CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Communication is the basic attribute of human life (Thompson 2003:1) and language is the main tool of human communication (Clark et. al. 1994:1). Initially this communication was within societies and communities at local level but it took a new dimension as people from various societies, communities and nations started interacting with each other.

The period following the 1950s saw a tremendous increase in the need for communication among the people of the world in various spheres of international contact like politics, academics, economics, technology and culture. The world has started becoming a global village. This gave birth to the need and pressure of adopting a common lingua franca for this global village to facilitate communication and make it more practical for the people of various linguistic backgrounds (Crystal 1997:10). This phenomenon led to the emergence of an international language.

English was accorded this privilege and it became the language of international communication or international language. Whatever may be the political or economic reasons and factors responsible for entrenching English in this position, the reality is that these reasons and factors can not diminish the importance of English and its pervasive use in international affairs. Presently, English is the language of international economic system. It is a language which has secured a place for itself alongside local languages in multilingual communities and is also learnt by all classes of the society. Its acquisition can guarantee the availability of opportunities to employment, travelling, higher education, and even better life. These are some of the characteristics which according to Brutt-Griffler (cited in Mackay 2002:12) make an international language. Following are some of the evidence which can be presented to support the position of English as a global language and a language of wider communication.

MacKay (2002:17) states that over 85 percent international organizations in the field of international relations make some official use of English. In Asia and the
Pacific 90 percent of the organisations use only English for their official proceedings (ibid).

Thus English is playing a vital role in political, social, educational, and economic concerns of the nations. English is the language of popular culture in the form of being the language of English films and music which entertain people all over the globe (ibid). The travel and tourism industries also rely on English as a common language of communication. The knowledge of English is also essential to access printed and electronic information and higher education as higher education is dependent on English in many countries (ibid). Thus “knowledge of English is necessary for accessing many discourses at a global level from international relations to popular culture to academia” (MacKay 2002:18).

A huge industry of language teaching exists in many countries of the world. This includes private language teaching institutions as well as private and state schools (Mackay 2002:14). The number of the people who have some familiarity with English is growing and macro-acquisition of the language is also increasing (MacKay 2002). Macro-acquisition means acquisition of the language by various levels of society both at individual level and in groups. Individually more and more people are learning it, and it is also finding a place in the academic curricula in various countries. The phenomenon can be explained by citing Crystal (1997:3) who states that English is now taught over 100 countries and is emerging as the chief foreign language being learnt and displacing other language in the process.

Graddol (1997:8) specifies the following domains of English in the international arena:

1. English is the working language of international organizations and conference.
2. English is the international language of science and technology.
3. English is used in international banking, economic affairs and commerce.
4. Advertising for global brands is done in English.
5. English is the language of audio-visual and cultural products.
6. English is the language of international tourism.
7. English is the language of tertiary education.
8. English is the language of international safety in the fields of aeronautics and sea.

9. English is the language of international law.

10. It is a relay language in interpretation and translation.

11. It is the language of technology transfer.

12. It is the language of internet communication.

It is an ample indication that English is being used as a lingua franca in all spheres of international activity and it can be claimed that, internationally English has developed a ‘special role that is recognized in every country’ (Crystal 1997:2).

Kachru (1992) has presented a concentric model to conceptualize the role which English serves in various countries. His model represents the “types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Kachru 1992:356).

1.1 BACKGROUND

CLT has its roots in the idea that the goal of language learning is to become good at using language for communication. That simple notion is surprisingly profound. Although languages have been taught around the world for many centuries, this seemingly obvious idea is fairly recent. Beginning in the 1960s, British applied linguists developed the communicative approach as a reaction away from grammar-based approaches such as the aural-oral (audio-lingual) approach. CLT didn’t take the teaching world by storm for another 20 years; however, Communicative language teaching enables learners to acquire a language by focusing on the development of communicative competence.

To do this, communicative language teachers use materials that focus on the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions. (Examples include asking for things, describing people, expressing likes and dislikes and telling time.) CL teachers also emphasize the processes of communication – for example, using language appropriately in different types of social situations. They encourage students to use their second language to perform different kinds of tasks, like solving puzzles and getting information. They also stress using language to interact with other people. The following Venn helps explain the communicative competence.
1.2 THE THEORY BEHIND CLT

The theory behind CLT suggests that we learn language by using it. However, we use language in four different ways, which we can think of as competencies. The best way to develop communicative competence is for learners to strengthen these areas of competence. In the diagram, the learner’s discourse, grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competencies overlap in areas high in communicative competence.

- **Discourse Competence** refers to the learner’s ability to use the new language in spoken and written discourse, how well a person can combine grammatical forms and meanings to find different ways to speak or write. How well does the student combine the language’s elements to speak or write in English? Teachers often call this ability the student’s fluency.

- **Grammatical Competence** refers to the ability to use the language correctly, how well a person has learned features and rules of the language. This includes vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence formation. How well does the learner understand the grammar of English? Teachers call this accuracy in language use. Fluency and accuracy are traditional measures of effective language learning. The other two competencies are less obvious.

- **Sociolinguistic Competence** refers to the learner’s ability to use language correctly in specific social situations – for example, using proper language forms at a job interview. Socio-linguistic competence is based upon such factors as the status of those speaking to each other, the purpose of the interaction, and the expectations of the players. How socially acceptable is the
person’s use of English in different settings? This competency is about appropriacy in using language.

- **Strategic Competence** refers to strategies for effective communication when the learner’s vocabulary proves inadequate for the job, and his or her command of useful learning strategies. Strategic competence is how well the person uses both verbal forms and non-verbal communication to compensate for lack of knowledge in the other three competencies. Can the learner find ways to compensate for areas of weakness? If so, the learner has communicative efficacy.

CLT has its critics. For example, an early critic of the approach, Michael Swann, pooh-poohed the approach brilliantly in a pair of academic essays. His critique seems to be aimed at early dogmatic, almost evangelical, writings on CLT. In the early days many true believers seem to have failed to appreciate that non-CLT language teaching can also be effective. The non-dogmatic approach I advocate seems less open to criticism, since it happily accepts methods and techniques from other approaches, as long as they work. One of Swann’s criticisms, however, still rankles. Said he, “language learners already know, in general, how to negotiate meaning. They have been doing it all their lives. What they do not know is what words are used to do it in a foreign language. They need lexical items, not skills…. ” Many CL teachers believe vocabulary acquisition is the most important part of language learning, and that the most important lexical items to learn are verbs. The rest of language learning can be illustrated in a parallel diagram, shown below. This model applies to all languages, regardless of the method or approach the teacher uses, and it is relevant irrespective of your approach to language teaching.

The Heart of Language
In the heart of this diagram lie the three components of language: phonology, lexis and structure. Together, they comprise the content of language around the periphery of the graphic are the four language skills. These are speaking and writing, the productive or active skills; and listening and reading, the receptive or passive skills.

**Language Content**

- Phonology refers to new features of the sound system of the language. For example, focusing on the difference between the words “rip” and “lip” is a phonological exercise. A more common way to teach phonology is simply to have students repeat vocabulary using proper stress and pronunciation.

- Structure refers to the rules we use to make correct sentences. For most purposes, we can think of structure as being the same as grammar. When we teach language structure, we almost always introduce these as examples or model sentences, and they are often called “patterns”.

- Lexis is about words. When we say we are introducing a new “lexical item” in a lesson, we usually mean a new bit of vocabulary. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether an item is structural or lexical. For example, when we study phrasal verbs like “chop down” or “stand up” in a class, we can address the topic lexically or structurally.

Every language, including sign language, has these components. Lexical, structural and phonological content lie at the heart of the language. But to make the language come alive requires the behaviours related to listening, speaking, reading and writing. In language teaching, the term “language skills” refers to the mode or manner in which language is used. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are generally called the four language skills. We deal with each of these topics in some detail elsewhere. Speaking and writing are sometimes called the active or productive skills, while reading and listening are called the passive or receptive skills. As we discuss elsewhere in this text, it is possible to consider thinking in the second language as another highly desirable ability. Some call it the fifth skill. So there you have it.

What defines CLT is its focus on the need to develop communicative competence. Like all language teaching systems, however, it can only be judged by its
ability to help learners practice using the content of language – phonology, lexis and structure. And that content can only be practiced through the behaviours known as listening and speaking, reading and writing.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has remained in fashion for a long time since its first emergence in the 1970s. This approach has been exported worldwide and seems to still occupy a dominant position in the global ELT industry nowadays. Nevertheless, in parallel with this dominance a global debate has increasingly arisen among applied linguists, researchers and teachers about CLT’s appropriateness and effectiveness in different cultural settings, as more attention has been paid to the important role played by social context in the process of methodological application.

1.2.1 What are Some Examples of Communicative Exercises?

In a communicative classroom for beginners, the teacher might begin by passing out cards, each with a different name printed on it. The teacher then proceeds to model an exchange of introductions in the target language: Using a combination of the target language and gestures, the teacher conveys the task at hand, and gets the students to introduce themselves and ask their classmates for information. They are responding in German to a question in German. They do not know the answers beforehand, as they are each holding cards with their new identities written on them; hence, there is an authentic exchange of information.

Later during the class, as a reinforcement listening exercise, the students might hear a recorded exchange between two German freshmen meeting each other for the first time at the gymnasium doors. Then the teacher might explain, in English, the differences among German greetings in various social situations. Finally, the teacher will explain some of the grammar points and structures used.

The following exercise is taken from a 1987 workshop on communicative foreign language teaching, given for Delaware language teachers by Karen Willetts and Lynn Thompson of the Center for Applied Linguistics. The exercise, called "Eavesdropping," is aimed at advanced students.

"Instructions to students" Listen to a conversation somewhere in a public place and be prepared to answer, in the target language, some general questions about what was said.
1. Who was talking?
2. About how old were they?
3. Where were they when you eavesdropped?
4. What were they talking about?
5. What did they say?
6. Did they become aware that you were listening to them?

The exercise puts students in a real-world listening situation where they must report information overheard. Most likely they have an opinion of the topic, and a class discussion could follow, in the target language, about their experiences and viewpoints.

Communicative exercises such as this motivate the students by treating topics of their choice, at an appropriately challenging level.

Another exercise taken from the same source is for beginning students of Spanish. In "Listening for the Gist," students are placed in an everyday situation where they must listen to an authentic text.

"Objective." Students listen to a passage to get general understanding of the topic or message.

"Directions." Have students listen to the following announcement to decide what the speaker is promoting.

Then ask students to circle the letter of the most appropriate answer on their copy, which consists of the following multiple-choice options:

- taxi service
- a hotel
- an airport
- a restaurant
1.2.2 How do the Roles of the Teacher and Student Change in Communicative Language Teaching?

Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more--becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. A classroom during a communicative activity is far from quiet, however. The students do most of the speaking, and frequently the scene of a classroom during a communicative exercise is active, with students leaving their seats to complete a task.

Because of the increased responsibility to participate, students may find they gain confidence in using the target language in general. Students are more responsible managers of their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

Nevertheless, in the debates which have arisen regarding its appropriateness or otherwise, there seems to exist a tendency of misinterpretation, essentialism and overgeneralization. Given the fact that CLT is an umbrella term and there is no standard model of CLT accepted as authoritative (McGroarty, 1984; Markee, 1997), This Study therefore adopt the viewpoint that CLT can be more constructively interpreted from an anti-essentialist perspective due to its open and flexible nature.

1.2.3 Starting Assumptions

In India as not just a foreign language, but as a much-hated language. From the despised instrument of oppression to the reluctantly adopted lingua franca to the status symbol of the upper classes to its position today as a second language, English has come a long way. In fact, it would not be an aberration to label it a first language for some echelons of Indian society. Just as the status of the language underwent constant reinvention, the whole ELT paradigm also travelled the complete gamut of modification. In the closing years of the Twentieth century when English began to emerge as the global language, the Indian classroom was transformed because of the change in the environment of the learner. Whereas the earlier surroundings had been acquisition poor with regard to English, suddenly every language user seemed to be jumping upon the learn-English-bandwagon.
The liberalization of the Indian economy ushered in all kinds of reasons to learn the language. While earlier in the century students who had specialized in English joined either teaching or the civil services, now a whole new spectrum of job opportunities has opened up. There are now call centres that need trainers to equip their employees with communication skills, there are multinationals who have been recruiting marketing staff who needed to be taught spoken English, there are medical transcription centres which need efficient translators and reporters. Those desirous of immigration to the west needed professional help for clearing tests like the IELTS. Hence, the avenues where ELT came to be required in India are unlimited today.

1.2.4 Fluctuating and Varied Institutional EFL Developments in India

The developments that have taken place in ELT methodology in the West took some time to reach Indian classrooms. The evolution of ELT in India, as in any other EFL country is linked with factors that are not pedagogic alone. Today, English can not be termed a foreign language in the Indian context, but in times past, it was a foreign language and its teaching had to take cognizance of all factors, pedagogic or otherwise. The two figures tracing the growth of ELT given here are different because ELT pedagogy developed primarily in the West where political and social realities were different and the status of English was fixed whereas, in India, ELT pedagogy depends upon the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which the status of English keeps changing. No diagrammatic representation can be complete without taking into account the fluid nature of the position of English in Indian society.

Figure one is this author's representation of the development of ELT as a discipline in countries where English is the first language and figure two is the development of ELT in India, it is obvious from the two figures that developments in ELT take time to take root in India. The causes behind this gap are three:

1. Only around the year 1980 did English achieve adequate attention from policy makers, administrators and teachers. Due to its chequered history in the country, its complete importance was realised more than three decades after independence.

2. Apart from a One-year course in teacher training for school teachers, no formal teacher training is given to new recruits or practising teachers. There are orientation courses and refresher courses for teachers in general, but no
course deals with ELT. It is only recently that the British Council has introduced CELTA and other such programmes; these are quite expensive, teachers do not want to spend money on them and their institutions rarely sponsor them.

3. The examination system is more achievement oriented rather than performance oriented, leading to an emphasis on grades and positions rather than issues of fluency or proficiency. Indirectly, the teacher remains in many classrooms even today, the facilitator of examinations rather than of linguistic or communicative proficiency.

In spite of the slower rate of evolution, English Language Teaching in India has been widening in its approach and methods. The result is that there is an increasing tendency, scope and intent of reaching the end of the ELT cone. At its own eccentric pace, ELT in India is today in step with the rest of the world today. Where the issue of methodology is concerned, ELT seems to be in three transient stages according to the different levels of the paradigm and its demands:

1. The first level is that of the institutions run by the government, mainly primary, secondary and high schools. Since the primary goal of these institutions is to provide education at affordable and subsidized levels to the public, ELT teaching cannot be placed at the widest end of the cone for the basic reason that the teachers there do not have much access to latest research and materials for reasons economic as well as geographic. Most of these institutions are the sole providers of education in rural and remote settings where they can fulfil adequately the basic requirements alone. In the urban locales the planning bodies are now moving towards up gradation through teacher training, syllabus modification and improved resources. In another decade or so, this level of ELT should be more communicative in nature with language and literature fully integrated.

2. At the second level are those institutions that are semi-government or are run by private managing bodies, assisted through government funds. These also include undergraduate colleges and postgraduate universities. Growth and development can be seen here in spurts. In some classrooms, teachers have reached the widest end of the cone, are aware of learner needs and adjust
methodology accordingly and use a judicious blend of interaction and communication in the class. In others, an observer feels caught in a time warp with pure talk-chalk lectures that are mostly teacher-centered. The positive observation is that there are practising teachers between these two poles, who are trying to change their teaching practice and are looking at alternate methodology. Just as there is a mixed bag of teaching practice, the institutions also range from indifferent to proactive. While there are places where even a small audio player is not accessible, there are administrators who have invested heavily in state of the art, perfectly equipped language laboratories.

3. The third level comprises pure private sector academies that undertake to make learners proficient English users within a stipulated period, of course by charging a fixed amount of fee. Since time means money for them, they are equipped with the latest materials like interactive, multimedia software. Jobs in the academic area are few and far between, so an increasing number of qualified teachers find their way to these places. The teacher profile gets younger and younger, resulting in increasing amounts of innovation and experimentation where methodology is concerned.

While teachers belonging to the first level are content to remain followers, the second level is being influenced by the third. When learners are in a rush as they need part-time employment or have an IELTS to clear, they often join academies in addition to their undergraduate classes. This creates a ripple effect and the ripples can be felt in three ways:

i. Young teachers who work in undergraduate colleges work part-time at these academies. At the academy, they use the latest teaching aids and materials since the purpose is to achieve fluency at the earliest. At their regular place of work, their teaching methodology undergoes a transformation because they tend to use the interactive, task-based and communicative methods more than the usual lecture methods used there normally.

ii. On taking into account the roaring business the academies are doing, the administrative bodies of undergraduate colleges are coming to realise that a whole untapped market needs to be explored. Along with their regular degree classes, they are gearing up to introduce revenue-earning courses in the field
of English proficiency, open to the public. This leads to a spillover effect in
the undergraduate classes too as some teachers would be common to both
courses and the same campus sees a lot of innovative teaching.

iii. Parents of learners form an important component of the teaching paradigm in
India. Earlier, any kind of change in courseware or teaching methodology
would result in stiff opposition from them and the administrative body would
recommend the continuation of age-old practices. Observing the winds of
change resulting from the acceptance of the global status of English, parents
today encourage innovation and experimentation in the classroom.

After attending interactive classes at the academy, learners search such
stimulation in their regular classes too. This is a radical change, especially if one
looks into the past. When communicative language teaching was introduced in India
in the 1980s, it was a dismal failure for the first few years because of the lack of the
right context. This context stands established in India today, so learners are receptive
and are actively encouraging more learner-centered classes.

The context of the whole teaching situation started changing around the year
2000. Socio-economic factors played a major role in this change that is dynamic even
today. The liberalization of the Indian economy led to the entry of many international
brands into the learners' mindset. Call centres, shopping malls and trade fairs, all need
young personnel, fluent in English. There is a mushroom growth of institutes and
academies of the third category above, offering the whole range of proficiency in
English from clearing the IELTS to speaking fluently. The Internet has played a major
role in creating a resource-rich environment by giving a wide range of exposure to
English. Becoming web-savvy has emerged as the need of the day and this is possible
only through English. These are just a few of the factors that have created a panacea
for the deadlock that CLT had found itself in.

Today, in India, a whole new generation is coming up; a generation that
travels a lot in countries where English is a first language, works in places where
English is the lingua franca and as a result, carries home to other generations the same
English as a medium of communication. Hence, the empowerment that Bax looks
forward to for teachers in times to come has come sooner due to changes in the
context of the complete teaching paradigm. Unless the context is supportive of
upgrading English performance of the teacher -which should be inclusive of communicative competence- no teacher training or upgrading of methodology can be productive and fruitful. This is a significant conclusion that can be drawn from the Indian situation.

The results of all the changes listed above stand reflected in the classrooms where CLT is still practised. The whole process of curriculum change is riddled with cumbersome and time-consuming procedures in India, so in spite of the limited success of CLT, it has not been removed from courses. This, in the long run, has been for the better because while on the one hand, the teachers have been able to familiarize themselves with its approach and methodology; on the other hand, the changed and changing context has encouraged its growing success today. Since learners are a part of the whole context, they are aware of the growing need for proficiency, both linguistic and communicative, in English. Today, more and more students take up part-time work (that requires fluency in English) along with their studies, this was earlier an aberration, now is the norm.

1.2.5 The Road Ahead in India: More CA Inclusive

ELT in India has come a long way from year 1880 when only 60% primary schools used English as the medium for teaching. By 1940, the grammar-translation method flourished and the spread of English remained confined to education and office circles, yet again in a haphazard manner. By 1970, structural linguistics started making its presence felt in Indian classrooms in the shape of drills and exercises. Around this time, all professional courses began to be taught in English, which had also become established as a library language and a subject for independent study. As compared to its establishment as an autonomous subject in other English-as-first-language countries around 1940, ELT emerged as an autonomous subject in India as late as 1980.

Similarly, the language laboratory also became a part of the ELT paradigm around 1985 as compared to the 1940 of these countries. CALI or Computer Assisted Language Instruction reached most classrooms in 1960 but it came to the Indian classroom around 1985; at present, in some places it has evolved into CALL or Computer Assisted Language Learning. Both CALI and CALL have not been adopted widely due to the obvious constraints of finance and the typically Indian mindset that
learning cannot take place without the presence of a human teacher. In the Indian context, Tickoo's distinction between CALI and CALL took on special significance. While it is true that multinationals, call centres and some private institutes are encouraging CALL, it is CALI that has gained wider acceptance.

Communicative Language Teaching reached both regions (India and the West) between the years 1970 - 1980, with the difference that the Indian context was not ready for CLT. Hence, it took around two decades to gain acceptance among learners and teachers. Language-literature integration gained recognition among teachers around the same time. India after 1995 has made up for the slow elephant years by broadening the apex of the ELT cone with a generous mix of so many methodologies that come under the generic category of CA or the Communicative Approach.

It is true that mostly this CA is practised in the institutes that belong to the third category above but the ripple effect created is gradually reaching the ELT classroom. Most institutes that target the language users who need proficiency in a hurry or who need to clear certain examinations invest heavily in teaching materials from publishing houses like the Cambridge University Press. Since all materials published in such places of repute are state-of-the-art in terms of methodology, teachers and learners are in a position of maximum benefit. Moreover, teachers at these centres are usually young postgraduates who are receptive to novelty and innovation.

They borrow heavily from their materials and often create a methodology of their own by using combinations of audio lingual or situational or functional or interactive or task-based or communicative or even the direct method language teaching. All these approaches and methods could be spread through a course or could even be used in one class, depending upon learner response. This pedagogy is still CA (Communicative Approach) oriented even if not restricted to one approach. Again teachers especially the younger ones are increasingly moving towards increasing the extent to which lessons are centered around CA.

The most significant impact of this approach is its sensitivity to learner needs and response. This sensitivity is what has been lacking in the academic aspect of ELT in India. The whole academic process is so unwieldy that it fails to respond to learner needs; learner response is too often ignored. The ELT cone of India is broadening at
the base today because of factors that have little to do with the ELT classroom in academic institutions. The irony of the situation is that while academicians label these learning centres 'shops' or 'commercial institutes' it is these establishments that are a major influence behind the changing face of the ELT paradigm in India.

1.2.6 An Overview of Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

“...there is, as Gebhard et al. (1990:16) argue, no convincing evidence from pedagogic research, including research into second language instruction, that there is any universally or ‘best’ way to teach. Although, clearly, particular approaches are likely to prove more effective in certain situations, blanket prescription is difficult to support theoretically. The art of teaching does not lie in accessing a checklist of skills but rather in knowing which approach to adopt with different students, in different curricular circumstances or in different cultural settings (Klapper 2001:17).

Such pedagogic choices are most effective when underpinned by an appreciation of what support theory, or indeed the range of theories available, can bring to practice. But what experience of theory does the average higher education teacher of ab initio, or language teaching in general possess?

“...in view of the fact that many junior academics in language departments are required to spend a considerable amount of their time teaching practical language classes, and that many of them come to the task from an academic research background, often involving a topic in the fields of literacy, cultural, historical or area studies, it is surprising and a little worrying that departments are not doing more to prepare staff for a substantial part of their academic role. Bearing in mind the typical background and profile of senior academic linguist, it would be unreasonable to expect most language departments to mount a programme of raining independently; nevertheless, there is much room for collaborative provision with Education and Staff Development or, where one exists, a language centre.

Unless the decision is taken to hive off language teaching to a specialist centre or to dedicated, trained language-teaching staff, it might be thought that departments should ensure that anyone embarking on a career in languages is at the very lest introduced to the rudiments of second language acquisition and second language instruction, the theory and practice of grammar teaching, approaches to translation,
techniques for teaching listening and reading, applications of ICT, and assessment of language proficiency (Klapper 2001: 7-8).

There is moreover wide divergence in the various aims of language teaching and learning. Quist (2000) discusses a ‘clash of cultures’ in language teaching in universities, between the liberal tradition which emphasises the cultural and intellectual aims of language teaching and learning in Higher Education, and the instrumental paradigm which emphasises ‘real-world’ skills with “an emphasis on speaking and interpersonal skills at the cost of writing or accuracy” (Quist 2000: 131).

The CRAMLAP questionnaire responses reflected this clash in aims and methodology in Regional and Minority Languages teaching and learning, broadly reflected within the ‘Philological’ and ‘Communicative’ traditions, but there was often little in the responses to suggest theoretical reflection.

Given the gap between practice and access to theory, we will now proceed to a summary of methods and theory in the expectation that it will help teachers in higher education to ground their future practice

Debate and developments around the methods of language teaching and learning have been ongoing since the time of Comenius in the 17th century, if not before. The complexity of contexts and the greater appreciation of the issues lead us to the conclusion that the panacea of a single, universal, optimum method for teaching and learning modern languages does not exist. Instead, teachers now acknowledge the need to adopt an informed eclectic approach, incorporating elements from the range of methods available. Most language teaching today emphasise oral communication, although many Higher Education programmes, including some CRAMLAP questionnaire respondents, place greater emphasis upon grammatical mastery and reading.

In attempting to define what ‘method’ is, we can consider Edward Anthony’s tripartite distinction of Approach, Method and Technique (Anthony: 1963).

This distinction was developed and recast by Richards and Rodgers (1982, 1985) as Approach, Design and Procedure, encompassed within the overall concept of Method, “an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice” (Richards & Rodgers 1985: 16) where
• Approach refers to the beliefs and theories about language, language learning and teaching that underlie a method

• Design relates the theories of language and learning to the form and function of teaching materials and activities in the classroom;

• Procedure concerns the techniques and practices employed in the classroom as consequences of particular approaches and designs.

Richards & Rodgers 1985:17)

There are many publications discussing the various language teaching methods employed over the years. We have drawn here, inter alia, upon Chapter Two of H. Douglas Brown’s Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (Longman/ Pearson Education, White Plains, New York, 2nd edition 2001).

Brown draws a distinction between methods as “specific, identifiable clusters of theoretically compatible classroom techniques” (p15), and methodology as “pedagogical practices in general…Whatever considerations are involved in ‘how to teach’ are methodological” (ibid.).’Methodology’ here can thus be equated to Richards and Rodgers’ ‘Procedure’.

Pedagogic approaches are typically informed by both a theory of language and a theory of language learning. For example, audio-lingualism was informed by a structuralist model of language and by behaviourist learning theory (Richards and Rodgers 1986).

The twentieth century saw new methods emerging with regularity in what Marckwardt (1972:5) saw as a cyclical pattern of “changing winds and shifting sands”
with each new method breaking from what preceded, while incorporating some of the positive aspects of its predecessors. This mortality of language learning methods, to use Decoo’s phrase can usually be attributed to the neglect or lack of one particular component (Decoo 2001: §4.5)

Brown Summarises:

A glance through the past century or so of language teaching will give an interesting picture of how varied the interpretations have been of the best way to teach a foreign language. As disciplinary schools of thought – psychology, linguistics, and education, for example – have come and gone, so have language-teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. Teaching methods, as “approaches in action,” are of course the practical application of theoretical findings and positions. In a field such as ours that is relatively young, it should come as no surprise to discover a wide variety of these applications over the last hundred years, some in total philosophical opposition to others - Brown 2001: 17-18

1.2.7 The Grammar-Translation Method

The Classical or Grammar-Translation method represents the tradition of language teaching adopted in western society and developed over centuries of teaching not only the classical languages such as Latin and Greek, but also foreign languages. The focus was on studying grammatical rules and morphology, doing written exercises, memorizing vocabulary, translating texts from and prose passages into the language. It remained popular in modern language pedagogy, even after the introduction of newer methods. In America, the Coleman Report in 1929 recommended an emphasis on the skill of reading in schools and colleges as it was felt at that time that there would be few opportunities to practise the spoken language.

Internationally, the Grammar-Translation method is still practised today, not only in courses, including CRAMLAP respondents, teaching the classical older stages of languages (Latin, Greek, Old Irish etc.) where its validity can still be argued in light of expected learning outcomes, but also, with less justification, in some institutions for modern language courses. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979:3) listed the major characteristics of Grammar-Translation:

- Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language;
• Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words;
• Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given;
• Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words;
• Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early;
• Little attention is paid to the context of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis;
• Often the only drills are exercises’ in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue;
• Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

Decoo attributes the grammar-translation method’s fall from favour to its lack of potential for lively communication.

A greater attention to grammar (focus on form/structure) has now re-emerged as well as appropriate integration by teachers of structures into content focused lessons. But the explicit teaching of grammatical paradigms in isolation is rare nowadays.

1.2.8 The Direct Method

While Henri Gouin’s The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages, published in 1880, can be seen as the precursor of modern language teaching methods with its ‘naturalistic’ approach, the credit for popularising the Direct Method usually goes to Charles Berlitz, who marketed it as the Berlitz Method.

The basic premise of the Direct Method was that one should attempt to learn a second language in much the same way as children learn their first language. The method emphasised oral interaction, spontaneous use of language, no translation between first and second languages, and little or no analysis of grammar rules.

Richards and Rodgers summarized the principles of the Direct Method as follows (2001: 12)

• Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language;
• Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught;
• Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around questions-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small intensive classes;

• Grammar was taught inductively;

• New teaching points were taught through modelling and practice;

• Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, pictures; Abstract vocabulary was taught through association of ideas;

• Both speech and listening comprehension were taught;

• Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

Decoo identifies as its weakness the lack of insight into the reality of the classroom situation for most learners, in its aspiration to a mastery of the language that few could achieve.

Many of the elements of the Direct Method listed above will be familiar to teachers in Higher Education, which, however, now includes more language use tailored to the needs and experiences of the students, and also a return to ‘focus on form’ (language structures)

1.2.9 The Audio-Methods

The Audio-lingual/Audiovisual Method is derived from "The Army Method," so called because it was developed through a U.S. Army programme was devised after World War II to produce speakers proficient in the languages of friend and foes. In this method, grounded in the habit formation model of behaviourist psychology and on a Structural Linguistics theory of language, the emphasis was on memorisation through pattern drills and conversation practices rather than promoting communicative ability.

Characteristics of the Audio-Methods:

• New material is presented in dialogue form;

• There is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and overlearning

• Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis taught one at a time;
• Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills;
• There is little or no grammatical explanation. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than by deductive explanation;
• Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context;
• There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids;
• Great importance is attached to pronunciation;
• Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted;
• Successful responses are immediately reinforced;
• There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances;
• There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content.
• (adapted from Prator & Celce-Murcia 1979)

1.2.10 The Oral-Situational Approach

This resembles the Audio-lingual approach as it is based on a structural syllabus but it emphasises the meanings expressed by the linguistic structures, not just the forms, and also the situations or contexts chosen to practise the structures. It can be found in courses dating from the 1970s which are now criticised for not achieving the hoped-for results.

As they were based on behaviourist psychology (see below), the Audio-method and Oral-situational approach were limited by their neglect of cognitive learning. The drill-based approach in the classroom re-emerged in early Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) software where it was perceived to motivate pupils and develop autonomous study and learning. CALL is now more sophisticated and can foster cognitive learning as well.

Chomsky

Noam Chomsky is identified with the Innatist or Nativist theory. As seen in the discussion under the age factor, Chomsky claims that children are biologically programmed to acquire language, as they are for other biological functions such as walking, which a child normally learns without being taught. While the environment supplies people who talk to the child, language acquisition is an unconscious process.
The child activates the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), an innate capability or blueprint that endows the child with the capability to develop speech from a universal grammar.

1.2.11 Cognitive Code Learning

With the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics, the attention of linguists and language teachers was drawn towards the ‘deep structure’ of language and a more cognitive psychology. Chomsky’s theory of Transformational-generative Grammar focused attention again on the rule-governed nature of language and language acquisition rather than habit formation. This gave rise in the 1960s to **Cognitive Code Learning** where learners were encouraged to work out grammar rules deductively for themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductive Learning</th>
<th>Grammatical explanations or rules are presented and then applied through practice in exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Learning</td>
<td>Learners are presented with examples. They then discover or induce language rules and principles on their own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cognitive code learning achieved only limited success as the cognitive emphasis on rules and grammatical paradigms proved as off-putting as behaviourist rote drilling.

1.2.12 Alternative or ‘Designer’ Methods

The 1970s saw the emergence of some alternative, less-commonly used methods and approaches, such as **Suggestopedia; The Silent Way; Total Physical Response**. An overview table of these ‘Designer’ methods is provided by Nunan (1989: 194-195) and Brown (2001: chapter 2).

Decoo (2001 §4.2) makes the important point that new methods such as these may succeed initially when introduced by skilled and enthusiastic teachers or personalities and are delivered in experimental or well financed situations with well behaved, responsive and motivated students and small classes. Problems arise, however, when attempts are made to widen such methods out to less ideal situations, with large classes, low motivation and discipline issues. Nevertheless, such methods
may continue to thrive in privileged circumstances with motivated teachers, as has been the case with the Silent Way or Suggestopedia, which continue to find supporters throughout the world.

### 1.2.13 Approach Replacing Method

If ‘Method’ involves a particular set of features to be followed almost as a panacea, it can be suggested that we are now in a ‘Post-Method’ era where the emphasis is on the looser concept of ‘Approach’ which starts from some basic principles which are then developed in the design and development of practice. Accordingly, the Richards and Rodgers model (1985) might be recast as follows, without the outer shell of ‘Method’:

![Diagram showing the relationship between Approach, Design, and Procedure/Technique]

### 1.2.14 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach, with echoes of the ‘naturalistic’ aspect of the Direct Method, was developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). It emphasised “Comprehensible Input”, distinguishing between ‘acquisition’ – a natural subconscious process, and ‘learning’ – a conscious process. They argued that learning cannot lead to acquisition. The focus is on meaning, not form (structure, grammar). The goal is to communicate with speakers of the target language.

**Krashen Summarises the Input Hypothesis Thus:**

We acquire language in an amazingly simple way – when we understand messages. We have tried everything else – learning grammar rules, memorizing vocabulary, using expensive machinery, forms of group therapy etc. What has escaped us all these years, however, is the one essential ingredient: comprehensible input (Krashen 1985: vii).
Unlike Chomsky, moreover, Stephen Krashen's linguistic theories had a more direct relationship to language learning and acquisition, thereby bringing them to the attention of language teachers around the world.

Krashen, along with Terrell, developed the "input theory," which stresses maximum amounts of passive language or what Krashen (1979) refers to as ‘i+1’ (input + 1), language input that is just a little beyond the learner’s current level of comprehension. Krashen contends that through context and extra linguistic information, like a mother talking to her child, hence the ‘natural approach’, learners will climb to the next level and then repeat the process. The message is more important than the form. The input is one way, from the teacher, and learners will participate when ready.

Nunan’s overview of the Natural Approach (1989, 194-195), adapted here, outlines its characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of language</th>
<th>The essence of language is meaning. Vocabulary not grammar is the heart of language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Learning</td>
<td>There are 2 ways of L2 language development:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition a natural sub-conscious process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning a conscious process. Learning cannot lead to acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Designed to give beginners/ intermediate learner communicative skills. Four broad areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>basic personal communicative skills (oral/written); academic learning skills (oral/written)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Based on a selection of communicative activities and topics derived from learner needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity types</td>
<td>Activities allowing comprehensible input, about things in the here-and-now. Focus on meaning not form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner roles</td>
<td>Should not try and learn language in the usual sense, but should try and lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher roles</td>
<td>The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Must create positive low-anxiety climate. Must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of materials</td>
<td>Materials come from realia rather than textbooks. Primary aim is to promote comprehension and communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Natural Approach was based upon Krashen’s theories of second language acquisition, and his Five Hypotheses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krashen’s Five Hypotheses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis</strong>: claims that there are two distinctive ways of developing second language competence: acquisition, that is by using language for “real communication” learning .. &quot;knowing about&quot; or “formal knowledge” of a language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Natural Order hypothesis</strong>: ‘we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Monitor Hypothesis</strong>: ‘conscious learning ... can only be used as a Monitor or an editor’ (Krashen &amp; Terrell 1983) and cannot lead to fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Input Hypothesis</strong>: &quot;humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages or by receiving &quot;comprehensible input&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Affective Filter Hypothesis</strong>: 'a mental block, caused by affective factors ... that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1985, p.100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cook presents a Combined model of acquisition and production on his website

![Diagram of Language Acquisition Model](image)

For Krashen, a conscious knowledge of grammar rules is of limited value and can at most enable the student to ‘monitor’ production (Krashen 1982: 15).

### 1.3 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Influenced by Krashen, approaches emerged during the 1980s and 1990s which concentrated on the communicative functions of language. Classrooms were characterized by attempts to ensure authenticity of materials and meaningful tasks.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as the norm in second language and immersion teaching. As a broadly-based approach, there are any number of definitions and interpretations, but the following interconnected characteristics offered by Brown (2001: 43) provide a useful overview:
1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic) of communicative competence. Goals therefore must intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic.

2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.

3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.

4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.

5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

6. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

The communicative approach was developed mainly in the context of English Second Language (ESL) teaching. The question must be asked, however, how universal can its application be? Decoo (§4.3) points out that one can relatively easily reach a fair level of communication in English, which has a relatively simple morphology (e.g. simple plurals with ‘s’, no adjectival agreement, no gender markers, etc). Neither is mastery of the highly irregular orthography of English a priority in an oral communication approach. French, for example, requires mastery of an enormously greater number of elements to reach a similar first year communicative level (different articles in front of nouns, gender, adjectival agreement, numerous verbal forms etc.). It is fatal for the progression and motivation of the learner to
ignore this complexity. With Irish, the apparently simple notion “Where do you live?” is not rendered by a simple question form of the verb ‘to live’, but by an idiom denoting state “Cá bhfuil tú i do chónaí?” (“Where are you in your living?”) linking it not with a verbal construction, but with the other idioms denoting state by means of the preposition, personal adjective, and noun construction, “i do lui, shuí, etc.”. This construction, and the other distinctive features of Irish, are not inordinately difficult when taught in structural context, but it is different to English and other languages and requires appropriate adaptation if the communicative approach is to be adopted. The same can of course be said about other languages as well.

1.3.1 Notional-Functional Syllabus

The move from method to approach has also focused on syllabus design. The Notional/ Functional Syllabus (NFS) has been associated with CLT. The content of language teaching is organised and categorized by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of grammar and structure. The work of Van Ek and Alexander (1975) for the Council of Europe and Wilkins (1976) has been influential in syllabus design up to the present day, and the Common European Framework (CEFR). The CEFR emphasises that consideration must be given to the role of grammatical form in its delivery:

The Framework cannot replace reference grammars or provide a strict ordering (though scaling may involve selection and hence some ordering in global terms) but provides a framework for the decisions of teachers to be made known. (Council of Europe 2001a: 152)

The breadth of possible applications of Communicative Language Teaching can lead to misinterpretations. In United Kingdom schools, for example, the National Curriculum introduced in 1988 led to a topic-based emphasis for modern languages subject teaching that sidelined the role of grammar, arguing from Krashen that comprehensible input alone was required. This ignored, however, the difference in context between transitional bilingual education for Spanish speakers in the USA and the few classes a week offered in British schools. Immersion education, on the other hand, recognised the positive potential of the CLT.
Responses to CRAMLAP questionnaires show a great diversity in models of ab initio teaching in Higher Education, with some institutions emphasising grammatical competence, others communicative, others again a combination of both.

However, the belief that exposure to ‘comprehensible input + 1’ could be sufficient to ensure language acquisition is now challenged. We are now in a ‘Post-Communicative’ era, influenced by a Constructivist theory of learning (see below).

1.3.2 Post-Communicative Language Teaching

Krashen’s theories on language acquisition have been challenged by researchers and theorists who recognise that while rich language input is necessary, it is not sufficient to create proficient speakers of the target language, even in immersion contexts, as Hammerly argued:

If ‘comprehensible input’ alone were adequate in the classroom, immersion graduates, after over 7000 hours of such input, would be very competent speakers of the second language – but they are not. They are very inaccurate (Hammerly 1991: 9).

Language teaching and learning has entered a ‘Post-Communicative’ phase which takes a more constructivist view of learning emphasising personal learning and discovery on the part of the learner, with more task-based, collaborative work between learners, and a more facilitating role for the teacher.

Immersion programmes in Canada were found to achieve good listening and reading comprehension in the target language, but relatively poor achievement in the productive skills of reading and writing (Genesee, 1987; Harley and Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985). Christopher Amala Dasstone (2002:5) summarises as follows:

Views about immersion pedagogy have changed over the years. Initially it tended to be considered good practice for the immersion teacher to use the immersion language extensively and for the pupils to focus on the subject-matter meanings that the teacher was transmitting. Underlying this was an assumption that extensive Immersion Language input plus focus on meaning would trigger natural language acquisition mechanisms in children so that they intuitively absorbed the underlying structure of the language, i.e. they would not need to focus on form as much as on meaning. Research suggests however that whereas this has undoubtedly encouraged confidence and fluency it often leads to pupils reaching a ‘plateau’ (fossilisation’
with recurrent problems in gender, syntax and morphology, rather than continuing to develop.

**Age Factor**

For adult learners, as is the case with Higher Education, there is research evidence to suggest that instruction may be more effective at an age, from the end of elementary schooling on, when learners have the maturity and motivation to use or transfer appropriate learning strategies (Harley and Hart, 1997; Muñoz, 1999; Singleton, 1989).

**Focus on Form**

The view that input exposure to the target language is sufficient has been widely criticised. The lack of focus on form features strongly among Klapper’s concerns with CLT (2003: 34):

- The embracing of a meaning-based pedagogy with little conscious attention to form, in direct contradiction of one of the classic statements of communicative competence (cf. Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983); [in CLT ] grammar is tied to certain functional contexts and learners have to rely on unanalysed chunks of language without any real understanding of their structure;

- Forms appear independently of grammatical context; the resulting absence of a reliable frame of formal reference means learners’ inaccuracies become systemic;

- The concomitant failure to build a generative language framework that enables learners to recombine linguistic elements and thus to create new or unique utterances.

While current approaches stress the need for a greater focus on form (see e.g. Doughty and Williams, 1998), Schmidt (1994, 2001) argues however that this ‘focus on form’ should be on specific forms, rather than a global approach. He emphasises the noticing by learners of specific linguistic items as they occur in input, rather than as awareness of grammatical rules.

The input and focus on form perspectives can also be seen in terms of experiential and analytic teaching. Harley (1991) distinguished between experiential and analytic teaching in immersion classrooms. Christopher Amala Dasstone (2002
Chapter 5) sets out the two modes in a figure which draws on and adds to Harley’s distinction:

1.3.3. Experiential and Analytic Immersion Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ANALYTIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message-oriented focus</td>
<td>More focus on the L2 code (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, sound-system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to authentic L2-use in class</td>
<td>Clarifies form-function-meaning relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 is the vehicle for teaching and learning</td>
<td>Provides regular feedback to help learners restructure their developing internal representations of the L2 code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important subject matter-use in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers tend to do much or most of the talking</td>
<td>Provides guidance on the use of L2-learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumes learners acquire the underlying L2</td>
<td>Assumes that cognitive processing is needed, in addition to experiential acquisition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rule-system through ‘use’ and ‘absorption’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangers: Learners’ L2 development may ‘fossilise’ (reach a plateau) and they may show a tendency for ‘smurfing’ using small number of high-coverage items (e.g. ‘chose’, ‘aller’, ‘faire’) rather than develop to express more precise meanings</td>
<td>Dangers: May over-emphasise accuracy; may pay too much attention to form rather than to form-function-meaning relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Harley, 1991 the author summarises here that “good practice would ensure that both modes (‘Experiential’ and ‘Analytic’ teaching) were activated to avoid the dangers that arise if one of them is allowed to dominate the other”.

Higher Education is at the other end of the scale from Immersion Education and veers towards the analytic.

1.3.4 Output; Intake; Interaction

Merrill Swain (1985) argued that the failure to achieve native-like competence in grammar and other features may be due to the learners’ lack of opportunities to actually use their target language. In a classroom environment, particularly where the emphasis is on rich input, the teachers do most of the talking while the pupils listen. Students tend to get few opportunities to speak and give short answers to questions. This is a crucial dilemma. If the teacher needs to supply substantial input, how can s/he ensure that individual learners have enough opportunities to speak and practise the input received?

Swain’s ‘output hypothesis’ (1985) maintains that opportunities for language production (the term now preferred to ‘output’) and practice need to be promoted for both written and spoken language with an emphasis on linguistic accuracy. Producing
the target language, she claims, may force students to pay more attention to (or to ‘notice’) how the language is used and what they need to know in order to convey meaning, than does simply comprehending it. This triggers cognitive processes that might in turn generate new linguistic knowledge or consolidate their existing knowledge (Swain 1995, Swain and Lapkin 1995), a constructivist process.

Swain (2000a: 201-2) cites Netten and Spain (1989) in support of this view. In an observation of three Grade Two French immersion classes, the weakest class (Class A) outperformed the stronger classes on a test of French reading comprehension. Observations in the classroom revealed that Class A “…were constantly using, and experimenting with, the second language as they engaged in communications of an academic and social nature with their peers and the teacher…”, whereas in the supposedly stronger class students had limited opportunities to use the second language to engage in real communication acts (1989:494).

In summary, therefore, output or production enhances fluency, but also creates students’ awareness of gaps in their knowledge. Through collaborative dialogue (Swain 1999, 2000b) they are encouraged to experiment but also obtain vital feedback on their performance which in turn encourages further effort.

Gass and Selinker (1994) have advanced the idea of ‘intake’, wherein the input, (vocabulary, grammar and expressions) needs to be internalised by the pupil before meaningful output is possible. The teacher needs to ensure that the input is ‘taken in’, that is, recognised, understood, and acquired by the pupils.

Long (1996) developed the Interaction Hypothesis which focuses on the notion of interaction as a stimulus for effective output. Genuine communication through interaction can clearly be linked to constructivist theory. In this hypothesis, the process of interaction when a problem in communication is encountered and learners engage in negotiating for meaning engenders acquisition. Input becomes comprehensible through the modifications from interaction. Again, feedback also leads learners to modify their output.

Activities to develop interaction include group and pairwork. Swain’s Dictagloss, where pupils collaborate to reconstruct dictated texts (Kowal and Swain 1994, Swain 2000b) is now well established as an interaction activity.
Interaction can be developed through a task-based approach which permits a “problem-solving negotiation between knowledge that the learner holds and new knowledge” (Candlin and Murphy 1987:1). The pupils interact with each other, and the teacher, thereby encountering new language which they can assimilate and then use. The role of the teacher is to provide suitable tasks to facilitate this process. An effective way of developing tasks is through use of exemplars or ‘recipes’ which can be adapted to particular needs. The task-based approach to language learning will be discussed later.

In summary, if we accept with Mitchell and Myles (2004: 261) that “there can be ‘no one best method’…which applies at all times and in all situations, with every type of learner”, we recognise that the diversity of contexts requires an informed, eclectic approach. To quote Nunan:

It has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are consonant with what we know about second language acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself (Nunan 1991: 228)

Examples from the immersion or school contexts may not always be applicable to particular Higher Education. Nevertheless, the CRAMLAP responses showed a full range of classroom environments in which the approaches to teaching and learning ranged from traditional grammar/translation to partial immersion.

1.4. CONSTRUCTIVISM AND POST-COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Constructivist Theories of Learning

Purely cognitivist theories have now developed into Constructivist theories of learning. Cohen and Manion (2004:167) explain that:

“At heart there is a move away from instructing and instructivism and towards constructivism”.

This “signals a significant move from attention on teaching to attention on learning; classrooms are places in which students learn rather than being mainly
places in which teachers teach. Teachers are facilitators of learning (Cohen & Manion 2004: 167)

**Cognitive constructivism  Jean Piaget (1896-1980)**

Piaget (1952 The Origins of Intelligence) is concerned with how the learner develops understanding. Children’s minds are not empty, but actively process material. The role of maturation (growing up) and children’s increasing capacity to understand their world in terms of developmental stages is central to his view.

- Children are constrained by their individual stage of intellectual development. They cannot undertake certain tasks until they are psychologically mature enough to do so.
- There is an emphasis on discovery learning rather than teacher imparted information
- The readiness to learn, when learners are to progress, is different for each individual
- The idea of a linear development through stages has been widely used in the design and scheduling of school curricula.

Higher Education students have, of course, reached maturity.

While Piaget hypothesized that language developed to express knowledge acquired through interaction with the physical world, for Vygotsky, thought was essentially internalised speech, and speech emerges in social interaction.

Vygotsky and Bruner are identified with Social Constructivism which places more emphasis upon the role of language and how understanding and meanings grow out of social encounter.

“For Vygotsky, learning is a social, collaborative and interactional activity in which it is difficult to ‘teach’ specifically – the teacher sets up the learning situation and enables learning to occur, with intervention to provoke and prompt that learning through scaffolding (Cohen & Manion 2004:168).”

Vygotsky is identified with the theory of the “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD). ‘Proximal’ simply means ‘next’ and the ZPD is the distance or gap between a child’s actual level of development as observed when working independently without
adult help and the level of potential development when working in collaboration with more capable peers or adults. The other person in not necessarily teaching them how to perform the task, but the process of interaction and enquiry makes possible new understandings or a refinement of performance. For Vygotsky, therefore, the development of language and articulation of ideas is central to learning and further development. The learner’s current level reflects the importance of prior influences and knowledge. The learner is ‘stretched’ and ZPD is about “can do with help”. The teacher’s role is to place learning in the ZPD.

Bruner is one of the key figures in the so-called ‘cognitive revolution’ that displaced behaviourism. Influenced by Piaget but later, and to a greater extent, Vygotsky (whom he is credited with having introduced to the West), he saw learning as an active knowledge-getting process in which learners construct new ideas based upon their current and past knowledge (Bruner Acts of meaning 1990) Learning how to learn is a central element, the process of learning is as important as the product, and social interaction is crucial. While concerned primarily with young children, much of Bruner’s theory holds true for adult learners as well.

Extending Piagetian theory, Bruner suggested three modes of thinking which increasingly overlap each other:

- the Enactive, where learning takes place through actions, manipulating objects and materials;
- the Iconic, where objects are represented by images which are recognised for what they represent, but can also be created independently;
- the Symbolic, words and numbers, which represents how children make sense of their experiences and language becomes an increasingly important means of representing the world, enabling thinking and reasoning in the abstract.

“Teachers need to be aware of the ways in which learning can be enhanced by using these three modes. At the enactive level, we can see the importance of the use of drama, play, total physical response and the handling of real objects. The iconic mode would be brought into play through the use of pictures, or words in colour. At the same time, learners begin to use the symbolic mode as they use the target language … to express ideas in context”
Bruner’s term Scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, and Ross 1976) has come to be used for the support for learning provided by a teacher to enable a learner to perform tasks and construct understandings that they would not quite be able to manage on their own as the learner moves towards mastery and autonomy, when the scaffolding is gradually phased out. It enables the teacher to extend the pupil’s work and active participation beyond his current abilities and levels of understanding within the ZPD.

Common elements of scaffolding include:

- defining tasks
- direct or indirect instructing
- specification and sequencing of activities
- modelling and exemplification; simplification
- reinforcing
- questioning
- provision of materials, equipment and facilities
- other environmental contributions

As well as scaffolding provided by the teacher, students collaborating in small groups can provide scaffolding for each other – ICT would be a prime environment for such work. This would exemplify and emphasise Vygotsky’s view that learning is a social as well as an individual activity.

David and Heather Wood developed the theory of Contingency in instruction.

Contingency developed from work on face-to-face tutoring. It attempts to strike a balance between:

- ensuring that learners solve for themselves as many of the problems in a task as possible, and
- intervening when the task is too difficult in order to avoid prolonged failure
- The goals of contingent tutoring in assisted problem solving are:
  - The learner should not succeed too easily
  - Nor fail too often.
• The principles are:
  • When learners are in trouble, give more help than before (scaffolding)
  • When they succeed, give less help than before (fading)

Critique

Constructivism is a theory and as such is open to critique as differing little from common sense empiricist views, or as providing misleading and incomplete views of human learning (Fox 2001). An overly enthusiastic endorsement of constructivism might reduce the teacher’s role to that of a facilitator, with the students in ‘discovery mode’. This is unlikely to be wholly satisfactory in Higher Education, either for teachers or learners, and an element of instructivism is to be expected. Nevertheless, Fox acknowledges that “the greatest insight of constructivism is perhaps the realisation of the difference made by a learner’s existing knowledge and values to what is learned next, both in facilitating and inhibiting it (ibid. 33).

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Second language Teaching (EFL) Traditional Method (CTM), rooted in Confucian conservatism, is characterized by its teacher-centeredness and rote memorization of texts. It has produced large numbers of students who are skilled in the written aspect of the language, but weak in the communication aspect. Globalization has brought India to the world stage. With demands from the job market, good written grammar skills are no longer sufficient for young graduates seeking a job. Instead, communication in English is promoted. In the past few years, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a buzzword in the field of English Language Teaching.

Teachers are asked to use a variety of teaching methods to encourage communicative competence of students. New regulations are given, regarding English as an instrument for personal development, as reported in the National Standards for English Curriculum (NSEC) (2001). Teachers are encouraged to adopt a flexible approach to language teaching, with the Communicative Approach being on top of the list. However, many obstacles have been encountered by teachers who try to use the CLT approach in their classroom. Much skepticism is expressed as to whether CLT works in second language teaching (EFL) classrooms. Despite fervent advocacy of the
Communicative Approach by westerners, many English teachers tend to believe that some idealized imported solution to the pedagogical problems cannot be expected to work in the second language learning / teaching (EFL) classrooms without any adaptation to local conditions.

1.5.1 Aims and Objectives

The majority of the research studies regarding the introduction of CLT into second language teaching / learning (EFL) have been theoretical works based on linguistics and pedagogy. In-depth ethnographic research examining the actual processes and dynamics experienced by individuals involved in and affected by the reform in English language teaching (ELT) is scarce (Ouyang, 2000).

The following questions need to be researched:

- Do the English language teachers at the Engineering College level use CLT in their teaching? If so, to what extent? If not, why not?

- What factors prevent them from using it? Also, do expatriate English teachers at the Engineering college level use CLT in the I year B.E. /B.Tech Students’ EFL setting? If so, to what extent? If not, what adaptations do they make to the second language setting and why?

- In order to answer these questions, more studies in the ELT field need to be conducted from a sociological and broad educational perspective to examine the underlying philosophy that influences the ELT methods.

Also, The findings for this research are expected to fulfill the following aims and objectives.

- Firstly, it aims to identify the characteristics of CLT from teachers’ perspectives.

- Secondly, it aims to assess perceptions of the effectiveness and appropriateness of CLT in the I year B.E. /B. Tech students’ EFL context at Engineering College level taking into account also perceived constraints on CLT promotion.
• Thirdly, it aims to find out how and in what ways CLT is adopted and adapted by the students, and the extent to which ‘communicative ideas’ are actually reflected in their teaching practice.

• Fourthly, it aims to indicate the extent to which the participants considered their experience from training programme to have been effective in facilitating CLT implementation and enhancing their teaching proficiency in a general sense. In accordance with these aims the following research questions more specifically guide the research:

1. ‘What are the conceptions of CLT held by Engineering College teachers of English with second language experience?’

2. ‘To what extent do these teachers perceive CLT as appropriate in the Engineering College EFL context?’

3. ‘Do the Engineering College teachers of English with second language teaching experience attempt to adopt or adapt CLT? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?’

Also this study attempts to analyze the Non native English teachers who are actually involved in classrooms and affected by reforms.

• This study attempts to identify the extent to which Non native English teachers use CLT in Second language teaching environment particularly in I year B.E. / B.Tech EFL context.

• Also to discover the possible factors that prevent them from using CLT, and to explore an English teaching method that may fit into the I year B.E. / B.Tech EFL setting.

1.5.2 Organization of the Thesis

Following this introduction, in the Review of Literature (Chapter two) I take an in-depth look at the issues outlined above in relation to CLT as appropriate methodology.

This will be followed by the Methodology chapter (Chapter three), in which the study justify the adoption of the overall research design, as well as explaining the procedures of data collection and analysis.
In Chapters four, five and six the study then present the findings for each research question in turn and incorporate initial discussion. In Chapter seven the thesis present an in-depth overall discussion, based on the contributions and problems emerging from the findings, in relation to the major issues identified in the Review of Literature. Chapter eight presents the conclusion and suggestions for future research.