SECOND SEMESTER COURSE MATERIAL FOR COURSE 1.2.7A(ENGLISH)

STRATEGIES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

COGNITIVE VIEWS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING:

CONCEPT OF COGNITIVE THEORIES: It focusses on mental processes, including how people think perceived to solve problems. It focusses the processing of information within the pre-existing one. The exponents of cognitive theories are Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky &Robert Gagne.

The Cognitive Approach

Cognitive theory assumes that responses are also the result of insight and intentional patterning.

Insight can be directed to **(a) the concepts behind language** i.e. to **traditional grammar.**
It can also be directed to **(b) language as an operation - sets of communicative functions.**

A variety of activities practised in new situations will allow **assimilation** of what has already been learnt or partly learnt. It will also create further situations for which existing language resources are inadequate and must accordingly be modified or extended - "**accommodation**". This ensures an **awareness** and a **continuing supply of learning goals** as well as **aiding the motivation** of the learner.

Cognitive theory therefore acknowledges **the role of mistakes**. See Dakin's Novish lesson in which he sets deliberate traps in *The Language Laboratory and Language Learning* by Julian Dakin published by Longman 1973.

Dakin:

- "We must design our lessons and language laboratory tapes so as to invite the learner to make **the minimum number of mistakes consonant with, and conducive to, learning new rules.**

- Equally important to the principles underlying the use of "meaningful drills" and also relevant to the role of mistakes in cognitive theory is the **association of mentalism with nationalism.**

An appreciation of cognitive theory can be gained by reviewing the history of language teaching, especially changes in attitude during the 1970s when

"meaningful drills" were being advocated and the shortcomings of "meaningless drills" were being highlighted.

Although drilling and rote learning gained their critics in the second half of the 20th century, it remains the case that:

- no language learner will proceed very far without recognition of language structure, and

- nobody will succeed in learning much without practice and repetition.

The recognition and productive use of patterns will always be an important part of language learning. Teachers adopting a cognitive approach will strive through the exercises they set to make pattern practice meaningful.

A language learner must follow the following patterns while learning a language with the help of cognitive approaches.

- **Substitution drills** merely require the learner to substitute in the previous response the word provided or embedded in the next prompt. The stimulus to which the response is trained is therefore the prompt taken in conjunction with the previous response. The prompts signal the internal changes and the series of responses set the pattern. For the teacher who sees the need for isolation and practice of mechanical production of sentences to improve learners' command of structure or pronunciation.
- **Mutation drills** require systematic changes in the form of words provided in the prompt before a substitution is made. They may therefore be useful in practising inflection of verbs or nouns, agreements between such constituents in the sentence as subject and verb, adjective and noun (in French & Spanish) and case endings.
- **Transformation drills** may embody the changes outlined above but also require at least the option of a change in word order, the addition or deletion of grammatical constituents and may exact the alternation of grammatical pairs. They can accordingly practise changes from affirmative to negative, changes in voice from active to passive, changes in mood, from indicative to interrogative to imperative to subjunctive and changes in sentence-type from simple to compound or complex. A further use of Transformation Drills is in the process of word derivation.
- **Application relationships** (relationships of reference) prompted by pictures, sound effects or knowledge of the world.
- **Collocation relationships** between vocabulary items in a sentence (involving any or all of its constituents) prompted by cue words or whole sentences. The relationship is exclusively verbal and responses depend on a knowledge of lexical inter-dependencies

This is how an enthusiastic language learner learns the language with ease and proficiency.

- **Implication relationships** between sentences prompted by whole sentences and requiring the substitution of synonyms, hyponyms, antonyms, converse terms or consequences in place of their antecedents. S a word or words R its/their counterpart.
- **Consequence, Hyponymy and Antonym Drills** - S: This is a wonderful book. R: Good, I'd like to read it. S: This is a fantastic record. S: Good, I'd like to hear it. R: Felicity is a very nice girl S: Good I'd like to meet her.
- **Synonymy Drills**