in many of the 'weather words' in the lesson. (Observer agrees to help out in difficult situations. But as the lesson proceeded no help was requested.)
Teacher explains 'hailstones' as 'snow'. 'Frost' is not explained at all. (Observation notes 08.10.2001, Class C2).

These examples also point to the importance of teacher's language proficiency and knowledge of other cultures in carrying out a successful English lesson. Other researchers have pointed out the importance of such knowledge in a language teacher's knowledge repertoire (Ellis, 1996; McKay, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Widdowson, 1996). The latter example is also evidence of the textbook being difficult to follow for students as well as for teachers. If this is the case in the top schools of Colombo, the situation in rural schools, where both students and teachers are likely to have even lesser knowledge of other cultures, would be worse. This problem has been raised earlier by Karunaratne (1993).

The Grade 9 textbook focuses mainly on developing writing and reading skills. But the syllabus states that teachers should also focus on developing students' listening and oral skills [National Institute of Education, Undated(a): 5]. When

⁶ The examples in this chapter will give the exact teacher-students dialogues. When such dialogues were in Sinhala, they were translated to English and put in italics. 'T' refers to the teacher and 'S' refers to any one student. If students took part in a dialogue as a group they will be called 'Few students' or when they answered as a class they will be called 'Class'. If there is a necessity to identify one particular student he/she will be called 'Student X' 'Student Y' and so forth.

teachers focus on completing the textbook instead of the actual syllabus, this indirectly takes away students' opportunities to listen to, or speak English in the classroom. All classrooms, except D1 and D2, had only one listening assessment during the period of observation. Spoken activities were either absent or when present failed in their objective of getting students to communicate in English. Therefore, the classroom teaching approach does not seem to optimally assist students in learning to communicate in English.

Use of Non-Textbook Teaching Material

The communicative approach recommends the use of a wide range of teaching material in the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). However, in the classes observed, non-textbook material was either rarely used, or was ineffective when used. Research has established that pictures are a useful tool in a language classroom, especially in explaining unfamiliar cultural factors (Canagarajah, 1993; McKay, 2000). Some teachers successfully handled difficult teaching situations by using pictures.

Example 3. The lesson is 'Seasons'.

T: (Brings a picture of winter and shows it to the class.) What is this? (Class says 'winter'.) (Points to snow.) What is this? (Class says 'snow'.) (Observation notes 09.10.2001, Class C1).

Teacher D1 also brought pictures of Sri Lanka, and other climatic conditions for explaining the lesson on seasons (Observation notes 26.09.2001). On both occasions students were listening, answering and paying attention to teachers. Pictures were effective for explaining conditions that are unfamiliar to both teacher and students and holding students' attention.

The communicative approach also involves the use of authentic (*realia*) material in classrooms (Clarke, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Ur, 1991). By authentic is meant materials used in everyday life by the target language community: for example, English newspapers, advertisements and signs. In the present study English newspapers were brought into the classroom for the lesson on newspapers (Classes A1 and B1).

Example 4. T: (Brings some newspaper advertisements to class.) I brought some ads to show you some catch phrases. (Teacher distributes the advertisements to groups of students. Each group is asked to study the advertisement and report the catch phrase in the advertisement they have studied.) (Observation notes 06.06.2001, Class A1).

In Class B1, the teacher used a newspaper article to describe the difference between the *noun* 'extract' and *verb* 'extract' (Observation notes 16.07.2001). On both occasions, the newspapers and their content were not the primary focus of discussion within the classroom. The authentic material, in this case, was not integral to the improvement of students' linguistic or communicative competence (Kramsch, 1993). Teachers seemed to lack the knowledge and training to make these materials useful for students.

Non-textbook material was ineffective when teachers used material that was too difficult for students to comprehend. Such material confused rather than supported the students' learning process.

Example 5. The lesson is 'noun+ing participle clause' (grammar: using the 'ing' form of a verb to describe a noun).

T: What is a clause? (No answer.) If you have forgotten you can write this down. (Reads from an English grammar book published in Britain). 'Part of a sentence containing a subject and a predicate is called a clause' (No explanations follow.) What is a participle? (No answer. Again reads from the above-book.) 'A participle is that form of the verb which partakes the nature both of a verb and of an adjective...' *Observer's comments:* The students are getting uneasy as they cannot write at the

teacher's pace and because they do not know the spelling for some words. But the teacher continues reading a very long note. Students are busy 'peeping' into their peers' books trying to get the note right. (Observation notes 09.10.2001, Class D1).

During the lesson described in the example above, students were more concerned about getting the notes down rather than learning what the teacher was speaking about. Students' behaviour suggested that a majority were not following the lesson. It is clear from these examples that effective use of material requires teachers to be aware of students' language fluency, and also of effective methods of integrating these materials into the learning process.

Electronic teaching aids are other classroom tools recommended by proponents of the communicative approach (Kramsch, 1993). Such tools were not used to introduce authentic English language to students even when such facilities were available in the school. Such facilities were not available in 1AB non-national schools. But national schools had televisions, video players and cassette players. School B also had a well-equipped computer laboratory. These facilities were not utilised by any of the teachers for reasons not explored in the current study.

Two factors could be triggering this extreme dependency on the textbook. Firstly, the primary goal of this entire language program, the O/L examination, focuses on the textbook and on reading and writing skills (Balac and Aamot, 1999; Goonetilleke, 1983). Teachers *have to* teach the textbook in order to prepare students for this examination. Many other researchers have also pointed out that having an examination as the course-objective places several restrictions on teachers (LoCastro, 1996; Savignon, 1991; Shamim, 1996; Ur, 1991). This responsibility for familiarising students with the textbook takes away any incentive for teachers to choose the content of their lessons. The students also *seem* content with the knowledge that they are being prepared for the O/L examination.

A second factor that produces the afore-mentioned dependency on the textbook could be teachers' lack of English proficiency. For example, Teachers A1, C1 and C2 unreservedly expressed their desire to learn *more* English. Linguistic knowledge has been considered very important in a language teacher's knowledge-repertoire, especially for conducting a communicative language classroom (Britten, 1985a, 1985b; LoCastro, 1996). But many Sri Lankan teachers of English lack this competency even after some years of pre- or in-service training (Cooray⁷, 2001, pers. comm., 18 November; De Souza, 1969j, 1978; Jayasuriya, 1969, 1976; Kandiah, 1984; Karunaratne, 1993; Murdoch, 1994). Researchers have pointed out various strategies adopted by such teachers to conceal their lack of English proficiency from the students (See Allwright, 1996; Coleman, 1996; Prabhu, 1987). The present study identifies teachers' dependency on the textbook as one such strategy.

Classroom evidence that supports the above claim about teachers' lack of English proficiency was found. All teachers were found to be using incorrect English vocabulary and/or grammar at various stages of a lesson. These mistakes were of two types, namely mistakes made in *speaking* English within the classroom and mistakes made in *teaching* English⁸.

Example 6. Listening assessment. Teacher reads a passage for students to listen to. She reads 'meant' as *meent* and 'session' as *shession* etc. (Observation notes 28.09.2001, Class C2).

Example 7. T: Summer? (Expecting students to describe summer.)
S: Sunny.

T: Yes, the *most hottest* period. (Observation notes 19.10.2001, Class D2).

Example 8. T: (explains the grammar lesson on 'Complex sentences'. Writes on the blackboard: 'He brought his car.') Now make this into a complex sentence. (No answer. So teacher continues to write the answer on the blackboard: '*He brought his uncle's car.*') (Observation notes 30.05.2001, Class A2).

⁷ N. Cooray is the Director General of The National Authority on Teacher Education, Sri Lanka.

⁸ In the examples that follow the mistakes made by teachers are in italics.

Example 9. Teacher is explaining the grammar lesson on page 69 of the textbook. Teacher reads out some words and asks the students to give their past participle. Teacher says 'drink'. Some students say drank and some drunk. *Teacher just smiles at the class and does not confirm the correct answer.* (Observation notes 29.10.2001, Class D1).

The intention here is not to say that these were deliberate attempts to mislead students. The first two examples (Example 6 and Example 7) could be identified as pronunciation mistakes caused by the influence of the mother tongue (Fernando, 1961; Parakrama, 1995). Nevertheless, such mistakes, as shown by Prabhu (1987), would have consequences on learners' knowledge and usage of the English language. For example, Teacher A2 mis-pronounced 'magnificent' as '*magnifishant*' (Observation notes 23.05.2001) and from thereon the students were found making the same mistake. The latter two examples (Example 8 and Example 9) convey incorrect or inadequate language knowledge to students. For students, who have little or no opportunities to improve or practise English outside school (See Chapter 5), teacher mistakes such as these could make a difference at the O/L examination. These findings confirm the necessity of improving teachers' English proficiency in order to make them more capable of conducting effective English classrooms.

Classroom Activities/Tasks

The communicative approach involves a range of classroom activities as a source of language practice for students (Brumfit, 1979; Johnson, 1979; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Such classroom activities, it is argued, should have some missing information that needs to be acquired by communicating with another person who has that information (Johnson, 1979). These activities are broadly divided into two categories; namely pre-communicative and communicative (Littlewood, 1981) (See Chapter 2). Pre-communicative activities include grammar and quasi-communicative activities, such as drills and role plays, required for subsequent communicative activities. Communicative activities engage students in actual communication with others. All activities observed in this study stopped at the pre-communicative stage.

Problems related to the nature of these tasks and the procedures adopted in conducting them also contributed to the lack of communicativeness in the classrooms.

Nature of Classroom Tasks

The most common type of tasks observed in this study was 'meaning-focused'. These are activities that engage learners in understanding, extending or conveying meaning by handling their linguistic (grammar) knowledge as demanded by the situation (Prabhu, 1987: 27). Within meaning-focused activities is a sub-category identified as 'information-gap' activities that require learners to transfer information from one person to another (Prabhu, 1987: 27). In the present study, information-gap activities mainly took the form of oral or written comprehension questions related to a text or role-play in the textbook. As with other research findings, such oral questions were always teacher-initiated (Pica, 1988; Ur, 1991).

Example 10. T: (Before starting the lesson on newspapers.) Who like to be journalist? (Five students put their hands up) Why do you want to be journalists? (No answer) Is it a very interesting job? (Class says 'Yes'). Why? (No answer) Because we can go from place to place and meet various people. Can you meet the president now? (Class says 'No'). Is it dangerous? (Class says 'Yes'). Why? (No answer). You have to face dangerous situations, (such as) bomb explosions...

Then teacher reads the lesson and asks some students to read.

After the lesson has been read several times, they move on to the comprehension questions in the textbook. Teacher asks the class to read the questions one by one and he explains the questions. Then students are asked to answer these questions in their notebooks with the help of their friends. (Observation notes 28.06.2001, Class B1).

Information-gap activities, though common, were not of the nature indicated for use in communicative language teaching. That is, the information that was exchanged was not unknown to either students or teachers and, therefore, doubt, the essence of information-gap activities (Johnson, 1979), was non-existent. The

information has already been *read* in the classroom and, therefore, most of the information required by the teacher could be picked up from the textbook. The same was true of the comprehension questions given in the textbook. Such questions granted limited opportunities for students to engage in independent language practice.

The students generally did not seem to encounter difficulties in answering these comprehension questions when they required short answers. This may be interpreted as a sign that most students are capable of understanding the questions. But when these questions required information that had to be presented in a (grammatically correct) sentence and when it could not be picked up from the textbook, students had difficulty (See Example 10: 'Why do you want to be journalists?'). Students were either not capable of answering such questions in English or the time given by the teacher to figure out an answer was insufficient. Such questions were always followed by a long silence from the students. At those times the teacher eventually answered the questions without any attempt to get students to form an answer.

Example 11. T: (After reading the role-play on page 50 of the textbook.) If you receive an invitation to visit Greece will you be happy? (Class says 'Yes'.) Why? (No answer. So the teacher continues.) Because it's a rare chance. *Observer's comments:* This answer could not be picked up from the textbook immediately. (Observation notes 12.07.2001, Class B1).

In some cases the teacher even put the answers on the blackboard for students to copy instead of waiting for them to produce their answers (12.07.2001, Class B2). Therefore, it can be argued that these activities focussed on finding the answer at the expense of improving students' ability to communicate in English, thereby failing to fulfil the primary objective of a communicative activity (Klippel, 1984; Pica, 1996). The teachers did not seem to use comprehension questions to generate a dialogue between themselves and their students. Such an attempt would have given students an opportunity to communicate in English. The importance of dialogue as a

language-teaching tool has been emphasised by Preston (1984). In the present study, teachers at times failed to present the questions as intelligible dialogues to students, let alone using them as a tool for teaching English.

Example 12. (Lesson on Seasons)

T: What can you say about the winter season? (No answer.) What can you get? (No answer.) Snow. Weather? (No answer.) Cold. And spring? (No answer.) Snow melts. *Observer's comments:* Teacher's expectations are not communicated to students by these short questions (Observation notes 19.10.2001, Class D2).

A further problem related to the nature of communicative activities is the talking required by such activities that could make a classroom very noisy (Ur, 1991). Teachers at the boys' schools in the present study unanimously believed that group activities would make the classroom very noisy and uncontrollable. Such activities, in their perception, are good for girls' schools but not boys' schools. Judging from the general difficulties encountered by these teachers in controlling their students and getting them to engage in learning, this belief was not unfounded.

Classroom activities were mainly from the textbook. However, non-textbook classroom activities, though rare, added enthusiasm to lessons especially when students had a double period of English.

Example 13. T: (Explaining adjectives.) We'll do a game. You have to do it according to the alphabetical order. I'll do 'A'. My minister's cat is an active cat. (No further explaining is done. But students immediately realise what is expected of them.) *Observer's comments:* The students seem excited. Everyone is busy preparing for their turn. They are smiling and seem to be enjoying the activity. (Observation notes 13.06.2001, Class A2).

Example 14. Teacher divides the class into two groups for a spelling competition. The teacher says a word and one student from the relevant group has to come forward and write it on the blackboard. *Observer's comments:* The students are excited. The excitement and enjoyment is so great that after a few minutes the classroom becomes extremely noisy

because of the discussions among members of each group and remarks made to students of the competing group. (Observation notes 11.07.2001, Class B2).

Compared to textbook activities, students' level of involvement in the lesson was much greater when activities such as the above were used in a lesson. Ellis (1997) suggests two methods of 'retrospective evaluation' that can be used for examining classroom tasks that are undertaken. The first method is 'impressionistic evaluation', that is, a subjective evaluation based on the degree of enthusiasm and involvement manifested by students. The second is a more systematic way of 'empirically evaluating' a task. The activities observed in this study were not empirically evaluated. The observer's impressionistic evaluation, however, suggests that non-textbook activities made the learning process more pleasurable for students. Unlike during other classroom tasks, all the students were observed engaging in these non-textbook tasks. Whether such activities had a positive impact on students' language acquisition was not examined. These activities, though motivating students to be actively involved in the lesson, were unsuccessful in making the classroom communicative for two reasons. Firstly, teachers rarely used such activities in the classroom. Secondly, as with textbook activities, non-textbook activities also offered limited opportunities for students to engage in independent language practice.

Task Procedure: Use of the Mother Tongue

Very often the tendency of both students and teachers to revert to the mother tongue in the classroom hindered the oral communicative objectives of classroom activities. Teachers differed in the extent of mother tongue usage in the classroom. Some teachers did almost all their lessons in Sinhala (Teachers B1, B2, C1 and C2) while others resorted to Sinhala when they thought it to be easier for them and students (Teachers A1 and D2). The majority of the students, on the other hand, preferred to talk in Sinhala to the teacher and their peers during a lesson. The teachers did not

seem to mind this as long as the students appeared engaged in learning activities assigned to them.

The use of the mother tongue by teachers and students seemed to fulfil a number of classroom requirements. Other researchers also have highlighted some of the observations made here (See Canagarajah, 1995a; Lucas and Katz, 1994; Skela, 1998). Teachers used Sinhala when an English expression was difficult for them to compose or difficult for students to follow⁹.

Example 15. (Explaining the lesson on page 66.)

T: What is humidity? (*Class gives the correct answer in Sinhala.* But the word given by students is a jargon word probably from their social studies lesson. The teacher does not seem to know the meaning of the technical term given by the students. Instead of asking the students for an explanation she starts explaining it in English.) Full of (short silence)... *Sinhala synonym for vapour.* (Observation notes 26.10.2001, Class D2).

Example 16. (Talking about advertisements.)

T: Sometimes they create wants for us. Create? (No answer.) Is it natural or artificial? (No answer). Artificial. I'm sure you have seen ads on TV. Imagine you use some other soap, but when you see the Lux ad you feel like buying it. That's what they mean by 'creating new wants'. Now tell me the meaning of this in Sinhala. (No answer.) *We don't really need them but when you see these you feel like buying.* (Observation notes 30.05.2001, Class A1).

Sometimes the teachers *specifically asked* for meanings in Sinhala when they realised that students may find it difficult to give a meaning in English.

Example 17. (Teacher writes on the blackboard 'I don't understand how she will get through her exam.').

T: Read this sentence. (Class reads.) Can you tell me the Sinhala meaning? (*Class answers correctly in Sinhala.*) (Observation notes 25.05.2001, Class A1).

⁹ In the examples that follow Sinhala words used will be translated into English and put in italics.

Teachers sometimes gave Sinhala translations of English instructions for classroom activities and comprehension questions.

Example 18. Explaining the activity on page 38 of the student workbook. *Teacher explains activity completely in Sinhala.* (Observation notes 25.09.2001, Class C2).

Sometimes translations such as the above were given to individual students who could not understand the general explanation (19.09.2001, Class C2 and 24.09.2001, Class C1). Teachers also used Sinhala to explain grammar (24.09.2001, Class C1). Finally, teachers used Sinhala to express their disappointment regarding student actions such as forgetting their books (06.06.2001, Class A1), talking in class (18.09.2001, Class C2) or not paying attention to the lesson (26.06.2001, Class B1).

The first two examples (Example 15 and Example 16) presented above, suggest possibility that teachers opted for Sinhala in the classroom whenever a teaching situation seemed difficult for them to handle in English. The mother tongue, in this case, was not used as a resource to help students but more as a resource to make the 'teachers' job easier' (Skela, 1998). Such instances also suggested problems related to teacher's English proficiency. The other examples (Example 17 and Example 18) can be considered situations where the mother tongue was used as a resource to improve students' target language comprehension.

Observations related to mother tongue usage of the students revealed that all students, irrespective of their English fluency, preferred to speak in Sinhala with each other during classroom activities or when interacting socially¹⁰. Similarly, the majority of students, except those fluent in English, used Sinhala in all their interactions with the teacher. The majority of students only spoke in English with the teacher when answering a comprehension question related to a lesson.

¹⁰ In the examples that follow Sinhala words used will be translated into English and put in italics.

- Example 19 T: (A number of students are not in the classroom) Where are the others?
Some Ss: (in Sinhala) *They haven't come back from aesthetics.* (Observation notes 30.05.2001, Class A2).
- Example 20. S: (In Sinhala) *Miss¹¹, my pencil case is missing.*
T: (In Sinhala) *Give his pencil case back.* (Observation notes 27.06.2001, Class B2).
- Example 21. T: We will do an assessment today.
Few students: (In Sinhala) *Please, don't. We haven't brought our books today. We have to study for the term test. There aren't enough pages left in the English notebook. We'll do it next week.* (Observation notes 26.07.2001, Class C1).

Students also used Sinhala for clarifications of classroom activities. The teachers usually answered such questions in English.

- Example 22. The teacher writes a letter-writing activity on the blackboard and explains how to write the letter. Students start writing the letter. One student stands up and asks the teacher (in Sinhala) '*why does the activity specify an address?*'... (Observation notes 21.05.2001, Class A1).

As demonstrated by the above examples, a majority of the students in all classrooms showed signs of reluctance or shyness to speak in English with the teacher. This may have been due to a lack of confidence. Evidence of such a lack of confidence and its inhibiting effects has been a recurrent observation in this study. These findings support the claims made by earlier researchers about the importance of 'self-confidence' (Clement, 1986; Clement, Gardner and Smythe, 1977a, 1980; Clement and Kruidenier, 1985; Lee, 2000) and 'willingness to communicate' (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998) for successful second language learning (See Chapter 3). Students' lack of confidence was most noticeable when they were reluctant to even read out something in English from the textbook.

- Example 23. (Lesson on Olympics, page 52.)

¹¹ 'Miss' is the form of address used by students to address female teachers.

T: Where was the first one held? (Front row students say 'Greece'.) (In Sinhala)
Why was it held?

Same students: To honour *and continue the rest of the answer in Sinhala.*

Observer's comments: The answer to the teacher's question was available in the textbook but the students somehow did not want to read it. (Observation notes 27.06.2001, Class B2).

In the example above students started reading a sentence in English out of the textbook when answering the teacher's question, but after reading two words in English they reverted to Sinhala. The act of reading out English words seems to develop some kind of anxiety in the students, a situation that could not be explained fully through the data gathered in this study.

Classroom evidence, however, indicate that the reluctance shown by students to speak in English is related to their lack of English fluency. In dealing with their lack of English fluency, the students adopted two methods: firstly, they repeated what was in the textbook and secondly, they imitated the teacher. As described through out this analysis, the first method was not facilitative to the improvement of students' ability to communicate in English. The second method also was not successful due to anxiety felt by students when required to speak in English.

Example 24. (Teacher asks students to do activity 4 on page 38 of the student workbook. The activity asks students to draw a bar graph on other students' likes and dislikes about sports. One student is asked to find out information about his/her group.)

S: (To the teacher in Sinhala) How can I ask others?

T: How many of you like to play...

(But this method is used only once. From the second time onwards the student just says the name of the game and asks (in Sinhala) others to put their hands up if they like it.) (Observation notes 25.09.2001, Class C2).

Proponents of the communicative approach recommend the use of pair or group work as a strategy for making students communicate in the target language

(Pica, 1988, 1996). But research has found that the tendency shown by students to revert to the mother tongue hinders the communicative objectives of such group activities (Holliday, 1994). This was true also of the present sample (31.05.2001, Class A2 and 24.10.2001, Class D2). Another problem with group activities, as pointed out by Pica (1988), is the tendency for the entire group to depend on one fluent student to find the answer for the activity. In the present sample, at times one student (especially a *kid*) in the group was seen composing and writing the answer on behalf of the group (11.10.2001, Class D2). Both these factors are consequences of students' lack of English fluency and confidence.

The discussion so far shows that in Sri Lanka students' mother tongue is an indispensable resource in teaching English. It is indispensable because it functions as a 'comfort zone' for both teachers and students who have to communicate and teach/learn in a non-native language. This comfort zone, in fact, makes the classroom more communicative by eliminating the disadvantages of not knowing English. A similar finding has been recorded in a research of Tamil school children learning English in Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 1995a). Excessive use of Sinhala, however, seems to take away the very few opportunities these students have to improve their level of communication in English.

Teacher-centred or Student-centred?

The communicative approach involves a teaching strategy that is less dominated by the teacher, providing opportunities for students to contribute to what they learn and how they learn it (Nunan, 1989). It has been argued that such a student-centred approach would lead to a friendly and supportive learning environment that minimises classroom anxiety for students (Littlewood, 1981, 1984). In the sample schools, this communicative principle had been adapted to suit the Sri Lankan teacher-student requirements.

The Role of the Teacher

All teachers in this study were traditional teachers. Here, the word 'traditional' denotes the dominant role taken by teachers within the classroom (Nunan, 1989). As shown by other researchers, teaching was done mainly from the front of the class (Lawton, 1987; Mosback, 1984). In every classroom, the teacher did most of the talking. The fact that individual students may have different learning style preferences (Reid, 1987) was not a concern for these teachers. Even if it was a concern, little or nothing could be done about it considering the course requirements and the large class sizes.

Student obedience in all classrooms meant complying with the teacher's expectations. Most of the time, teachers taught the textbook and expected students to participate within the frame of the textbook. When teachers were not dominant to the extent of forcing students to comply with them (Teachers B2, C1 and D2), most students drifted away from the lesson without engaging in any activities. Therefore, teacher-dominance was a necessary factor in these classrooms for learning to take place.

Judging from comments regarding the teacher made by students in informal conversations with the researcher and in the questionnaires, students preferred such dominant teachers. This finding is consistent with other Asian research (Canagarajah, 1993; Shamim, 1996). Students' preferences for teachers were also linked to teacher's use of Sinhala in the classroom. The teachers who were very strict (Teachers B1 and C2) also used more or at least some Sinhala in their teaching. A combination of these two factors, strictness and mother tongue usage, seemed crucial to becoming a preferred teacher. Use of the mother tongue in teaching seems to neutralise the strictness of the teacher. When teachers appeared lenient, but also used the mother tongue (Teachers B2, C1 and D2), the effects on students' behaviour was not the same as the effect produced by a strict type of teacher who also used the

mother tongue (Teachers B1 and C2). Such lenient teachers had problems of retaining students' attention. Therefore, a *Sri Lankan* English language learning environment can be considered supportive and friendly (Littlewood, 1981), if the teacher exercises considerable dominance in the classroom and uses more mother tongue in his/her teaching.

The means of marks received by students of each classroom, however, does not confirm that the teaching strategy of preferred teachers necessarily led to better English acquisition (See Table 5.15). Teachers A1, A2 and D1 demonstrated dominance levels of a nature different to the above-descriptions. Their teaching seems to produce the highest average English marks for students in this study (See Table 5.15)¹². Teachers A2 and D1 did most of the teaching in English. For this reason, students seemed to feel a distance from these teachers. Although students were not completely at ease with this teaching approach, the distance maintained by these teachers seemed to benefit students' language acquisition. Teacher A2, on the other hand, handled students with what may be called the optimal level of dominance. She used both English and Sinhala in her teaching and was both lenient and strict as required by classroom situations. Therefore, teachers in the present sample had to exercise a certain amount of dominance in order to obtain their teaching objectives.

In conclusion, the present study shows that a dominant approach to English teaching brings successful language acquisition in the *Sri Lankan* context. Two reasons related to the learning culture of *Sri Lanka* could account for this situation. Firstly, the students have become accustomed to such a teaching environment from a very early age. All school teaching on the island takes a similar approach. Coleman (1996) has observed this in his study of Indonesian university students. Secondly, the *Sri Lankan* cultural practice of compliance with authority or adults could be

¹² These students were all females. Therefore, the motivational and academic capability factors (See Chapter 6) that put females in an advantageous position also needs to be considered in this case.

reinforcing the teaching practices in the English classroom. Other researchers working in similar Asian cultural contexts have observed this (LoCastro, 1996; Shamim, 1996). Teacher dominance, therefore, in conjunction with less use of the mother tongue, though not a preferred teaching style of students, was the most successful teaching approach in regards to English marks obtained by students.

The Role of the Students

The dominance exercised by teachers in the English classroom automatically made students passive learners and controlled students' interactions during lessons in most of the classrooms observed. Despite teachers' attempts to limit such interactions, students frequently interacted with each other. Their interactions were completely in Sinhala and, therefore, were not helpful for improving their ability to communicate in English. Even students who were fluent in English always used Sinhala when communicating with their peers during a lesson. This situation, as analysed by Canagarajah (1993), can be seen as an attempt to avoid been laughed at as someone trying to discard his/her *Sri Lankan* identity.

Student interactions during an English lesson were of two types. Firstly, as found in other research (Crandall, 2001; Pica *et al.*, 1996), students interacted with the intention of helping or getting help from their peers for classroom activities. The purpose of such interaction was at times to *understand* instructions to classroom activities and at times to simply copy the answer from another student's book (25.05.2001, Class A2).

Example 25. Listening activity. The teacher distributes some papers with some questions.

T: Are you ready? Read the second question first.

Front row student to another: (In Sinhala) *What should we do?*

The other student: (In Sinhala) *Read the second question.* (Observation notes 25.07.2001, Class B1).

For two reasons, instances such as the above were minimally useful for the improvement of students' ability to communicate in English. Firstly, such interactions were motivated only by a desire to find the answers to activities and secondly, they were carried out completely the mother tongue.

Secondly, students interacted with each other as a form of 'boredom-relief' (Braine, 1994) during lessons. Such interactions were obvious in classes where teachers had less control over students (Classes B2, C1 and D2), and obscure in classes where teachers were strict (Classes A1, A2, B1, C2 and D1). Uncontrollable student mischief was common in Classes B2 and C1. Students of Class D2, though not as mischievous as the boys of Classes B2 and C1, would talk and giggle during lessons (11.10.2001, Class D2). Such student interactions seemed disruptive to any kind of successful learning, not only for the students involved in the interactions but also for the remainder of the class.

Difficulties in the System

There were extra-pedagogical difficulties which obstructed the efficiency of the language program caused by the school system. Most studies on the Sri Lankan school English language program focus on the difficulties encountered in rural settings (Kandiah, 1984; Karunaratne, 1993; Walatara, 1978). The intention here is to point out that even the so-called superior schools of the country encounter problems.

Every school in the sample had the problem of uncontrollable noise which distracted both teachers and students. The noise gradually became worse as the school approached its last few periods of teaching. The English teachers had to silence the next-door classrooms every day before and/or during lessons. Such attempts almost always failed until a teacher came into the particular class for teaching. The problem was mainly caused by frequent teacher absenteeism. There

were incidents when in an entire row of classrooms the only teacher present was the one being observed (24.05.2001, Class A1). At other times, the classrooms observed were generating noise even when the teacher was present (25.07.2001, Class B2 and 16.10.2001, Class C1). This was almost always the case when the teacher took teaching time for correcting books. The students would keep quiet only as long as the teacher was constantly monitoring them, if not teaching (15.06.2001, Class A2).

Frequent teacher absenteeism was a problem with the English teachers as well. In this study, it was planned to observe approximately 20 periods taught by each teacher. During the duration of the research, students of Classes A1, A2, C2 and D1 missed three lessons each, students of B2 and C1 five lessons each, B1 eight lessons and D2 two lessons. Teacher B1, in fact, had developed a reputation among students as a good teacher but someone who likes to *cut* classes. Furthermore, none of the teachers attempted to engage students in any kind of learning during their absence. Lack of effort and commitment from the teachers, demonstrated by such incidents, may be caused by occupation-related discontent felt by teachers (De Zoysa, 1990; Hird, 1995), an aspect not studied in the present research.

Another common distraction was the frequent *messengers*, students bringing messages, who were in and out of classrooms. These were mostly messages brought to the teacher. At other times, these *messengers* took students out of the classroom for sports, drama, singing and dance practices. Similarly, calls to Teacher B1's mobile phone were a constant distraction in his lessons. Such occasions seemed to completely take the students' attention from the lesson and they would start chatting until the teacher resumed the lesson.

As Holliday (1994) noted, class size was also be problematic. Teachers in the study stated that the large number of students in a class created difficulties for correcting books and paying attention to weaker students. For example, classes A1, A2, B1, B2, C2 and D1 had at least one student who seemed to have difficulties in

following the English lesson. Teachers B2 and C2 were aware of such students in their classes but said that it was difficult to focus on them because of the large class size and pressure to complete the syllabus. The other teachers were not even aware that they had such students in their classes. Teachers resorted to peer-corrections¹³ and group work¹⁴ as methods of managing the large class sizes. Furthermore, classrooms were not spacious enough to accommodate the large numbers of students. All the classrooms were so packed that they barely managed to accommodate the observer. The crowded classrooms meant that teachers could not physically reach all students. For students, especially the less capable ones, it meant less attention from the teacher which gave them the opportunity to engage in other activities during a lesson. This was always the case when the teacher was lenient (20.07.2001, Class B2: Students are eating, 04.10.2001, Class D2: One student is reading a novel). Therefore, it was usually students who had a genuine interest in the subject and those in close proximity to the teacher who engaged in the lesson. Having a large number of students in a small classroom also made it difficult, as Coleman (1996) noted, for students to hear the teacher (30.05.2001, Class A1) and see the blackboard clearly (12.10.2001, Class C1).

Some other difficulties were related to the timetable. Students seemed restless and tired when English was scheduled for the latter half of the day. The school surroundings, which became noisier by this time of the day made the situation worse. In most classes (except in B1 and C2 where the teachers were very strict) when English was scheduled for the last period only one or few students responded to the teacher (25.05.2001, Class A2 and 27.09.2001, Class C1). Another timetable related problem was the delays that occurred as students transferred between classrooms for different subjects. For example, when students had Aesthetics before English (Class

¹³ Students exchange books and correct them as the teacher gives the correct answers.

¹⁴ Group work, in this case, meant that teachers would only have to correct one book for a group of students.

A2 and Class B1, Wednesdays) they took up to ten minutes off the English period to assemble in the classroom. This considerably reduced teaching time in the English classes.

Conclusion

The present sample was discovered to be a highly motivated batch of students who had few opportunities to improve their knowledge of English in their family background (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). Therefore, as reiterated in the previous chapters, providing students with opportunities to *learn and practice* English in the school is very important. Analysis of classroom pedagogy, however, showed that opportunities provided for students to learn and practise English in the classroom were minimal. Furthermore, the high levels of motivation reported by students were not reflected in the classroom behaviour of a majority of the students. While this disjunction between motivation and classroom behaviour may have been caused by methodological problems related to the self-report method used for gathering data on motivation (See Chapter 4), it is also possible that this was the students' reaction to the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers.

Classroom teaching of English was largely textbook-based and teacher-centred. Content of an English lesson was almost exclusively based on the textbook which focussed more on improving students' writing and reading skills because of their importance at the O/L examination. The teachers, burdened with the responsibility of preparing students for the O/L examination, committed themselves to teaching the textbook instead of the syllabus. The fact that most classroom activities were adopted from the textbook led the classrooms to be minimally communicative. Teachers' lack of English proficiency and training were other possible factors that hindered them from breaking out of the language-teaching framework provided by the textbook. A further problem was the students' reluctance to speak English in the classroom. Except for a few fluent students, they always

opted to communicate in Sinhala in the classroom during group activities and other interactions.

As noted by Holliday (1994), traditions brought into the classroom by teachers and students seem to obstruct the purpose of a classroom based purely on communicative practices. Teachers seemed to adopt a traditional, dominating method of teaching English, probably an attempt to practice what they experienced as students. Students seem to have become accustomed to classroom situations where the teacher takes up this dominant role. Furthermore, a dominant teacher seemed to be a prerequisite for holding students' attention.

In the present sample, therefore, communicative objectives of English teaching seem to be partially successful. The success is evident in areas of improving students' writing and reading skills. That is, a majority of the students (53%) managed to obtain a mark above 50%, that is, credit and distinction passes, at the term end test of 2001 which was a textbook-based writing and reading examination. However, oral communicative activities were unsuccessful for three reasons.

1. Teachers' lenient attitude to students' language of interaction during activities.
2. Students' reluctance to speak in English with classmates.
3. Nature of activities which can be completed without speaking in English.

In summary, these schools, where the English program is *supposedly* functioning well compared to rural schools (Kandiah, 1984; Walatara, 1978), face their own problems in developing students' ability to communicate in English. Some additional problems are caused by the very social prestige that makes these the better schools on the island. For example, it is because of the social prestige attached to these schools that parents want to enrol their children in them (Udagama, 1999). This makes the class size disproportionate to the size of the classroom which in turn makes teaching and learning very difficult.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusion

The relationship between students' socio-economic status, motivational characteristics and classroom pedagogy, and students' level of second language acquisition were examined in this study. This chapter summarises the main findings of the study and discusses their implications for educational policy and practice in Sri Lanka. The historical evolution of the English language in Sri Lankan society provides a particular social context for the learning of English. The British colonial educational and language policies established English as an elite form of communication in Sri Lanka. Several post-independent policies that focused on equal opportunities for all Sri Lankans took education, and, therefore, the English language to a certain extent, out of the elite sphere. Though these policies increased the number of educated Sri Lankans, several social and pedagogical factors contributed to the retention of English as a privilege of a minority.

Various theoretical perspectives were found to be useful in understanding the social, psychological and pedagogical conditions that affect second language acquisition. Firstly, Apple's theory (1976, 1996) that discusses the social class structure and its relevance to education was examined. His conceptualisation of the reproduction of social class in the school classroom was utilised to understand how students from particular family backgrounds are advantaged in the English classroom and, therefore, in their level of English acquisition. Further, sociological theories that describe the possible functions of English for multi-ethnic, developing countries of Asia were considered. Such theories see multi-ethnic, developing countries requiring English as a *lingua franca* (link language) between speakers of different languages (integrative function) and as the language of knowledge, technology and international trade (instrumental function). The integrative and instrumental functions of the

English language were shown to be relevant to the motivation shown by students towards learning English.

Secondly, attitudinal and motivational characteristics of learners were studied using the socio-educational model of second language learning introduced by Gardner (1985b). The integrative and instrumental functions of English described above have been considered to lead to two types of motivation, namely integrative and instrumental motivation. The relationship between these two types of motivation and learning English was examined. Existing research conducted on second language learners in western countries has concluded that integrative motivation leads to successful language acquisition, while studies in Asian contexts have shown instrumental motivation to be more useful for English acquisition. These findings were supported by the present study which showed that an instrumental motivation was more pertinent to successful English acquisition in Sri Lanka.

Finally, the adoption of the communicative approach to language teaching was examined. Theoretically, English teaching in Sri Lankan schools is expected to occur within a communicative framework. The findings of the present study, however, pointed out that practices of communicative language teaching are inadequately implemented in the English classrooms of Sri Lankan schools. This implementation was found to be hindered by factors such as course requirements and examination demands, students' reluctance to speak in English, the dominant role played by teachers and teachers' lack of English proficiency.

Demystifying the 'Privileged' Social Position of Urban Students

Social conditions that affect English acquisition were studied from a micro perspective, focusing on social class characteristics of individual learners. Previous research has shown that students from higher social class backgrounds are more advantaged in educational and/or English language achievement. In developing

countries, urban students have been considered exceptionally advantaged in this respect. In the case of learning English in Sri Lanka, these arguments are based on the better physical and human facilities available in some prestigious urban schools and on the urban social conditions that generally favour the English language. These educational and social advantages are considered to provide greater opportunities for learning and practising English and to motivate learners. For decades, sociologists, educationists and linguists writing on Sri Lanka have argued that students in urban government schools, especially in Colombo, are more privileged compared to their rural counterparts with respect to their level of English acquisition. In recent years this argument has extended to students of IAB schools, which are largely situated in urban areas. The present study tested these claims.

The study sample, because it was limited to urban schools, did not provide sufficient grounds to dismiss the claim that urban students are more privileged than rural students. It was found that urban schools and the general social environment of the students were privileged in the sense that schools had reasonably good physical facilities. However, the data showed the key differentiating factors to be family social class and English usage at home and in the school English classroom. These findings raise considerable doubts about the success of the English program in rural schools, where, according to previous research, not only are school facilities inadequate but also students' family backgrounds are less favourable for English learning (Jayasuriya, 1969; Kandiah, 1984; Rupasinghe, 1985, 1990a; Walatara, 1965).

Upper class students¹ showed higher levels of English acquisition. Parents' level of education, family income and fathers' occupation was found to be positively associated with students' English acquisition. It was also revealed that at least one

¹ Students in the sample were divided into eight social classes based on their family income, father's occupation and father's educational qualifications.

parent speaking English at home was helpful for improving students' level of English acquisition. However, a majority of students fell in the middle or low social ranks with respect to these social class characteristics and, therefore, were not exposed to socio-economic conditions identified as *most* favourable for English acquisition in this study. That is, only a minority of students fell into the highest income category. A minority of mothers and fathers held post-secondary educational qualifications and only a minority of the students had a parent who spoke English at home. If this was the case in these prestigious urban schools, it is reasonable to expect that a larger percentage of students in rural and urban deprived schools would not possess the family characteristics favourable for learning English.

These findings, related to student's social class background and English acquisition, showed that students in urban 1AB schools do not necessarily come from families where they have exposure to English or schools with proficient English teachers. The data showed that, similar to the rural learning conditions described by former researchers, a majority of students even in these so-called privileged schools depend largely on the school English language program for learning English. While conditions of rural students may be worse (as shown in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3), these findings suggest that urban schools also require a significant strengthening of teacher training and facilities.

Are Students Motivated to Learn English?

Lack of motivation shown by students has been commonly regarded as contributing to the failure of the school English course in Sri Lanka (as discussed in Chapter 3). The present study in addition to testing this common claim was concerned about the *nature* of the students' attitudinal and motivational characteristics. Positive attitudes toward learning English, higher levels of motivational intensity (effort), higher levels of desire (liking) were positively associated with students' level of English acquisition. Motivation, the aggregated score of the above three variables, was also

shown to result in higher levels of English acquisition. The kind of goal/reason (orientation) for being motivated was also found to be relevant. That is, instrumental goals/reasons for learning English were positively associated with English acquisition, whereas integrative goals/reasons were negatively associated.

The correlations identified between each of the above variables and English acquisition were weak or moderate. This situation can be partially understood by considering the place of English in the wider school curriculum. Learning English, because it is curriculum requirement in school, can be considered an imposition made on the students. Therefore, how they feel about learning English, the effort they put into learning it, their desire, motivation or goals for learning it seemed less relevant. The interesting finding was that irrespective of whether students learn English by choice or because of a curriculum requirement, a majority of them show positive attitudes and relatively high levels of motivation toward learning English. But high levels of motivation alone do not seem to bring similar levels of success for all students. Family related social factors, gender, academic capability and pedagogical conditions seem to override the influence of motivation in most students.

Gardner's finding that an integrative orientation and motivation are the more important factors related to successful second language acquisition was not confirmed in this study. This may be partially explained by differences in the social context studied by Gardner (Canadians learners of French and English) and the present study. Students in the present study did not seem to recognise English as a potential tool for communication between English and non-English-speaking Sri Lankans, that is, as an integrative language within the state boundaries of Sri Lanka. However, comments made by the students revealed that English was considered to have an integrative value in an international sense, as a language that connects various nations. Their immediate and main concern for learning English was related to its instrumental value: providing better future educational and employment opportunities. Therefore,

contrary to Gardner's findings, instrumental motivation was more relevant to successful English language acquisition in Sri Lanka.

These findings can be seen as a reflection of the present standing of the English language in Sri Lankan society. The English language was neglected as a potential *national* link language for several decades after independence. Till the late 1980s politicians ignored this potential function of English in their attempts to restore the national languages. Decades of ignoring the language has led to generations of Sri Lankans believing that learning their national language was sufficient. Therefore, the students in this study who grew up with these prevailing attitudes seemed not to recognise English as a possible link language which could unite Sri Lankans.

Contrary to expectations, students' positive attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans were not associated with higher levels of English acquisition. Students who held negative attitudes about English-speaking Sri Lankans were the ones who obtained higher marks for English. These findings were taken to indicate that the derogatory social value attached to the English-speaking Sri Lankans, expressed through words such as *kaduva*, *kalu suddo* and *brown sahib*, actually reinforces English acquisition. In contrast to findings made by former researchers, it is difficult to argue that these derogatory terms are counterproductive to English acquisition.

Is Communicative Language Teaching Successful in the Classroom?

Classroom conditions and the pedagogical style adopted in classrooms are relevant to language learning. A majority of the students in the present study claimed that they had problems in learning English in school and a majority of those stated that their difficulties were related to speaking in English. Communicative language teaching has the capacity to rectify these problems. Observations made in the classrooms.

however, suggest that several factors hinder the achievement of communicative objectives² in Sri Lankan schools.

In this study, the extent of the communicativeness of each classroom was determined with respect to two major principles of communicative language teaching. They were:

1. Teaching should be less teacher-centred and students should be given the opportunity to learn independently (Littlewood, 1981).
2. More attention should be placed on target language communication with a reasonable use of the mother tongue when necessary (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Teaching strategies that were rated moderately communicative produced students with the highest average for English (See Table 5.15). Therefore, it was argued that greater conformity with the principles of communicative language teaching does not necessarily produce higher levels of language acquisition in the Sri Lankan school English classrooms.

In contrast to what is expected in communicative language teaching, a dominant teacher figure was a common characteristic of all the classrooms. This teaching approach turned students into passive learners whose main classroom task was to listen to the teacher. Interestingly, teachers' use of the mother tongue in the classroom was related to the level of strictness they exercised. Teachers who were very strict were also frequent users of Sinhala in their teaching. Students preferred such a teaching approach to one that used more English. Teachers who used more English in their teaching, with strategic use of Sinhala, and who took a reasonably dominant role in the classroom were more successful teachers, as indicated by the

² The word 'communicative' was used in the present study to refer to opportunities given to students in the classroom to *independently produce* language in its written or spoken form.

marks obtained by their students (See Table 5.15).

Several other problems were identified as hindering the communicative objectives of the English course. The O/L examination and the school term tests that are based on the textbook put pressure on teachers to teach the textbook, which focuses on improving students' reading and writing abilities, at the expense of developing students' oral language skills. An additional problem arising from paying more attention to the textbook was the less frequent use of non-textbook classroom materials and *realia* such as English newspapers and magazines. This decreased opportunities to make links between the language classroom and the students' social environment. Teacher's lack of English proficiency was another reason for teacher's dependency on the textbook. This lack of English proficiency led certain teachers to teach entirely in Sinhala in the classroom. In addition to the problems discussed above, classroom tasks, the key form of teaching according to the communicative approach, were also unsuccessful in developing students' ability to speak in English for two main reasons. Firstly, these tasks were mostly written activities rather than activities that required spoken English. Secondly, students were reluctant to speak in English with each other even when such activities required spoken English. Teachers, concerned with outcomes, and not the process of how students completed the task, were satisfied as long as the students produced the correct answer. No attempts were made to get students to communicate in English during the English lesson.

Other conditions in the school environment also made successful teaching of English difficult. Extreme levels of noise in the school, frequent English teacher absenteeism, frequent disturbances during lessons, large numbers of students in a classrooms and timetable related problems hindered the teaching process. Earlier researchers have claimed that these conditions were mostly found in rural and urban deprived schools. But the present study demonstrates their prevalence in the more privileged urban schools as well.

These findings challenge a widely held view that the English course functions relatively well in the urban superior schools because of their better facilities and better qualified teachers (De Silva and De Silva, 1990; Fernando, 2001; Rupasinghe, 1990a). Though the situation in rural schools has not been examined in this study, the findings raise considerable doubt about the communicativeness of an English lesson in a rural or deprived urban school where social conditions, teaching conditions and physical facilities in schools are claimed to be inadequate. The expectation that communicative language teaching is effectively implemented in urban schools was challenged, as was the expectation that teachers would be well qualified.

Are Female Students Advantaged in Learning English?

The present study revealed that compared to their male counterparts female students obtained higher marks at the English examinations. Females were more attentive during lessons, showed higher levels of homework completion and participation in the classroom and were academically more capable than the males. Furthermore, a majority of the teachers who taught female students adopted a more communicative approach than the teachers who taught male students.

The present study also attempted to identify the gender specificity of attitudinal and motivational variables. It was revealed that female students showed attitudinal and motivational characteristics that were most favourable for English acquisition. They reported more positive attitudes toward learning English, higher levels of motivational intensity (effort), desire and motivation to learn English, more negative attitudes toward the English-speaking Sri Lankans, and identified more with instrumental reasons for learning English. A combination of these pedagogical and psychological characteristics seems to put females ahead of the males in English acquisition.

Additionally, these findings provide grounds to speculate on a reciprocity between students' attitudinal and motivational characteristics and language pedagogy. Students who are motivated seem more attentive in the classroom, which in turn might provide teachers with adequate space to be more communicative and vice versa. In the case of the male students, because they were less motivated to learn English, teachers were more concerned about getting students to listen to the lesson, and when they were attentive teachers used more Sinhala in order to retain their attention.

To conclude, the study showed that most students in the more prestigious schools of Colombo rely on the school English language program for English proficiency. Though a majority of the students were highly motivated to learn English, family-related factors and inadequate pedagogical strategies inhibit language acquisition of some motivated learners. Improvements to socio-economic circumstances of individual families require large-scale, macro changes to the entire social structure that are not easy to accomplish in a developing country such as Sri Lanka. Therefore, attention should be placed on improving classroom pedagogy.

Suggestions for Improving the Teaching of English

The school English language program in Sri Lanka aims to teach English to every Sri Lankan irrespective of social, geographical and economic differences. Many Sri Lankan educationists, linguists and researchers have expressed their views about improving the quality of the school English language program. Most proposals suggest large-scale changes to the education system as a whole. These changes would directly or indirectly affect the English language program. While some of these proposals are already being implemented, a majority seem unachievable considering the historical background of education and the political culture of contemporary Sri Lanka. Proposals that have an impact on the teaching of English include the following:

1. Limit the number of students to whom English *should be* taught: English should be taught only to those students who will proceed to higher education, that is, those who have a higher possibility of joining the jobs that requires a good command of English (De Souza, 1969d, 1978: 41-42; Goonetilleke, 1983: 15; Nesiiah, 1945: 25). This proposal has been accused of imagining an ideal situation, which will help to reserve English for the best (Parakrama, 1995: 176). It should be noted that even under the current policy of English for all, English still is indirectly the preserve of a few.
2. Introduce a stratified syllabus and textbook to suit the different ability levels of students studying in the same classroom and also in different geographical areas (Balac and Aamot, 1999; De Silva, 1978; Walatara, 1978).
3. Change the entire secondary school curriculum according to the students' geographical and social needs (Baker, 1989a: 507-508; Ekanayake, 1987, 1990): These writers are suggesting a curriculum which will aim to improve the skills of rural children in farming and practical trades. The position of English in such a curriculum has not been explained. It is reasonable to argue that these rural necessities may not require the teaching of English to the level it is currently taught in schools. Therefore, such a curriculum may only include a Basic English course.

Several decades of equitable education in Sri Lanka have conditioned Sri Lankans to expect a similar type of education for all, irrespective of socio-economic or geographical inequalities (Baker, 1989a: 507-508). Under such conditions, proposals such as the above are considered a threat to equal opportunities and are not favourably received by a majority of the population (Balac and Aamot, 1999: 36; Usvatte-aratchi, 2002). Therefore, proposals suggesting different programs for different sectors that would *seemingly* discriminate against a section of the student population have not received wide acceptance from politicians and policy planners.

The findings of the present study, however, suggest the feasibility of some of the above-mentioned proposals. For example, a majority of the fathers managed their occupations without much use of English. This suggests that though English fluency might be regarded as a useful qualification for certain higher-ranking jobs, a majority of jobs in Sri Lanka do not require very high levels of English fluency. Similarly, classroom observations clearly showed different levels of English fluency in one classroom. These levels of fluency ranged from those students who spoke entirely in English to the teacher and the researcher, to those who were capable of stringing a sentence together when requested to do so by the teacher, and those who could not copy down what was put on the blackboard. Following the same textbook was too easy for the first type of students and too difficult for the latter. A stratified syllabus could prove useful under such conditions.

The implementation of these kinds of changes is unlikely, however, given the national commitment to an equitable system of education that prevails in Sri Lanka. Educational policies of post-independent Sri Lanka have continued to focus on an unachievable policy of providing equal opportunities for every citizen of the country. The national requirements of teaching English as a link language and as a language leading to better jobs have led to an education policy which attempts to teach English to every student in the island without considering their different social, economic and geographical circumstances and needs. For example, a student coming from a farming background may be more interested in improving his farming skills and supporting his family instead of pursuing a career which requires an extensive proficiency in the English language. The requirements placed on an education by a rural student could be very different to the expectations of an urban student. With respect to teaching English, so-called equal opportunities have largely resulted in further disadvantaging the rural students and advantaging a certain urban social strata: the minority group who uses English as their medium of communication in intimate social circles (Jayasuriya, 1969; Kandiah, 1984; Udagama, 1999; Walatara, 1965, 1974). The findings of the present study show that the English language

program of government schools has not met its stated objectives for a large proportion of the urban students who do not fall into either of the above categories, but who would most probably require a reasonably good knowledge of English in pursuing their aspirations. The English program in Sri Lankan schools is an expression of ideological hegemony as explained by Apple (1982c, 1992, 2001). The elite class of Sri Lankan society has devised a language teaching policy for the entire nation which theoretically provides equal opportunities for everyone, but in practice advantages the elite circles.

The necessity of rectifying this approach to English teaching has been widely observed in recent years. However, politicians, who are the key figures of policy implementation (Hanson-Smith, 1984, 1990), are reluctant to take the necessary measures due to likely mass opposition. Judging from the political responses received to policies such as the ones discussed above that suggest changes to the textbook or the entire curriculum, it is reasonable to argue that making similar suggestions related to education in Sri Lanka is a futile exercise. To ensure their successful implementation, policies that suggest improvements to the English program *must not* indicate differentiation of a particular section of the society. Therefore, proposals that focus more on making improvements to the English course within the current education system seem more pertinent.

Proposals by earlier researchers that suggest changes to English pedagogy in school without differentiating between different groups of students have led to certain changes in the English language program. However, for various reasons their implementation has not been a complete success. Such proposals can be summarised as follows:

1. Age at which English should be first introduced in Sri Lankan schools: This issue has been largely debated during the past few decades of teaching English. One school of thought suggests that English should be taught to students at age 10 or 11 (De Souza, 1969g, 1969h, 1978: 41-42; Lo Bianco, Sivagurunathan and

Sivakumaran, 2000: 37). The other view is that English should be taught from the first year in school (De Silva, 1978: 47)³. After teaching English to students from age nine for decades, the current Sri Lankan school curriculum has adopted the latter approach to teaching English. Since 1998 the policy of second language teaching has focused on teaching English from year one in school (Fernando, 2001; National Education Commission, Ministry of Education and Higher Education and National Institute of Education, 1998; Presidential Task Force on General Education, 1997: 21; Ruberu, 2001). However, interviews conducted for the present study with the principals of the schools revealed that this new approach is difficult to implement due to teachers' lack of English proficiency.

2. System of examination: It has been suggested that a compulsory English exit examination, before the termination of secondary education, would ensure that students have to show a sound knowledge of the language at university entrance (De Zoysa, 1990; Goonetilleke, 1983: 15; Hanson-Smith, 1984: 26-27). Such an examination was introduced in the A/L curriculum in 1999⁴ (Fernando, 2001; Jayaweera, 2001: 3; Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2001; National Institute of Education, 1998; Presidential Task Force on General Education, 1997: 22).
3. Availability of English teachers for rural schools: It is argued that teachers should be compelled to work in rural areas for a certain period of their service and that they should be given incentives to compensate for the hardships associated with working in these areas (De Zoysa, 1990: 72; Goonetilleke, 1983: 17). This is currently practised in Sri Lanka. However, the politicised nature of the education

³ The findings of the present study support the latter proposal at least in the case of students from higher-level urban schools.

⁴ The subject guide to this new English course states that the proposed examination 'though optional and not counted towards university entrance requirements, will serve to enhance the candidate's potential for success both in the university and in the competitive labour market' (National Institute of Education, 1998). This could lead to an improvement of student motivation. However, as many problems regarding quantity and quality of teachers have not been completely resolved, this examination could develop into another examination that brings success to the children who pick up English at home.

system allows teachers from more privileged and powerful backgrounds to avoid this service (De Zoysa, 1990: 71).

4. Improvement of teachers' language and teaching skills: Regional English Support Centres and Teacher Centres have been introduced for the improvement of English teachers' language and teaching skills. Furthermore, English language has been made a compulsory subject in all teacher-training programs (Jayaweera, 2001: 1; Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2001; National Education Commission, 1997; National Institute of Education, 2001).
5. Introduction of English-medium instructions for students in the A/L classes (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2001; Usvatte-aratchi, 2001): Due to the lack of teachers capable of teaching *in* English, this option is currently available only to students learning science subjects for the A/L examination in high-ranking urban schools. This is largely criticised as another policy of further disadvantaging the already disadvantaged rural students (Madapatha, 2001; Usvatte-aratchi, 2001).
6. University or school?: Other proposals are related to whether in attempting to improve English-teaching in Sri Lanka, attention should be placed on the school English language program, or on the universities. Some argue that if the school English program is improved the university language program will also automatically improve (Rupasinghe, 1985: 88; Wickramasuriya, 1974: 6) while others argue that if university education were to change back into the English-medium, school students would be more motivated to learn English (Hanson-Smith, 1984: 26-29). This issue currently remains largely unresolved.

This active debate regarding the teaching of English language is a clear indication of the recognition given to the language in contemporary Sri Lanka. The suggestions made in this study focus more on improving the micro level of teaching in classrooms, with particular attention to the teaching and learning of English in urban schools.

The success of the micro level suggestions made here depends largely on two macro level improvements: teacher training and the national examination system. English teacher training should focus more on improving English proficiency and the communicative teaching abilities of English teachers. Communicative activities cannot succeed if the teacher does not possess at least a reasonable level of English fluency. Furthermore, the success of any improvements to educational programs depends on whether the suggested change is reflected in the examination process. If the examination system does not test students' oral communicative skills, students' motivation to speak English in the classroom will not improve and teachers will continue to ignore oral communication in the classroom. Classroom activities need to change accordingly.

The findings of this study have several implications for education policy planners of Sri Lanka. It pointed out the necessity of further improving the school teaching conditions in order to compensate for the lack of English exposure received by students in their homes. As has been pointed out by earlier researchers (Canagarajah, 1993; Rupasinghe, 1990a, 1990b), urban students have access to a wider range of English language resources than do their rural counterparts. Such resources include a wide range of mass media available in English, larger numbers of parents, teachers (apart from English teachers) and principals who can speak English fluently and social conditions that require English, for example, speaking to a non-Sinhalese. As it is, the English course in schools does not draw on these 'resources' that *could* facilitate student's English acquisition. Incorporation of such resources available in the students' social environment would be one way of dealing with the lack of English usage these students experience outside the school. The incorporation of mass media materials seems the most practical approach in this respect. The possibility of using mass media as a resource in improving students' knowledge of English has been emphasised prior to the present study (Government of Sri Lanka, 1990: 81; Hanson-Smith, 1984; Lalprema, 2001). However, empirical data to support this thesis has not been gathered in the Sri Lankan context.

In the present study, information was gathered on what types of mass media: newspapers, television, radio, Internet and magazines, were accessible to students, how often they were accessed and in what languages (See Appendix B). As expected, a majority of the students in this sample had access to some kind of mass media⁵. Television was the most frequently accessed medium. Many television programs in Sri Lanka are broadcast in English, and most of these target a child audience⁶. The present study also found that students who either accessed mass media solely, or frequently, in English obtained the highest averages of English marks.

Walatara's (1974) findings indicate that Sri Lankan government schools do not have the same access to technology as language classrooms in developed countries. One solution to this problem, without imposing an additional financial burden on the school would be to bring home based technological facilities into the English classroom. However, this may not be applicable to all the geographic areas of the island. But the present study suggests such a possibility in the prestigious schools of Colombo. For most of these students mass media could be their only opportunity to hear native English or native-like Sri Lankan English. The students need guidance in how to interact with what they read/hear/watch through media in order to make use of the media to improve their English proficiency. This is one way in which teachers and textbook designers could incorporate authentic materials into the English classroom.

As pointed out by other researchers (See Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), the communicativeness of a Sri Lankan English classroom has to be invented through the present structure of teaching to which teachers and students have become

⁵ 80.3% read newspapers, 97.2% watched television, 78.1% listened to radio, 50.3% read magazines and 13.2% had access to the Internet

⁶ The national television service (Sri Lanka Rupavahini Co-operation) has an island-wide coverage and has a line up of educational programs from the Discovery channel.

accustomed. However, a prerequisite for achieving communicative objectives is that the present form of classroom activities should change into activities that require teachers and students to communicate in English. As the textbook seems to be the main concern of both teachers and students, it is recommended that the textbook include more oral activities⁷ that would require students to speak in English with each other and the teacher. For example, Fotos (1994), in her study with Japanese university learners of English, demonstrated a task type called 'grammar consciousness-raising tasks' as a remedy for getting students to communicate in English during classroom activities. These tasks had a grammar problem as their task content which the students could not complete without communicating in English. Tasks such as these need to be devised for use in the Sri Lankan English classroom.

The classroom characteristic most closely related to improving the frequency of oral communication is the kind of dominance exercised by the teacher. As students are comfortable in a strict teaching atmosphere, it is suggested that this strictness be directed towards making students communicate in English. Instead of focussing on keeping students quiet and attentive to the lesson, teachers should encourage students to speak in English. Initially this may lead to anxiety in the students, but if it were a course requirement, then students would eventually comply.

The findings regarding students' attitudinal and motivational characteristics also have implications for educational policy planners and English language teachers. Firstly, the fact that students are highly motivated places attention not on the students, but on the content of the curriculum and teaching approaches as the sources of low levels of English acquisition. Secondly, it suggests that the language course should reinforce both integrative and instrumental reasons for learning English in the

⁷ It is not the intention here to imply that written activities are not capable of improving students' ability to communicate in English. Judging from the observations made in the present study, it is highly doubtful whether teachers and students would actually use such activities as an opportunity to produce language independently. Therefore, it is expected that, if the textbook could *impose* oral activities on the students and teachers, they would have no option but to engage in communication.

students. That is, the teaching of English needs to focus on *national* requirements of learning English, such as learning English to communicate with other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka and for finding better employment in Sri Lanka. Such a focus would show students the immediate necessity of learning English instead of an *international* necessity that is less realisable in their social world. Such an approach would not only facilitate the educational objectives of the nation, namely, national unity and the production of individuals for the future job market (De Mel, 2001), but also lead to a further improvement of students' motivation. A third implication is related to the low levels of motivation shown by male students. It might be useful for teachers of male students to pay more attention to developing positive attitudes and motivation in the students. This needs to be made a component of the teacher's classroom agenda.

Suggestions for Future Research

The purposive sample chosen for the present study identified some of the social, psychological and pedagogical characteristics related to English acquisition of a cohort of students in more advantaged schools where the English language is *supposedly* well taught. This and the inclusion of students studying only in Sinhala-medium schools limited the possibility of generalising the findings to the multi-ethnic student population of Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is suggested that future research be undertaken on an island-wide scale with a stratified sampling strategy to include urban and rural settings and also students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Apple's theory (1978, 1982c) could be more systematically tested in the Sri Lankan context. In order to understand how schools are utilised in establishing ideological hegemony three basic elements of school need to be studied. They are: the day-to-day interactions and regularities of the hidden curriculum; the overt school curriculum; and the fundamental perspectives (leftist or rightist) that educators use to plan, organise and evaluate school life. The present study did not incorporate all these aspects into its research agenda. The methodology focused more on the micro

level, with attention placed on students' class characteristics, day-to-day interactions in the classroom and their level of English acquisition. Therefore, it is recommended that future research be undertaken from the wider perspective described by Apple.

Furthermore, social, psychological and pedagogical conditions should be examined more extensively and systematically in separate studies. Combining these three aspects into one study may have affected the participants' responses by cueing them to possible answers to questions asked of them. For instance, the observation method which required the observer/researcher to spend time at the research site seem to have unfavourably influenced the students' answers to the questionnaire either because of their desire to be liked by the researcher, or because of their fear that the researcher might report their answers to the teachers. Additionally, it is suggested that open-ended rather than closed questions be used to gather more extensive and in-depth information.

One aim of the study was to devise a methodology for gathering data related to motivational and attitudinal variables of language learners. For this purpose, the study adapted the Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) introduced by Gardner (1985a) through his studies with Canadian learners of French and English. Adaptations to the original questionnaire were essential in its application to the Sri Lankan context. The adapted test battery was shown to be an ineffective tool for identifying the diversity of attitudinal and motivational variables of English-learners in Sri Lanka. Further attempts at adaptation should be preceded by research to find the range of attitudinal and motivational variables culturally pertinent to the Sri Lankan context. This would enable the construction of a Sri Lankan version of the AMTB based on Gardner's original AMTB for future research in Sri Lanka. The present study has been a mere first step in that direction.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Each parent is required to fill out one questionnaire.

Information provided will be held entirely confidential and will *not* be used for any purposes other than academic research. Names or any other information of direct identification will not be divulged in any publication arising out of this research including the thesis.

1. What is your relationship to the student in the sample of this research:

Mother	
Father	
Guardian	

2. Do you *generally* speak English with your child/children at home?

Yes	
No	

3. What is your highest educational qualification?

Primary (Year 1-5)	
Secondary (Year 6-13)	
Technical college, teacher training college, Nurse training college etc.	
Professional training	
University first degree	
Postgraduate	

4. What do you do for a living?

Regular wage/salary employment in:	Public sector	
	Private sector	
	NGO sector	
Self Employment	Professional	
	Agriculture	
	Industry	
	Trade	
	Other (pl. specify)	
Casual / temporary work		
Retired (mention your former job)		
Housewife		

5. Do you use English in your work place for official purposes?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please answer questions 6.

6. Use of English in your work place for official purposes can be rated as follows (use the percentages as rough indicators to help you find the box to be chosen):

Mostly in English (say over 75%)	
Substantially in English (say 50-74%)	
To some extent in English (say 25-49%)	
Rarely in English (say 1-24%)	

7. How important do you think knowledge of English is for your child in having a good life?

Crucially important	
Very important	
Important	
Important but can do without it	
Not at all	

8. In which of the categories below would you list the monthly income of your family?

Less than Rs. 5 000	
Between Rs. 5 001-10 000	
Between Rs. 10 001-15 000	
Between Rs. 15 001-20 000	
More than Rs. 20 001	

Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix B

Student Questionnaire- Part I

To be administered among the students.

(Information provided will be held entirely confidential and will *not* be used for any purposes other than academic research. Any information of direct identification will not be divulged in any publication arising out of this research including the thesis.)

- 1) Your name:
- 2) What is the name of the class you studied in when you were in year 8?
- 3) What is your favourite subject in school?
- 4) What is your mother tongue?
- 5) What is your religion?
- 6) For how many years have you been learning English in school (with the year 2001 included)?

Less than 6 years	
6 years	
More than 6 years	

- 7) Have you learned English from anywhere else before it came to be taught in school?

Yes	
No	
Cannot remember	

- 8) If the answer to question 7 is yes, please specify the place where or the person from whom you learned English.

Place or person	Mark ✓ if relevant
Home (by parents and/or siblings)	
Private tutoring	
Pre-school (Montessori)	
Other	

- 9) Do you attend private tuition classes for English now?

Yes	
No	

- 10) Do you think or feel that you have difficulties in learning English in school?

Yes	
No	

If yes, answer questions 11.

- 11) Indicate the area of English language learning, which you find greatest difficulty in mastering.

Reading and comprehension	
Writing	
Listening and comprehension	
Speaking	

- 12) Please indicate which of the following you have access to at home?

Newspapers	
Television	
Radio	
Internet	
Magazines	

- 13) How often do you read/watch/listen to the above mass media?

	Everyday	Less than everyday
Newspapers		
Television		
Radio		
Internet		
Magazines		

- 14) In what language(s) do you read/watch/listen to the above mass media?

Sinhala only	
English only	
Sinhala and English equally	
Sinhala more English less	
English more Sinhala less	

- 15) What are your future career plans?

A professional (including medical doctor, engineer, scientist, consultant, accountant, architect, computer scientist, company executive, university lecturer etc.)	
Skilled technician or a trained service worker (including activities like nursing and teaching in school)	
Develop my own business	
Find a job soon after school and think of a career later	
No clearly developed career plan as yet	

- 16) Are you planning to continue your studies in school up to the A/L examination after completing your O/L examination?

Yes	
No	
Not decided	

- 17) Do you have plans to continue studying English after completing the O/L examination?

Yes	
No	
Not decided	

- 18) Are you planning to study up to a university degree after completing the A/L examination?

Yes	
No	
Not decided	

Thank you very much for your support.

Appendix C

Student Questionnaire- Part II

To be administered among the students.

Information provided will be held entirely confidential and will *not* be used for any purposes other than academic research. Any information of direct identification will not be divulged in any publication arising out of this research including the thesis.

Section 1.

Why are you learning English? (Please indicate how you feel about the following statements by ticking the most appropriate box. Do not mark more than one box please.)

Goals	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Better opportunities in the job market and a chance to generally enhance economic opportunities within Sri Lanka					
Opportunities to go abroad for employment					
An opportunity to enhance future learning in a Sri Lankan university and later to join a foreign university for graduate work					
An opportunity to join a bachelors degree course in a foreign university					
Ability to be able to use the modern information technology facilities, particularly the Internet.					
A better status within the Sri Lankan society					
The opportunity to understand the English-speaking Sri Lankans					
The opportunity to become friends with English-speaking Sri Lankans					
Opportunities to get in touch with English-speaking Sri Lankans living in western countries					
The ability to think and behave like English-speaking Sri Lankans					

Do you have any other reasons, which motivates you to learn English? Please write those reasons in the space below.

Section 2.

What do you think about learning English? (Please indicate how you feel about the following statements by ticking the most appropriate box. Do not mark more than one box please.)

Thoughts about learning English	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I learn English because it is a subject in the school curriculum.					
I really enjoy learning English.					
I learn English because my parents want me to.					
I like learning English.					
I learn English because all my friends learn it.					
I learn English because I like it and because it is an interesting subject.					

Do you have any other reasons, which motivates you to learn English in school? Please write those reasons in the space below.

Section 3.

Do you get any kind of support from your parents to improve your English?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please describe the nature of support you receive by ticking the most appropriate box. (Do not mark more than one box please.)

Nature of support	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
They really encourage me to study English.					
They teach me English at home.					
They think I should devote more time to my English studies.					
They show a lot of interest in anything to do with my English course in school.					
They always stress the importance of learning English.					
They send me for a private tuition class to learn English.					
They urge me to seek help from my teacher if I am having problems with my English.					
They are already encouraging me to continue learning English in the A/L classes.					
They always stress the importance English will have for me after I leave school.					
They speak to me in English at home.					

If your parents support you to learn English in any other ways please describe them in the below box.

--

Section 4.

What do you think about English-speaking Sri Lankans? (Please indicate how you feel about the following statements by ticking the most appropriate box. Do not mark more than one box please.)

English-speaking Sri Lankans	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like to get to know a lot of English-speaking Sri Lankans.					
Some of our best citizens are fluent speakers of English.					
English-speaking Sri Lankans are very friendly and hospitable.					
English-speaking Sri Lankans are very modern than the rest and I think that it is a great quality.					
English-speaking Sri Lankans are trustworthy and dependable.					

If you have any other thoughts toward English-speaking Sri Lankans please describe them in the below box.

Section 5.

Please describe the effort you put into learning English. (Complete the sentence by selecting the answer that best describes your effort.)

- i. I actively think about what I have learned in my English class:
 - a) very frequently
 - b) hardly ever
 - c) once in a while
- ii. If English was not taught in school. I would:
 - a) learn English by reading books and newspapers, watching TV, by speaking with others etc.
 - b) not bother learning English at all
 - c) try to obtain lessons in English from somewhere else.

- iii. When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in English class, I:
 - a) immediately ask the teacher for help
 - b) only seek help just before the exam
 - c) just forget about it
- iv. When it comes to English home work, I:
 - a) put some effort into it, but not as much as I could
 - b) work very carefully, making sure I understand everything
 - c) just skim over it
- v. Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I:
 - a) do just enough work to get along
 - b) do very little work
 - c) really try to learn English
- vi. If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra English assignment, I would:
 - a) definitely not volunteer
 - b) definitely volunteer
 - c) only do it if the teacher asked me directly
- vii. After I get my English assignments back, I:
 - a) always rewrite them, correcting my mistakes
 - b) just throw them in my desk and forget them
 - c) look them over, but do not bother correcting mistakes.
- viii. When I am in English class, I:
 - a) volunteer answers as much as possible
 - b) answer only the easier questions
 - c) never say anything

Section 6.

Please describe how much you like learning English. (Complete the sentence by selecting the answer that best describes your desire.)

- i. During English class, I would like:
 - a) to have a combination of English and Sinhala spoken
 - b) to have as much Sinhala as possible spoken
 - c) to have only English spoken
- ii. If I had the opportunity to speak English outside of school, I would:
 - a) never speak it
 - b) speak English most of the time, using Sinhala only if really necessary
 - c) speak it occasionally, using Sinhala whenever possible

- iii. Compared to my other courses, I like English:
 - a) the most
 - b) the same as all the others
 - c) least of all
- iv. If it were up to me whether or not to take English, I:
 - a) would definitely take it
 - b) would drop it
 - c) do not know whether I would take it or not
- v. I find studying English:
 - a) not interesting at all.
 - b) no more interesting than most subjects.
 - c) very interesting.
- vi. If there were English-speaking families in my neighbourhood, I would:
 - a) never speak English with them.
 - b) speak English with them sometimes
 - c) speak English with them as much as possible

Thank you very much for your help.

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