PART II
A PARTIAL TESTING OF THE HYPOTHESES

5.0 Introduction: The purpose of the experiment

A few points from earlier chapters have got to be recapitulated here:

It was noted in Chapter I that:
(a) there is a category of Indian Intermediate level ESL students who do not have the readiness to take off into free production in English, because they have not habitualized the correct use of various structural elements in their (written) production of English;

it was hypothesized in Chapter IV that:
(b) considering the 'meagreness' of their exposure to English, it is both necessary and sufficient to give them explicit instruction in the correct use of the structural items concerned and then to go on to repetitive drilling of the same items meaningfully in order to help them to habitualize their correct use.

It was also observed in Chapter I that the above-mentioned category of learners have various structural problems in
their production of English, that it would not be possible to tackle all of them in a study of limited scope such as the present one, and that this study is therefore restricting itself to dealing with a selected few (structural) problems. This study has chosen the following two structural elements for special attention:

(1) formally correct production of verbs and verb-phrases to show tense, aspect, and number and person of subject rightly in both positive and negative statements,

and (2) correct ordering of words in both types of sentences when simple (in the sense of non-complex, non-compound) statements are converted into questions and when simple quoted questions are embedded in reporting statements.

The purpose of the experiment that is going to be reported in the following parts of this chapter was to demonstrate whether the hypothesis as stated in (b) above is valid or not — in other words, to show whether or not a scheme of (remedial) teaching in which explicit instruction in the use of a certain structural element was combined with meaningful drilling of the same (and not one of these activities or the other) would help habitualize the correct
use of that particular element. (This point will be restated in an elaborated form in section 5.1.1 below.)

It is to be specially noted that a deliberate effort was made in the experiment to see that the learners were helped to internalize a few concrete (basic) sentences (and not abstract patterns) through repetitive drilling, and that it was through the internalization of these actual sentences that the habitualization of the structural elements in question was attempted. Therefore, the experiment may be said to have (partially) demonstrated the method advocated by this study (in Chapter IV) for leading learners systematically towards the readiness for taking off into free production in the language.

5.1 The planning of the experiment

The experiment was planned with the intention of testing the validity of the following hypotheses.

5.1.1 The hypotheses

(1) Students with very limited exposure to English, namely, those whose major (if not sole) contact with English is in the ESL classroom, do not acquire satisfactory use of the language, even for their limited purposes, namely, their ESL requirements,
unless their conscious knowledge of the rules and the forms has been taken care of as a first step in the ESL programme. In other words, communicational tasks done without having acquired the readiness for tackling them do not produce any results by way of ESL proficiency when the exposure to the language is as limited as what happens in the ESL classroom: communicative/communicational methods of teaching (as was pointed out in section 2.7 above) are not meant for situations in which the major (if not the sole) means for conveying English to ESL learners is the ESL classroom — at least not in the initial stages, but only in situations where there are much longer periods of time available for contact with English so that even while English is being used only as a medium (and not as a subject of study) the medium is 'rich' enough for the learners to draw out from it and internalize the 'rules' of its use as a medium, in the same way as a first language learner does.

In yet other words, the 'medium'-approach to language teaching requires a great deal of exposure (which we may not have the resources to afford or even make possible), while the 'subject-of-study'-approach might prove to be an effective short-cut in situations
where time and resources are extremely limited.

(2) 'The rules and forms' or the basic mechanics of using the language, belong to a limited system, and this system can be stated in a number of steps in a linear order, and these steps can be taught one by one in an additive/cumulative manner. (This, by the way, is just what the structural syllabuses attempt to do.)

(3) In such a teaching scheme, errors could nearly be completely eliminated by never making the learners perform beyond their competence. If at all errors occurred, they could be treated as mistakes, and not as errors \( \text{cf.} \) Corder's (1967) error-mistake distinction, and there would be a frame of reference against which they could easily be corrected almost immediately.

(4) The additively obtained mastery of the basic mechanics of the language, if acquired satisfactorily, would bring the learners to a state of readiness for attempting connected writing in the language, i.e., performing strictly within competence. (The teaching strategy at this stage should be one of progressive relaxation of the external control exerted over the
learners' 'use' of the language: they should be led gradually into freer and freer use of the language on their own.)

(5) Acquisition of ESL proficiency starts from conscious manipulation of individual rules and goes on to conscious manipulation of multiple rules (several rules at a time), and then to gradual 'deconscientization' (George, 1984) in the use of these rules, while the external control gets gradually reduced and the students start using the language with greater and greater freedom and spontaneity. (Communicative tasks, i.e., tasks demanding uncontrolled, free use of the language, will not make any sense to learners who have not been made ready for them through tasks done with conscious manipulation of rules, first individually and then collectively.)

5.1.2 A discussion of the hypotheses

The experiment was planned on the basis of the hypotheses given above. On this basis it was further hypothesized that it should be possible to single out one or two basic rule-form-problems and to attempt a mastery-learning strategy for dealing with these problems alone, in the limited span of time available to the researcher. The experiment was
specially geared to show that:

(1) it is possible to accomplish mastery-learning of individual structural items, one at a time in a linear order

and that

(2) such learning would be additive, and would cumulatively make up the basic proficiency in the use of the language or the readiness to start 'performing' in the language.

The main thesis of this study, to repeat, is that no learner achieves the effective use of a language until he has stored in his (language) repertoire a great many ready-made sentence-level units of the language perfectly 'fused' (cf. Palmer and Redman, 1932) with the corresponding units of meaning (sections 4.2.3 and 4.3). What has to be emphasized at this point, however, is that this sentence-level 'fusing' activity (and the internalization of the 'fused' units) represents the final stage before the learner takes off into free production in the language. Before coming to this stage the learner would have gone through stages of acquiring the most meaning-carrying items of the language first isolatedly and then connectedly; he would have come to the stage when his target language (production)
proficiency is at the linked-(content)-words level. The first language learner has a smooth transition from this stage to the next in which he spontaneously imbibes also the least meaning-carrying or structural items of the language through the internalization and (re)-production of sentence-level units as chunks. This is so because he has a very rich exposure to the language. In the case of the second language learner with his meagre exposure to the target language, it may be required that:

(1) he is deliberately taught the use of the structural items

and that

(2) he is given a great deal of deliberate drilling to habitualize the use of these.

What is being argued here is that a certain degree of automatization in the correct production of the structures of the code is necessary as a pre-requisite for the code-meaning links to take place in the cognitive domain of the learner's mind in the final stages of his learning to use the language for communication. In real communication the focus of attention rests mainly on the message and not the code. The learner will be able to shift his attention to the message only if he is in a position to take his
attention away from the code — that is, only if there is an appreciable degree of automaticity acquired through the 'deconscientization' (George, 1984) process in the correct production of the code. H.V. King (1959-60) observed:

..... In order to develop practical skill in speaking the language, the student must work toward the kind of automatic control of grammar that enables the native speaker to manipulate words with no hesitation and with perfect accuracy. (p.13).

The above discussion makes it clear that the communicative/communicational methods of teaching are defective on two scores:

(1) They do not admit that automatization in the formally correct production of the code is a prerequisite for the readiness to start using the code for conveying meaning.

(2) The learner who is being initiated into the use of the code for conveying meaning has to begin with a great deal of repetition of the same units of the code (expressing the same units of meaning of course). The advocates of the communicative/communicational methods of teaching (cf. Brumfit and Johnson, 1979) do not admit that a first language
learner is naturally provided with these repetitions and that a second language learner has to be artificially provided with these.

The structuralists generally stop with the drilling of the structures, which are soon forgotten because language is never stored in the mind as a set of structures, but only as a set of units conveying units of meaning. Unless the use of the code learnt cumulatively as suggested above, is immediately taken forward to the next step in which it is used for conveying meaning, it will soon be forgotten. And, unless the acquisition of the knowledge of the code has been made sure of previously through natural or artificial means, the code-meaning linking (and the internalization of the linked chunks) of the next stage will never take place in the cognitive domain of the learner's mind. J.P.B. Allen (1973) remarked:

There is no point in teaching the code without going on to teach text and discourse; but it is not possible to teach text or discourse unless the students have a prior knowledge of the code. (p. 106).

Michael West (1952) expressed the view that:

....., the cure for bad grammar is not more grammar, but short advances within a graded and controlled vocabulary, followed by long plateaus of assimilation. (p. 20).
Therefore, the experiment in this study was planned to show that it should be possible to accomplish a cumulative mastery of the code by way of readiness to start the code-meaning linking activities in the next stage of the learning process, by teaching one (structural) item at a time. It goes without saying that the learners would have to be taught the various structural items one by one so that their cumulative mastery of the (basic) code would be systematically built up, and that they would have to be led forward systematically through a series of tasks over which the external control exerted upon their performance would be progressively relaxed from strict manipulation towards the free use of the language. (Manipulation would here mean the repetitive, habit-forming use of set language-forms to express oft-handled, fixed meaning-units, and the free use of the language would signify the application of the principle of 'recurrent partials' for the breaking up of the set forms and the reassembling of the parts for the expression of intricate personal thinking through the use of original linguistic combinations.) All this would be necessary before the learners are ready to start using the language with an appreciable degree of originality and creativity. Only a longitudinal study would be able to execute a programme in which all this is systematically attempted. Given the limited scope, the present study was
able to plan the experiment only as a demonstration of a strategy for attempting the mastery-learning of two structural elements singled out for the purpose, in order to show in sample the kind of initial steps to be taken in a remedial situation. The following remark by Gurney (1976) would be relevant here:

A point that I hope will emerge strongly is that remedial does not imply grossly different. Neither the teaching methods nor the children concerned have any characteristics inherently different from those found in the usual classroom. Good remedial methods are simply good teaching methods, and what is practised in remedial groups or classes need not be confined to those situations. The capable remedial teacher looks for the level at which a child is competent in order to work forward from there. This means that the activities and methods used are often equivalent to those employed with younger children who are progressing satisfactorily. A two-way flow of information and ideas on teaching methods between the remedial and the ordinary class teacher is needed. In the final analysis both are concerned with the same problem—getting children to read efficiently..... the insights and methods gleaned in the remedial field are almost certainly applicable elsewhere. (p. 17).

With this in view it was planned that the experiment should be conducted on a group of about 30 Intermediate students whose achievement in ESL was very low. Twenty-eight students from local junior colleges, having scored less than 45% in their ESL paper for their Secondary School Certificate, were admitted to attend a remedial ESL programme
to be conducted over a month's time with two sessions of teaching of two hours' duration each in a week. It was decided that the programme should start with a pre-test given in two exactly parallel versions: the first half of the students taking Test I and the second half of the students taking Test II. It was also decided that the programme should end with a post-test in which Test II of the pre-test would be given to the first half of the students and Test I to the second half.

5.2 The execution of the experiment

As has already been stated, the two structural problems, namely, the formally correct production of the verb phrase and the right ordering of the elements within the part of the sentence related to the verb phrase when statement-question changes occur, were chosen to be the focus of attention in the experiment. The two parallel versions of the test were prepared with this focus in view. Copies of the two tests are attached herewith to reveal, not only their focus, but also their parallel nature. As will be noticed, a small writing task was attached at the end of each test.
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST - I

Name: ........................ Time: 1 hour
Class: ........................ Marks: 50

Instructions

Answer all the questions.
Write each answer in the space provided for it.

Q.1. Change the following into negative sentences:

Example
I am a teacher.
I am not a teacher.

1. He is a mechanic.

2. The boys work hard.

3. Arun travels by bus.

4. Ashok came here yesterday.

5. He comes here everyday.

6. My friends are good singers.

7. They sing well.

8. Anil jumped very high.

9. The team has won the match.

10. The child has been crying.

(10 marks)
Q.II. Turn the following into questions:-

Example
He is a doctor
Is he a doctor?
1. That is Gopal's sister.
   .................. ?
2. Gopal rides very fast.
   .................. ?
3. He had an accident.
   .................. ?
4. He broke his arm.
   .................. ?
5. He is in the hospital.
   .................. ?
6. His friends go to the hospital everyday.
   .................. ?
7. The doctor has bandaged his arm.
   .................. ?
8. The doctor gives him injections everyday.
   .................. ?
9. He had a bad pain in the arm.
   .................. ?
10. He has been suffering badly.
    .................. ?

(10 marks)

Q.III. Ask a question to get the underlined part of each statement as answer:-

Example
Krishna brought the chalk
Who brought the chalk?
1. Mr. Patel lives in Madras.
   .................. ?
2. He came here this morning.
   .................. ?
3. Lila was reading a story.
   .................. ?
4. Rita has gone home, because she is ill.
5. The boy has been hiding in the dust-bin.
6. The servant found the watch on the table.
7. She leaves home at 8 o'clock.
8. The children play in the lawns.
9. The puppies run in the garden.
10. The kitten drinks milk.

Q.IV. Write out the missing parts:-

1. A to B : What is the Principal's name?  
   C to B : What is A asking?  
   B : A is asking what.

2. A to B : Where is the post office?  
   C to B : What does A want to know?  
   B :

3. A to B : (In the morning) Ravi is taking his exercises.  
   C to B : (In the evening) What did A tell you in the morning?  
   B :

4. A to B : How does this machine work?  
   C to B : What did A want to find out?  
   B :

5. A to B : How did you come here?  
   C to B :
   B : A wants to know.

6. A to B :
   C to B :
   B : A wanted to know where my son studied last year.

7. A to B :
   C to B :
   B : A wants to find out when my daughter comes back home in the evenings.

(10 marks)
Q.V. The following is the first half of a story. Read it carefully.

One evening little Ganesh and his elder brother Suresh were playing with Ganesh's new red ball. A monkey was sitting on a tree nearby and watching them play. Once the ball went rolling very near the tree. Before Suresh could pick it up, the monkey came running down and snatched it away. Little Ganesh started crying for his beautiful red ball. Then Suresh thought of a plan.

Now, describe in your own words how Suresh got the ball back from the monkey. You may write about five or six sentences in the space below:

(10 marks)

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Q. I. Change the following into negative sentences:-

Example
He is a doctor.
He is not a doctor.

1. I am a student.

2. The girls sing well.

3. Ramesh plays hockey.

4. Anita danced beautifully.

5. She dances everyday.

6. My friends are good foot ball players.

7. They play well.

8. Sunita ran very fast.

9. The pump has stopped working.

10. The woman has been cleaning the room.

(10 marks)
Q.II. Turn the following into questions:

Example
She is a teacher.
Is she a teacher?

1. That is Amitabh's brother.
   ................................?
2. Amitabh teaches very well.
   ................................?
3. He taught you in class VIII.
   ................................?
4. He left the school last year.
   ................................?
5. He is in Madras now.
   ...............................?
6. He comes here once every month.
   ...............................?
7. He has passed the examination.
   ................................?
8. His friends like him very much.
   ................................?
9. He married a girl from Madras.
   .................................?
10. He has been looking for a house.
    ...............................?

(10 marks)

Q.III. Ask a question to get the underlined part of each statement as answer:

Example
Sarita broke the glass.
Who broke the glass?

1. Mr. Venkatesh works in the post office.
   ...........................................?
2. He came here this morning.
   ...........................................?
3. Kiran was writing a letter.
   ...........................................?
4. Lila has left the job, **because she is getting married.**

5. The girl has been sitting **in the garden.**

6. The boy found the pen **on the desk.**

7. He comes home **at 6 o'clock.**

8. The puppies hide **in the dust-bin.**

9. The girls play **hide and seek.**

10. The baby cries **when it is hungry.**

(Q.IV. Write out the missing parts—)

1. A to B: Where is the railway station?
   C to B: What is A asking?
     B: A is asking where ............

2. A to B: When is your turn?
   C to B: What does A want to know?
     B: ......................................

3. A to B: (In the morning) Ramana is reading his lessons.
   C to B: (In the evening) What did A say to you in the morning?
     B: ......................................

4. A to B: Why does this child cry in the class?
   C to B: What did A want to find out?
     B: ......................................

5. A to B: What did you eat for lunch?
   C to B: A wants to know .....................

6. A to B: ...................................
   C to B: ...................................
     B: A wanted to know where my brother worked last year.

7. A to B: ...................................
   C to B: ...................................
     B: A wants to find out when my sister leaves home in the mornings.

(10 marks)
Once a little mouse happened to run over a sleeping lion. The lion got angry and caught hold of the little mouse, and said he was going to kill him. The little mouse pleaded, trembling: "Please have mercy on me and let me go. I shall never forget your kindness as long as I live." So the lion had pity on him and let him go. The little mouse ran happily away after thanking the lion.

One day the lion got caught in a hunter's net. He roared in great anguish.

Now, imagine the rest of the story and write it out in your own words. You may write about five or six sentences in the space below:
5.2.1 The pre-test

On the first day of the programme the tests were given to the students as per the planning done beforehand.

5.2.1.1 The administration of the test

The students were given roll numbers, and were seated in the order of the roll numbers. They were told that they were going to write a small proficiency test in English — which had no certification purposes behind it. The diagnostic purpose of the test was explained to them: it was meant only for the tester-teacher to find out what they knew and what they did not know in English so that the teaching to follow could be planned accordingly. Test I was given out to roll numbers 1, 3, 5, etc., and Test II to roll numbers 2, 4, 6, etc. They were strictly asked not to start writing before the instructions were completely given. There was a brief explanation about the task to be done under each question. It was made sure that the stories in the last question on both the papers were familiar to the students. It was also ascertained that the students — all of them from either 1st year or 2nd year Intermediate class — were used to connected writing in English, such as letter-writing, paragraph-writing, expansion of proverbs, precis-writing, miniature essay-writing, writing fairly lengthy answers to questions based on their textbooks, reproduction of stories
and (parts of) lessons in their textbooks in the summary-form, etc. — all this was part of their ESL work in both school and college. At the end of these clarifications the students were asked to take out their pens and start writing. They were told that there would be ample time for them to write all the answers carefully and that there was no need for any hurry or panic. It was ascertained as far as was possible that the students would view the test and react to it the way it was meant to be viewed and reacted to. With this much of introduction/orientation, the students started writing. Copying was prevented as far as it could be, and each student seemed to be seriously engaged in doing the task in front of him or her.

5.2.1.2 The scoring of the test and the findings made therefrom

The binary system was followed for the marking of the first four questions. Each item tested the manipulation of one particular rule, and the manifestation of the manipulation of the rule in question was viewed either as correct or as incorrect; there were no different degrees of correctness or incorrectness. In other words, each item was marked either with a ✓ or with a X — a ✓ standing for 1 point and a X standing for a zero; there were no half-points, quarter-points, etc. Impressionistic marks
were given only for answers written for the last question.

The scoring of the pre-test revealed the following facts:

1. The students had no readiness for connected writing or communicational tasks in English, because many of them did not try to answer the last question, and those who tried doing it messed it up. Obviously, all the 'experience' that they had had in both school and college for doing such tasks had not still taught them how to tackle such tasks.

2. This was obviously because they were significantly defective in the conscious manipulation of the basic (structural) rules, even while manipulating one of them at a time, as was clearly revealed by their performance on the first four questions.

The above findings proved the validity of the first half of hypothesis no. (1) given in section 5.1.1 above, namely, that communicational tasks done without prior readiness for tackling them do not contribute to the building of ESL proficiency. The second half of this hypothesis, namely, that explicit teaching and drilling of structural items will act as a short-cut for building ESL proficiency in situations with limited resources, and the other four hypotheses stated
at 5.1.1 above were to be tested during the execution of the rest of the programme.

5.2.2 The teaching and drilling activities of the programme

There were five sessions of teaching following the pre-test, each lasting for two hours.

In the first session there was explicit teaching about:

(1) the formally correct production of verb phrases in the twelve different tenses in combination with the six different types of subjects,
(2) the rules for using 'not' for negation,
and (3) the inversion-rules for making the two different types of questions, namely, the yes/no type and the Wh-type.

There was also a minimal spell of oral drilling in the production of these items. The material used for teaching as well as drilling was of the isolated sentence type, and the only aids were a big blackboard and differently coloured pieces of chalk. Special care was taken to use only a very limited set of vocabulary items which were either basic or of the loan-word category and which, therefore, were definitely familiar to the students.

In the following sessions of teaching, mainly three
different types of activities were attempted:

(1) Every session began with a quick recapitulation of the 'rules and forms' learned, followed immediately by a short spell of isolated-sentence-drilling to consolidate this learning, i.e., conscious manipulation of one rule at a time.

(2) Then a connected passage was given out on the left hand side of the blackboard, based on which a number of highly manipulated/strictly controlled tasks of the following kinds were done:

(a) loud reading of the passage and pointing out of the verb-phrase in each sentence, which was underlined

(b) re-reading of the passage, changing the subject of each sentence to a different number or person each time

(c) re-reading of the passage with the verbs in different tense-forms

(d) re-reading of the passage with all the verbs negated

(e) making questions out of the passage — either of the simple inversion type or asking for the information given in a particular phrase in each sentence
(f) These questions would be written out on the right hand side of the blackboard and the passage on the left hand side would then be rubbed off. The next activity would be to orally reconstruct the passage by looking at the questions on the right hand side of the blackboard. All this was done by the students individually, and the students were not given the opportunity to write down anything in their notebooks during these oral drilling spells.

(g) The last activity under this type was one in which each student wrote down on his own, the original passage by looking at the questions on the blackboard. These scripts were collected from them for later scrutiny; they were corrected and returned to the students in the following sessions.

Two samples of the kind of passages used for this second type of activity are given below:

I. Mr. Ravindra lives in Hyderabad. He works in a post office. He leaves home at 8 o'clock in the morning. He goes to the post office by bus. He takes a bag everyday. It contains his lunch-box. He eats rice for lunch. He works
till 5 o'clock in the evening. He comes back home at 6 o'clock. He travels back home by train.

II. The boys sleep in the hall. They get up at 5 o'clock in the morning. They do exercises early in the morning. They learn their lessons after breakfast. School begins at 9 o'clock. The boys eat their lunch in the school dining hall. In the afternoon they read or practise art. After tea they play games. They play football or hockey. They go to sleep at 10 o'clock.

(3) A third type of activity was the construction of simple stories out of a series of highly manipulated/controlled tasks. It was found that verb phrases alone could not sustain the interest of the students for very long. Therefore other structural items such as active-passive voice conversions, direct-indirect speech conversions, conversions in the different degrees of comparison, etc. were brought in. These helped greatly in sustaining the interest of the students for the following two reasons:

(a) These conversions were regularly done in their ESL classrooms, though these had never been taught to them systematically, and a systematic teaching of these would be greatly welcome, as
that would help them score better marks in their ESL papers.

(b) There was a marked enlargement in the scope of (manipulated) tasks that could be attempted in the classroom as a result of the increase in the variety of manipulations made possible.

A series of manipulated tasks could thus be employed in the construction of simple stories which were familiar to the students. Some of the stories constructed in the class this way were: (a) the hare and the tortoise, (b) the thirsty crow, (c) the fox who fooled the crow, (d) the fox who jumped for the bunch of grapes, (e) the birds who got trapped in the net, (f) the old man who taught his sons the lesson of unity, (g) the old man and his son who carried the donkey, etc. Each sentence in a story would result from the manipulated use of a particular rule. The 'stimulus' for the task would be given on the blackboard, and each task would be done orally in the class, that is, the story would thus be constructed orally in the class. At the end of a considerably long period of oral drilling, the students would be asked to construct the story in the written form — each one on his own, in his notebook — by looking at the tasks given on the blackboard. Their stories
were either read out and corrected in the class itself, or collected from them for later correction. This was a third type of activity which was greatly enjoyed by the students.

All the five sessions of teaching followed the same pattern as is laid down in the three different types of activities described above. What, in effect, was achieved was a great deal of repetition of the same utterances (all of them of the very basic kind), each time with a crucial change that represented the (conscious) manipulation of one particular rule. One point to be specially noted is that the repetitions were not mechanical, but were made as purposeful as possible through the requirement of having to (consciously) use a particular rule each time. Another point to be specially mentioned is that, whatever were the activities attempted, the focus of attention in the classroom constantly remained on the two structural problems originally singled out for special attention.

5.2.3 The *post-test*

The post-test was given to the students on the final day of the programme, as per the original planning, and the scripts were collected back from them immediately on their completion of the tasks. The administration of this test
was also done very much the same way as in the case of the pre-test. The scripts were evaluated in the same way as those of the pre-test. The score-sheets representing the performance of each of the students on both the tests are attached herewith. A quick look at the score-sheets is sufficient to reveal the outcomes of the experiment.
5.3 A discussion based on the findings/observations arrived at through the experiment

Three major observations were made during the execution of the experiment. A discussion on each one of them follows immediately.

5.3.1 An observation to question Krashen's (1981a) 'monitor' theory

It was observed that students who produced verb phrases and their negated forms extremely haltingly in the beginning, exhibited greater and greater ease in their production of these as the drilling continued in the class. Progressively less time and effort required in the doing of a task represents progressively greater automatization and 'deconscientization' (George, 1984) in the use of the rules concerned. (A good example to illustrate this principle would be the learning of typewriting.) Therefore, the above observation may be cited as the demonstration of a principle at work which is contrary to the one implied in Krashen's (1981a) 'monitor' theory. According to Krashen (1981a), consciously acquired knowledge of the use of a language acts only as a monitor in performance and never results directly in production, implying that unconsciously acquired knowledge of the use of a language (as in the case of a native speaker), which always results directly in production, does not act
as a monitor and that the native speaker does not therefore (and need not) possess a mechanism to monitor his performance. Thus Krashen implies a conscious learning–unconscious learning distinction (or a learning-acquisition distinction) in the context of his 'monitor' theory. Krashen's implications may be questioned on the following grounds:

(1) Language-use, being a cognitive activity, is always a monitored one, irrespective of the user being native or alien.

(2) In language-use it is not the production of the code alone that is monitored but also the message to be conveyed. This further strengthens the argument that native speakers also employ a monitoring mechanism while using their language.

(3) The attention of the monitor keeps shifting back and forth from the code to the message according to the nature of the demands placed upon it.

(4) A native speaker, having learnt the use of the code unconsciously, generally demands that more of the monitor's attention be on his messages.

(5) A second language learner, on the other hand, especially in the initial stages, demands that his monitor attend almost fully to the correct production
of the code: he is in no position at that stage in his second language learning to convey any 'original' messages through his target language.

(6) Given the opportunity to go on to the more and more automatic production of units of the code correctly, and to the use of these for conveying units of meaning of his own choice and composition, it may be hypothesized that the second language learner will attain to a position in which his monitor (at times, upon demand) can place more of its attention on the message than on the code — almost like a native speaker. This was the tendency demonstrated by the learners in the experiment under discussion here.

(7) The monitoring mechanism in language-use, therefore, has two parts to it, and one of these parts, in all cases, is constituted by the knowledge for the correct production of the code, whether acquired consciously or unconsciously, while the other part is constituted by the conceptual framework existing in the language-user's mind from which all his messages take shape.

When we posit a monitoring mechanism with two parts to it as described above, we are in a position to claim that
greater automaticity in the correct production of units of the code indicates correspondingly greater readiness for learning to convey units of (personal) meaning using the code by the shifting of attention. Krashen's monitor is obviously monolithic in character, which is questionable on the above-given grounds, and is constituted solely by the consciously acquired knowledge of the code. His position is questionable also because the conscious learning–unconscious learning distinction, or the learning-acquisition distinction, cannot be granted in the context of a monitoring mechanism of the above description.

5.3.2 An observation to question Corder's (1967) 'error–mistake' distinction and the concept of 'interlanguage'

Corder (1967) reserves the term 'error' to describe systematic deviance in ESL learners' performance. When an ESL learner, who has not attained to the level of the target proficiency in ESL, performs spontaneously or is asked to perform either in an oral or in a written ESL task, he may employ one of the three following strategies:

(1) use certain rules which he knows to be accepted rules for his correct performance,

(2) formulate certain rules (in the absence of such knowledge), the way he habitually formulates them
on such occasions, on the basis of his understanding of language-use in general derived from his knowledge of the mother tongue or some other (known) language,
or (3) give up all such efforts in frustration (when the task in hand is totally beyond him) and perform literally as it would seem fit to him on the spur of the moment.

When pressed into performance too often, learners get into the habit of formulating on their own, rules of the category mentioned at no. (2) above, and many of these rules come to stay with them, and thus, an 'interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972) is created, which either belongs to one particular learner or gets shared by a group of learners who are partners in their ESL learning. Whenever the need to perform arises, such learners comfortably fall back upon their 'interlanguage' competence — that is, learners who have created an 'interlanguage' for themselves. One thing to be mentioned about them is that the creation of an 'interlanguage' resulted in their case on account of frequent compulsion to perform. Many learners are not required to perform that way — with the result that they do not have even a systematic 'interlanguage' to replace the target competence. It is such learners, who have no system
whatsoever, who perform (when occasionally asked to do so) the way referred to at no. (3) above.

It was noticed, while evaluating the scripts of the pre-test in the present experiment, that most of the students had adopted the strategy mentioned at no. (3) above: they had no system, and their errors had no systematicity about them. According to Corder (1967), unsystematic errors would be termed 'mistakes', which would mean that they are slips of the tongue (or pen), and would be recognized (as mistakes) by the performer who would rectify them almost immediately on recognition. The students in the present experiment, initially, were in no position to correct any of their own 'mistakes'; their 'mistakes' were certainly not 'mistakes' in Corder's terms; nor were they 'errors', because there was no systematicity about them. As they had no system, each 'sentence' produced was an idiosyncratic sentence, and not a unit in an 'idiosyncratic dialect' (Corder, 1971), which would be systematic. They had no 'approximative systems' (Nemser, 1974) or 'transitional competence' (Richards, 1971). The whole concept of 'interlanguage' was found to be irrelevant in their case, and against this background Corder's error-mistake distinction also emerged to be questionable.

Another point to be specially noted in this connection
is that learners produce errors (systematic or otherwise) or create 'approximative systems' only when they are pressed into performing beyond their competence. If it is so, it should be possible to plan a strategy of teaching by which errors are prevented from occurring by never making the learners perform beyond their competence. It was found in the present experiment that errors could almost completely be eliminated if the learners always performed strictly within their competence.

Another distinction that Corder (1967) made was the input-intake distinction. This is a question-begging distinction, because the only way to assess the intake is by examining the output, and the output is only the 'tip of the iceberg' as it were; there is no satisfactory way of ascertaining the real nature of the intake in its entirety, because the output can never be equated with the intake under normal circumstances. At the same time it is possible to have a teaching scheme in which the input = the intake = the output. When the input is a complex one, the intake will not be equal to it normally. But it should be possible to equate the intake with the input, and then the output with the intake, when one particular rule (and only that) is taught, and its understanding made sure, and then required to be used in strictly manipulated/controlled
production in which the use of no other rule figures.

Example

Rule (to be explicitly taught): In order to negate, use 'not' immediately after the (first) helping verb in the verb phrase.

Production: Negate the following:

(1) The child is sleeping.
(2) The child has been sleeping.

This is the kind of strategy that was attempted in the present experiment: errors were eliminated to the maximum possible degree, and it was found to be a workable strategy. If at all errors occurred, they could be treated as 'mistakes' or slips of the tongue (or pen), and could be immediately corrected against the frame of reference that had been established in the classroom. An essential part of grammatical terminology was brought in, to help with the establishing of this frame of reference, and it was realized that grammatical terminology, though incapable of feeding directly into competence that should form the basis for performance, was a great convenience and time-saver when it came to explanations and correction of mistakes: it should be looked upon as the scaffold which does not form part of the structure, but is nevertheless necessary and
helpful in the easy and convenient erection of the structure. Crawshaw (1984) observed:

It remains true nonetheless that a basic set of metalingual terms to describe the elements within the simple sentence: subject verb object, active and passive sentences, verbal complements and so on, provides an additional medium for understanding simple structural distinctions; these can only aid the understanding communicated by the visual presentation of structure.... (p. 73).

The whole concept of 'interlanguage' and 'error'-production was therefore found irrelevant in the context of this experiment. It was found that in a situation where learners are never made to perform beyond their competence, or rather, made to perform always strictly within their competence, it should be possible to build up competence cumulatively, and to finally reach a stage when learners are ready to perform tasks in which many rules are manipulated simultaneously. Theoretically speaking, it should also be possible to achieve the 'deconscien-tization' (in the use of the rules) necessary for genuine communication through a series of such tasks over which the external control exerted over learners' performance gets progressively reduced. The experiment thus endorsed the hypotheses stated in the beginning, though it was not elaborate or rigorous enough to prove them right.
5.3.3 An observation that questioned the rigour of the experiment

A third observation made during the experiment was that there were a number of variables involved in the learning strategy that was attempted — many that could not be controlled in an experiment of the kind that was planned. When specific rules had to be taught in the class, it was essential that:

(1) the learners were motivated (to listen and to learn),

(2) the learners had the cognitive capacity to understand the explanation of a rule (unlike in a natural language learning situation in which no rules are consciously taught or learnt),

and that

(3) the learners were habitually good listeners — without their attention wandering.

While evaluating the answer-scripts of the post-test, it was noticed that a certain number of students had made no appreciable gain in their knowledge and manipulation of rules after all the teaching and drilling done in the class. This can be explained only in terms of variables such as the ones mentioned above, which were not controlled in any way in the execution of the experiment: no such
rigorous measures were adopted. Corder (1967) expressed the view that 'motivation and intelligence appear to be the two principal factors which correlate significantly with achievement in a second language'. (p. 22).

On the basis of the considerable gain made by a good majority of the students (as the score-sheets show), it may be claimed that, given motivation and the necessary cognitive capacity/equipment, which are necessary for the learning of a second language under the conditions in which the experiment was conducted, it should be possible to build up 'cumulative competence' in the correct production of the code (as a pre-requisite for learning to communicate), and that the strategy recommended here would act as a short-cut leading straight to target proficiency by-passing the entire area of 'interlanguage' or 'transitional competence'.

It was part of the planning initially done that the experiment would not attempt taking the learners right up to the readiness for communication. The way it was planned and carried out, the experiment was intended only to demonstrate the feasibility of an explicit rule-teaching and drilling strategy as the first step in a remedial programme. No gain was expected to be shown in the performance of the task in the last question, as it was a 'communicational' task: none was expected and none was shown. The
focus of the experiment was captured, as intended, in the performance on the first four questions. Apart from the score-sheets (attached earlier), the pre-test and post-test answer-scripts of a few of the students are given as an Appendix at the end, so that, on being examined, they will testify to the feasibility of the strategy that was recommended and to the validity of the hypotheses that were put forward. (In the post-test the students were asked to write the answer to the last question in the mother tongue instead of or in addition to the answer in English, in case they were not satisfied with their answers in English; many of the students did this. This helped to make sure that the content of the story was no problem to them.)