The theories on the relationship between language and society support the notion that social activities simultaneously reflect, create, and recreate the ways of knowing, communicating, and maintaining social relations. Central to these theories is the role that language plays in social practices. In social relations language works in ways in which social class, culture, and social and linguistic identity are constructed and reconstructed through human relationships. In such social construction processes, the power structure and socio-linguistic relationships determine the development of S L learning and communication and the ideological discourses that support them.

The acquisition of knowledge depends greatly on the social environment where an individual develops with the assistance of different social contexts. The S L learning scenario too has undergone a paradigm shift in which the traditional behaviourist approach has been replaced by a socio-cognitive approach where the learners’ role is redefined and greater attention is focussed on the learning process. In the changed context, the learners’ understanding of themselves in relation to the society they belong to comes under careful scrutiny. The socio-cognitive factors also influence the way the learners pick and use the languages at their disposal. There are different ways in which these perspectives foreground and background the dynamic relationship between the social and cognitive aspects of language use.
4.1 Language, Culture and Communication

Human social and mental activities, as Vygotsky argues, are organised through culturally constructed artefacts (1962). He conceives of the human mind as a functional system in which cognitive properties are organised into a culturally shaped mind through the integration of symbolic artefacts into thinking. In this view, all the higher mental functions, including cognitive processes such as intentionality, logical thinking and problem solving are thus socially determined. Thus, the ways of learning and communicating are essentially outcomes of such higher mental functions. In this regard, S L communication can never be seen as occurring casually in interactive environments, rather, it is a premeditated action, taking place with the active support of the higher mental functions.

According to Vygotsky, the cultural artefacts we inherit belong to four genetic domains (1987). The phylogenetic domain is concerned with how human mental operations are distinguished from the mental processes in other forms of life, and socio-cultural domain relates to how the different types of symbolic tools developed by human cultures affected the kinds of mediation. In the ontogenetic domain, the focus is on how children appropriate and integrate the means of mediation, especially language, into the thought processes as they mature; and in the fourth, microgenetic domain, interest is in the reorganisation and development of mediation over a relatively short span of time.

What concerns us is the exploration in the ontogenetic domain in which language and thought are integrated to develop a means of mediation that considerably influences an individual’s functional efficiency. An individual uses language in the
process of exploring the ways of mediating the activities through the integration of different artefacts. It can, thus, be assumed that in second language acquisition, control and self-regulation over the means of mediation provided by the target language greatly contribute to the user's functional efficiency. To be a competent user of a language means to be able to control one's psychological and social activity through that language. Mastering all the means of mediation including communication skills seems to form a major part of an individual's processes of learning and it is a prerequisite for his or her development as an independent learner as well as an efficient performer.

In the process of learning, individuals move through different stages in which they are first controlled by the objects and people in the environment, and finally they gain control over their own social and cognitive activities. In the socio-cultural theory, these stages are referred to as object, other and self-regulation (Lantolf 1994), and there should be a smooth progression from one stage to the other to make learning effective. The aim must therefore be to attain the stage of self-regulation where the learner becomes self-directed, and hence, learning becomes effective. This is the stage where the learner is able to exercise control over the means of mediation, including communication, to gain efficiency in learning activities.

The physical or symbolic artefacts get modified in the process of providing functional efficiency to individuals, and they are passed on from one generation to the next. The mental tools such as numbers, arithmetic systems, music, art and above all, language combine with physical tools to establish an indirect or mediated relationship between themselves and the world around them. The adaptation and modification of symbols or artefacts initiated by humans are acts of empowerment prompted by the
necessity to modify behaviour to suit the changing environmental requirements. Language too, is a product of the human mind that constantly gets remodelled in use to satisfy the users’ cognitive and communicative needs. This motive is predominant in S L communication where the adaptation needs arise from not only personal requirements but also environmental compulsions.

The inseparable link between language and the social context implied in the notion of communicative competence has always influenced the objectives of second learning and teaching. The concepts in socio-cultural theory strongly support the view that the human mind is mediated in its operations. They corroborate the Vygotskian view that humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely, instead, on tools and labour activities that allow them to modify themselves and the world around them (1962, 1978). They also use symbolic tools or signs to mediate and regulate their relationship with others and with themselves, and thus change the nature of these relationships.

The communicative view of language seems to hold the idea that thinking and speaking are completely independent phenomena with speaking serving only as a means of transmitting already formed thoughts. The socio-cultural theory, however, argues that thinking and speaking may be separate, but are closely interrelated in a dialectic unity in which publicly derived speech completes privately initiated thought (Wertsch 1991). Thus, thought cannot be explained without taking into account how it is manifested through linguistic expressions, and these expressions, cannot be understood fully without seeing them as manifestations of thought (Bakhurst 1991). The dialectic unity between thought and speech is crucial in our understanding of the process of language learning. These processes, according to Vygotsky (1978),
influence the nature and development of human behaviour, as it results from the integration of socially and culturally constructed forms of mediation into human activity.

This concept of dialectic unity is crucial to the argument put forth in this thesis. Based on this view, it can be argued that S L learning too is a conscious activity and communication in it cannot be separated from the acts of conscious learning. Therefore, during the process of learning, 'dialogic integration' in T L communication cannot be as natural as it is in the case of L1 acquisition. When the gap between the acts of learning and acts of communication gets wider, it is an indication that the higher mental processes should intervene in those acts more strongly, and this is precisely what happens in T L communication in the classroom. The higher mental processes cannot achieve their full potential without seeking the assistance of the L1 resource that is closely associated with creativity and spontaneous expression. Therefore, in S L communication, L1 structures naturally emerge to stimulate communicative acts.

4.1.1 Social Constructivism

The social constructivist approaches to learning have recently made inroads into the field of second language learning under the influence of the theories proposed by Vygotsky (1978). The social psychologists believe that a dialogic approach to learning empowers readers to position themselves as participants in the process of making meaning together with the text and its author, rather than taking a passive role in the processes involved in learning. This has led to a shift in the perception of the learner-role in which the learners take a strategic approach to learning, and it is necessary to
provide them with careful scaffolding to help them develop effective, independent learning strategies and positive dispositions.

Based on the idea of language as a social construction, it is possible for us to argue that language ‘organises the lived experience, the social reality of people’ (Nayar, in Kundu et al 2009: 32). Even within the same language community, groups are likely to be formed on the basis of social distinctions, especially in terms of class, gender, occupation and other socio-cultural formations. The members of each group then form and share among themselves varieties of language that are characteristically different and almost mutually exclusive. Language, in this view, can be seen as a social artefact linking the members of a particular social group as it functions as an instrument of their consciousness through which they can relate their experiences and share them with the members of their group.

In the activity theory (Lantolf 2000), learning is described as an action driven by the purpose and motivation for learning. In the learning process, the aim of our learning, and the way we achieve it, depend on the social purposes of the activity. These social purposes are integrated into the community behaviour in L1 learning, but in L2 learning, they are external entities waiting to be integrated into the learning environment. They are also highly individualised in the sense that different learners in the same class prioritise them differently. The teachers can play an important role in setting up learning environments that exploit different learning purposes, but what really counts is how the students themselves view the activity and its expected outcome.
The role of communication in the process of language learning has received some recognition, but the potential of its intrapersonal manifestations in knowledge construction and language learning needs greater consideration. Vygotsky (1978), for instance, claims that learning occurs through a process of dialogue. This dialogue is initially intermental, in the sense that it takes place between the teachers and learners, between the learners in a group, or even between texts and readers. Then at a later stage, the learner begins to understand what is said or written through intramental dialogue. Thus, learning is interactive in the sense that learners initially interact with the sources of knowledge outside themselves, and subsequently, they take part in analysing and reconstructing knowledge within their own minds. In the former stage, dialogue occurs, but it is between different people who use different languages on different occasions. The latter stage is an advanced one where they become capable of exploiting their intrapersonal dialogue to consolidate their learning.

The principles of language acquisition and learning help the teachers form certain views of language learning and communication that might influence their classroom practices. The language teachers today expect their students to participate actively in the class, engaging themselves in interactive language learning tasks and ultimately become efficient learners. This shift in attitude opens the door for a new approach to learning and teaching based on the idea of social constructivism. The social constructivist framework provides psycholinguistic support to the fostering of learning effectively through interactive pedagogical practices. It emphasizes that learning takes place in a socio-cultural environment and views learners as active
constructors of their own learning. What they learn and how they do it are determined by the nature of the learners and the social context in which they are positioned.

Socio-cognitive theories encompass a wide range of ideas about the interplay between social and cognitive factors involved in language learning in general, and communication in particular. These theories explain how the mental processes involved in language learning link to the social and affective aspects of learning. They relate to the interactionalist approaches to theory and research in language acquisition and deal with the biological predispositions of the human mind for learning. Within the socio-cognitive framework, learners are seen “dialectically connected to the social contexts in a synergistic, two-way relation” (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 11).

In the cognitive realm, there is a mediation of relationship in the reception and transmission of messages that generally guides the interplay between the known and unknown, the implicit and the explicit. Meaning, in the socio-cognitive sphere, is dynamic, and its purpose is to capture and transfer the intent with all its fluidity. The central tenet of socio-cognitive theory is that learning and cognition are social, not autonomous acts (Lantolf 1994), and it has influenced, to a great extent, theory and practice in language and literacy education. In this view, the social and affective aspects of the learning and communication processes receive greater attention. Thus, we can justify the position that language, and communication processes are never socially or politically neutral; they occur in, and are guided by, the contextual factors with which the individuals interact. Therefore, in language learning, there is a social nexus between learning and communication.
Socio-cognitive views focus on the social and interpersonal dimensions of language learning environments that stimulate and support the acquisition of words and structures. The processes involved in learning have indeed begun to demonstrate specific outcomes in second language acquisition that relate to classroom negotiation structure. The cognitive orientation to the study of language learning and communication focuses its attention on the issue of the central processing unit, which is the working of the human mind. Its frameworks and activities centre on explicating the ways in which the mind processes and internalizes an objective reality. There are different theoretical approaches emphasizing different aspects of the phenomenon of human learning and all of them consider learning as a multifaceted phenomenon that demands forging new principles to explain its highly interactive nature. Communicative capability too combines various other skills for a range of purposes, including reasoning, acquisition of knowledge and furthering their own knowledge of language through enquiry and interaction.

The theory of cognitive orientation considers language learning as an active, constructive, cumulative, and goal oriented process. In this process, we examine the role of mental processes that turn knowledge into communication skills with the assistance of social and psychological factors, which is different from the traditional view of knowledge building. The primary emphasis is on the role of those cognitive processes and mental operations that are involved in constructing meaningful interpretations of learners’ experience. Such experience is what gives abstract concepts a concrete shape and subjective meaning (Kolb 1984). Thus, efficient learning could not be accomplished without the active, conscious involvement of the learner in the
process. Active learners can respond to events in accordance with their perceptions and interpret them in constructive and interactive environments. Thus, the active and responsible participants are those who make choices based on reality rather than chase ideals in a disinterested manner. In this view, immediate personal experiences that find better expression in the L1 use are crucial to communication and L2 learning.

Both the cognitive and socio-cognitive traditions attempt to integrate the processes operating inside and outside the human mind. The socio-cognitive approach emphasises the interplay between context and mind, whereas the psychological view relies on the primacy of mind. The relationship between these views is evident in the fact that an individual’s mind can never function isolating itself from its environment. Socio-cognitive actions are constructive processes that take place in the mind and higher levels of processing are involved in the experiential transactions that construct knowledge. Language too can be considered more as a socially constructed reality than an autonomous entity existing in the mind of the learner. Prior knowledge in the mind is negotiated and new knowledge is built up with the assistance of communication activities during interactive processes. In this process, the learners take inputs from various environmental factors to develop and sustain a system of communication, using the experience of other participants as well as other languages that exist in the environment. The argument in this thesis considers this view to advocate the use of the L1, as it can occur in our bilingual S L communication, not the way it has traditionally been used.

4.1.2 Socio-cognitive Action
It is also possible to look at language from the perspective of a tool that controls the social behaviour of individuals. People acquire languages because they want to use them to perform a variety of social functions. When you say a person knows a language you mean s/he has developed and internalised a linguistic system that can perform a variety of functions. However, as Corder puts it, the possession of such a system is not part of a person’s behaviour since it is not something that develops biologically or naturally.

Knowing something implies having learned it or discovered it; we aren’t born knowing things. But we can scarcely speak of knowing some sort of behaviour such as walking; in such a case we speak of knowing how and learning how.... The term behaviour does not seem to do justice to language. This is because behaviour is usually thought of as something essentially physical and observable, and that while much language has overt physical manifestation—movements of vocal organs with the production of sounds, and movements of the hands with the production of traces on paper--any notion that this is all there is to language is obviously unsatisfactory.

(Corder 1973: 106)

In the light of this argument, equating language development with behaviour formation may not be fully appropriate since it does not account for the mental processes involved in it. At the same time, language can be considered as behaviour at the ability level because all normal human beings possess it. Producing sounds at the ability level is an observable behaviour, but that alone does not make an individual competent as a language user. This inborn ability has to be transformed into a social action that is monitored by the cognitive faculty.
This argument can be strengthened by the example of social skills manifested in the activity of walking. Here too, the observable behaviour in walking has to be transformed into a social action for an individual to become a competent walker. In reality, walking is as much a social skill as it is a biological endowment. Like language, it is also an aspect of behaviour at the ability level. The individuals using their sense of judgement should as well transform it into a social action to realise its functional value. As in the case of language, there are social conventions that govern walking, and they vary in terms of the context, time and social setting. Therefore, both these abilities, walking and speaking, have distinct levels of manifestations, the ability level and skill level. At the ability level, they can be considered as behaviours, but at the skill level they are not merely behaviours; they are social actions initiated by the individual and controlled by the mental processes.

In the social action view of walking, the successful execution of action depends on common sense, knowledge of the environment, experience and the pre-existing knowledge. Similarly, in the use of language in communication too, these factors play a crucial role. We resort to any available strategy to tide over crises while walking, and in the same manner, apply any strategy that would work in a given communicative situation. For the bilinguals, their L1 is as dependable as a walking stick a walker uses in times of infirmity. It is therefore impossible to ignore the constructive role the L1 plays in the processes of L2 acquisition and communication, particularly if we consider the L2 acquisition as an aspect of social action.

The manifestations of such social actions can be observed in a walker who moves to the destination avoiding hurdles and collisions, and negotiating other possible
deterrents. Similarly, a language user turns the language skills into a social action by utilising all its communicative potential in social interactions. These are characterised by the learners’ unforeseeable moves towards making meaning with the help of speculating, negotiating and hypothesising in their way forward. In such activities, interaction is not confined to the exchanges between the individual and the people and things in the environment, but it also includes interactions taking place within the mind. The transformation that takes place during communicative actions with the active involvement of the cognitive faculty is what matters in second language learning. In this process, certain innate behavioural structures in an individual get transformed into language skills with the help of the processes of interaction between the individual and the environment. This is an inevitable process because it is in society that individuals put to use their language skills, along with other social skills, in various interactive ways.

However, in such social interactions, there is also a contradiction with regard to the learners’ educational and non-educational experience. The integration of talking, thinking and learning into communication, and vice versa, is possible only when the learner’s self is favourably inclined towards it. This strengthens the view of learning as a process of constructing knowledge with the help of the interactive environment aiding the interplay between language and thought (Vygotsky 1978). Hence, knowledge construction is not a solitary mental process, but a significantly social and cultural interplay that decisively alters the cognitive processes involved in it. Through the internalisation of dialogue, children learn to think and critically examine the inputs they receive from the environment and this process in turn helps order their thinking and develop their reasoning and problem solving skills.
Therefore, cognitive development can be seen as a process of acquiring one’s own culture in which both the individual and social factors are constituents of a unique interactive system. Consequently, language and thought are viewed as complementary to each other. Thought is action since human consciousness has a social character in the sense that social consciousness develops as people communicate with each other. The link between form and function is also established in the process of developing social consciousness through language use. All this indicates that when the transfer of the operational structure takes place in the target language, the content of the utterance emerges. In this view, the teacher’s role is to promote changes in a partnership enterprise towards the learners’ cognitive development, not confined to offering models for spontaneous responses.

4.2 Context in S L Communication

It has been established that communication is a process embedded in complex social systems, and meaning construction can be evaluated only in relation to the existing social context. In communication, the knowledge of language is integrated into the social awareness of the individual that includes those dialogic spaces where meaning is ultimately made by the use of language. Thus, the acts of communication reflect the individuals’ attempt to integrate the complexities of the internal and external relationships between the mind and the environment. This interplay between context and mind generates language that is contextually appropriate and socially acceptable. The mind functions with the socially constructed learning structures to produce competence in the application of any skills including language.
In the prevailing social context, the power of language is assessed from the point of view of “the intrinsic-power hypothesis and the acquired-power hypothesis” (Kachru1986: 126). In the case of English in our country, the first one claims that it intrinsically possesses certain linguistic characteristics that would make it a preferred language for international purposes. This position, according to some sociologists, is similar to the claims of racial superiority, and therefore undesirable. The second hypothesis sounds reasonable since it emphasizes the ways in which a language acquires power probably by means of its versatility in terms of the functions it performs.

The human drive for shared understandings of words evolves out of social contexts and these shared notions become integrated into the human mind (Vygotsky, 1978), and externally manifested in the form of language. The word meanings are dynamic rather than static formations, and in view of this dynamicity, second language development depends greatly on the learners' L1 vocabulary that directs and controls their perceptive formulations. The learners are typically expected to internalize the meaning associated with a given word through definitions in a context of use. Discourse in second language learning, then, aim to evoke the sense of utterances in specific contexts, not merely its outward manifestation.

Language develops during man’s transition from a biological being to a product of social culture. With the evolution and dissemination of culture, language too develops as an encoder and decoder of its artefacts in a complementary manner. Thought, language and volition are the main constituents of what Vygotsky (1987) calls the higher mental functions that are internalised relationships of social nature as well as the basis for the social structuring of human personality. 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.

All this shows how deep rooted is the influence of context, culture and human
consciousness on language. Children begin to explore their environment through
language use. At the same time, they are engaged in developing new social actions
leading to behaviour modification. In these processes, the role of language is to act as
an affective tool for social interactions. While Piaget (1971) considered development as
an a priori requirement for learning rather than as an outcome of learning, Vygotsky
(1987) takes the view that learning and development are part of an interactive process
in which there are two levels of development. The first level is the potential level of
development, which means the ability to solve problems under adult guidance or in
collaboration with more efficient peers, and the other is the real development, which is
based on a child’s capacity for independent problem solving. From the point of view of S
L communication and learning, the potential level of development is more relevant
though progression to the real development is the ultimate aim.

In the language acquisition framework proposed by Vygotsky (1962), language
acquisition occurs through the meaning making process in which assistance comes in
the form of social interactions and subsequent cognitive operations. Through a
collaborative process, all the components form a functional system that the learners use
for gaining efficiency to accomplish the task. Vygotsky outlines this process in his
general genetic law of cultural development:

Any function in the child’s cultural development appears twice, or on
two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the
psychological plane. First it appears between as an inter-psychological category, and then within the child as an intra-psychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition. It goes without saying that internalisation transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (1962: 163).

The process of integration of artefacts into human activity can be effective only if the process is supported by the contextual and affective domains. The ideology of communicative language teaching recognises the need for activities whose outcome depends on information exchange emphasising collaboration and equal share of responsibility among the learners. The message is that unequal, hierarchical contexts are not conducive to learning languages since they are not communicative or interactive enough to stimulate the learner’s independent leanings. However, in formal systems of learning, it is not always possible for us to completely avoid unequal, hierarchical relationships, thus, the need for compromises arise.

The socio-cognitive view of second language learning considers lexical items not as a unitary link between thought and expression, but as the sense that is constructed through the mediation of social, and dialogical activities. Thought, undergoes many changes before it is represented in speech, and therefore, meanings are created, modified and appropriated through interaction in social contexts (Vygotsky 1987). The concept of dialogicality (Bakhtin 1981) also supports the view that meaning emerges when voices meet. In this view, a word produces meaning when there is response and we learn words not from dictionaries, but from the responses they generate. These words are strengthened by multiple dimensions of meaning people bring to the context
of interaction. Language finds expression in utterances, dialogues, or discourses that are generated in the process of communication. An utterance carries with it the possibility of generating responses, and in turn, creates dialogue (Bakhtin 1986). Discourse emerges when dialogue assists in the formation of meaningful interactive environments. True dialogue furthers discourse because those involved in it use language as a tool in goal-directed actions (Wells 1999). These processes occur in a continuum, and when they are transferred into the L2 format, the linking nodes may remain in the L1 mode.

The socio-cognitive framework stresses the importance of sense creation processes that take place only in a dialogical environment. In the development of a second language system, sense creation has to be achieved in communication, but the socio-cultural back up may not be adequate. Words become integrated into a learner’s conceptual system through strings of associations, perceptions and personal experiences. The integration process is seen as a series of stimulus-response events in which cognition and L1 structures play a crucial role. This process of integration cannot take place without the active assistance of translinguistic applications involving translations and transcreations.

The activity theory suggests another version of communication in which contextualized communicative tasks lead to the acquisition of language. This view suggests that the act of communication links language acquisition to communicative events in which there is a negotiation of meaning that does not require an a priori knowledge of grammar. In this view, communication is not the result of the knowledge of the structure, but the structure is acquired through the act of communication. In
communication, a large number of operations come together to create inferences, associations, and conclusions. Human memory and the cognitive processes supporting it, form a vast network, with nodes of ideas connected to each other by means of associative links (Clark, 1991). When a node is activated, its impact leads to the activation of the adjacent nodes. The acquisition of language and communication skills involves exchanges between the processes that together represent ideas that make up meaning. Activation of these representations will lead to the generation of the knowledge that is transmitted in communication.

Views on the role of the knowledge of grammar in communication influence not only the second language acquisition theories but also the practices of many S L and F L learning classrooms. However, while deciding on the kind of activity to be put to use, we need to take into consideration the fact that the learners' minds are mediated by the social, historical, and cultural contexts that surround them (Luria 1981). It is also noteworthy that we change and influence the contexts to suit our understandings and purposes. In order to change or influence the worlds we live in, we use language as a major tool that helps us appropriate our knowledge and understanding of the world.

The acquisition of knowledge through the application of grammar and the study of linguistic structures depends on the ability to make sense of the meaning derived from actions and interactions. Meaning is not the product of automatic, predisposed and encyclopaedic versions of language but is contingent on dialogue. Meaning-making is contextual, dialogic and discursive, and doing so will allow for more communication and negotiation of meaning that will result in greater second language acquisition.
It is not possible to negate the role of grammar in the acquisition of an additional language. However, overemphasising it may eventually lead to a lack of dialogue and discourse within a language classroom. An alternative environment conducive to generating dialogue can be created if we resort to the possibilities of bilingual communication. The communication using the target language can be made intermittent, letting the learners communicate alternately using both the languages, taking their own comfort zones into consideration. The learners are likely to experience less strain if they are allowed to freely switch codes in the communicative process and exchange the same information simultaneously using both the languages. The success of communication in terms of the unhindered meaningful exchange of ideas is likely to have a rejuvenating influence on the learner.

In language learning, the learners do not just gather unrelated items. Instead, the learning leads to a whole network of new connections. In order for the learning to be successful, the aim would be to establish a greater number of connections among what is to be learned. These processes of establishing connections and activating the nodes of ideas have to go in a continuum for uninterrupted communication, and the SL being learned is not fully equipped to achieve this. This is where we need to seek the assistance of the L1 structures for making communication uninterrupted and meaningful. The switching and mixing of L1 and L2 codes becomes handy and desirable in this context.

When we communicate in the classroom in order to consolidate newly acquired language skills, our ultimate aim is to enable the learners to compose the new language forms with the minimum participation of the conscious mind. We want them to be
spontaneous communicators who have mastered both the content and form of expressions to establish an independent S L communication activity, the aim of which is not only the immediate satisfaction of concrete practical objectives but also the interaction with the competent users of that language. These are more like objectives arising out of integrative motivation in which the learners show great desire to know the culture, behaviour and social values of a language community.

However, in the classroom context, this type of communication activity is hard to accomplish and it takes a different shape, as its guiding motive is entirely different. The learners communicate not always to say what they want to say, but to structure language in view of the consolidation of acquisition. We want the learners to free their communication process from the participation of consciousness, but it is not as easy as it sounds. Since promoting interaction is our major concern, we may have to shelve our idealistic notions and look forward to pragmatic solutions. In this context, it is worthwhile to build on what Leontiev calls ‘monological discourse’ (1981: 23) in a foreign language that involves the participation of consciousness with the perception of utility as its guiding motive. Therefore, the demands of the context determine our communicative preferences. When asked to communicate ‘naturally’ in a situation in which everyone’s L1 is the same but it is not the T L that needs to be practised in communication, where is the scope for ‘natural’ T L communication? Even if some T L communication occurs, it is prompted by the need to learn the T L, not by the genuine necessity to communicate. In such communicative acts, conscious application of knowledge is inevitable.

Thus, instructional communication activities in the second language classroom should recognise the importance of the impact of the relationship between language
and the social context. The acquisition of additional language skills demands intensive practice in the use of the target language in which conscious application of knowledge is imperative. Since second language acquisition involves the formation of highly complex networks of relationships between linguistic structures, it can be learned only if it is experienced sufficiently for those networks to be built up in the learner, as in the case of the mother tongue. This is hard to achieve in SL communication and it deters the learners from gaining success in the communication practices. We have a bilingual context that does not provide the learners with the direct experience of a single language. In real life, the learners have a mixed linguistic experience in which English takes the least share.

In such contexts, the classroom situation sharply contrasts with the real life communication needs since the emphasis is on linguistic knowledge rather than the real communicative encounters. The classroom learning can, to a great extent, have a good impact on the performance and views of the learners with regard to the communication activities, but it is not enough to optimise their linguistic performance and communicative efficiency. That is the reason why we need to exploit the potentials of the L1 and certain attributes of translation in the processes of classroom communication.
4.2.1 Micro-contexts

Context is an extremely fluid concept. There are contexts within contexts, different perceptions of the context, and different ways of understanding its influence on individuals and society. The classroom communicative experience has to be extended into a context where people are required to engage in communicative activities for attaining certain goals. This kind of goal-direction can reorganise the context and coordinate the micro-contexts to seek what the people in them consider necessary for their empowerment.

It has now been established that the experience of learning is dependent upon the context in which it takes place. Hence, the nature of the classroom context in the implementation of language learning programmes needs greater consideration. Learning largely results from the interplay between various learner perceptions and the contextual factors, and affected by the ways in which educational institutions function, as well as how the learners perceive the efficacy of the activities involved in the programme. The most important thing is how we are going to create new paradigms of learning in relation to the micro-contexts that emerge periodically in the process of classroom communication.

From the sociolinguistic perspective, the choice of language use and subsequently evolved user behaviour depend largely on the linguistic and situational contexts. According to Ellis, linguistic context refers to the words in an utterance and the discourse structuring of a text or conversation, and the context involves domains such as the language user’s interactive environments (1987). It may also be added that
psychological orientations form yet another micro-context. The interactions among these contexts determine the nature of communication and the selection of strategies. If the interactive environment is bilingual, as is the case of our SL classrooms, the interactants find ease and pragmatism in mixing codes, and the language use will be creative and unconventional.

From the cognitivist point of view, learning a language that is not regularly used in the locality requires the learners to put in conscious effort to remember words, expressions and grammatical rules. They need to practise, reinforce and consolidate language items before they can transfer these structures in use to situations. There is no single way in which learners acquire the knowledge of a second language and the acquisition depends on many factors pertaining to the learner on the one hand, and the learning context on the other. It is, therefore, natural for the learners to employ a variety of strategies ranging from translation to code mixing depending on the contexts. For instance, classroom peer interactions hardly use the L2, and this considerably limits the possibility of the L2 use in classroom communication. Therefore, the only way to bring in some L2 use is to encourage the simultaneous use of both the languages, even if it means mixing them up indiscriminately.

From the heuristic functional point of view, the mediation between thinking and learning is what a language has to perform, and it can be left to anyone's imagination to what extent we can expect a newly learned language to carry out this function replacing the other language that has been doing it for quite a long time. How then can we expect an additional language that cannot even perform such a mediatory function to equip the learners with the skills and readiness necessary for engaging in the so-called genuine,
natural target language communication in the classroom? We need to be a little more realistic to concede that the learners are actually empowered through “learning the meta-level linguistic skills as opposed to acquiring the language of the secondary discourse” (Davison 2000: 245). The meta-level knowledge is a micro-context involving certain intentions, social practices, their constitutive values, significance, and how they relate to other practices.

In empowerment too, the micro-contexts influence the learners’ level of performance within the discourse and make them educationally successful. They also presuppose the development of the ability which helps the learners effectively use newly acquired skills and knowledge. From the perspective of the socio-cultural theory, interaction implies communication leading to the construction of social meaning which sustains social relations. Therefore, the relationship between interaction and learning depends on the influence the micro-contexts exercise on the interactive environments. The creation of the micro-contexts owes not only to the external environment but also to the relatively more complex psychological states of the learners. It is argued here that fresh contexts keep emerging in creative interactions; they are continuously shaped by the formation of social and interactional meanings as well as by the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of the context.

The most notable thing here is that a context may consist of several hidden micro-contexts in which there could be highly individualized strategies of survival. There may be “social or interactional and mental or transactional uses of language” (Richards 1990: 54-56) that are determined by the social contexts and the orientations of the users. The fallacy seems to lie in our ways of recognising only the visible, generalised
forms of the context, totally ignoring the micro-contexts each learner brings to the classroom. This occurs both in our pedagogical choices, and in the perceptions of what is acceptable or unacceptable in relation to the systems of which we are a part. It is true that the most practical thing to do in a formal language classroom is to conform to the norms, but the problem is that we get carried away by an idealistic view of language learning and the apparently potent role ‘genuine communication’ seems to play in it.

Many of our theories of learning and much of the practice of teaching do not consider the profoundly subjective nature of communication and learning. The desire to collect information and the pressure to produce achievement are subjective experiences capable of creating micro-contexts in the learning process. Thus, when we insist on genuine, natural S L communication in the classroom to facilitate learning, we tend to ignore the fact that the acts of genuine S L communication need to be in harmony with the micro-contexts that have emerged in the environment. This clearly explains the problem of learner resistance in the S L classroom where the ‘simulated reality’ confronts the micro-contexts the learners bring to the classroom.

Another difficulty is that learners are often placed in contexts that are not conducive to optimizing the relationship between learners, contexts and institutions. Each institution carries with it a micro-context of heritage that boasts of its constructive role as a social engine responsible for changing the economic, cultural and social environment. Such role perceptions are often rooted in rather rigid considerations of social order that fail to accommodate changing trends with regard to social relations and interactions. This is perhaps the reason for the learners’ refusal to accommodate in
learning other micro-contexts that account for emerging trends and realigning social order.

Thus, unless the learners are in a dynamic context that permits and encourages them to carry with them a variety of micro-contexts, the learning will remain ineffective. The learners should be able to make their own intelligent choices about their approach to learning and communication. The right to choose comfortable learning strategies and the ability to make empowered decisions are necessary in a context that can coordinate all the micro-contexts within its purview. While stressing the importance of shared knowledge in the communication process, we should realise how fundamentally difficult it is to create and sustain sharing through natural forms of communication in the S L context. There can be assimilation of neither information nor linguistic structures without necessary micro-contextual support. We will have to be blissfully optimistic to think that the learners will disregard all the micro-contexts to consider the communicative situations we create in the classroom perfectly genuine and participate naturally in them. However, in reality, these situations sufficiently contribute to the learners’ discomfort and reluctance because they are fully aware that they have been created artificially and their competence is insufficient to cope with the requirements of communication.

The idea of using the existing knowledge, which is also a micro-context, to construct new knowledge, or improvise it, is valuable from the epistemological point of view. It is, thus, reasonable to use the potential of L1 in developing the L2 structures in L2 learning situations. When we insist on the strict use of L2 for all kinds of communication in the classroom, we are actually keeping the existing knowledge
entirely out of action. This is contradictory to the views this research presents, and even when we allow some concessions, we are so bothered about the purity and accuracy of the T L, that we end up discouraging slightly odd but natural formations resulting from the cohabitation of the languages in question. We little realise that such formations are part of the ‘interlanguage’ on which the learners build their competence of the T L.
4.2.2 Post-globalisation Context

Technology and economic globalization have also left their mark on language generating new genres of communication that integrate the skills in novel ways. Curricula now focus on projects that integrate language and skills according to communicative tasks that students endeavour to accomplish. However, the benefits of task-based instruction have been blown out of proportion into a highly successful method, ignoring its lack of emphasis on communicative accuracy and structural appropriateness. There are problems with regard to the ways in which tasks have become a mere pedagogical construct with questionable connection to communicative tasks that may find social relevance (Widdowson 2003). Thus, attempts should be made to present communicative tasks in more context-bound ways giving the learners more freedom to approach them from their own perspectives.

Language versatility and adaptability are desirable qualities in the academic arena where interdisciplinary approaches have become the order of the day. We encounter problems in describing the nature of SL communication in the context of globalization, technology, and the emergence of a variety of Englishes. Such a situation demands the creation of more room for accommodating eclecticism, both in terms of content and form. It is in this context that we need to develop a holistic dimension of teaching and learning in which the distinction between content-based and form-based approaches becomes less visible. Communication, however, has to concentrate on both content and form, and there should be efforts to engage students in more participatory actions. The acceptance of language as a holistic entity that
accommodates corruptions, neologisms and occasional L1 use thus becomes a credible and distinctive alternative.

In the case of S L communication in the learning of English our country, it is important to consider the changes that the post-globalisation social context has brought into it. In the present day world of liberalisation and globalisation, many people are eager to learn foreign languages, preferably English, for various reasons. Apart from the curiosity to explore the world and the learning experience, there are also considerations of business promotion. Since English, now a global language, is considered a language of opportunity, more and more people desire to learn it and enjoy the benefits it offers to them. It is also a constant source of intrinsic pleasure for many of them. However, when it comes to its learning, the learners face a volley of problems in their encounter with the learning tasks in our English classrooms as well as the communicative situations they face outside the classroom.

In the post-globalisation context, discourse is not a monocultural manifestation with an intrinsic linguistic identity, but it is as amorphous as the linguistic formations in multicultural societies. In literary communication, post-structuralism does not recognise texts as discrete units with fixed meanings; they rather “operate with dynamic language codes that keep mixing up with other codes and conventions in their effort to create meaning in amorphous, multicultural environments” (Peim 2000:171). In this process, they keep referring to the things outside the immediate context. Similarly, in normal communication too, meanings are not free productions of personal responses, but are constructed under the influence of a variety of social and contextual factors, as Vygotsky (1978) postulated earlier. The meaning contexts are created by the socio-
cultural environment where the learners interact with a large number of linguistic and cultural entities in the classroom and outside.

The post globalisation socio-cultural context has initiated a move towards the development of the so-called ‘monoculturalisation and monolingualisation’ in which disparate linguistic identities show the signs of disintegration. Though the social varieties of languages are still strong, or even, have become more telling, the globalising fluidity resulting from cultural unipolarity has begun to encompass them. Peim highlights this post-globalisation characteristic of linguistic and cultural instability:

Language represents a ready made symbolic ordering of the world, constraining, as much as enabling, our perceptions of and dealings with the world. At the same time, by problematising the stability of identities, post structuralist theories of language, text and meaning enable the institutional forces at work in the realm of signification to become more visible, and open the possibility of textual politics...... This enables us to see how institutionalised meanings and values might be challenged, re-read and rewritten (2000: 171).

The post-structuralists too reiterate the instability of meanings, which drift and realign in its meanderings in the multilingual, multicultural streams. Alongside grows the fluidity and instability in the use of uniform codes and structures. In such processes, the institutionalised practices including the S L teaching need to accommodate the post-modern fluidity of communication processes, and adopt more flexible ways of making the practices meaningful. In this view, the idea of creative individuals mastering a second language using whatever resources they can comfortably employ is in tune with the tenets of post-structuralism. While thinking of practical ways of developing a
learning programme that incorporates these ideas in an institutionalised setting, we need to consider the potential role of the kind of ‘impure English’ the youngsters of the post-globalisation era employ in their interactions.

4.3 Bilingualism and SL Communication

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of our country is that it is diverse in terms of the languages, cultures and religions, and this diversity is the reason for our much-acclaimed pluralism. The cultural, religious and linguistic diversity may have its own advantages as well as disadvantages, but on a closer look, we can see that the merits outweigh the demerits. Colonialism had left the English language behind in our country, but we accepted it wholeheartedly, nurtured and nativised it, and finally gave it an important place among the indigenous languages. Whatever we may call it, however we wish to describe it, it has come to establish itself as one of the Indian languages which performs, among many other functions, the act of holding together our vast country as one nation.

It may be worthwhile to mention here that the spirit of pluralism and accommodativeness is inherent in the Indian society in the sense that it has accepted and nativised many things including the English language. This characteristic spirit of pluralism and accommodativeness is evident in other events and occurrences in our history too. For example, even the monotheistic religions found it easy to come and settle comfortably here because the native polytheistic religion had neither reluctance nor difficulty in accommodating them mainly because of their own polytheistic beliefs and pluralistic outlook.
The same kind of attitudinal positivism can be the reason for the maintenance of the vibrant bilingual situation our country can boast of. There has always been this argument that our bilingual environment has been nurturing the growth of English although there are many people who subscribe to the contrary views. It may be beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into the merits of these arguments, nevertheless, as learners belonging to a bilingual society who are engaged in learning an additional language; we need to think of the ways of turning the possibilities offered by the bilingual environment to our advantage. Moreover, it is necessary for us to maintain this bilingual state while going ahead with our plans of developing English.

There is a view that instructional programmes work better when they provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in their first language. In this view, first-language proficiency influences the developmental patterns in the second-language structure and expressions, which may often reflect the patterns of the first language (Bialystok 2001). The influence of the first-language literacy on the literacy development in English can be seen in the processes of drawing comparisons, juxtaposing strategic applications and structural patterning. This view emphasises the importance of the transferability of certain skills in planning and providing second-language instruction to students who already have a first language. Those who are literate in their first language are likely to have an edge in the acquisition of literacy in English, and thus, SL instructional programmes work better when they provide opportunities for students to use their first language proficiency in the learning process.

The second language learners enter the classrooms with varying degrees of oral proficiency and literacy in their first language. They can presumably take advantage of
the higher order vocabulary skills in the first language in developing the ability to provide formal definitions and interpreting metaphors in the use of a second language. Similarly, they can also take advantage of cognate relationships between their first language and English to understand English words, an important precursor to comprehension. This cognate knowledge is tangibly associated with the development of their comprehension of English utterances.

How then do we exploit the possibilities of the bilingual situation of our S L classroom to promote the learning of English? First and foremost, we should stop insisting on the ‘English only approach’ based on the fallacy that it is possible to generate genuine, natural S L communication in the classroom. This may sound a bit absurd to those purists who try to convince us that it will limit the learners’ practice and exposure to a considerable extent. On the contrary, if the learners are given the freedom to simultaneously use both the languages holding firmly onto their comfort zones, they will get more inclined to make the classroom communication activities proactive. Moreover, the liberty to freely switch codes will work on their creativity, interest and involvement since the situation can cut down their anxiety and inhibitions to a great extent.

4.3.1 Translation and Transcoding

It has already been established that the knowledge of a language involves not only the knowledge of what form it takes but also how it functions in social contexts. In this sense, human language offers the strongest possibility as a means of communication because it can assign semantic interpretations to verbal
representations. New concepts give rise to words, our need to express ideas and emotions results in the creation of words, and then they gain new dimensions of meanings in social interactions.

In the process of meaning transfer in S L learning, the learners build up a system known as interlanguage, which is different from their first language and second language systems (Selinker 1972). This system is an indication of S L development and has a structurally intermediate status between the L1 and the target language. The cognitive processes related to second language acquisition are language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning and communication, and generalisation of rules and principles (Selinker (1992). The theory of interlanguage is based on the assumption that there is a psychological structure latent in the brain, which is activated when the learners attempt to learn a second language. In this process, the learners produce utterances different from those that the native speakers would produce if they had attempted to convey the same thing. This clearly indicates the formation of an intermediate linguistic system that is markedly different from the target language.

The theory of Interlanguage formation points to the occurrence of active mental processes within the learners in the course of language learning. These processes involve language transfer from previous learning experience, employing strategies for second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and finally, overgeneralization of elements of the target language system. The strategies of learning and communicating are particularly important since they decisively influence the nature and type of the interlanguage. When a learner realizes that he has no linguistic
competence for handling a target language material, he evolves some strategies to overcome the situation. A strategy that probably works at the conscious level may be oversimplification in which the learners attempt to reduce the target language to a simpler system. Oversimplification is the process of replacing words and structures with the help of the native language repertoire. The learners resort to the acts of oversimplification, code mixing and code switching in order to maintain fluency in communication. This can be observed in their simultaneous use of the L1 and T L structures in the course of communicating.

The theory of interlanguage formation seems to be in tune with the concept of input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982) who argues that when the learners are exposed to a particular language, they do not assimilate the grammar of that language straight away. They process the input data, form certain hypotheses and test them before arriving at their own system of rules. They may use and discard many systems in the process of learning which indicates the active mental operations going on in the learners’ mind. Since the concepts are largely structured by the first language, it exercises a lot of influence on the patterns and structures the learners construct. Hence, it is natural for them to view the second language through their first language and form a system of S L that makes compromises with their first language.

In all these cognitive processes, translation involving code-transferring and meaning-construction using different code-systems plays a no less significant role. If we are to concede that there is some connection between language and thinking, then the process of translation involving code-transferring and structural comparisons will have to be considered as an integral part of the communication process. We may not be able
to agree with the hypothesis of linguistic relativity formed out of overstretching the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Sapir 1949), but there is sufficient reason to think that language and thinking influence each other in some tangible way. Thinking presupposes the existence of the mental entities of representations and these are compared and contrasted in the translation process.

Language not only enables communication, but also reflects the conceptual world of its users by means of mental representations. Mental representations involve the structure of knowledge as perceived by the individuals. These are patterns of organization that comprise the knowledge of the individual, processes of changing this knowledge, deriving new knowledge through conscious and unconscious inferences and generating new plans of action. In translation too, the cognitive processes that determine the learning outcome play a similar role since it involves transferring of mental representations using the framework of a different linguistic system. Therefore, we need to recognise the importance of translation as a process assisting language learning and communication.

This, however, does not correspond to the view that language is just a “translating device for the imperfect expression of thought or experience” (Gethin 1990: 194). On the contrary, the producer of messages keeps creating translinguistic formats to fit in the knowledge of the new language in accordance with the receiver’s responses and preferences. An individual has no difficulty in switching over to a second language in which s/he is scarcely proficient, if the situation warrants its use in social interactions. On such occasions where the possibility of communication is limited to the use of a second language, the users’ code-switching and code-mixing mechanisms are activated
and the strategies prompted by them are employed to enhance communicative efficiency.

In such applications, translation could be a process of code transferring which this thesis would like to describe as ‘internal translinguistic application of knowledge’. This involves the ‘correlative transcoding’ process that this thesis finds to be an internal precursor to the translation process, later manifested externally in linguistic communication. Therefore, it has great relevance to the acts of L2 learning and communication. It is argued that correlative transcoding occurs vigorously in bilingual environments, and thus, the classroom communication need not be made monolingual by insisting on the use of the target language at all times. On the contrary, the mixed use of both the languages based on situations and comfort levels does have a correlation to what happens outside the classroom.

When the same kind of activity takes place both in the classroom and outside, much of the confusion and culture shock could be avoided, and a feeling of meaningfulness could be created in the minds of the learners. So long as it is difficult to bring original, natural and authentic communicative situations using the target language to the classroom, it would be better to let the communicative activities go in an unhindered manner, without placing restrictions on the use of the vernacular language in the pretence of safeguarding the ‘natural development’ of the target language. This would enable the learners to mix and switch codes freely giving the language of thought an opportunity to stimulate the process of correlative transcoding.
The concept of correlative transcoding may explain the phenomenon of mutual intrusion of words and expressions into the systems of interacting languages in a bilingual environment. An example of the functioning of rapid code-transferring mechanism can be seen in schools and colleges situated in cosmopolitan areas where code-switching and code-mixing go on quite effortlessly. In those bilingual individuals, the correlative transcoding process is found to be rather quick and efficient. This is on account of the fact that the environment around them is as bilingual as their own classroom, and there is no difference in the way in which they communicate in the classroom and outside. There may be simultaneous use of two or more languages, but most of the time people belonging to different native language communities depend on a link language for most of their official functioning. Even on occasions where they are required to use two languages simultaneously, code-switching and code-mixing occur to them quite easily as they have already developed a fully functioning correlative transcoding mechanism.

The effect of bilingual communication stimulated by code-switching, code-mixing and code- transferring mechanisms in the second language classroom on language learning appears tremendously high. The experiment (cf. Appendix II) conducted as part of this research showed that the process involved was not a mere word-for-word translation, but a process that involved a lot of syntactic and semantic code transferring that is initiated and controlled by the ‘language of thought’ (Fodor 1975). Since this process is characteristically different from ordinary translation, it can be called ‘correlative transcoding’ which is one of the most important language processing functions the ‘language of thought’ performs. This process of correlative transcoding is
manifest in code-switching, code-mixing, and code transferring that characterise S L communication.

This conclusively shows that code-switching, code-mixing, and code transferring are natural, unpremeditated and involuntary actions taking place in the course of normal communication in bilingual environments and they can never be considered undesirable in second language classroom communication. When such processes naturally evolve in the classroom without invoking rebuke or ridicule, much of the learning tension is eased out and the possibilities of learning by comparison and contrast open up.

4.3.2 Bilingual Strategies

The effect of bilingualism in S L learning and communication has given rise to different views. For some, bilingualism has a facilitating influence that is referred to as additive bilingualism; some others consider the influence as constraining and term it as subtractive bilingualism. Those who subscribe to the additive nature of bilingualism argue that it can be used to facilitate S L learning and communication. However, how to tap its potential is an issue that needs scrutiny. Obviously, there is a lot of creativity in the application of bilingual strategies. Creativity is a mental trait that is rooted in the individual’s self and finds expression through the freedom of choice in terms of learning, thinking and strategy use. It is closely associated with the concept of the language of thought (Fodor 1975), mother tongue and cultural perceptions of the individuals. The creative faculty in humans get activated when they encounter problems, and pragmatic considerations provide the apt environment. The strategic application of bilingual
interactions could also be viewed in the light of the individuals’ ways of finding solutions to the problems they encounter while dealing with the environment.

Some researchers opine that bilingual students who receive instruction both in their native language and English show better proficiency in English than those students who have been instructed only in English (Bialystok 2001). This thesis goes a step further to argue that creativity is the basis of success in communication and it cannot develop if the L1 is kept entirely out of action. Besides, languages share certain basic universal characteristics and the knowledge of one system supports the development of the other. All this indicates the desirability of implementing and encouraging bilingual communication strategies in our second language classrooms.

Code switching is an important bilingual communication strategy that involves the alternation between two codes of languages in the language use of people who share those codes (Bialystok 2001). It is a communication strategy for maintaining and enhancing the efficacy of communicative interactions. A number of social and linguistic factors determine choices about how code switching manifests in communication. It is quite common in multilingual and multicultural societies and can take on several forms including alteration of sentences, phrases from both languages. Code switching generally occurs unconsciously in the speakers’ eagerness to put his/her messages across using the available terms and expressions in any of the languages. Similarly, code mixing occurs when a speaker is momentarily unable to remember a term but is able to recall it in a different language. Bilingual speakers very often tend to use code switching for making modifications and clarifications in their communication acts that are meaning focussed by nature. It is also linked to reiteration in which a particular
message, or a part of it, is repeated and translated into the other linguistic code. This kind of replication is used to clarify the meaning of the message or to give emphasis to what is being conveyed.

There is a view that code switching is a real, specific discourse strategy (Gumpertz 1982), employed by bilinguals who are able to use at least two languages to communicate with varying degrees of proficiency. The frequency of code switching seems greater in a second language learning situation. In a bilingual environment, there is a strong relationship between code-switching and general language functions. Code-alternation generally occurs when the speaker loses fluency and the communicative intent. In the case of S L communication, the switch of language is used in order to direct the message to the possible receivers with an intention to produce a better effect.

Since code-switching is a natural, unpremeditated and involuntary action taking place in the course of normal communication in bilingual environments, it can never be considered undesirable in second language classroom communication. When it naturally evolves in the classroom without invoking rebuke or ridicule, much of the learning tension is eased out and the possibilities of learning by comparison and contrast open up. Therefore, it is not possible to consider free and frequent code switching as detrimental to the second language being learned. On the contrary, the whole process enhances the rate of cognitive operations that result in better learning.

Nevertheless, it is understandable that the kind of code-switching taking place in the classroom is slightly different from the type seen in natural discourse since the languages between which alternation takes place are the native language of the
learners and teachers and the foreign language that they are expected to gain competence in. The use of code switching may not be conscious; this means that the users are not always aware of the functions and outcomes of the code switching process. Therefore, in some cases it may be regarded as an automatic and unconscious behaviour. However, whether conscious or not, it necessarily covers some basic functions which may be beneficial in language learning environments.

The learners’ dealings with the problems they encounter in communication lead to several processes like code-switching, code-mixing, code-transferring and a volley of other strategies. These processes stem from the pragmatism or practical considerations the learners form out of their interactions with the environment. This thesis, however, argues that it as an outward manifestation of their creativity rather than temporary changes of stance arising out of pragmatic considerations. The learners appear to be wriggling out of the crises caused by the breakdown of communication, but on a closer look, we can understand that these attempts seek to effect a permanent kind of behaviour modification, which indicates a creative approach to problem solving.

No second language teaching programme could be made effective and meaningful unless we take into consideration the socio-psychological state of the learners and the socio-cultural environment that surrounds them. The learners’ perceptions of identity and the utility of the target language are the factors that decisively influence their inclination towards learning an additional language. In a bilingual context, the programme needs to be designed in such a way that these perceptions undergo changes that finally lead to creativity, adaptation, and to a certain extent, acculturation.
Therefore, in the second language classroom communication, we cannot undermine the role of bilingual communication, which should go on in an unrestricted manner basing itself on the learners’ comfort levels. In this process, the participants in the communicative venture should be in a position to code-switch either way based on their own comfort levels. The internal code-switching process then invigorates the ‘brain language’ or the ‘monitor’, which will result in proactive learning. The processes of code switching and code mixing will develop into code transferring and transcoding, which, in turn, result in the structural consolidation of the L2.

Thus, in our S L classroom activities, it is time we considered using the potential of multilingual and multicultural interactions that have become the hallmark of the modern world of business and academic activities. It is worthwhile to examine the ways of using the existing systems of knowledge to develop other systems that might be of use to the learners. In our case, the learners’ accessibility to English newspapers, magazines and other media of communication has considerably improved, compared to the students of the previous century. This has opened up the possibilities of using the materials available in English as well as vernacular languages in the improvement of English, which is the recessive language in our classroom context.

4.3.3 Discourse Generation

From the perspective of the social constructivist view of communication, language is part of the ‘discourse’ generated in a meaningful social context. Discourses at the primary level are connected stretches of language that makes sense (Gee 1990), but at the secondary level, they are also socio-cultural creations combining and
incorporating beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviour and ways of thinking. Socialisation, both at home and outside, adds to the meaning of the discourse and the acquisition of each additional language means strengthening the processes of empowerment. In bilingual environments, the contrast between primary and secondary discourses is likely to bring a sense of incongruity of power and resultant conflicts into the social structure. In such processes, it is the function of language to equip them with the skills of enquiry and analysis leading to unhindered social interaction. People usually encounter secondary discourses during their interactions at various social institutions including schools and colleges. Such discourses are characterised by the use of languages for a variety of purposes, ways of thinking, attitudes, values, behaviour and word view. Lankshear et al highlight the generation of secondary discourses and their relevance to the processes of communication in a bilingual context.

Education, socialisation, training, apprenticeship and enculturation are among the terms we use to refer to processes by which the individuals are initiated into the discourses of their identity formations. Initiation into discourses is a cultural activity, and the discourses themselves are, simultaneously, means and outcomes of cultural processes.

(Lankshear et al 1997: 17)

The educational institutions are also discourse communities where learners get involved in discourse making as part of their interactive learning activities. In such activities, social structures and linguistic forms become intertwined to make the communication process meaningful as well as complex. It is in the light of this view that we need to think of a classroom communication policy that takes into consideration such social factors in addition to the need for using the target language in
communication for the sake of acquisition. Bilingual communication that can accommodate comfort zones for each learner seem to be a reasonable proposition, and more over, it will be in tune with the learners’ psychological orientation.

The concept of language as a tool for developing the functional efficiency of its users puts forth a two-pronged tool function theory. On the one hand, it is viewed as a mental tool that controls the thinking process, and the other, it is a cultural tool that is manifest in the acts of communication. These two aspects of tool use are inextricably linked, and together they help the language users make sense of the world. Therefore, as Mercer (1995) puts it, language is not just a means by which individuals can formulate ideas and communicate them, it is also a means for people to think and learn together.

All this shows that discourse generation in a bilingual context involves the application of the languages operating in it. Thus, it is now time we stopped worrying about the task of generating genuine, natural kind of second language communication, and started thinking of putting to use the resources the learners possess in the form of existing knowledge of their own native language. In addition to this, the knowledge they have gathered by means of their interactions with their surroundings will supplement their effort to learn a new language. Mercer puts it quite unambiguously stating that “teachers have to start from where the learners are, to use what they already know, and help them go back and forth across the bridge from everyday discourse to educated discourse” (1995: 83).
The dialogue arising out of the bilingual, bicultural interactions, which disregard rigidity in form and function, generate discourse. This can effectively turn into an ‘educated discourse’ that encompasses a complex web of secondary discourses of teaching and learning. In this process of transformation, the language structures are expected to get integrated into the values, cultural perceptions and worldview of the learners. The dialogue should incorporate problem solving and critical thinking without which the meta-level cognitive and linguistic skills are unlikely to develop. Natural communication is actually a process in which three levels of interaction, linguistic, psychological and cultural levels, are harmoniously coordinated.

Therefore, it seems illogical to assume that the learners can engage themselves in genuine, natural kind of communication immediately after being introduced to a new language that they are actually able to use in a very limited sense. The lack of coordination between the linguistic, cultural and psychological levels of operation is likely to have a debilitating effect on the competence of the learners. Thus, no situation contrived to carry on classroom communication appears genuine or is meaningfully related to what they have been experiencing. This discrepancy might even carry on to the apparently potent ‘problem solving activities and information gap activities’ (Prabhu 1987), where we think we can easily establish the much sought after tangible link between thinking and learning.

The foregone discussion clearly shows that the socio-cultural dimensions of learning cannot be kept separate from our dealings with the individuals. There are processes of distinction and discrimination in all our academic activities and they have considerable social implications. Such social implications seem to underlie the
communicative processes implemented in our classrooms. In any language-teaching programme, what come to the fore are the considerations of what to teach and how to teach it within the constraints of a given setting. As part of systematising the whole programme, certain aspects of language are selected and graded to make the practice look scientific. This, however, does not seem to correspond to the post-structuralist view of language which defies any kind of functional isolation of the aspects of language because of its characteristically unstable and drifting nature.