Instructional communication and its role in second language learning began to hog limelight with the advent of communicative language teaching, an approach that advocates teaching language as communication. Until then what was being communicated took precedence over the act, ways and processes of communication. With the popularity of the communicative approach, the acts of instructional communication in the classroom attracted greater attention and the theorists and practitioners started thinking of developing strategies that would produce better results. In this chapter, there is an attempt to examine what research says about various aspects of language learning and communication, the influence of the context, the socio-cultural factors and psychological orientations on them.

There is a general view that formal instruction facilitates acquisition though the results might appear much later in the learners' life. This means that there is a crossover between conscious learning and the internalisation of L2 rules and features for spontaneous use. Seliger has found that the more input the learners gained from instruction, the better they were able to make progress in their acquisition (1977). Corder states that interaction places demands on the learners to manipulate their interlanguage to conform more to the target language model (1978). It is, therefore, necessary to understand the current conceptions about the nature and processes
involved in learning, language acquisition and communication before exploring the inadequacies of their implementation in the S L classroom.

2.1 Discovery learning

The concept of discovery learning has been well established as part of the educational philosophy of great philosophers including Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Dewey. According to Dewey, there should be an intimate and necessary relationship between the processes of actual experience and education (1957). The leading developmental and cognitive psychologists like Piaget, Bruner, and Papert who arrived on the scene later had also endorsed in their writing the efficacy of discovery learning. However, despite enjoying a few positive swings in the field of non-formal education, it has seldom gained acceptance in formal educational practices because of social cynicism and system constraints.

According to Bruner, discovery is, in essence, ‘a matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insights’ (1979: 82–83). In this process, the learner reviews the available material and makes discoveries. In addition, Bruner also talks about two types of teaching, of which only one supports discovery learning. ‘The expository mode’ is a teacher-centred form of instruction in which the learner is a passive participant in the process. However, in ‘the hypothetical mode’, the teacher and student work collaboratively in the teaching and learning process (1979: 83). It is in this hypothetical mode that Bruner finds the kind of teaching that encourages discovery.
Furthermore, Bruner discusses at length four main benefits of discovery learning: an increase in intellectual potency, the shift from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards, the learning of the heuristics of discovering, and the aid to conserving memory. In short, he states that intellectual potency is the ability of the learner to detect patterns while finding solutions to problems. According to him, on the one side of the spectrum is ‘episodic empiricism, and on the other is cumulative constructionism’ (1979: 85). The place where the learners fit into this spectrum is dependent on the strategies they employ to solve the problems in learning.

The learners dealing with episodic empiricism are likely to use strategies that are not logical or connected, the learning in the cumulative constructionism domain is “characterized by sensitivity to constraint, by connective manoeuvres, and by organized persistence” (Bruner 1979: 86). Therefore, a learner who can successfully construct knowledge upon previously learned material will have a higher degree of success in learning involving problem solving. It may also be added that this pre-knowledge includes not only his/her educational experience but also the information s/he has gathered about the environment, society and culture.

According to psychologists learning is not a passive process of absorbing predigested knowledge, nor is it a totally self-governed activity happening independently of all the factors outside the learner. Entwistle states that learning involves many activities, memorizing where necessary, relating new information to the old, linking theoretical ideas or academic knowledge to personal experience wherever possible, adopting a critical stance in relation to other people’s ideas and evaluating evidence with caution (1981). Besides, all these cognitive processes, there are socio-
psychological factors that influence the cognitive processes that ultimately determine learning.

Therefore, the word learning seems to refer to one process; but it takes different forms depending on the nature of the subject learned, and the traits of persons who undertake learning. The occasions, circumstances, forms and contents of learning are numerous and extremely varied. Gagne, for instance, identifies eight different kinds of learning, ranging from simple associations between items to the relatively complex forms of learning items necessary for concept formation and problem solving (1985). Ausubel, in a broader classification, makes a distinction between discovery learning and reception learning. He uses the term discovery learning to refer to the kind of learning which occurs in situations where the learners apply what is acquired or discovered by them (1968).

In discovery learning, experience determines the nature of discovery, and this indicates the fact that learning is essentially dependent on some kind of experience, either physical or mental. Therefore, one who has learned to transform experience into learning cannot operate in a detached and indifferent manner, without getting himself involved in the process. Judged by the criteria of personal involvement and self-initiatedness, it appears that Ausubel’s (1968) discovery learning’ and Kolb’s (1984) ‘experiential learning’ refer to the same kind of mental orientation in which the learner directs himself to discovering knowledge.

2.2 Language acquisition
The studies in language acquisition began to have a major twist with the advent of the ideas of the highly influential linguist, Noam Chomsky, during the late sixties. Consequent to this, there appeared a new linguistic theory of language acquisition particularly since the language learners defied behaviourist expectations by not conforming to the behaviourist practices of endless drills and repetition. Chomsky proposed a cognitive model of linguistics contesting claims of the earlier non-cognitive, behaviourist and structuralist paradigm (1965). The earlier approach, which had been shaped significantly by Bloomfield (1933) conceived linguistics as concerned with describing the observable behaviour of the speech communities without any reference to what must be going on in the minds of the individual language users. Chomsky shifted the focus of interest towards the psychology of the individual speaker. He introduced the concept of generative grammar as a formalism to describe the well-formed sentences of a language. However, the concept of generative grammar has to be seen as a theory of the linguistic competence in an idealised situation. Thus, the aim of linguistic theories, whether they comply with Chomsky’s approach or not, has been to describe linguistic competence, in view of the performance manifest in communication.

Consequent to this, Chomsky postulated that all normal human beings are born with a language Acquisition Device (LAD) that enables them to develop language from an innate set of principles, which he called the Universal Grammar (UG). His theory of transformational-generative grammar attempts to explain how original utterances are generated from the language user’s underlying competence. According to Chomsky, the behaviourist theory cannot explain the complexities of generative grammar, particularly the creative manifestations of language. He further argues: “the creative aspect of
language use, when investigated with care and respect for the facts, shows that current notions of habit and generalisation as determinants of behaviour or knowledge are quite inadequate” (1968: 84).

Language acquisition theories put forth by Chomsky primarily apply to first language learning, however, we can extend them to explain certain aspects of S L learning. Taking up his view of the learner as a generator of rules, Corder argued that the errors made by students who are native speakers of other languages indicate the development of underlying linguistic competence and reflect the learners’ attempts to organise linguistic input (1967). In this process, subsidiary linguistic systems are developed. These intermediate systems created by the learners while trying to come to terms with the target language were later called “interlanguage” by Selinker (1972), who viewed learner errors as evidence of positive efforts by the learners to learn the new language.

This view of language learning allows for the possibility of learners making deliberate attempts to control their own learning and, suggests the role and impact of self-directional orientation in language learning. The psycholinguistic theories of cognitive processing in language learning aimed at discovering how learners employ learning strategies to promote language learning later resulted in a flurry of studies in the mid and late seventies. All of them emphasise the idea of not only “finding the best method or getting the correct answer but also assisting the learners to enable them to learn on their own” (Rubin 1975: 45).
Consequent to the cognitivist views proposed by Chomsky, there have been attempts to develop an awareness of language learning strategies used by the learners. Krashen (1982) challenges the rule-based theories of the grammar-translation method, the audio lingual and behaviourist theories that language can be taught as a system of habits and it can be acquired by mere repetition and practice. He proposes five hypotheses. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis holds the view that natural communication is preferable to conscious, rule-based learning. The Natural Order Hypothesis states that grammatical structures of a language are acquired in a predictable order and the Monitor Hypothesis argues that conscious learning can help an adult language learner refine his language use. The Input Hypothesis emphasises the importance of comprehensible input and the Affective Filter Hypothesis states that a learner’s emotions and attitudes can act as a filter that slows down the acquisition of language.

Russian social psychologists, Vygotsky (1962) and Leontiev (1981) propose a socio-cultural back-up theory in language acquisition that emphasises the role of socio-cultural consciousness of individuals in the internalisation of linguistic structures. Their views corroborate the argument that socially assisted, goal-directed and independent learning endeavours can considerably promote the cognitive processes leading to language acquisition. All the higher order mental functions, according to Vygotsky (1978), are internalised relationships of social nature as well as the basis for the social structuring of human personality. Thought, language and volition are the main constituents of what he calls the higher mental functions. He considers culture as a
promoter of new thinking patterns as well as the transformer of the kind of activities developed by the higher mental functions.

### 2.3 Communicative Competence

An influential theoretical principle underlying the communicative language teaching movement was the notion of communicative competence which is the ability to use language to convey and interpret meaning in relation to specific contexts. It was later categorised by Canale and Swain into four separate components. These are grammatical competence which relates to the learner's knowledge of the vocabulary, phonology and rules of the language; discourse competence which relates to the learner’s ability to connect utterances into a meaningful whole; sociolinguistic competence which relates to the learner’s ability to use language appropriately with regard to the context, and strategic competence which relates to the learner’s ability to employ strategies to compensate for imperfect knowledge (1980: 16).

Language development needs to be viewed in the light of the distinction between competence and performance. The term competence refers to what an individual knows, and performance is what he actually does (Chomsky 1965). Based on this view, it can be argued that an individuals' grammatical competence alone is insufficient to make them efficient performers in the target language unless it is adequately supplemented by other social, affective and contextual factors. Grammatical competence thus accounts for the ability of speakers to understand arbitrary structures of their language and produce grammatically correct sentences in a given situation. This means that a system of rules is internalised and this system guides a speaker in the
production of language that is put to use in problem solving acts. Successful execution of such problem solving acts can in turn work on the development of competence.

The communicative approach has tried to link linguistic communication theory with language teaching based on the sociolinguistic model of linguistic description that uses communicative competence as the central concept. Austin (1962) has inspired the functionalist model, and the sociolinguistic and systemic linguistic influences have been from Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1970). They postulate that linguistic structure has to be understood and analysed on the basis of the social functions of the language. Such social functions, on most occasions, have the potential to even transform or modify the linguistic structures to change the nature of language. According to Halliday “the system of natural language can best be explained in the light of the social functions which language has evolved to serve. Language is as is because of what it has to do” (cited in Kress 1976: 17). Here, language learning is viewed as learning the uses of languages, and the meaning potential associated with them. The structures, the words and the sounds are the realisations of this meaning potential. Learning language is thus learning to mean; it is a process in which the meaning potential is realised in the form of structures that relate to the underlying function the language is supposed to serve.

The cornerstone of communicative language teaching theory is the belief that how language functions is more important than knowledge of its form or structure. Similarly, the concepts of the communicative functions of language promoted by Wilkins (1976) have had a strong influence on contemporary language learning programmes and textbooks. Other well-known figures in the field also have consolidated and extended the theories of communicative language teaching. Widdowson argues that by
adopting a communicative approach, language can be ‘developed incidentally, as a by-product of using it’; and that “knowing will emerge from doing” (1991:160). Littlewood stresses the need to give learners extensive opportunities to use the target language for real communicative purposes, and believes that the ability to communicate effectively is more important than perfect mastery of the structures of the language (1981).

The idea of communicative language teaching arose as a reaction to grammar-based approaches to teaching found in teaching materials, syllabuses, and teaching methods in the 1960s. The proponents of communicative language teaching established it through convincing critiques of the inadequacy of the linguistic and pedagogical theory underlying grammar-based approaches. It was an attempt to put on rails the concept of communicative competence and to apply it across all levels of language use. With the advent of this approach, there arose an awareness of the importance of instructional communication, and the notion of using ‘genuine, natural communication’ in the S L classroom, the implications of which are discussed in the ensuing sections of this thesis.

The theory of social constructivism postulates that ‘all people construct their own interpretation of truth; for this reason multiple dissimilar ways of knowing and describing are equally valid’ (Brown 2000: 11). Breen and Littlejohn (2000) discuss the need for creating structures, which will enable learners to have a say in the management of their own language learning. In addition, negotiation of meaning and process syllabuses (Breen and Candlin 1980) focus on exercising shared decision making in the classroom. A process syllabus attempts to highlight the classroom decisions open to negotiation, and thus, makes classroom communication meaningful. These can be seen as attempts to bridge the gap between idealism and pragmatism, however, their effect on the
teaching/learning situation has to be analysed to understand their efficacy in our S L situation.

2.4 Socio-cultural Dimensions

Russian social psychologists have made significant contributions in the field of language study in relation to thought and culture. They consider language learning, like any other forms of human behaviour, as a dynamic intentional activity. They maintain that individuals produce speech not in response to external acts, but in connection with the solution of some problems they face (Leontiev 1981). The formal learning of a foreign language is especially directed at problem solving though there may not always be an immediate sense of purpose. Leontiev goes on to argue that speech is identical to any other form of human behaviour that has a definite aim and is impelled by a system of motives (1981). These motives may be internal or external in the sense that they may be directed at either satisfying a physical or personal need or giving social control by maintaining one’s position or prestige in society.

The epistemological view of the socio-cultural theory considers human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities (Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch 1991). It argues that the development of human consciousness depends on the specific social activities of the individuals. Theories of situated cognition argue that knowledge entails hands-on experience, not just accumulated information; the processes of learning are negotiated in what people experience in the social practices associated with particular activities (Wenger 1998). Similarly, a community of practice regulate social activities by
normative ways of reasoning and using tasks and other resources in collective activity (Lave and Wenger 1991). Johnson views this as the knowledge the individual “constructs through the knowledge of the communities of practice” within which s/he participates (2006: 237).

The socio-cultural theory also supports the notion that humans develop as participants in cultural communities who want to function in society as efficient individuals. This means that in order to understand human learning, or higher cognitive development, it is necessary for us to look into the social activities that the individuals engages in as part of their social living (Vygotsky 1978, Leontiev 1981). Learning, therefore, is not a straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge, but a “progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity” (Johnson 2006: 238). Since social activities, and the language used to regulate them are structured to gain meaning in historically and culturally situated ways, both the physical tools and the language practices used by communities gain their meaning from those who have come before.

Vygotsky has convincingly argued that language learning is predominantly a social process and the internalisation processes involved in the acquisition of interactional patterns provide a foundation for the internalisation of linguistic knowledge (1978). The process of internalising these interactions develops new cognitive structures and they act as monitors in the process of the use of the newly acquired language. According to Ohta, these interactions are interactional routines which are formed through the classroom activities so that the learners get to know how new
structures and vocabulary can be used in emerging communicative contexts (2000). Nevertheless, the problem is that the intractional routines we manage to create in the classroom often tends to be monotonous and require no creative use of the language skills.

Vygotsky (1978) talks about higher mental functions, particularly those involved in language acquisition and use, which are produced by the interactions between the conscious matter in the human mind and the social consciousness in the environment. The individual becomes humanised because of such interactions that produce language. Such interactions between human matter and cultural environment are carried out through the mediation of tools and symbols. While tools are the equipment people develop from time to time to enhance their functional efficiency, symbols are formed to structure and represent the aspects related to language use.

Cognition is viewed as a process embedded in complex social systems; hence, the study of meaning construction has to consider the existing data on language and cognition. The socio-cognitive tradition suggests that cognitive models of language come from the autonomous individual mind to include those dialogic spaces where meaning ultimately finds expression in communication. Both the cognitive and socio-cognitive traditions attempt to integrate the complexities of the internal and external relationships of object and mind; socio-cognitive places primacy on the interplay between context and mind, cognitive on the processes within the mind. The functioning of the mind, combined with the other socially constructed learning structures, can certainly produce competence in the use of skills including language.
2.5 Psychological Foundations

Psychological orientations are attributes like attitudes and motivation that are involved in the arousal, direction, and sustenance of behaviour. Motivation often acts reciprocally with the environment and we can observe individuals' behaviour in terms of their responses to the environmental cues. It is a drive that stimulates, directs, and sustains people's behaviour; therefore, the teacher should try to produce the best output by manipulating the students' motivation in the classroom. Studies show that motivation to learn is determined by the learner's perceptions of self-efficacy and self-control. It has a functional role in the psychological growth of the individual as it serves the function of preserving the learner's self-worth. Thus, it contributes to the maintenance of positive self-concept, perceptions of self-efficacy and personal control that underline the ability to be self-directed.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) talk about two types of motives, instrumental and integrative motives. In the instrumental type, the learners consider the use of the T L as a factor that determines and promote their functional efficiency, and therefore, it is a passport to prestige or success. On the other hand, if a learner wishes to identify with the target language community to learn the language and the culture of the speakers of that language, the motivation is called integrative. The integrative motivation is supposed to be more beneficial for the learning of another language. However, it is also possible to argue that instrumental motivation may be more effective in situations where the target language performs certain important functions in society. Ellis supports this view stating "motivation derived from a sense of academic or communicative success is more likely to motivate one to use a foreign or second language" (1991: 118). The
utilitarian orientation in our context refers to the learners’ desire to learn the TL in order to accomplish some purpose such as to get through an examination or to further a career or business.

Gardner (1985) proposes another model in which he classifies motivation at two levels, goal oriented motivation and core motivation. The motivation at the goal level influences the learner’s core motivation, the learner’s orientation to language learning, and the learner’s attitudes towards the learning situation. He describes the core second language learning motivation as a construct composed of three characteristics: the attitudes towards learning a language that he calls ‘affect’, the desire to learn the language namely ‘want’, and motivational intensity that is indicated by the term ‘effort’. He goes on to argue that highly motivated individuals want to learn the target language, enjoy learning it, and strive to learn it at any cost. His view of second language learning motivation is that the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity. In this view, motivation is goal directed, the learners’ immediate goal being successful learning of the target language.

Psychologists maintain that traits such as anxiety, curiosity, autonomy and the need to achieve are important aspects of human behaviour. Bruner (1966), states that motivation is fuelled by the satisfaction of curiosity. People learn effectively when they are able to channel their curiosity to accomplish their own ends, not just passively meet the demands of others. He also refers to another intrinsic element of motivation, the drive to achieve competence. To sustain pleasure and interest, we need to master things for our own sake rather than for extrinsic rewards. There are also concepts of
intrinsic motivation arising out of the learners’ interest in the culture of the target language community, and competence motivation emerging from their perceptions of achievement.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, politics, and education began to show the influence of the concepts of autonomy and independence. Humanism (Rogers 1969) advocated considering the learners as fully functioning individuals, and respecting their emotions, feelings, and perceptions of autonomy. Under the influence of it, the language instructors became more concerned with methods of learning, rather than methods of teaching. This shift was consistent with the teachers’ desire to evoke creativity, inquiry, and critical thinking in learners through dialogue and interaction instead of providing them with a teacher-centred instructional environment (Benson and Voller, 1997). The popularity of learner-centredness, communicative language teaching, and strategy instruction are examples of how learner autonomy is manifesting itself in the pedagogy of foreign language instructors (Pinkman 2005).

Ideological currents had moved the focus of L2 teaching from the teacher to the learner. This consequential centre change attempted to place the learners in the ideological zone of foreign language learning with an emphasis on freedom and autonomy. Attempts were made to take the needs of the learners into account and the methods and materials were adapted accordingly. All these consequential radical changes have contributed to the new role of the individual learner as a constructor of knowledge.
Malcom Knowles, who is well known for his pioneering contributions to the field of adult education, also emphasizes the importance of self-direction and learner-centredness in language learning. He argues that learners need to be treated as individuals capable of learning and their learning styles need due recognition. Another noted humanistic psychologist, Maslow, talk about self-actualisers who can be placed on the highest level of the hierarchical pyramid he proposes because of their capability to fully use and exploit their potentialities (1968). Self-actualisers, in his opinion, will be greatly motivated to be self-directed in their endeavours.

There have also been studies that examine whether self-esteem is a cause or an outcome of academic achievement and whether correlations between both are positive, negative or insignificant. The findings maintain that self-esteem influences achievement; and a positive correlation is found in many studies. Self-esteem, according to Arnold, has three major components: competence, cognition and stability (1999: 28). Studies indicate that all these components are integrated into one’s personality to a great extent and they may affect a person’s learning and communicative performance.

The notion of competence has been studied in connection with the notions of efficacy and success, and it can be seen as a major factor in academic achievement (Bandura 1969). Developmental psychology places the emergence of competence in middle childhood. Along with this develops a sense of worthiness in early childhood that comes originally from the value system adopted by the society. Competence and the perception of worthiness help one make judgements about oneself. Both phenomena not only exert influence on each other but also determine the nature of cognition and the working of the affective factors in an individual.
Self-efficacy, another psychological trait, relates to a person’s perception of his ability to attain certain goals. This has a bearing upon his self-directed functioning that arises out of his self-esteem and self-efficacy. His goal setting capabilities are determined largely by the psychological states of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Bandura argues that individuals exercise control over their thoughts, feelings and actions by means of developing self-esteem (1997). They evaluate the control over their actions and environment with the help of feelings of self-efficacy that help them consolidate their capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce certain results. Self-efficacy is constructed on the basis of active engagement, personal experience, and psychological and emotional factors.

Schumann’s notions of social distance and psychological distance are manifest in learner inhibitions, alienation and other psychological barriers (1978). These have been recognised as serious problems in the process of second language acquisition. It can be argued that the psychological processes involved in learning a new additional language will be influenced by the individuals' willingness to adapt to a new cultural context. Recent studies in the field of culture, identity and language learning reiterate this viewpoint, and thus, the variability of the psychological processes in terms of different cultural contexts has been considered while evaluating classroom communication and the language learning processes.

Positive psychological orientations or favourable dispositions culminate into learner autonomy, the most sought after state for a language learner. The notion of learner autonomy is a direct consequence of the preoccupation with learner-centredness in educational policies and practices, a preoccupation that has had its
corresponding formulation in the recent second language acquisition research. Learner autonomy is considered as a closely related concept within the general paradigm of learner-centred education. It emphasizes ‘the ideas of individualization of instruction, the development of self-directed learning, the methodology of self-access, and the incorporation of strategies in learner training’ (Johnson & Johnson 1998: 306-7).

2.6 Learning Strategies

There is no consensus on what constitutes a learning strategy in second language learning or how these differ from other types of learner activities. Obviously, using the target language in communication is one such learning strategy. In S L learning, communication strategies also involve aspects of language acquisition and relate to the ways of cognitive activation. Further, even within the group of activities referred to as learning strategies, there is considerable confusion about language specific strategies and about the “hierarchic relationship among strategies” (O’Malley et al 1985: 22).

Rubin talks about two kinds of learning strategies: “those that contribute directly to learning, and those that contribute indirectly to learning” (1975: 43). The direct learning strategies include clarification, verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing and deductive reasoning; the indirect learning strategies are creating opportunities for practice, and production under which communication strategies come. However, according to Brown, learning strategies and communication strategies are two “separate manifestations of learner behaviour in which communication is the output modality, and learning is the input modality” (1980: 87). He argues that learners generally apply the
same fundamental strategies such as rule transfer used in learning a language to communicating in that language.

Ellis thinks that strategies for learning and strategies for using are quite different manifestations of a more general phenomenon that he calls learner strategies (1987). Similarly, Tarone suggests that by helping students to say what they want or need to say, communication strategies can help to expand the scope of language (1980). Even if the communication is not perfect in grammatical or lexical terms, in the process of using the language for communication, the learner is exposed to language input, which may result in some learning. Therefore, such attempts may also be considered learning strategies. However, it may be difficult to differentiate between communication strategies and learning strategies in the case of language learning on the grounds of motivation or intention. The learners may have a dual motivation to both learn and communicate, and they learn a language when the basic motivation is to communicate.

Stern brings out a list of ten language learning strategies, which he believes to be characteristic of good language learners. At the top of the list, he puts personal learning style, which is very close to the concept of self-directed learning (1992: 260). Stern further defines learning strategies as “broadly conceived intentional directions that corroborate the view of language use as an intentional, goal-directed behaviour” (1992: 261). O’Malley et al use the definition of learning strategies as being “operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information” (1985: 23). These strategies too are employed by the learners in their attempt to do things on their own to become self-directed individuals.
The language learning strategies include communication strategies as well as the other personal strategies in the process of learning the target language. Lessard-Clouston states that the ability to “use language-learning strategies is complementary to the development of the communicative competence in the learners” (1997:3). According to Oxford, strategies are especially important for language learning because they are “tools for an active, self-directed endeavour, which is essential for developing communicative competence” (1990:1). These views stress the need for helping the learners develop and use good language learning strategies to maximise the learning outcome.

Nunan, in a study designed to help the learners reflect on the role of strategy use in their own learning and communication, concludes that the language classrooms should have a dual focus, the content and form (1995). This is because an awareness of language structures and their functional aspects greatly help the learners in their communicative ventures. Good language learners are able to adapt learning styles to suit themselves, are actively involved in the language learning process. They are able to develop an awareness of language both as a system of rules and as a means of communication. In this process, they constantly keep expanding their knowledge of language in order to develop the target language as a separate system that has a separate independent existence.

The learners capable of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately in the process of learning considerably improve their communication skills. According to Fedderholdt, “metacognitive strategies improve organization of learning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Cognitive strategies include using previous
knowledge to help solve new problems in which they are able to exploit L1 structures. Socioaffective strategies include seeking the help of competent speakers to correct pronunciation and grammar, or seeking peer assistance in group work, in communication practice” (1997:1).

Though the studies with regard to the effectiveness of strategy use may not show any consistency, there are indications that good language learners achieve success by employing effective communication strategies. It is important to note that the students who are self-directed, and who believe that they are able to control the learning activities all by themselves, successfully employ the language learning and communication strategies. This means that teachers can assist the language learning process by promoting strategy awareness and use. In this context, it is important to tap the potential of a variety of factors, including the L1 use, and other learner orientations in the use of learning and communication strategies.

For structuring the meaning they want to convey, the learners tend to intermittently go back and forth exploring and manipulating all kinds of linguistic knowledge they already possess. The communication strategies that we have been currently employing in our English classrooms of rural areas have been going without much improvisation despite the realisation that they have a major role in language acquisition. In principle, communication has to be a two-way process that not only exchanges information but also adds on to the competence and proficiency of the participants involved. Nevertheless, in practice, it remains one-sided, having lost all its dynamism and effectiveness. This happens when the practitioners insist on communicating in the TL, the process in which the learners get exhausted and
subsequently switch off. On such occasions, the teachers too have to resort to L1 use to restore the communication climate that has withered.

In such situations, learning and communication strategies remain self-defeatist, except for the efforts put in by a daring few. Ultimately, it is either the one-way T L communication initiated and lethargically carried on by the lone foot soldier called the English teacher, or the high-flowing, natural L1 communication nurtured by the members of the peer group as well as the teachers of other subjects. In this context, we need to think of instructional communication strategies that provide more room for creativity and individual initiative to unfold in the process. The search, therefore, should focus on how we can exploit the natural inclinations of humans to produce results even if they defy conventional wisdom and the notions of propriety and correctness.