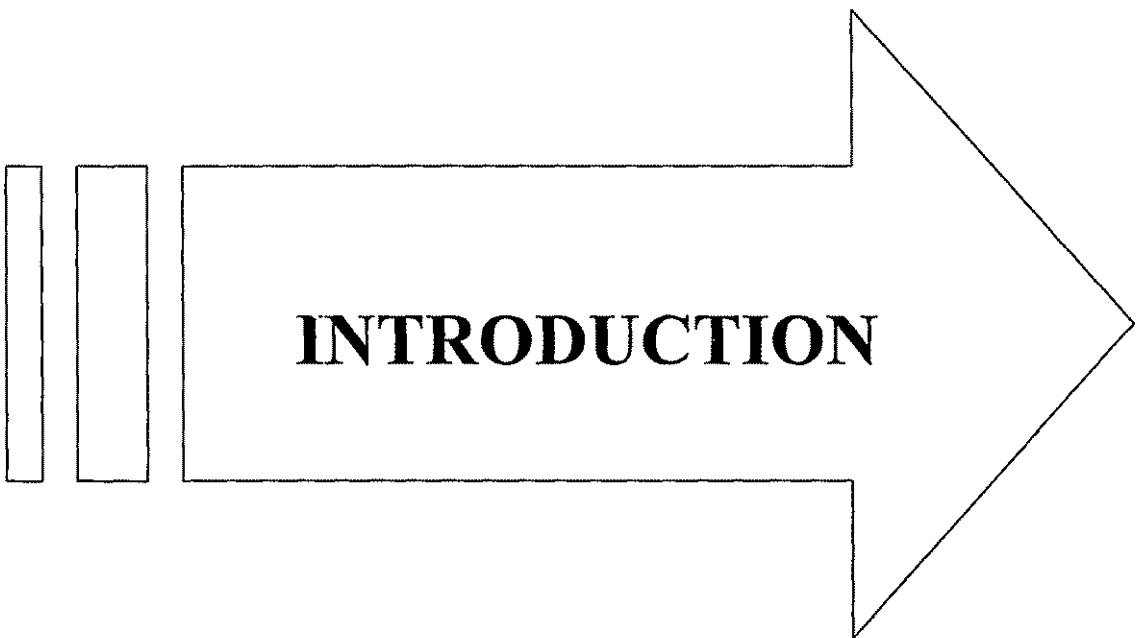


CHAPTER - I



INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.0.0 INTRODUCTION

All social animals communicate with each other, from bees and ants to whales and apes, but only humans have developed a language which is more than a set of prearranged signals.

Language is obviously a vital tool. Not only it is a means of communicating thoughts and ideas, but it forges friendships, cultural ties and economic relationships.

Throughout history, many have reflected on the importance of language. For instance, the scholar Benjamin Whorf has noted that language shapes thoughts and emotions, determining one's perception of reality.

“Language is the light of the Mind.” (John Stuart Mill).

Language, of course, is knowledge, and in our world today knowledge is one of the key factors in competitiveness, Brains and Knowledge are what create the prosperity and growth we tend to take for granted. In an advanced industrial society in an increasingly interdependent world, the Knowledge of other languages becomes indispensable.

1.1.0 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate. This capacity involves the picking up of diverse capacities including syntax, phonetics, and an extensive vocabulary. This language might be vocal as with speech or manual as in sign. Language acquisition usually refers to first language(mother-tongue) acquisition.

1.1.1 MOTHER-TONGUE

Mother-Tongue is the language that a child learn from his/her mother. S/he begins the learning of this language in his/her infancy.

“The mother-tongue is as natural for the development of the infants body.” (M.K.Gandhi)

It is through the skill achieved in mother-tongue that the child expresses all his/her feelings and desires, and understands the feelings and desires of others. Thus, the purpose of communication through mother-tongue begins at the earliest stage of life.

Mother-Tongue, being the first language, that a child learns, helps the child in all kinds of thinking, as he grows. With his/her growth, the spirit of inquiring, reasoning, analyzing, elaborating, discussing and discerning grows. All these mental operations are carried on in the mother-tongue.

1.2.0 MOTHER-TONGUE HELPS IN SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When parents and other caregivers (e.g. grandparents) are able to spend time with their and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school well-prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language. From the point of view of children's development of concepts and thinking skills, the two languages are interdependent. Transfer across languages can be two-way: when the mother tongue is promoted in school (e.g. in a bilingual education program), the concepts, language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. In short, both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages.

1.2.1 BILLINGUALISM CONFERS LINGUISTIC ADVANTAGES ON CHILDREN

Bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively teaches the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language. By contrast,

when children are encouraged to reject their mother tongue and, consequently, its development stagnates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.

1.3.0 POLICIES OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO FOSTER MOTHER-TONGUE

THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA

In order to provide facilities for teaching a minority language or mother tongue, State Education Ministers evolved a scheme in 1949. Subsequently, the Union Education Ministry in consultation with States formulated a Three Language Formula. This Formula as enunciated in the National Policy Resolution of 1968 and reiterated in the National Policy on Education 1986 provides Hindi, English and modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states and Hindi, English and the Regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States. This Formula has created many difficulties for Urdu speakers. The major grievance of Urdu speaking linguistic minority is that their children have been denied the facility of mother tongue instruction. The result is that a large number children of Urdu speakers are learning the regional language instead of the mother tongue as the first language. Accordingly, the Gujral Committee recommended the following modified form of three language formula:

(i) In Hindi speaking States:

- (a) Hindi (with Sanskrit as part of the composite course);
- (b) Urdu or any other modern Indian language excluding (a) and
- (c) English or any other modern European language.

(ii) In non-Hindi speaking States:

- (a) Regional language;
- (b) Hindi;
- (c) Urdu or any other modern Indian language excluding (a) and (b); and
- (d) English or any other modern European language.

PRESS NOTE ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DATED JULY 14, 1958, CONTAINING STATEMENT ON LANGUAGE.

1- Urdu is essentially a language of our country, and its homeland is India. The Constitution has recognized this basic fact by including Urdu among the national languages, and the various provisions that apply to these languages, apply to Urdu also.

2- While Urdu is spoken by and is considered as their mother-tongue by a very considerable number of persons in India , more especially in North India, it is not a language used by the majority of recognized as one of the State languages, the principal one being Kashmiri. In the Telengana area of Andhra Pradesh it has also been recognized as an additional language for that region, although the principal language of the State is Telugu. In Northern India, more especially in Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the use of the Urdu language has been wide spread, though it is confined to a minority chiefly living in towns. In the past, the principal cultural centres of the Urdu language have been Delhi city and Lucknow.

3- . In the areas and regions where the Urdu language is prevalent, the following facilities should be especially provided:

(a) Facilities should be provided for instruction and examination in the Urdu language at the primary stage to all children whose mother tongue is declared by the parent or guardian to be Urdu.

(b) Arrangements should be made for the training of teachers and for providing suitable text books in Urdu.

(c) Facilities for instruction in Urdu should also be provided in the secondary stage of educations.

(4) Documents in Urdu should be accepted by all courts and offices without the necessity of translation or transliteration in any other language or script, and petitions and representations in Urdu should also be accepted.

NCF-2005

In Language, it makes a renewed attempt to implement the three-language formula with emphasis on mother-tongue as the medium of instruction. India is a multi-lingual country and curriculum should promote multilingual proficiency in every child, including proficiency in English, which will become possible only if learning builds on a sound language pedagogy of the mother tongue. It focuses on language as an integral part of every subject, since reading, writing, listening and speech contribute to a child's progress in all curricular areas and therefore constitute the basic of learning.

1.4.0 ORIGIN OF URDU LANGUAGE

The Urdu language developed between the Muslim soldiers of the Mughals armies who belonged to various ethnicities like Turks, Arabs, Persians, Pathans, Balochis, Rajputs, Jats and Afghans. These soldiers lived in close contact with each other and communicated in different dialects, which slowly and gradually evolved into present day Urdu.

Urdu belongs to the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Urdu by origin is considered to be a descendent of Saur

Senic Prakrit. The term Prakriti means root or basis. It is a later version of Sanskrit. As Prakrit language began to develop, it was influenced by Western Hindi dialects of Khari Boli, Brij Bhasa and Haryanvi.

With the coming of Insha's Darya-e-Latafat, a need was felt to differentiate Urdu with other languages especially Hindi. It became a Hindi-Urdu controversy and as a result Khari Boli and Devanagari became the identity of Indians while Urdu and Persian of Muslims. In this context, Persian and Arabic words replaced with Sanskrit served the purpose of differentiating Hindi from Urdu.

1.4.1 OFFICIAL STATUS OF URDU IN INDIA

Urdu is also one of the officially recognised languages in India and has official language status in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh and the national capital, New Delhi.

In Indian administered Kashmir, Urdu is the primary official language.

1.5.0 TO REJECT THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE IN THE SCHOOL IS TO REJECT THE CHILD

When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to children in the school is "Leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door", children also leave a central part of who they are their identities at the

schoolhouse door. When they feel this rejection, they are much less likely to participate actively and confidently in classroom instruction. It is not enough for teachers to passively accept children's linguistic and cultural diversity in the school. They must be proactive and take the initiative to affirm children's linguistic identity by having posters in the various languages of the community around the school, encouraging children to write in their mother tongues in addition to the majority school language (e.g. write and publish pupil-authored bilingual books), and generally create an instructional climate where the linguistic and cultural experience of the whole child is actively accepted and validated.

1.6.0 GUIDELINES OF NCF 2005

Education is not a physical thing that can be delivered through the post or through a teacher. Fertile and robust education is always created, rooted in the physical and cultural soil of the child, and nourished through interaction with parents, teachers, fellow students and the community. The role and dignity of teachers in this unction must be strengthened and underlined. There is a mutuality to the genuine construction of knowledge. In this transaction the teacher also learns if the child is not forced to remain passive.

1.7.0 WHAT IS CONSTRUCTIVISM?

Constructivism may be considered an epistemology (a philosophical framework or theory of learning)(Jean Piaget, 1967), which argues humans construct meaning from current knowledge structures. Formalization of the theory of constructivism is generally attributed to *Jean Piaget*, who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by learners. He suggested that through processes of *accommodation* and *assimilation*, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. When individuals assimilate, they incorporate the new experience into an already existing framework without changing that framework. This may occur when individuals' experiences are aligned with their internal representations of the world, but may also occur as a failure to change a faulty understanding; for example, they may not notice events, may misunderstand input from others, or may decide that an event is a fluke and is therefore unimportant as information about the world. In contrast, when individuals' experiences contradict their internal representations, they may change their perceptions of the experiences to fit their internal representations. According to the theory, accommodation is the process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit new experiences. Accommodation can be understood as the mechanism by which failure leads to learning: when we act on the expectation that the world operates in one way and it violates our expectations, we often fail, but by accommodating this new

experience and reframing our model of the way the world works, we learn from the experience of failure, or others' failure.

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on experiences we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own '*rules*' and '*mental models*' which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences. The term refers to the idea that individuals, through their interaction with the environment, construct their own knowledge and meaning (Fosnot, 1996; Steffe and Gale, 1995). Construction indicates that each learner individually and socially constructs meaning as he/she learns. Constructing meaning is learning. The constructivist perspective provides strategies for promoting learning by all. This metaphor of construction comes from that idea that humans are builders, shapers, and designers, who throughout history have created artifacts from the pots to skyscrapers. The emphasis of the constructivist theory is on the *PROCESS* rather than the *PRODUCT* of learning. Constructivists' theory focuses that the learner in working memory constructs knowledge. In this approach, the students determine how much they have learned as well as the process by which they learned. It changes the dynamics of the traditional class room by empowering the learner as the focus and architect of the learning process while redefining the role of the instructor to be a guide and helper, rather than the source and conduit of knowledge.

This view emerged in the 1980s and 1990s and was based on the study of human learning in increasingly realistic settings. This philosophy has a long history. The major philosophies behind this theory are Dewey, Montessori, Piaget and Vygotsky and Novak. Driver and Easley's article entitled "Pupils and Paradigm: A review of literature related to concept development in adolescent science students", which was published in the Study of Science Education, is considered as the beginning of the constructivist movement. Later on Posner(1982), Driver(1989), Novak(1993) and others conducted studies on 'how children construct knowledge' and 'how teacher can provide interventions to help children construct their own concept'. According to the knowledge construction view, the learner is a sense maker, whereas the teacher is a cognitive guide who provides guidance and modeling on authentic academic tasks. The instructional designer's role is to create environments in which the learner interacts meaningfully with academic material, including fastening the learning process of selecting, organizing and integrating information.

There is a shift from positivist point of view to constructivist point of view, the epistemic view of positivist considers that 'objects' can be studied and the knowledge is discovered unaffected by previous ideas or beliefs. The '*universal truth*' that is discovered is based on logic, objective experience based on inferences and mathematical application. In contrast to this view, the epistemic view of constructivist considers that knowledge is

constructed based on previous knowledge and human experience. There is no final truth '*out there*' but the knowledge is continually tested and refined with further observations and experiences. Thus, students' alternative frameworks, previous experiences and knowledge play an important role to mould students' conception in the classroom.

For meaningful learning to occur in the classroom, it is essential that the understanding of students' learning process is gained and is applied to curriculum construction. In the absence of this, rote memorization largely takes place in the classroom, which is neither helpful nor lasting (Saxena, 1995). Learning with understanding takes place when the four frames of understanding: content frame, problemsolvein frame, epistemic frame and inquiry frame (Perkins and Simmon, 1998) are taken care during teaching and evaluation.

Constructivism believes that students do not come to the class with '*Tabularasa*'- clean slate and their previous experiences, beliefs and ideas affect the interpretations they make of their observations (Driver, 1983). Constructivists' intervention includes continual testing, modification, restructuring and improvement of knowledge based on experiences and experiences

and observations. Its basic assumptions could be listed as:

1. Knowledge acquisition is a constructive or generative process and each student's knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic (Fisher and Lipson, 1986).

2. Students hold intuitive ideas that are both identifiable and stable and have enough commonality to make it worth in planning and instructional strategies (Clough and Driver, 1986)
3. Misconceptions may originate as a result of students' interaction/experiences with the real world and/or because of his/her misinterpretations of the world of ideas presented to him (Driver and Easley, 1978).
4. Development of alternatives frameworks or misconceptions is from the same mechanism that leads to the development of conception. In addition, some modes and sequences of presenting information during teaching may result into development of misconception (Eylon and Linn, 1987).
5. Due to their different conceptual ecologies, different students can 'incorporate' the same new experiences/ideas differently in their conceptual structures/frameworks (Jordan, 1987)
6. The process of concept formation is a continuous process of successive approximation and refinement (Fisher and Lipson, 1986)

1.7.1 BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

- i. Learning is an active meaning-making process required to solve meaningful problems. It is not a passive receptive process.
- ii. Meaningful learning occurs within authentic learning tasks.

- iii. New learning depends on the learner's previous knowledge and experience.
- iv. Social interaction facilitates learning.

1.7.2 PRINCIPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

1. Learning is a search for meaning. Hence, learning must start with the issue around which students are actively trying to construct meaning.
2. Meaning requires understanding wholes as well as parts. Parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Hence, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts.
3. In order to teach well, the teacher must understand the mental models that students use to perceive the world and the assumptions they make to support those models.
4. The purpose learning for an individual is not just memorise the 'right' answers but to construct his or her own meaning.

1.7.3 WHO IS A CONSTRUCTIVIST ?

A constructivist is a practitioner who

- 1 Believes knowledge is constructed or invented by the learner
- 2 Involves learners in active manipulations of meanings, numbers, and patterns
- 3 Believes learning is nonlinear
- 4 Provides students with the tools of empowerment: concepts,

- heuristic procedures, self-motivation, and reflection.
5. Believes learning occurs most effectively through guided discovery, meaningful application, and problem solving.

1.7.4 CONSTRUCTIVISTISM LEARNING INTERVENTION

The learning intervention of constructivis are presented in the following captions.

The Nature of the Learner

The Learner as a Unique Individual

Social constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds. The learner is also seen as complex and multidimensional. Social constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually encourages, utilises and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process (Wertsch, 1997).

The Importance of the Background and Culture of the Learner

Social constructivism encourages the learner to arrive at his or her own version of the truth, influenced by his or her background, culture or embedded worldview. Historical developments and symbol systems, such as language, logic, and mathematical systems, are inherited by the learner as a member of a particular culture and these are learned throughout the learner's life. This also stresses the importance of the nature of the learner's social interaction with knowledgeable members of the society. Without the social interaction with other more knowledgeable

people, it is impossible to acquire social meaning of important symbol systems and learn how to utilize them. Young children develop their thinking abilities by interacting with other children, adults and the physical world. From the social constructivist viewpoint, it is thus important to take into account the background and culture of the learner throughout the learning process, as this background also helps to shape the knowledge and truth that the learner creates, discovers and attains in the learning process (Wertsch 1997).

The Responsibility for Learning

Furthermore, it is argued that the responsibility of learning should reside increasingly with the learner (Von Glasersfeld 1989). Social constructivism thus emphasizes the importance of the learner being actively involved in the learning process, unlike previous educational viewpoints where the responsibility rested with the instructor to teach and where the learner played a passive, receptive role. Von Glasersfeld (1989) emphasizes that learners construct their own understanding and that they do not simply mirror and reflect what they read. Learners look for meaning and will try to find regularity and order in the events of the world even in the absence of full or complete information.

The Motivation for Learning

Another crucial assumption regarding the nature of the learner, concerns the level and source of motivation for learning.

According to Von Glasersfeld (1989) sustaining motivation to learn is strongly dependent on the learner's confidence in his or her potential for learning. These feelings of competence and belief in potential to solve new problems, are derived from first-hand experience of mastery of problems in the past and are much more powerful than any external acknowledgement and motivation (Prawat and Floden 1994). By experiencing the successful completion of challenging tasks, learners gain confidence and motivation to embark on more complex challenges.

1.7.5 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Instructors as Facilitators

According to the social constructivist approach, instructors have to adapt to the role of facilitators and not teachers (Bauersfeld, 1995). Where a teacher gives a didactic lecture which covers the subject matter, a facilitator helps the learner to get to his or her own understanding of the content. In the former scenario the learner plays a passive role and in the latter scenario the learner plays an active role in the learning process. The emphasis thus turns away from the instructor and the content, and towards the learner (Gamoran, Secada, & Marrett, 1998). This dramatic change of role implies that a facilitator needs to display a totally different set of skills than a teacher (Brownstein 2001). A teacher tells, a facilitator asks; a teacher lectures from the front, a facilitator supports from the back; a teacher gives answers according to a set curriculum, a facilitator provides guidelines and creates the

environment for the learner to arrive at his or her own conclusions; a teacher mostly gives a monologue, a facilitator is in continuous dialogue with the learners (Rhodes and Bellamy, 1999). A facilitator should also be able to adapt the learning experience 'in mid-air' by using his or her own initiative in order to steer the learning experience to where the learners want to create value.

The learning environment should also be designed to support and challenge the learner's thinking (Di Vesta, 1987). While it is advocated to give the learner ownership of the problem and solution process, it is not the case that any activity or any solution is adequate. The critical goal is to support the learner in becoming an effective thinker. This can be achieved by assuming multiple roles, such as consultant and coach.

1.7.6 THE NATURE OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

Learning is an Active, Social Process

Social constructivist scholars view learning as an active process where learners should learn to discover principles, concepts and facts for themselves, hence the importance of encouraging guesswork and intuitive thinking in learners (Brown et al.1989; Ackerman 1996). In fact, for the social constructivist, reality is not something that we can discover because it does not pre-exist prior to our social invention of it. Kukla (2000) argues that reality is constructed by our own activities and that people, together as members of a society, invent the properties of the world.

Other constructivist scholars agree with this and emphasize that individuals make meanings through the interactions with each other and with the environment they live in. Knowledge is thus a product of humans and is socially and culturally constructed (Ernest 1991; Prawat and Floden 1994). McMahon (1997) agrees that learning is a social process. He further states that learning is not a process that only takes place inside our minds, nor is it a passive development of our behaviours that is shaped by external forces and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

Vygotsky (1978) also highlighted the convergence of the social and practical elements in learning by saying that the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge. Through practical activity a child constructs meaning on an intrapersonal level, while speech connects this meaning with the interpersonal world shared by the child and her/his culture.

Dynamic Interaction between Task, Instructor and Learner

A further characteristic of the role of the facilitator in the social constructivist viewpoint, is that the instructor and the learners are equally involved in learning from each other as well (Holt and Willard-Holt 2000). This means that the learning experience is both subjective and objective and requires that the instructor's culture, values and background become an essential

part of the interplay between learners and tasks in the shaping of meaning. Learners compare their version of the truth with that of the instructor and fellow learners in order to get to a new, socially tested version of truth (Kukla 2000). The task or problem is thus the interface between the instructor and the learner (McMahon 1997). This creates a dynamic interaction between task, instructor and learner. This entails that learners and instructors should develop an awareness of each other's viewpoints and then look to own beliefs, standards and values, thus being both subjective and objective at the same time (Savery 1994).

Some studies argue for the importance of mentoring in the process of learning (Archee and Duin 1995; Brown et al. 1989). The social constructivist model thus emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the student and the instructor in the learning process.

Some learning approaches that could harbour this interactive learning include reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, problem-based instruction, web quests, anchored instruction and other approaches that involve learning with others.

1.7.7 COLLABORATION BETWEEN LEARNERS

Learners with different skills and backgrounds should collaborate in tasks and discussions in order to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field (Duffy and Jonassen 1992).

Most social constructivist models, such as that proposed by Duffy and Jonassen (1992), also stress the need for collaboration among learners, in direct contradiction to traditional competitive approaches. One Vygotskian notion that has significant implications for peer collaboration, is that of the zone of proximal development. Defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers, it differs from the fixed biological nature of Piaget's stages of development. Through a process of 'scaffolding' a learner can be extended beyond the limitations of physical maturation to the extent that the development process lags behind the learning process (Vygotsky 1978).

Learning by Teaching (LBT) as Constructivist Method

If students have to present and train new contents with their classmates, a non-linear process of collective knowledge-construction will be set up.

The Importance of Context

The social constructivist paradigm views the context in which the learning occurs as central to the learning itself (McMahon 1997).

Underlying the notion of the learner as an active processor is "the assumption that there is no one set of generalised learning

laws with each law applying to all domains" (Di Vesta 1987:208). Decontextualised knowledge does not give us the skills to apply our understandings to authentic tasks because, as Duffy and Jonassen (1992) indicated, we are not working with the concept in the complex environment and experiencing the complex interrelationships in that environment that determine how and when the concept is used. One social constructivist notion is that of authentic or situated learning, where the student takes part in activities which are directly relevant to the application of learning and which take place within a culture similar to the applied setting (Brown et al. 1989). Cognitive apprenticeship has been proposed as an effective constructivist model of learning which attempts to "enculturate students into authentic practices through activity and social interaction in a way similar to that evident, and evidently successful, in craft apprenticeship" (Ackerman 1996:25).

Assessment

Holt and Willard-Holt (2000) emphasize the concept of dynamic assessment, which is a way of assessing the true potential of learners that differs significantly from conventional tests. Here the essentially interactive nature of learning is extended to the process of assessment. Rather than viewing assessment as a process carried out by one person, such as an instructor, it is seen as a two-way process involving interaction between both instructor and learner. The role of the assessor becomes one of entering into dialogue with the persons being assessed to find out their current level of performance on any task and sharing with them possible



ways in which that performance might be improved on a subsequent occasion. Thus, assessment and learning are seen as inextricably linked and not separate processes (Holt and Willard-Holt 2000).

According to this viewpoint instructors should see assessment as a continuous and interactive process that measures the achievement of the learner, the quality of the learning experience and courseware. The feedback created by the assessment process serves as a direct foundation for further development.

Evaluation Techniques

The special Evaluation Techniques for Constructivist Approach are pictorial assessment, reflective questioning, hands-on assessment and concept mapping.

- 1. Pictorial assessment:** It uses pictures that represents familiar objects and events. The assessment device couples with learning activities and can be completed concurrently. Students are required to apply what they have learned and to communicate what they understand. Often more than one answer or solution is possible in an assessment task.
- 2. Reflective questioning:** It consists of written tasks that expect students to respond to a wide range of intellectual tasks. It requires students to reflect on the

lessons content and to use their knowledge in a way that is different from the way it was experienced in the lesson.

3. **Hands-on assessment:** It is otherwise called as Performance Assessment as it permits the teacher to observe how well a student can perform.
4. **Concept mapping:** These are essential tools for planning and teaching and can help improve student concept conceptions while helping to avoid misconceptions. It helps students fulfill high quality and meaningful learning outcomes. It is a good exercise to ask the children to develop maps as the end of instruction to reflect what they understand as a process of summative evaluation.

1.7.8 THE SELECTION, SCOPE AND SEQUENCING OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

Knowledge should be discovered as an integrated whole

Knowledge should not be divided into different subjects or compartments, but should be discovered as an integrated whole (McMahon 1997; Di Vesta 1987).

This also again underlines the importance of the context in which learning is presented (Brown et al. 1989). The world, in which the learner needs to operate, does not approach one in the form of different subjects, but as a complex myriad of facts, problems, dimensions and perceptions (Ackerman 1996).

Engaging and Challenging the Learner

Learners should constantly be challenged with tasks that refer to skills and knowledge just beyond their current level of mastery. This will capture their motivation and build on previous successes in order to enhance the confidence of the learner (Brownstein 2001). This is in line with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development which can be described as the distance between the actual developmental level (as determined by independent problem-solving) and the level of potential development (as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers) (Vygotsky 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) further claimed that instruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development. Then it awakens and rouses to life an entire set of functions which are in the stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development. It is in this way that instruction plays an extremely important role in development.

In order to fully engage and challenge the learner, the task and the learning environment should reflect the complexity of the environment that the learner should be able to function in at the end of learning. Learners must not only have ownership of the learning or problem-solving process, but of the problem itself (Derry 1999).

Where the sequencing of subject matter is concerned, it is the constructivist viewpoint that the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any stage in some form (Duffy and Jonassen 1992). This means that instructors should first introduce the basic ideas that give life and form to any topic or subject area, and then revisit and build upon these repeatedly. This notion has been extensively used in curricula.

It is also important for instructors to realize that although a curriculum may be set down for them, it inevitably becomes shaped by them into something personal which reflects their own belief systems, their thoughts and feelings about both the content of their instruction and their learners (Rhodes and Bellamy 1999). Thus, the learning experience becomes a shared enterprise. The emotions and life contexts of those involved in the learning process must therefore be considered as an integral part of learning. The goal of the learner is central in considering what is learned (Brown et al. 1989; Ackerman 1996).

The Structuredness of the Learning Process

It is important to achieve the right balance between the degree of structure and flexibility that is built into the learning process. Savery (1994) contends that the more structured the learning environment, the harder it is for the learners to construct meaning based on their conceptual understandings. A facilitator should structure the learning experience just enough to make sure that the students get clear guidance and parameters within which to

achieve the learning objectives, yet the learning experience should be open and free enough to allow for the learners to discover, enjoy, interact and arrive at their own, socially verified version of truth.

1.7.9 CONSTRUCTIVISM: LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION

In Constructivist Teaching learners construct their own understanding rather than having it delivered or transmitted to them. Learners use their own experiences to construct understandings that make sense to them. New learning depends on prior understanding and is interpreted in the context of current understanding, not first as isolated information that is later related to existing knowledge.

Learning is enhanced by social interaction. Social interaction in constructivist lessons encourage students to verbalize their thinking and refine their understandings by comparing them with those of others.

An important part of Constructivism are authentic learning tasks. They promote meaningful learning. Authentic tasks are classroom learning activities that require understanding similar to thinking encountered outside the classroom. Many abstract ideas can be made more realistic by embedding them in authentic tasks.

Constructivist learning activity lessons focus on explanations and answers to problems or questions. The

explanations and answers come from learners, not from the teacher, and derive from content representations and social interaction. The teacher helps students construct knowledge by guiding the social interaction and providing content representation.

Constructivist lessons face students with a question that serves as a focus for the lesson. Students are active, both in their groups and in whole-class discussion. Students are given autonomy and control to work on their own. Students develop understandings that make sense to them. Students also acquire understandings that can be applied to the everyday world. Constructivist lessons are intrinsically motivating because they stimulate curiosity; keep learners actively involved, autonomous and controlling of what they learn. This also increases motivation which results in children learning more.

One way to make constructivist teaching more effective is by providing students opportunities to verbalize and share the ideas they are constructing. Group work involves students working together in a group small enough so that everyone can participate on a task that has been clearly assigned. The purpose of group work is to provide opportunities for each student to become actively involved in the thinking task at hand which increases their learning.

1.8.0 OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING FIRST LANGUAGE OR MOTHER-TONGUE

- 1- To acquire the knowledge of:
 - a- Elements of language,
 - b- Different forms and formats of literature, and
 - c- Different forms of compositions.
- 2- To acquire the ability of comprehending whatever he/she listens to.
- 3- To acquire the ability of comprehending whatever he/she reads.
- 4- To acquire the ability of expressing oneself orally.
- 5- To acquire the ability of expressing oneself in writing.
- 6- To acquire the ability of translating from the second language to the first language and vice versa.
- 7- To develop the ability of appreciating the literature of the first language.
- 8- To bring in originality in written expression.
- 9- To develop an interest in mother-tongue and its literature.
- 10- To develop healthy and desirable attitude towards mother-tongue.

1.9.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Researcher in this study aspires to measure the effectiveness of the Constructivist Approach in terms of student's achievement in Urdu language, comparing the achievements of the students staying by Traditional Approach and Constructivist Approach.

Title of the study is:

“Comparison of Constructivist Approach with Traditional Approach for teaching Urdu language to Class 9th in terms of Achievement in Urdu language”

1.10.0 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The Executive Committee of NCERT had taken the decision, at its meeting held on 14 and 19 July 2004, to revise the National Curriculum Framework, following the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development in the Lok Sabha that the Council should take up such a revision. Subsequently, the Education Secretary, Ministry of HRD communicated to the Director of NCERT the need to review the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE – 2000) in the light of the report, Learning Without Burden (1993). In the context of these decisions, a National Steering Committee,

chaired by Prof. Yash Pal, and 21 National Focus Groups were set up. Finally, NCF came in the form of a document in 2005.

Our teachers are following/practicing the behavioral approach in teaching. They consider learners as the passive receiver the information. The classroom is managed in an authoritarian manner. Teachers dominate the class. Students are compelled/forced to draw conclusions as per the directives of the teacher. They are not empowered to take their own decisions. Therefore, learning becomes a either burden for the learners or of no use in their day-to-life. Education is liberation. Providing direction not the decision should be the function of education. Learners have to construct their own knowledge as per their previous experiences and the cultures in which they live in. Constructivist approach considers the learners as “the creator of their own knowledge”. Therefore, the Italian philosopher Giambattita Vico precisely and elegantly said “God knows the world because he created it; human beings can only know what they have made themselves”. Constructivism can be thought of as a “theory of knowing” (Fosnot, 1996) because it examines the way in which we know and learn. As we examine factors related to the construction of knowledge, we find two focal points: that of cognitive constructivism and that of social constructivism. Cognitive constructivists focus on the cognitive processes associated with constructing knowledge as individuals make sense of new information with which they are confronted. Social constructivists concern themselves with the social and cultural

processes at work (Windschitl, 2002). Learners are active creators of their own knowledge by asking questions, exploring subject, and constantly assessing what and how they know. Each new knowledge must be reconciled with prior understanding; else false models (previous knowledge/paradigms) continue to prevail. Teaching through pupil-generated experiments, real-world problem solving, discussion, debate have to be used in this approach.

Critical pedagogy provides an opportunity to reflect critically on issues in terms of their political, social, economic and moral aspects. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and a commitment to democratic forms of interaction. This is important in view of the multiple contexts in which our schools function. A critical framework helps children to see social issues from different perspectives and understand how such issues are connected to their lives. For instance, understanding of democracy as a way of life can be chartered through a path where children reflect on how they regard others (e.g. friends, neighbors, the opposite sex, elders, etc.), how they make choices (e.g. activities, play, friends, career, etc.), and how they cultivate the ability to make decisions. Likewise, issues related to human rights, caste, religion and gender can be critically reflected on by children how different forms of inequalities become compounded and are perpetuated. Critical pedagogy facilitates collective decision teachers making through open discussion and by encouraging and recognising multiple views.

Therefore, need to shift from the behavioral approach to constructivist approach of teaching. Critical Pedagogy and the constructivist approach go hand in hand. Therefore, a study is needed in the area of Constructive Approach to find its effectiveness in terms of the variables related to cognitive and affective domain.

1.11.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

For the present study following objectives have been formulated:-

- 1- To study the effectiveness of the Constructivist Approach in terms of:
 - a- Achievement of students in Urdu language,
 - b- Reaction of students towards the Constructivist Approach.
- 2- To study the effect and interaction of Treatment and Gender on students' Achievement in Urdu by taking Class 8th Achievement in Urdu as covariate..
- 3- To compare the students' classroom behavior before and after the treatment.

1.12.0 HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses for the study were as follows:

- 1- There is no significant effect of Treatment on Adjusted mean score of students' Achievement in Urdu when Class 8th Achievement in Urdu is taken as covariate.

- 2- There is no significant effect of Gender on the student's Achievement in Urdu when Class 8th achievement in Urdu is taken as covariate.
- 3- There is no significant interaction of Treatment and Gender on the Adjusted mean score of students' Achievement in Urdu when Class 8th Achievement in Urdu is taken as covariate.
- 4- There is no change in the students, classroom behavior.

1.13.0 DELIMINATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following were the limitations of the study :

- 1- The small sample was taken due to limited scope and time of the study.
- 2- Standard tools were not available for this study, so investigator constructed tool.
- 3- Sophisticated statistical technique for testing the reliability and validity couldn't be used because of limited facilities.
- 4- The study is limited to the private school of Bhopal.
- 5- The study is limited to class 9th students only.

1.14.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Achievement

Achievement is a general term for successful attainment of some goal requiring:

- a- Certain effect.
- b- The degree of success attained in a test.

- c- The result of certain intellectual or physical activity defined according to objective prerequisites.

In the context of the study, the word achievement means, degree of success attained in post-test, which is related to objectives of two approaches.

Traditional Approach

The Traditional Approach contained the different methods like Lecture Method, Dictation Method and Text Book Method. The learner become passive in this approach.

Constructivist Approach

In the Constructivist Approach, learning is a process of the construction of knowledge. Learners actively construct their own knowledge by connecting new ideas to existing ideas on the basis of material/learning situations presented to them (experience).