CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF ESP IN A COMMUNICATIVE FRAMEWORK – PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

In the first chapter, the researcher examined the concept of communicative competence and restated it for the purpose of this study, as the ability of the user of a language to produce and interpret discourse with specific reference to a particular communicative function in context - this ability being largely determined by the extent of his knowledge of the conventions shared in a given context. The researcher also established the impossibility of arriving at a single communicative grammar for a language.

The major task of this chapter is to find an answer to the question: What is the most appropriate pedagogic programme that will enable a learner to acquire communicative competence as defined above? The most suitable method seems to be the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, with an ESP framework. (CALT hereafter). In proposing the CALT, we shall discuss its most salient features and in the process, explain why we prefer it to the earlier approaches.

By early nineteen eighties a change in the second language pedagogy gave birth to the Communicative Approach which was a revolution against the traditional approaches in the same way that ‘Democracy’ was a revolution against ‘Monarchy’. The development of language learning or teaching from form-based to a meaning-based approach: the move towards an eclectic approach from a rigid method: the shift from teacher-fronted to learner-centred classes: are all subsumed under the broad term
‘communicative approach’. It aims at developing the learner’s communicative competence. In other words, it is mainly concerned with developing the communicative ability in language learners.

The advent of communicative method of teaching language led to the acceptance of errors by learners as a normal part of the learning process. Teachers could now involve learners in group and pair work without making the learners feel guilty in any way about their errors in speech. The process was regarded more important than the product. Howatt (1984) indicates that the original motivation for developing a Communicative Approach was remedial, an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing structural syllabi, materials and methods. However, the recent approach is rather more broad – based and organised on the basis of communicative functions. It has for its goal not just communication but communicative competence. It does not ignore the role of grammar in the process of language teaching but questions the usefulness of grammatical rules without their application to real life situations.

2.2 GOAL OF ALL LANGUAGE TEACHING: COMMUNICATION

Communication is a major function of language. Sometimes it is internally oriented. i.e., with one’s own self (e.g) self-expression, verbal thinking, problem solving, creative writing, etc., More often it has an external orientation i.e., communication with others; and the aim of second language teaching is to develop in the learner, the latter kind of communicative ability. All good language teachers recognise this. It is therefore natural that they may regard with scepticism a slogan like ‘Teaching for communication’, or on acronym like CALT. At the turn of this century, Otto Jespersen had stated, “We ought to learn a language through sensible communications” (1904, p. 11).
What then makes CALT different? The goal of teaching may be universally accepted to be communication; but approaches to language teaching differ in their adoption of different means to achieve the same end. The choice of these means is determined by the answers to two questions. What is language? What does knowing a language involve? The answers are largely influenced by the linguistic, sociological, psychological and pedagogic theories in vogue at a particular time.

The traditional grammarians believed that a set of rules had to be learnt if one wanted to communicate through a language. The advocates of the grammar translation method claimed that one could attain the ability to communicate in a language by learning the rules of grammar and by doing exercises in translation. As written language was considered superior to spoken language, ‘communicating effectively’ was equated with ‘writing effectively’ and this required a strict adherence to classical models which were considered to be perfect and worthy of emulation.

Even among the traditionalists, some emphasized the need to learn a living language rather than the old–fashioned literary form of it. It was felt that “the main foundation of the practical study of language should be connected texts, whose study must be accompanied by grammatical analysis” (Sweet, 1964, p. 100).

The structuralists adopted a different approach in conformity with their attitude to language. To them, language was a formal system. They offered “a description, analysis and a set of definitions and formulas – rules if you will, based firmly and consistently on the easier, or at least the most objective aspect of language use - form” (Francis, 1971, p. 77). Influenced by behaviorist psychology, they considered language as a set of habits and learning as essentially a process of conditioning. Drills and pattern practice were regarded as the right means to achieve communicative abilities in a
language. Since language was viewed as a system of structures, a mastery of the structures was expected to provide one with the ability to communicate, “We can now define completely for our purposes what it is to know how to use a language. A person knows how to use a language when he can use its structure accurately for communication at will, with attention focussed on content, recalling automatically the units and patterns are needed and holding them for a normal memory span at conversational speed …” (Lado, 1964, pp. 34 – 35).

A cognitive approach to language learning was advocated by the transformationalists. According to them, language manifested rule governed creativity. Linguistics was regarded as a branch of cognitive psychology. ‘To know’ a language was to acquire competence in the Chomskyean sense of the term. A grammar accounted for the relation between deep structure and surface structure with a set of phrase structure rules and transformational rules. Learning a language required learning those rules. Commenting on the structuralists, Lakoff (1971, p. 60) remarks: “ … until recently it was considered heretical to suggest that people were in any interesting way different from rats” ; and adds “… we are doing something different, something that utilises the unique capacities of human beings to a fuller extent than other methods, which we hope will give learners more insight into other language and enable them to use them more like native speakers” (p. 69).

Realizing the futility of taking extreme positions, some advocate an eclectic approach that is more practically related to the realities of the classroom. “Teaching, like life, has its own criteria, by which it integrates for its needs, and it should not bother language teachers whether they are clear enough to draw theoretical lines around” (Bolinger, 1971, p. 36).
More recently, a communicative approach has been claimed to be “a goal, which if pursued realistically and with a broader spectrum of learners in mind – can be the most intrinsically motivating language learning objective that our profession has ever conceived” (Finocchiaro, 1977, p. 7). This view, however, is not universally accepted. Some are sceptical of its validity and consider it to be the latest jargon in language teaching which will be outdated in a few years: “There is a case for regarding communicative competence as one of the goals (an incidental goal) of language learning ... there is no case for regarding communicative competence as the central organizational and constitutive principle of classwork” (George, 1978, p. 4). According to George, a CALT is not relevant to Asian ELT as it advocates a restricted kind of realism and violates the criterion of efficiency. He warns the Asian teachers of English that their greatest regional shortcoming is the absence of detailed, neutral observations of what happens in the classrooms.

In order to ascertain where the truth lies, it is necessary to examine the major assumptions of CALT in so far as they relate to the concepts of What a language is, what knowing a language involves and the new orientations in pedagogy that accompany it.

2.3 THE MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS OF A CALT

Linguistics today has been enriched with insights from various other spheres of knowledge: anthropology, sociology, ethnography of communication, philosophy of language, psychology, ethnomethodology, pragmatics, etc.,. The contribution of all these to a better understanding of the nature of language has already been referred to in Chapter one.
Roulet discusses why “the principal linguistic theories from de Saussure to Chomsky which have been applied to problems of language teaching have all failed to provide information on the use of language as an instrument of communication. What they have done is to concentrate on the system, not use; the sentence, not the discourse; the referential function of language, to the exclusion of other functions; only one variety of language” (1975, p. 75).

The inadequacy of earlier linguistic theories, along with new insights in linguistics led to the postulation of a communicative competence which subsumed linguistic competence. There was a shift of focus from language regularised, standardised and decontextualised, to language in context, in all its variety and complexity. In conformity with this trend, a different means of arriving at the same goal of communication was necessary.

The concept of communication has formed the major focus of attention in recent discussions on language teaching. Allwright (1977, p. 167). Raises the following basic questions:

Are we teaching language (for communication)? or

Are we teaching communication (via language)?

As linguistic competence forms a part of communicative competence, he feels that it is worthwhile starting with communication as the primary focus of language teaching.
To communicate effectively, a learner needs to acquire communicative competence as defined in Chapter one. This would involve:

- a knowledge of shared conventions with reference to specific functions in context;
- an awareness of language as a dynamic process;
- a knowledge of the rules of use as well as the rules of usage;
- a focus on language as discourse;
- a focus on specific purposes - which brings in the notion of ESP.

The features listed above constitute the approach to language teaching adopted in this study; the implementation of these factors in the classroom is expected to provide a different means of arriving at the same goal of communication. The fact that the means are different is significant; but it is also necessary to establish that they are better than the means adopted by earlier approaches. This will be the main focus of the next section, where we shall defend the CALT while defining it.

2.4 LANGUAGE AS A SET OF SHARED CONVENTIONS

Language is a set of conventions - both linguistic and sociocultural. Communication is possible only if there is a shared knowledge of conventions between the encoder and decoder. These conventions are related to communicative functions in context. The first and major task of the CALT is to identify the shared conventions relevant to the learners on the basis of two criteria: their purpose for communication (ESP here) and their level of competence. They may already be aware of certain conventions; these need not be included in the present course.
The learner cannot be merely presented with a list of conventions; if so the CALT will not be significantly different from the earlier approaches. Instead of providing a list of grammatical rules, structures, phrase structure rules and transformational rules, or notions or functions, we will be presenting a list of conventions and a learner also needs to know how these conventions are realized through appropriate language. “Communicating is not merely a matter of following conventions, but also of negotiating through and about the conventions themselves. It is a convention-creating as well as a convention-following activity. So in learning how to communicate, the learner is confronted by a variable process” (Breen & Candlin, 1980, p. 90).

A list of shared conventions is necessary for the CALT. What makes the CALT different is that it provides a list of conventions, a different way of enabling the learner to acquire these conventions. This is influenced by a view of language as a dynamic process and not a static product. The learner will learn through negotiation, not through information-transfer.

2.5 COMMUNICATION AS A PROCESS

Every good language teacher believed that he taught language for communication; he viewed communication as the end product or target to be achieved. The CALT brings a communication from product to process. The learners learn to communicate by communicating, i.e., he learns by doing. Communication becomes both the means and the end. The learner is constantly engaged in negotiating the discourse relevant to his needs, and this enables him to acquire the ability to produce and interpret discourse, i.e., to become an efficient user of the language. The choice of
the type of discourse is determined by the communicative functions relevant to his needs.

In viewing communication as a process, it is possible to treat it either as the content of the process or as the method of the process. The communicative approach introduces communication, as the content of the process. The communicational approach brings in communication as the method of the process. This needs further clarification and exemplification.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{COURSE} & \text{TARGET} \\
\hline
\text{Communication} & \text{Communication} \\
\text{Process} & \text{Product} \\
\end{array}
\]

Content  Method

The above diagram indicates how Communication which has so far been treated as the target or end product of a course, has now been shifted to occupy the position of a component of the course itself. The major focus of the course is Communication as a process. The process of Communication may be treated in two ways - as forming the contents of the course, or as prescribing the methodology of the course.

Any approach to language teaching so far has defined its contents before proceeding to discuss how these can be taught best. In a grammatical syllabus, the area of grammar to be taught is specified. In a Communicative syllabus design as said by (Munby, 1977) the content of the syllabus is arrived at after determining the variables in the Communication Needs Processor. As a Communicative syllabus takes the needs
of the learner as the starting point, it has to define these needs as the content of the course. ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses belong to this category; the contents of the course are defined in terms of the specific purposes for which English is learnt - social, academic, occupational or official. Thus an approach to language teaching which considers the process of communication as the means to an end and defines in clear terms the content of the process may be termed a Communicative Approach or CALT.

The other approach presented in the diagram above also views communication as a process and as the means to an end but differs in fundamental aspect. There is no specification of the content of the syllabus. However, the focus is on the method. The learner is treated as a problem-solver who has a pre-occupation with meaning. In the process of his struggle to understand what the problem means, he acquires language unconsciously. The methodology, or how it is to be taught is considered to be more important than the content or what is to be taught. It is therefore not possible to design a content-based syllabus but only a procedural syllabus which indicates what is to be done in the classroom, rather than what parts of the content are to be learnt at different stages. This approach is termed Communicational, to distinguish it from the content-oriented communicative approach referred to earlier.

A communicational approach may be suitable for the early stages of language learning where a learner is not able to define for himself the purposes for learning a language; when his purposes are defined, he may benefit better from a communicative approach or CALT. For the purposes of this study, therefore, we have decided to adopt the CALT to find out the communicative competency level of the students.
2.6 Rules of Use and Rules of Usage

The shared conventions of communication which a learner needs to acquire may be considered from two different levels: the sociocultural and the linguistic; and they correspond to Widdowson’s (1978) distinction between rules of use and rules of usage. The learners selected for this study are advanced learners at the tertiary level; they are expected to possess adequate linguistic competence or knowledge of the rules of usage at the sentence-level.

They should now learn the rules of use (at the sentential and discoursal level) and also the rules of usage at the discoursal level. This would help the learners to negotiate shared conventions in context. There are three different ways in which these rules may be built into a suitable pedagogic programme:

- Present the rules of usage alone and assume that the rules of use will be learnt automatically.
- Systematically relate the rules of usage to the rules of use.
- Present language as communication and expect the learners to infer the rules of use as well as the rules of usage.

The choice of the first alternative requires decision on a more fundamental, but related question: Is there a need to teach grammar at the advanced level? It is the common experience of teachers of English in Indian Universities that students make a number of grammatical mistakes in spite of having learnt formal grammar for many years.

They have learnt English through a non-CALT programme which teaches the code first. Language is presented as a means of exemplifying certain features of the code.
In a situational approach, for instance the following dialogue might take place:

Teacher : Is there a book on the table?
Student : Yes, there is a book on the table

Both the teacher and the student know that the book is on the table and the student knows that the teacher knows. This is a very artificial situation, since there is no genuine information gap and the emphasis is on learning structures under the pretence of communication.

2.7 FOCUS ON FUNCTIONS IN DISCOURSE

A communicative view of language necessarily focuses on language as discourse, and attempts to train the learner to produce and interpret discourse, through negotiating the meaning potential of a text. The CALT by definition, is need-based, it is concerned with the purposes for which learners need English, purposes which can be expressed as functions in context: “ESP thus fits firmly within the general movement towards ‘communicative’ teaching of the last decade or so” (Brumfit, 1980, p. 108).
2.8 ESP - VALID AND RELEVANT CONCEPT

2.8.1 The concept of special language

English for Special Purposes implies that there is a special language for the special purpose. This notion of a special language has often been misunderstood and treated with scepticism. This was due to two reasons: an inadequate notion of register and the confusion of a special language with a specialized aim.

The language of law or the language of science for instance, was regarded as a ‘special’ language. This was related to the notion of register: “Language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations. The name given to a variety of language, distinguished according to use, is register” (Halliday, MacIntosh & Strevens, 1964, p. 87). Registers were defined according to their formal properties, any given register could be identified on the basis of lexis and grammar. Different registers may be established on this basis. “There is no need to labour the point that a sports commentary, a church service and a school lesson are linguistically quite distinct. One sentence from any of these and many more such situation types would enable us to identify it correctly” (Halliday et al).

2.8.2 ESP - A SPECIFIC WAY OF USING ENGLISH

In order to avoid the misconceptions arising out of the use of the term ‘Special’, we have decided to consider ESP as English for Specific Purposes. This specific English may be regarded as special way of using English as determined by the functions in a particular context involving specific topics, role relationships, etc., ESPs are situationally, rather than formally conditioned. The way discourse is organised determines the nature of the language.
It has already been stated in Chapter one that a unique model of discourse or a communicative grammar of English is impossible. Discourse is determined by numerous variables in context; it is an ongoing process of negotiation involving interactional strategies.

The foregoing discussion attempted to clarify certain misconceptions arising out of regarding ESP as a special kind of language defined by certain lexico grammatical features. The preference of the term ‘Specific’ has been helpful. The specific purposes for which the learner requires English determine the communicative functions in context. It is useful to define ESP as a special way of using language in a particular context. ESP in this perspective, is a valid and relevant concept in ELT. We shall now attempt to make a stronger case for ESP by establishing that ESP is a much more valid goal in education than English for General Purposes (EGP hereafter).

2.8.3 ESP - A MORE REALISTIC EDUCATIONAL GOAL THAN EGP

In accepting the notion of ESP, we acknowledge that there are specific purposes for learning a language. This raises a related question: Can there also be non-specific purposes for learning a language? It may be argued that passing examinations may be a valid purpose in itself. This cannot, however, be taken seriously since the argument applies to the whole curriculum and not English alone; further a curriculum planner cannot regard passing examinations as an adequate educational goal.

A more valid question would be: Is there a general non-specific purpose for communication, as against a specific purpose? Communication always takes place for a specific reason. It is not possible to find anyone communicating for a vaguely general purpose, except perhaps insane people; but even they, by their very vagueness
communicate their insanity. Phatic communion also has a purpose. It helps to establish social relationships though the focus may not be on the verbal message.

2.8.4 EGP IN L₁ SITUATIONS

It may be argued that there must be a set of purpose common to everyone, since a native speaker begins his language acquisition by learning to communicate for life’s ordinary purposes, which are common or general to every speaker. There seems to be a confusion of issues here; what is regarded as ‘general’ or ‘common’ refers to communication for social purposes. A native child requires his L₁ to perform certain specific social functions in his speech community and not for some general purposes common to all contexts. It is possible to identify a set of common purposes for communication in social interaction, in a man’s daily life; and these need not be consciously learnt; they are acquired in the process of learning one’s native language.

If we interpret ‘general’ to mean the common purposes for communication in day to day life, we admit that there are certain communicative purposes common to life’s ordinary requirements; but this does not imply that there is a common English shared by all these contexts; each communicative function or purpose has a specific linguistic realisation in a particular context as determined by the several variables operating in that context: “To take a trivial example, when I offer a cup of tea to my family in bed in the morning, what I say is necessarily different from what I say if I offer a cup of tea at midmorning to a post graduate student, and it is different again from what I say if the vice-chancellor passes by in the afternoon and I offer a cup of tea to him” (Strevens, 1977, p. 144).

Since linguistic realizations vary according to social contexts, a person belonging to a lower class will speak very differently from a speaker of the upper class.
and will feel uncomfortable in a different social set-up. If he has to communicate with someone from the upper class, he needs to learn the language. A second language learner may have the ability to communicate for these same purposes in his mother tongue, but he has to learn these in L₂. What are common purposes to L₁ learners may be specific purposes to L₂ learners.

These common or general purposes are not common to all contexts of communication; if it were so, then a native learner will not require any formal training in his L₁; but this is not true. When a native child has a formal education, he acquires communicative competence in his L₁ in contexts with which he was unfamiliar at home. For example if he is a student of science, he learns to express communicative functions in science through his L₁. If there were an area of English common to all communicative contexts, then a native speaker should be able to communicate with facility in any context; but often there are instances where a native speaker finds himself incompetent.

Selinker (1979) reports the findings of a research project to answer the question, “what does a native speaker of English, not trained in genetics need to learn in order to understand a particular genetics text?” The question implies that a native speaker needs to learn something, i.e., he requires training in his L₁ for specific purposes. One of the participants in the project is reported to have said: “How can we teach the non-native speaker to read this stuff when we don’t even know what we don’t even know” (Selinker, p. 201).

It is possible that a non-native speaker may be able to communicate better than a native speaker, if he has had training in English for certain specific purposes. As
pointed out in the first chapter, a non-native lawyer in the Indian context today will be able to communicate much better in legal English than a native baker. In bilingual and multilingual situations as in India, L₁ is used for social purposes and English for academic, occupational or official purposes. Most educated Indians find it difficult to communicate in L₁ for any purposes other than social as they have had no formal training in it.

In L₁ situations, the term ‘general’ is treated as equivalent to ‘common’, and we have suggested that even if there are certain common purposes for communication in everyday life (which we would prefer to regard as communication for social purposes) there need not necessarily be an English common to all these purposes. There can be no English for general purposes as against English for specific purposes in L₁ situations. Even an L₁ speaker requires training in L₁ for specific purposes.

2.8.5 EGP IN L₂ SITUATIONS

The term general English or English for General Purposes is more common to L₂ situations. Most Indian Universities offer a compulsory course in General English, which is expected to provide the learner with general competence in English. An examination of any of these General English syllabi indicates the nature of the contents of these courses. The general English syllabi for the first semester of the first year degree class in Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (2006-2007), for instance, includes the following:

A Prose text - An anthology of short essays of which four pieces are prescribed

- The Suitor and Papa
- The Sniper
A Handful of Dates
Two Gentlemen of Verona

One Act Plays

Two Blind Men and a Donkey
The Pie and the Tart
The Shirt
Refund

An Anthology of Poems

Composition - Letter writing, Note making, Dialogue writing,
Report writing, Precis - writing, Comprehension,
Developing hints into an Essay.

One Extensive Reader - Abridged version of a novel.

Grammar & Usage - Nouns, Articles, Prepositions, Adjectives,
Adverbs, transformation of sentences relating to specific areas.

Spoken English - A Course in Spoken English (M.S. University publication prescribed for all the four semesters).

The plight with ‘Spoken English’ is that it is not being dealt by teachers in most colleges. Spoken English is tested through written mode. A further painful circumstance is that a student who fails to open his mouth during spoken viva receives 20/20 but fails miserably in his theory paper. Hence communicative tasks have to be incorporated into the syllabus and not taught as a separate area.

The prevalent pattern of the GE courses seems to be the prescription of reading texts (anthologies of poetry and prose, short stories, novels and plays along with some exercises in reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and composition). Though
‘Language items’ are used in some universities, there has been no attempt to understand the learner’s needs and interest in a systematic way. This is evident from the design of the syllabuses above mentioned and their implementation in the classrooms.

A syllabus of the above kind lacks specificity; it is too general to achieve any results. The prose text focuses on the skill of intensive reading; the extensive readers attempt to cultivate literary sensibility and also more exposure to language. The Anthology of poems is also meant to foster the ability to appreciate literature. The composition exercises focus on communication skills, with no specific purpose in view. The grammar component is mainly remedial.

This syllabus is a compromise which attempts to please everyone but succeeds in pleasing no one. The advocates of literature complain that the syllabus is of a very low standard and it is impossible to cultivate literary sensibility in the learners with this syllabus. The students find it uninteresting as it has no relevance to their respective courses; it does not enable them to understand texts on their subjects. The general English classes offer a means of relaxation from the rigours of the subject classes.

General English has no relevance for the learners except perhaps as a subject to be passed in examination. The English teacher finds himself superfluous and is frustrated. Further the teaching methodology is often examination oriented and teacher-centred, done largely through lecturing, text explication, translation and dictation of notes. Not much remedial teaching is done though the provision exists in some universities. Testing in most universities appears to be a mismatch between what is taught and what is tested, and is often in the form of end-of-the-year examinations, without any internal assessment.
Therefore learners end up in memorising select sections of the syllabus for the examinations, without developing the readiness to break from the confinement of prescribed practices (Hudson, 1967). In other words, students tend to rely more on convergence to certain established patterns of knowledge and behaviours, and not divergence towards creativity to cope with problems, which have no ready made formulaic solutions (Widdowson, 1983).

As a result, the General English courses in India have failed since they lack specificity and do not meet learner needs, but attempt to cater to the teacher’s notion of what the learner needs. Realizing the need for formulating aims and objectives in the light of learner requirements, an urgent need to relocate English learning in a more practical, skill-oriented package for the students, as in the ESP courses, the Syllabus Reforms Committee (1976 - 77, pp. 2 - 3) suggested the following: At the national level, English must serve as our ‘Window on the World’ - as the language in which nearly all contemporary knowledge is accessible. At the individual level, English will still serve as ‘the language of opportunity’; any individual seeking socio-economic advancement will find ability in English an asset.

The vagueness and imprecision associated with general English courses seem to be common to EGP courses not merely in India, but all over the world. Brumfit remarks: “If ESP courses run the danger of being fuzzy and imprecise ... If an ESP teacher’s strength is his willingness to try to specify precisely the nature and needs of the learners entering his course, related to his purposes, the General English teacher’s weakness is his unwillingness to do this” (1977, p. 72).

It would therefore be more useful to treat General English as a combination of a number of ESPs relevant to learner needs - and not as an ‘ad hoc’ amalgam of unrelated
purposes that achieve no results. The general English course offered to an undergraduate in India may consist of three components:

- **EAP** - English related to his discipline, (e.g.) English for Economics
- **ESS** - English for Social Survival - to the extent it is relevant in an L2 situation like India.
- **EOP** - English for occupational/official purposes.

EGP should therefore be modified to integrate a number of very specific purposes for learning a language. The General English offered in the Indian Universities today is a contradiction in terms; it may be more appropriately called ENP or ‘English for No Purpose’.

This perspective on EGP is useful in answering a major criticism against ESP. “Can ESP be an adequate goal in the broader educational perspective?” By restricting learners to a specific kind of English, ESP programmes may be deliberately cutting off the rich heritage of English culture or even world culture, available through the English language. A utilitarian ESP course fails in this respect, but it is necessary to think of priorities. The immediate goal of learning English in the Indian context today is to provide opportunities for the development of good engineers, scientists, lawyers, etc., In a competitive world, specialist education has greater relevance than the earlier kind of liberal education.

As indicated in the above discussion, ESP is a question of priorities. If English is needed only for very specific purposes, a narrowly focussed ESP course is adequate. In the Indian context, where English serves as the link language, a more organised EGP course consisting of a number of ESP courses would be relevant. It is thus possible to envisage ESP Programmes that are relevant but not narrowly restricted.
The above discussion has been helpful in pointing out the vagueness, imprecision and lack of specificity associated with general English courses. A General English course may become useful if it is treated as a combination of a number of ESP courses relevant to the learner.

2.9 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL SCENE IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

Statistics show that the higher education system in India is probably one of the largest in the world with no fewer than 4,50,000,000 students, employing 2,63,125 teachers (out of which 58,661 teach in University departments and constituent colleges, and 2,04,464 teach in colleges affiliated to universities) (1991 UGC Report, cited in Rao, 1995, p. 237). The increased enrolment at the UG level over the years has led to the mushrooming of affiliated colleges run by private management. In addition, there are the open universities and correspondence course institutions of recognised universities. All these expansions in the educational sector in the post - independent Indian University scene were apparently meant to meet the manpower requirements of the country.

However, in reality there has been little effort during the past several decades to link educational opportunities with employment opportunities. In fact, there have been continual shortcomings in the educational sector, which show that the “bulk of the expansion of facilities has been at the first degree stage (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., and B.B.A.,) with resources for education always short of requirement and the quality of education offered in many institutions sub-standard; enrolment has increased primarily in arts, commerce and science courses, which offer few employment opportunities with few regulatory mechanisms, and an unwillingness to even enforce the ones that exist, sub-standard institutions have been established, and seeking higher education has
largely been purposeless, more for whiling away time as no worthwhile options are available” (UGC Report on Vocationalisation of Education, 1993, p.1).

An average undergraduate student presumably looks upon the university as a means of getting degrees and/or diplomas, but without any well-defined purpose in terms of employment prospects. Most of the courses are also not skill-oriented programmes, which will serve as an educational bridge to the employment market. This leads to a colossal waste of human resources.

Therefore a dire need for creating a framework and programme of action to reduce the mismatch between higher education and the manpower needs of the country is required: “The situation therefore calls for special efforts and programmes in the university sector to develop human resources compatible with the requirements of contemporary society and to evolve mechanisms for the generation of new employment opportunities in the private and public sectors, both in conventional and non-traditional areas” (Khanna, 1991, p. 54), yet no kind of education should be a mere tailor-made manpower for the worker market nor can degrees guarantee immediate work opportunities.

However, it is becoming important that “educational and training institutions should show an awareness and appreciation of the social and economic changes which make demands on the system to produce persons with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for assuming productive and creative roles in society” (UGC Report on Vocationalisation of Education, 1993, p.1). Thus a policy of this kind of manpower - a workforce of useful as well as enterprising citizens geared towards the developmental needs of the country is to be produced.
2.10 SPE - SPECIFIC PURPOSES FOR ENGLISH

Teaching English for specific purposes seems to be a valid educational goal. An even better alternative may be to start with the specific purposes and then relate them to English; for languages serve the purpose of communication and not vice versa: “As soon as possible English for specific purposes needs to turn into specific purposes using English” (Brumfit, 1977, p.72). It is better to think in terms of SPE-specific purposes for the use of English rather than ESP.

This perspective on ESP may solve another problem in the implementation of ESP programmes, viz., Who is to teach ESP? The English teacher or the science teacher? In a college in Tiruchendur there was an interesting controversy between the English and Commerce departments as to who should teach business correspondence to commerce students. The English department claimed that they alone had the required competence in the English language; but the Commerce department decided to teach the course, as they felt that they were better equipped to handle the subject.

The only possible answer to the question, “who is to teach ESP”? is, that neither is fully qualified - the English teacher does not know the subject, and the subject teacher, most often is not good at English.

2.11 ESP PROGRAMME AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Most of the ESP programmes today are designed for adult learners at the tertiary level in developing countries. The basic assumption of most such courses is that the learners have the required linguistic competence in $L_2$; the purpose of some of these courses is to activate the dormant linguistic competence into communicative competence. Usually a course in general English is offered to beginners. This is
basically structural, giving the learner core-Grammatical competence in a number of ‘ad hoc’, unrelated communicative situations. After the learner has acquired the desired grammatical competence at the secondary level, a superstructure of a CALT attempts to build the communicative competence for the required purpose. ESP today for adult learners at the tertiary level in developing countries combines two approaches:

A grammatical (structural) approach at the initial level + A Communicative (functional) approach at the advanced level

This seems to be the most sensible way of introducing ESP in the present context of second language learning in India, where the learners are expected to have mastered the structures and this knowledge has to be exploited in order to derive maximum benefits with minimal effort.

An ESP course, by definition, is based on a specification of language needs from the learner’s point of view. A young learner may not be able to decide on the specific purpose for which he might need English later in life. Children in India, for instance, generally start learning English at the age of seven or eight.

Two types of solutions may be offered to this problem: positive as well as negative. The negative solution is, not to teach any English until the learner is able to decide for himself the purpose for which he requires English. Relevance to his needs should be motivated enough for him to master the language in a short span of time with concentrated effort. It would be a meaningful use of language in a relevant context. The
researcher’s six year old nephew for instance refused to learn to speak English. No amount of coaxing was of any use. A guest who could speak only English arrived and the child became very fond of her but was not able to communicate with her. In despair he accused his mother of having failed to teach him English. He had a very specific purpose for learning English.

A categorisation of the different types of ESP will be useful for course-designers in ESP; it would be particularly relevant to this study, if it specifies the role of ESS (English for Social Survival) within a general ESP framework. In the process of categorisation, our notions regarding ESP will also be made clearer.
The categorisation of Strevens (1977, p. 92) may be taken as our starting point.
The following modification of Strevens’ taxonomy:

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ESP
  - English for Science
    - English for Law
      - English for Medicine
        - Restricted
          - Elaborated
  - English for Occupational/Vocational purposes
    - (EVP)
  - English for Academic Purposes
    - (EAP)
    - ESS - in a native language situation
      - ESS1 - in a native language situation
      - ESS2 - in L2 Situations
      - ESS3 - in foreign language situations
  - English for Social Survival
    - (ESS)
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("English for Academic Purposes\) (EAP)\)

("English for Social Survival\) (ESS)\)

("English for Official Purposes\) (EOP)\)
If one needs to communicate with native speakers in their own country, one has to acquire ESS; Newmark (1979, p. 60) cites a relevant example: To get one’s cigarette lit by a stranger, one has to say “Do you have light?” or “Got a match?” and not “Do you have illumination”? or “Are you a match’s owner?” though the latter sentences are perfectly grammatical.

In a country like India where English is the second language, a learner requires a different kind of competence - ESS\textsubscript{2}. A question like “Where you are going?” or a uniform tag question like “Isn’t it?” may be tolerated by an average Indian though it will irritate / amuse a native speaker. What is accepted without reservation in an ESS\textsubscript{2} situation, may not be accepted at all or accepted condescendingly in an ESS\textsubscript{1} situation.

If, however, one visits England merely as a tourist, a lower level of competence would be adequate for his purposes. A tourist is interested in intelligible communication, not identification with the English society. The language of the tourist phrase book is adequate for his purposes. The English he requires may be termed ESS\textsubscript{3}.

It is therefore probable that a learner may require competence in English for sheer social survival and this is not related to occupational, academic or official purposes. ESS is an important category of ESP that needs to be included in our taxonomy. This is overlooked by many since ESS is often equated with English for General purposes (EGP). We have already discussed this in the previous section and established how even life’s ordinary purposes require a specific kind of English which does not necessarily constitute a common basis on which other ESP programmes could be built.
Any English language teaching programme, if it is to be relevant and successful, should include all the components - ESS, EAP, EVP and EOP, the level and proportion of which is determined by a prior analysis of learner needs. Eg., A student of science needs EST to be able to interpret and produce texts in science. Later, when he becomes a full–fledged practising scientist he needs EVP to communicate with others in relation to his occupation and EOP to communicate at the official level. He also needs ESS to identify himself with the society at a non-technical level; in his own country or in other countries.

The only meaningful, profitable and relevant way of learning English (or any language for that matter) seems to be through ESP programmes as outlined above consisting of four components – ESS, EAP, EVP, EOP. The best way to learn a language is to learn it for a purpose, and an ESP programme answers this requirement.

2.12 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN ESP COURSES

Since communication strategies play a significant role in communication, it may be useful to build in enough challenge into course materials in order to create conditions congenial for the use of strategic competence which would in turn produce the required oral competency. As discussed in the previous chapter, in a heterogeneous class, there are definitely a good number of disadvantaged learners who suffer from incompetence and, who have not attained the cognitive skills nor the second language learning strategies required to comprehend such materials and the appended language tasks. As a result, the disadvantaged L2 learners tend to become passive and, consequently, frustration sets in them, leading them, eventually, to a ‘switch off’ stage. So there is a need for a separate set of materials for these learners designed with the specific goal of repairing their cognitive, strategic, linguistic and communicative
hurdles of a fundamental nature. This would gradually motivate and prepare them to negotiate with materials of higher cognitive and communicative challenges. For the purpose of this study let us define Communication Strategy first because one of the reasons for communicative incompetence among rural women students is the lack of communication strategy and then move to the theoretical perspectives of communication strategies.

Poulisse (1994) indicates that of all definitions of CSs that have been offered so far, the one by Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 36) is the most widely used. They define CSs as “Potential conscious plans for solving what presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”. In this definition problem-orientedness is adopted as a primary and potential consciousness as a secondary criterion. In practice, this means that CSs can be identified when speakers are aware of a problem in their communication.

2.12.1 TYPOLOGIES OF CSs

Faerch and Kasper (1983) classify communication strategies into three major types:

- Formal reduction strategies
- Functional strategies and
- Achievement strategies

1. Formal reduction strategies

These are strategies used by learners to avoid producing non-fluent or incorrect utterances. Using such strategies, learners focus on the use of specific, limited rules or patterns that they can perfectly master. The purpose of utilizing these strategies, which deal with linguistic aspects of the target language, i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis, is to avoid errors and to facilitate speech.
2. Functional Reduction Strategies

These strategies are used when the learners have experienced problems in the planning phase (due to insufficient linguistic resources) or the execution phase (retrieval problems). The aim of such strategies is to avoid rather than to achieve.

3. Achievement strategies

Whereas the previous two kinds of strategies are to solve communication problems using avoidance, achievement strategies make use of communication resources expansion. They are used both in planning and executive phase. Achievement strategies used in the planning phase are called compensatory strategies. They are classified as follows:

a) Code switching:

Code switching refers to a change by a speaker from one language or variety to another one. It can take place in a conversation when one speaker uses one language and the other speaker answers in a different language. A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of their speech or sometimes even in the middle of the sentence.

b) Interlanguage transfer

It is similar to code switching but rather it includes the shift to a combination of linguistic features of the native language and the interlanguage. Here, the learner combines a word in his native language with a word in the foreign language that has similar spelling or pronunciation but with different meaning. For example the Danish word “history” which means “story” may be matched with the English word “history”.

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c) **Inter-intralingual transfer**

This strategy includes overgeneralisation of grammatical rules. For example, the words “people” and “information” will be pluralized as “peoples” and “informations” which means the learner did not master the exceptions of the grammatical rules of the target language.

d) **Interlanguage-based strategies**

These are strategies affected by problems that learners face in their interlanguage system. To solve these problems, learners may use: generalisation, paraphrase, and/or word coinage (using new words of the individual’s own to express what that individual wants to say, e.g., “inner clothes” for “underwear”)

e) **Cooperative strategies**

Such strategies are used where learners fail to communicate successfully, and ask for help from the listener, the teacher, a friend and so on.

f) **Non-linguistic strategies**

In face to face communication, the learners may use non-verbal mime, gesture, and signals. Whereas achievement strategies aiming at solving problems at the planning phase are called compensatory strategies, achievement strategies used to overcome obstacles in the execution phase are called retrieval strategies. The retrieval strategies are categorized in Faerch and Kasper (1983) as follows: Waiting for the term to appear, appealing to formal similarity, retrieving via semantic fields, searching via other language, retrieving from learning situations and sensory procedures.
Littlewood (1984) offers a typology containing eight strategies. They are:

- Avoid communication
- Adjust the message
- Use paraphrase
- Use approximation
- Create new words
- Switch to the native language
- Use non-linguistic resource
- Seek help

He further suggests that when the learner is aware of gaps or weaknesses in his linguistic repertoire and when he feels that others are competing for turns he chooses to avoid participating in the discussion of the topic. When the learner cannot avoid participating he may choose to adjust the message to the linguistic resources available to him. For example, he may omit some information which he is unable to express or may express it less precisely by slightly changing the meaning.

He may also describe a word or a concept for which he does not know the target language expression, which is called paraphrase. For example, if he does not know the word “kettle” he may use a definition such as “a thing we boil water in”. In place of the word, sometimes the learner may use a word or a phrase which is very close to the target language expression (the strategy of approximation). For example, if the learner wants to refer to a “Water-pipe” but does not know the word, then he may call it a “pipe”
Corder (1981, pp. 104-106) points out that all strategies used by learners fall under two macro-strategies. They are:

- Message adjustment or risk avoidance or
- Resource expansion or risk-running strategies.

He maintains that when the learner is faced with a situation where his linguistic resources do not permit him to express himself successfully the learner has only two options open for him. He can either tailor / adjust the message to the linguistic resources available to him (the strategy of message adjustment) or he can attempt to increase his resources by one means or another in order to realize his communicative intentions (the strategy of resource expansion).

In message adjustment the learner either refuses to enter into or continue a discourse with some field or topic because of a feeling of total linguistic inadequacy (which is called strategy of topic avoidance) or he tries but gives up or says something slightly different from what was intended. These are message abandonment and semantic avoidance strategies respectively. Here the learner compromises on the message. In resource expansion the learner attempts to increase his resources by one way or another in order to realize his communicative intentions rather than compromise on the intended message.

In our discussion above we have dealt with the various types of communication strategies and their purpose in an ESP course, for learners to communicate specific meanings for specific purposes. We shall now have a close look into the effect of CSs on oral communicative competence.
The emphasis on spoken language and the popularity of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) resulted in research in communication strategies - a notion closely tied up with the concept of interlanguage and strategy training. Some researchers claim that learner’s communicative abilities were greatly improved after they received instruction in CSs use. For example, Savignon (1972), who calls them “coping strategies”, has been accepted by Buch (1989), Chen (1990), Dornyei and Thurrell (1994), Dornyei and Scott (1997).

Other investigators have argued that there is no need to explicitly teach CSs since second language (L₂) learners who generally know how and when to use CSs in their first language (L₁) are able to transfer their strategic competence to L₂ situations. They know what kind of descriptions to give to unknown words and know that transfer strategies are likely to be successful. Thus, there is not much need for L₂ learners to develop their strategic competence, but rather need to learn how to perform it.

Chen (1990) rejects the idea that strategic competence is transferable from L₁ to L₂. His argument is that learners employ CSs every now and then, but may not be able to use the appropriate CSs spontaneously. Dornyei (1995) supports Chen’s point of view when he argues that learners come to the L₂ classroom with the skill of “reading” in their L₁. So why do we have to teach them to read in the target language since they have already acquired the skill?
O’ Malley (1987) provides some evidence for the teachability of strategic competence. He indicates that:

Teachers should be confident that there exist a number of strategies which can be embedded into their existing curricula, that can be taught to students with only modest extra effort, and that can improve the overall class performance …

Future research should be directed to refining the strategy training approaches, identifying effects associated with individual strategies, and determining procedures for strengthening the impact of the strategies on student outcomes.

(p. 143)

Oxford (1990, p. 207) supports the idea of direct strategy training. She says: Research shows that strategy training which fully informs the learners (by indicating why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of this strategy) is more successful than training that does not.

Chen (1990) agrees with Faerch and Kasper (1983) that strategic competence could be taught explicitly in the L2 classroom. He sees that it is possible to do something about our teaching method to make it conducive to the development of the learner’s strategic competence. That means teaching the learners how to use CSs appropriately and effectively as part of the classroom syllabus.

Savignon (1972) was one of the pioneers in this field. She seems to have realized that the mastery of the mechanics of a language did not ensure the ability to use the language for communication. She also observed that the traditional teaching practice did not help or lead to authentic communication. Therefore, she started to think of the possibility of creating authenticity in second language teaching in the classroom.
That means producing some materials for teaching verbal exchange based on real-life situations. She was concerned mainly with the skills that are needed to get one’s meaning across, to do things in the second language, to say what one really wants to say. She conducted an experiment in which she studied the communicative skills and grammar skills of three groups of college students enrolled in an introductory audiolingual French course in the United States. All three groups received the same number of hours of instruction in the standard (formal and grammatical) programme, but one group had an additional class-hour per week devoted to communicative tasks (where the emphasis was mainly on getting one’s meaning across). The second group got an additional hour to a “culture lab” programme and the third spent an additional hour in a language laboratory programme. We will refer to these groups as the communicative competence (cc) group, the cultural group, and the grammatical competence group.

She found that although there was no significant difference among groups on tests of grammatical competence, the ‘CC’ group scored significantly higher than the other two groups on four communicative tests she developed. Savigonon’s finding was that students who had received training in Communicative skills felt better prepared to use their limited knowledge of French to (its best) advantage. Freed from an overt concern with linguistic accuracy, they were able to communicate in French whereas the other control groups were not.

Buch (1989) observed that some learners manage to participate in the Target language (TL) communicative situations, whereas the majority fail though they have more or less the same socio-economic, educational and linguistic background and almost the same linguistic repertoire. Therefore, she conducted a study to develop the
ability of using CSs in learners who were inhibited from using CSs (and thus, fail to participate in TL communicative situations). In her study, she prepared a set of activities on the assumption that in performing those activities, learners would resort to various CSs. However, in order to find out whether the proposed activities are teachable in the classroom situation and whether they contribute to the development of use of CS, a 14-day pilot teaching programme was carried out at Gujarat Law Society Institute of English (GLSIE), Ahamedabad.

The learners chosen for the pilot programme were seven learners from the senior batch of GLSIE. Those learners came from more or less the same socio-economic background. The learners were informed about the purpose of the pilot programme and the kind of activities they were going to be involved in.

The use of CSs was not taught explicitly or separately. It was encouraged and induced by allowing the learners to use CSs, by the teacher using CSs in her own conversation and by demonstrating the use of CSs when learners fell short of TL expression. The use of mother tongue (MT) was not only allowed but also encouraged in the initial stages. The teacher also used MT in the beginning and gradually switched over completely to the TL and also the learners were asked to interact only in the TL in the later stages.

These activities were also observed by one more observer who was a senior researcher in the area of English Language Teaching. The researcher came to the conclusion that the outcome of the pilot programme was successful. That means, the use of CSs enabled the learners to express themselves better. Moreover, it increased the learner’s participation in the classroom activities which enhanced TL interaction. Besides, the task and activities (used in the pilot programme) interested the learners and
they could involve the learners in target language interaction. A positive change with regard to learner’s language behaviour was also noticed towards the end of the programme. The above discussion is evident that strategy training helps the learners to participate in TL communicative situations effectively.

Since the present study has also made an analysis that there is a correlation between students’ low oral proficiency and lack of learning strategies, let us therefore explain what are learning strategies and what are the impacts on learners’ Oral communicative competence.

2.12.3 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND LEARNING STRATEGIES.

Tarone (1994) points out that communication strategies are used by the learner to resolve communication problems when the interlanguage system seems unequal to the task. When in an attempt to communicate meaning, the learner feels that the linguistic item needed is not available to him, he can resort to a variety of strategies of communication in getting that meaning across. So, for example, if the learner wants to refer to an electrical cord in English and does not know the exact lexical item to use in referring to it, he can call it ‘a tube’, ‘or’ ‘a wire with two plugs in each side’.

Learning strategies are used by the learner in a conscious attempt to master the target language. One such strategy of learning is learner’s conscious comparison of what they produce in it. Examples of learning strategies are the use of mnemonics to remember target vocabulary, memorizing textbook dialogues, use of flash cards, and so on. Clearly, such strategies are often successful, but they can also result in error. Memorized lists can get confused with one another, for example, the mnemonic mediator word may become confused with the TL word. An example of the latter might
be that an English-speaking learner of Spanish might use a mediator word ‘pot’ in order to remember that the Spanish word for duck is ‘pato’ - but might end up using pot in interlanguage references to a duck.

Selinker (1972) makes a distinction between strategies of learning and strategies of communication. He draws our attention to both these terms as two distinct inferable phenomena in the learner’s interlanguage. He not only emphasizes this distinction but also suggests that both these strategies are related.

Selinker reviews the relationship between communication strategies and learning strategies and concludes that: “The distinction in principle is seductive, but seems to have proved impossible to distinguish in practice” (1984, p. 339). He further states that: “it is reasonable to suppose that interlanguage communication strategies must at times further learning, but apparently no one has any idea how this happens” (Selinker, 1984, p. 340).

However, Corder highlights the importance of keeping the strategies of learning and communication quite separate. He refers to strategies of learning as “the mental processes whereby a learner creates for himself or discovers a language system underlying the data he is exposed to” (1977, p. 12). Whereas he refers to communication strategies as “the devices whereby he exploits whatever linguistic knowledge he possesses to achieve his communicative ends” (Corder, 1977).

However, Huang (1987) studied the learning strategies used for developing oral proficiency. There were 60 subjects in the study in China. The subjects were given an oral test in the form of “Interview” and questionnaires to report the learning strategies. The results showed that subjects who used “functional practice” strategies (such as
communicating with others, reading for meaning, etc.,) more often performed better in oral communication. Reading also was found as “the most significant predictor of oral proficiency” (p. 292). This study followed Bialystok studies of functional and formal practice strategies, monitoring and inferencing (1981). Bialystok (1981) included an “oral test” in her study and found that functional practice strategies had an effect on oral proficiency.

Oxford (1995, p. 378) reports that “the correlation was low but significant between cognitive strategies and speaking proficiency”. On a different line of research, Dadour (1992) investigated in an experimental study the effect of learning strategies training on speaking proficiency. The subjects were 122 first year and fourth year Egyptian B.A English students. The first year students were divided into two groups (control and experimental groups) and so were the fourth year group. The results showed that statistically significant difference was found between the groups who had strategy training and those who did not have. The groups that had training were better in oral performance.

A review of the above mentioned reflective and empirical studies points out the uniqueness of the present study undertaken by the investigator. Moreover, the review of literature given in the above pages throw light on the vital areas of material production within an ESP framework and methodological procedures that have a direct bearing on the present study undertaken by the investigator.

To sum up, in the foregoing discussion, we have indicated the reasons for the choice of a CALT for designing a course in ESS. We have examined the concept of ESP, tried to analyse certain misconceptions regarding the notion and established its validity when considered as a specific way of organizing discourse, rather than as a set
of lexicogrammatical features. We have suggested that ESP is a more valid educational goal than EGP; it is useful to revise our approach to EGP by introducing more specificity into it. We have attempted to suggest workable solutions to basic problems of ESP course – design. The focus of course design would be more on specific purposes than on English; We should start thinking of specific purposes for using English, rather than start with English and think of the specific purposes for which it may be used. We have further discussed the implementation of ESP programmes at different levels. We have then presented a taxonomy of the different kinds of ESP.

The latter half of the Second Chapter focuses on the need for teaching communication strategies directly or explicitly among rural women students at the tertiary level teaching situation. It can be very useful and effective for the following reasons:

- Rural students are not exposed to the real environment of the target language. Therefore they need to be taught how to use CSs in order to solve their communication problems when they occur.
- Learner’s L₁ and L₂ in Tamil Nadu are not cognate languages. In other words, there is a language distance between the student’s native language and the target language and that will not help students make successful transfer as is the case in the European languages. For example, French learners of English may transfer successfully the French word “Attention” /ɒˈtɛnˈten/ into the L₂ /ɒˈtɛnˈten/ as it exists in both languages with some difference in pronunciation.
- There are cross-cultural differences between students’ L₁ & L₂ and that leads in many cases to misunderstanding and communication breakdown. In fact, there are so many culture-specific “do’s and don’ts” that learners are constantly faced within the target language.