CHAPTER II
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2.0. OVERVIEW

The learning of grammar should automatically lead to 'linguistic creativity' and ability in composing—atleast this is the theoretical expectation. Though the input is being steadily monitored from the primary level, the output has been rather unpredictable in a majority of students, in the ESL curriculum in question. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the input of grammar and the output of 'linguistic creativity' and 'compositional ability'. This situation poses a challenge to the present theoretical understanding. One has to locate the area of deficiency before suggesting corrective measures. Where does the problem lie? Is it in the input (the grammar syllabus overtly or covertly taught) or in the manner of teaching/learning or in the link between 'linguistic creativity' and 'compositional ability'? This research project is an attempt to critically examine these questions and the possible answers to these and other related questions.

The first chapter, Introduction, presented the historical and pragmatic justification for the present research project as well as the scope of this project. The historical developments in the Indian ELT scene have been critically examined in relation to international developments in theories of Linguistics and Language teaching. This chapter is, in a sense, a reversal of the first chapter. It presents the theoretical developments in the area of Linguistics and Language Teaching at the international level and makes an attempt to narrow down possibilities that are feasible to the Indian scene.

The first section of this chapter presents a brief and critical account of
developments in the area of grammar, grammar teaching and the teaching of composition. The second section poses the problems from the post-structuralist perspective which in effect problematizes the notions of grammar teaching and composition.

2.1. GRAMMAR, GRAMMAR TEACHING AND COMPOSITION THROUGH THE AGES

2.1.1. PRE-SAUSSUREAN ERA

Pre-Saussurean grammar dates back, over 2000 years behind Saussure, to the Greek scholars of the fourth and the fifth century B.C. Based on the assumption "...that the structure of their language embodied the universal form of human thought or perhaps, of the cosmic order" (Krishnaswamy 1971:46), the Greek grammarians wrote grammars of their language. When Latin became the dominant language of the Western world, Latin grammarians based their grammar on the Greeks', irrespective of the fact whether the categories found in the Greek language existed in their language or not. From then on, the tradition of using one language as a model for writing the grammar of another language became a generally accepted practice in the field of grammar and linguistics. William Lily was the initiator of the dreaded rules of grammar and his emphasis on mindless rote-learning and the custom of writing sample sentences or 'Latins' made the language-learning children shudder. Every child who entered the school in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England was taught Latin grammar through the study of declensions, conjugations and translations, sometimes with the use of parallel bilingual texts. The rules of grammar were presented and illustrated; disconnected sentences were given for translation to teach specific rules, as Titone (1968:28) illustrates with examples:

The philosopher pulled the lower jaw of the hen. My sons have bought the
mirrors of the Duke. The cat of my aunt is more treacherous than the dog of your uncle.

Such unnatural sentences were constructed on grammar points and they had no relation to the language of real communication. ‘Grammar’ was confined to translation—the written form, and ‘speaking’ was marginalized. When opportunities for communication among Europeans increased due to various factors, there was a demand for oral proficiency. The grammar of declensions, paradigms, prescriptive rules and rote-learning had to give way to meet the new demands.

In addition, traditional grammar made itself unpopular with some of its unscientific ideas: the ability to read and translate was considered to be more important than the capacity to arrive at ‘meaning’; grammatical forms of language were treated as autonomous entities pushing ‘meaning’ to the secondary place; ‘correctness’ was insisted upon and the normative rules of ‘good’ language contributed more to that factor, to the exclusion of meaning; and grammar, forming a part of the trivium with logic and rhetoric, had more to do with mental discipline and intellectual rigor than with language or communication. That the learning of a meaningless form or arbitrarily imposed rules of correctness or learning about a language will not help a learner to communicate in real life was not understood for centuries. Moreover, the ‘Purist attitude’ towards language was labelled as ‘grammar’ and the ‘attitudes and prejudices’ were the ‘rules’ of grammar.

_Purists have undoubtedly existed in all times and in all places. The rise of the purist attitude in the later years of the seventeenth century became very predominant in the eighteenth century (Krishnaswamy 1971:120)._  

2.1.2. SAUSSUREAN ERA - THE BEGINNINGS

For the first time in the history of linguistics/grammar, language was treated as
an autonomous object and ‘the underlying system of language’ got focussed in Saussure’s treatment of language. The grammarians of the Pre-Saussurian era refused to believe the fact that language is always in a state of constant flux and hence grammars could change.

Saussure defined language as a system of signs—la langue (the rules, codes, conventions) — and the same when manifested in speech, he called la parole. Though differentiated in form and purpose, la langue and la parole, visualized by Saussure are interdependent. Words or speech acts — la parole — cannot have meaning unless there is an underlying system — la langue — which makes it possible to utter and understand them. This fundamental notion of Saussure shifts the emphasis from the meaning of a certain sign to the structure of the system.

His (Saussure’s) concern is with what is “social” rather than individual, with what “never requires premeditation” rather than with what is “wilful and intellectual” with what is “essential” rather than what is “more or less accidental” with the system that makes possible a particular speech act rather than with a particular speech act (Sheriff 1989:7).

For Saussure, the linguistic sign “is a two-sided psychological entity” composed of a “concept and a sound image” which he called ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ respectively. The relationship between the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’ is arbitrary and can also be said to be both fixed and free at once — ‘fixed’ in the sense that no individual can change a sign once it gets established in the linguistic community; ‘free’ in the sense that through use and circulation over a period of time, changes might occur.

The chain of objective reality, the word, the concept image (signified) and the sound image of the word (signifier) has arbitrariness of linkage at various levels. The relationship between objective reality and the linguistic representation of this reality is
merely convention-bound, culture-based and historically-decided. The relationship between the signified and the signifier is again arbitrary. Language is not a simple naming process as Saussure points out:

*If words stood for pre-existing entities they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next, but this is not true (1974:116).*

Each language perceives the world and all that exists in the world differently. Extending the same, it could be said that even everyday concepts are arbitrary.

*The logic of Saussure's theory suggests that our world is constructed for us by our language and that 'things' do not have fixed essences or cores of meaning which pre-exist linguistic representation (Rice 1989: 6-7).*

A further distinction made by Saussure is between synchronic and diachronic aspects.

*The synchronic is the structural aspect of language, the system at a particular moment; the diachronic relates to the history of the language—the changes in its forms and conventions over time. Because signs do not have any essential core of meaning they are open to change, however, in order to 'mean', the sign must exist within a system that is complete at any one moment (op. cit: 7).*

This made Saussure to focus on *langue* in its synchronic aspect, keeping the historic (diachronic) aspect as the backdrop.

Yet another useful distinction—the difference between syntagmatic (horizontal) and paradigmatic (vertical) relationship between signs in language has been put forward by Saussure. Syntagmatic relationship is the relationship of chain wherein the relationships among the various units within a chain are at focus. Paradigmatic relationship refers to the association of each unit in a chain with units outside the chain with the same syntagmatic function. e.g.,
Allen (1975:22) sums it up thus:

**Syntagmatic relations are relations of Co-occurrence; paradigmatic relations are relations of substitutability.**

According to Saussure, the grammar of a language cannot be based on the grammar of any dominant or superior language because, in any given language, the relationship between the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’ is arbitrary — a matter of convention. Since paroles — utterances — are many and varied in nature, Saussure advocated langue — the latent underlying system or a set of conventions to be studied. Saussurean structuralism has had its influence for the past eight decades in areas such as language philosophy, linguistics, literary theory and English language teaching.

The most important implications of Saussurean linguistics to grammar and grammar teaching as perceived by the structuralists and transformationalists gave way to two major streams in language pedagogy, one based on behaviourism and another on mentalism.

**2.1.3. STRUCTURALISTS AND THEIR EXPERIMENTS**

Attracted by Saussurean structuralism, a number of linguists started their experiments with language, in a scientific manner. In the works of the anthropologists-turned-linguists — Franz Boas, Edward Sapir and Leonald Bloomfield — ‘grammar’ got redefined as the description of classes of morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and their combinations. The notion of ‘Structures’ and combinatorial
possibilities became an obsession with the structuralists.

That the language elements are not mere collections of individual items but are related to one another in a system is the essence of structuralist approach to linguistic analysis. What is conspicuous here is the shift from 'item centred view of language' to 'structure centred view of language'. The individual sounds, words or parts of sentences have linguistic significance, only when they contrast and combine with each other in the patterns of a linguistic system.

For the Prague Linguistic Circle, 'Structuralism' refers to the 'unique relational structure' of a language and any analysis must be based upon the elements of a language, not in isolation but as parts of a systemic whole. The American linguists in the 1940s and 1950s — Block, Wells, Harris, Bloomfield and Hockett — used the term 'structural' to "indicate a characteristic preoccupation with form rather than meaning" (Allen and Widdowson 1975).

For Fries (1952), language is a physical, observable phenomenon that must be studied objectively. Dismissing the conventional understanding of the notion of meaning as untenable, the structuralists argued for the primacy of structure. Fries argues thus:

*Structural meaning is signalled by specific and definite devices. It is the devices that signal structural meanings which constitute the grammar of a language. The grammar of a language consists of the devices that signal structural meanings (emphasis added) (ibid:56).*

What is tacit in Bloomfield (1933) is that in all study of language, we must start from forms and not from meanings. Language was seen as an abstraction by most of the structural analysts.

*The primary concern was methodological precision: The emphasis was on*

In the backdrop of traditional grammarians' dependence on individual intuition, the structuralists' description—based on distributional criteria that could be tested and verified—made it look scientific and objective. The 'Scientific inquiry' of most of the structural linguists was limited to a 'corpus of observable data'. The proponents of the structural tradition viewed language 'as a set of behavioural patterns' used by the members of a community in their 'verbal exchanges'. There was 'no non-arbitrary upperbound' with regard to the acceptable utterances. This understanding leads to a major contradiction in the formulations of structuralists—that is the contradiction between 'corpus of observable data' and 'potentially infinite set of utterances'. Rosenbaum ([1965] 1973:250) argues:

There is clearly an equivocation on the term 'language' here which leads to two equally damaging conclusions. If an arbitrary natural language is taken to consist of an infinite set of sentences, then the results of a structural investigation do not constitute a description of language at all, but of something else. On the other hand, should a language be construed as nothing more than the corpus stored in a set of tape recordings, then the task of saying anything of scientific interest about the psychological and linguistic properties of the endless repertoire of sentences which not only define the language of a speech community but which are the personal property of every normal member of this community belongs to a branch of science other than linguistics.

As language itself was believed to be 'all mechanical skill', mastery of the forms of the language should go before the meaningful use of those forms, argued the structuralists. Grammar should be taught with explicit rules and through 'structural drill or pattern practice'. Structures should be acquired inductively. D.A. Wilkins (1972:18) points out the inherent defects in this approach:
Neglect of one's semantic intuition and overdependence on formal analysis can lead to dubious conclusions about the structure of a sentence.

Bloomfieldian structuralism was reinforced by similar other theories like Tagmemics and Systemics. In all these theories one finds endless classification and multiplication of technical terms. The taxonomic approach of the structuralists seems to narrow down 'grammar' to lists of 'meaningless' forms and formal statements. Julia (1983:41) rightly summarizes this point:

When the emphasis is on structure, procedural refinements are insufficient to tell why the utterances under analysis have the form they have. There exists a permanent risk of merely applying new techniques to old ways of thinking. At the root lies the perennial confusion between products of behaviour and the behaviour itself. A long tradition and the consequent wealth of conceptual systems stand in the way of any attempt to look at verbal behaviour simply as behaviour which is verbal.

2.1.4. THE CHOMSKYAN REVOLUTION

Rejecting the popular assumptions of structuralists, Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures offered a radically different view of language, proposing the theory of transformational generative grammar.

... by a generative grammar I mean simply a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assigns structural descriptions to sentences. Obviously every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized a generative grammar that expresses his knowledge of his language (Chomsky 1965:8).

Chomsky labelled this knowledge as 'competence' as against the actual use of language in concrete situations — 'performance'. Skinner's 'Verbal Behaviour' was
sought to be replaced by 'cognitive process' and the 'habit formation theory' of the structuralists by 'rule-governed activity'. T.G. Grammar aimed at providing the most comprehensive set of generative rules, indicating the underlying relations among syntactic patterns. The 'rules', argued the TG grammarians, must 'explicitly' generate all and only the sentences in the language in question. In other words, nothing is left to be 'tacitly understood' as in traditional grammar.

The langue/parole dichotomy of Saussure clearly makes a distinction between 'the generalized rules of the language' as social conventions and the 'actualized language'. While the former is stable and systematic, every parole-act is a unique event — that which is idiosyncratic and situation-specific. Chomsky's notions of 'competence' and 'performance' are not exactly the same as de Saussure's langue and parole, respectively. It can be said that both agree on one point: that it is not the description of the idiosyncratic utterances that constitute the proper objective of the linguistic study of language but the “characterization of the regular rules of grammar” (J.P.B. Allen 1975).

Chomsky's terms and de Saussure's terms are not exact equivalents, since de Saussure describes langue as a 'social product ... a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body', while Chomsky regards competence as a property of the minds of the individual which is developed as part of his general maturation (emphasis added) (Allen 1975:38).

Chomskyan paradigm dismisses problems of day-to-day language use:

...such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest and errors (random or characteristic) in applying knowledge of the language in actual performance (Chomsky 1965:3).

To abstract langue from instance of parole was the obsession with all the
structuralists, starting from Saussure. There had been stiff resistance from many linguists to this 'process of idealization'. Influenced by Malinowski's study of the relationship between language and social context, Firth rejected the 'static structural formalism' of Saussure. Chomsky's notion of 'linguistic competence' — sentence-level grammatical competence of an ideal-speaker-listener in a mono-lingual speech situation — also came under sharp criticism from sociolinguists such as Hymes who proposed the notion of 'communicative competence'.

Though Chomsky proposes the dichotomy of 'competence' and 'performance', his theory is out and out a 'competence-oriented theory'. 'Performance' is totally marginalized in this theory because the entire framework is an attempt at capturing an ideal native speaker's intuition. This process of idealization naturally calls for 'decontextualization', 'standardization' and 'regularization' (Lyons 1972). It is obvious that Chomsky is not talking about actual language use but some abstract principles which are believed to be the basis for actual language use. Moreover the entire work of Chomsky centres around sentence-grammar. But language exists, occurs and is used not as sentences but as utterances. These are governed not merely by 'rules of grammar' but also by 'rules of use'. The insight of Hymes (1972:278) that there are "rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless", added a new dimension to the issue. The notion of 'communicative competence' proposed by Hymes became a catchword for a whole generation of linguists who were all the while finding themselves uncomfortable with Chomsky's abstraction-oriented sentence grammar.

The rules of TG are highly abstract and it is highly unlikely that the rules can be made use of for learning a language. The structuralists concentrated on 'existing texts'—what had already been said or written, whereas the generative linguists also explored 'what is possible in language'. Chomsky ([1965] 1973:216) rightly says:
When we say that a sentence has a certain derivation with respect to a particular generative grammar, we say nothing about how the speaker or hearer might proceed, in some practical or efficient way, to construct such a derivation. These questions belong to the theory of language use - the theory of performance.

No doubt, a reasonable model of language use will incorporate, as a basic component, the generative grammar that expresses the speaker-hearer's knowledge of the language; but this generative grammar does not, in itself, prescribe the character or functioning of a perceptual model or a model of speech production.

As long as language and language behaviour are kept as two different domains, no effective investigative strategy into the interaction between speakers and listeners can be worked out. The abstract constructs designed solely for description and explanation cannot provide any pedagogic recommendation. They might help in understanding how a learner's language works but not in knowing how to make it work.

Descriptive theories are concerned with classification of corpuses of heard or read language; generative theories are concerned with the sentencehood of sentences. In a broader framework, descriptive theories are positivist; generative theories are rationalist (Currie 1973:67).

There seems to be a basic incompatibility between linguistic theory and education practice in the sense that there are burning issues of theory within linguistics which would make a teacher's questions about language seem irrelevant. No amount of idealization can change the fact that the mechanisms responsible for verbal performance are functional and not formal.
2.1.5. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND THEREAFTER

This researcher is of the firm view, drawn from fifteen years of experience in the teaching of English as a second language at the tertiary level, that years of exposure to a foreign language, by way of explanation, pattern practice and substitution drill does not help the learners 'use' a given grammatical item correctly and appropriately in spontaneous utterances. The observation that

*paying attention to grammar actively impedes the effort to achieve communicative competence because the learner's attention is deflected from the expression of meaning, which is the point of communication to the consideration of form, which is not* (Reynaldo Jimenez and Carol J Murphy 1984:205).

is being proved to be very valid in the ESL curriculum in question year after year, batch after batch. There could be theoretical perceptions which doubt the validity of the above argument. In first language acquisition, the formal learning of the grammar of the language takes place much later than the effective acquisition of communication. Even by the 1960s, ethnographers mounted such a powerful attack on Chomsky's formalism that he was forced to modify his theory, accommodating communicative competence. In the experience of this researcher, the knowledge of grammar does not get transferred automatically to communication.

A generative grammar of a language is a theory of an ideal speaker's linguistic competence which constitutes unconscious, latent knowledge. Phrased differently, it expresses the principles that determine the intrinsic correlation of sound and meaning in the language in question. The same is confirmed in Chomsky's ([1966] 1973:240) view of linguistic inquiry:

*...certain highly abstract structures and highly specific principles of organizations are characteristic of all human languages, are intrinsic rather...*
than acquired, play a central role in perception as well as in production of
sentences, and provide the basis for the creative aspect of language use.

It has to be remembered that Chomsky is making this observation only in relation to
abstractions such as an ideal speaker, an ideal listener, an idealized monolingual speech
situation and so on.

"Competence", whether it is "knowledge of sentence possessed by an ideal
speaker/listener in a homogeneous speech community" (Chomsky 1965:3) or
"internalized knowledge lying behind the production of speech" (Lyons and Wales
1966) refers to various aspects to language behaviour that can be formalized in a model
of description. Rosenbaum ([1963] 1973:260) makes a list of the several aspects of a
speaker's linguistic competence.

A speaker can understand sentences which he has never heard before. Similarly,
he can produce new sentences on the appropriate occasion. Second, a speaker
knows implicitly that certain sentences in his language are ambiguous while
others are not. Still other sentences are synonymous. Third, he is capable of
detecting differences in the relations which words have to one another in
sentences even though these relations are not explicitly specified in the phonetic
representations of sentences.

But these formulations cannot stand a critical examination from the point of view of
'real-time' language use in a scientific manner.

The growing enthusiasm over the concept of 'competence' has extended the
meaning of the term to include the individual's knowledge of social rules which
determine the appropriate use of linguistic forms. As Hymes (1972) rightly points
out, Chomsky's concept of 'linguistic competence' is inadequate for it cannot account
for aspects of language knowledge apart from the knowledge of sentence structure:
"There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless". To validate his argument, Hymes advocates a 'fourfold distinction':

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (1972:281-282).

Halliday approaches language not from within but from outside because he sees language as a means of social communication. He does not believe in describing the system of language in its own terms but in linking the system with the manner in which it is used in communication. A number of linguists and language philosophers who favoured 'communicative functionalism' felt that features like 'illocutionary force' 'presupposition' and 'information focus' cannot be dispensed with. Pointing out the 'narrowness' of Chomsky's grammatical competence, they expressed that 'knowing' a language involves the ability to compose correct sentences and the ability to use them appropriately in acts of communication. Campbell and Wales (1970:247) speak of 'communicative competence' as the linguistic ability

...to produce or understand utterances which are not so much grammatical but, more important, appropriate to the context in which they are made (emphasis added).

The different contexts make the utterances take on a wide range of meaning. For example, in the context of a husband/wife stepping out of their home, the uttering of
the sentence, “It is raining” might as well serve the same communicative function as “Bring me the umbrella”. No grammar, descriptive or transformational, would account for these two sentences having the same meaning as sentences.

Consequently, acquiring proficiency in a language includes not only the knowledge of the basic structural principles of the language and how to use sentences in ‘performing acts of communication’ but also how to combine them to create coherent passages of discourse. Hence, the focus of teaching needs to be extended from Chomsky’s notion of competence to the notion of communicative competence.

The communicative school discounts the structural school on two points: pre-selection of language—a kind of over attention to language which amounts to interference to the ‘delicate’ cognitive processes of the mind, and intensive treatment of the selected grammatical features. The communicative school proposes ‘problem solving’ and ‘mind engaging’ activities to cultivate the abilities of producing utterances and using them appropriately. Dismissing ‘pre-selection’ as non-real, it recommends ‘simple English’ for the early years. True enough, the critics maintain that it is a milder form of pre-selection and grading as opposed to the ‘graded arrangement’ of structures in Structural School.

Communication is ‘negotiation of meaning’ between a speaker and a listener and communicative competence has to do with real speakers and listeners who interpret, express and negotiate meaning as against the ideal speaker-listeners. The concern for ‘communicative competence’ has brought us face to face with the ‘contexts’ in which language is ‘used’. Consequently, a ‘text’ (written or oral) takes on meaning, only as it is interpreted by a reader or listener. This interpretation depends, in turn, upon the ‘context’ attributed to the ‘text’ by the one who interprets it (Savignon 1983).

Communication is not arranging sentences one after another; the fact is that
people do not always speak/write in complete sentences; at the same time, all sentences are not interesting, relevant or suitable to the situations; sometimes incomplete sentences carry the message efficiently. All these go to say that ‘something else’ is necessary for communication other than the internal grammar of sentences. If that is so, why should language teaching/learning concentrate on producing correct sentences? What is that ‘something else’ which enables a learner to perceive the meaning in ‘language sans grammar (rules)’? The dilemma is whether a learner should believe in Halliday’s claim (1985:35) that “impeccably well formed(language) is typical of casual spontaneous speech (including that of children)” or should (s)he follow Chomsky (1965:31) and assert that actual language is ‘degenerate’ and deviates from the rules of grammar. The possibility of producing peculiar but perfectly grammatical sentences like “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously” (a famous example of Chomsky’s) is very much there by following the abstraction-oriented theory of Chomsky. A learner is pushed to the extreme end, wherein (s)he has to make a distinction and choice between ‘abstracted language’ and ‘language in use’—‘sentence linguistics’ and ‘discourse analysis’—though these two need not be treated as members of a mutually exclusive set. Interestingly, it was Zellig Harris (1952), a sentence linguist who coined the term ‘Discourse Analysis’ by which language is viewed not only as a formal system but also as part of a wider social and psychological context. ‘Discourse’ is composed of one or more utterances which may or may not be well-formed sentences. The focus is on communication and not on ‘grammaticality’ as defined in sentence grammars.

The term ‘discourse’ has been used to refer to other factors in addition to the language code. These other factors—social notions—determine the meaning of the linguistic form in a social context wherein language operates. Social factors act as constraints upon its use. The role of social constructs like rights, obligations and
attitudes becomes significant for an utterance to be intended and interpreted. The study of individual communicative acts logically leads to the study of linked communicative acts or sequences wherein 'coherence' and 'relevance' become predominant. At both levels, there is no neat correspondence between linguistic forms and communicative functions. For example, the imperative form is associated with the directive function which includes the giving of instruction. Yet one can give instruction without using the imperative form. The single word 'DOG' or the picture of a dog at a gate wall communicates a message — the relevant instruction, although the imperative form is also used as 'beware of dogs'. All of them — the single word, the picture and the imperative form — serve the same directive function. Acquiring such conventions of use is as much a part of learning as acquiring the rules of grammar.

In foreign language teaching the tendency is to assume an equation between linguistic form and communicative function and to teach language use purely in terms of the code. Thus learners are commonly misled into thinking that commands are uniquely associated with imperative sentences and questions with interrogative sentences. The danger of such a grammar-oriented approach to language teaching is that the learner can come to believe that rules of use are not distinct from rules of grammar and that messages will always match the code forms which most directly reflect the function which the messages fulfill. When learners encounter language in use outside the classroom and the textbook, they often find to their distress that they cannot interpret it simply by reference to their knowledge of the code (Criper and Widdowson 1975:202).

What is needed for an utterance to convey a particular communicative intent is not only a set of grammatical rules but also a set of conditions which together constitute the rules of use. It has already been seen that there is no one-to-one correspondence
between messages and the forms in the language code. One linguistic form can be used to fulfill a variety of communicative acts and vice versa. Widdowson (1978) aptly puts it: “Meanings do not exist ready-made in the language itself; they are worked out”.

The formal links that sentence grammar proposes are part of the systemic character of the language in question and as such have very little relevance to actual language use. These cohesive devices alone cannot convey meaning. In the absence of the ‘cohesives’ in a discourse, one has to look beyond the literal formal meaning of what is said or written and to try to understand what the sender of the message intends its function to be. This raises questions like: What enables a learner to infer the intended function? What are the possible functions of language? Are these functions related to certain specific forms? The answers to these questions may lead to the fact that sequences can be ‘coherent’ without being ‘cohesive’.

An analysis of a piece of continuous discourse where one utterance follows another in sequence indicates a still more surprising factor. To cite an example,

Patient’s relative : How is he, Doctor?
Doctor : Pray to God.
Patient’s relative : Is his condition so critical?
Doctor : Inform your relatives.

There is no syntactic relationship between these utterances; no textual cohesion is indicated; yet they are clearly related as utterances. This gives rise to a question whether it is possible to be coherent as discourse without being cohesive as text. Inspite of the complete absence of cohesion, the piece can be recognized as an instance of coherent discourse. To achieve it, one has to, first, establish a relationship among the four utterances as illocutionary acts and then supply the missing links:
Patient's relative : How is he, Doctor?

Doctor : (I've lost all hopes you'd better) Pray to God.

Patient's relative : Is his condition so critical?

Doctor : (Yes. His end is nearing) Inform your relatives.

The same can be said of the written discourses too. According to Johnson-Laird (1981:122), words in a sentence are “cues to build a familiar mental model”.

The knowledge of written discourse would explore the exciting reading strategies and writing of coherent passages. Hymes (1964, 1974:19) observes:

*Communication is not a purpose of language, but an attribute. Any use of language involves the attribute of communication. The fundamental justification for introduction of the ‘notion of communication’ into models of grammar, I take it, is to ensure a scope of grammar that is adequate to encompass the full range of devices and relatives people employ in whatever they do with language.*

In ‘Discourse Analysis’ meaning is viewed as dynamic ‘interactive force’ constructed by the mind from language, in context. It is not a static entity (‘sense’) attached to words and sentences as proposed in Semantics. Paul Grice’s (1975) ‘Co-operative Principle’ and Austin’s (1962) and John Searle’s (1969, 1975) ‘Speech Act Theory’ pose some disturbing questions to Semantics. This critical examination privileges ‘Pragmatics’ over ‘Semantics’. According to the ‘Co-operative Principle’, a sender of a message obeys four maxims:

1. *the maxim of quality (be true)*
2. *the maxim of quantity (be brief)*
3. *the maxim of relevance (be relevant)*
4. *the maxim of manner (be clear)*

It is clearly seen that the examples discussed so far, follow these principles and only
because of this reason they are meaningful as pieces of discourse. Interpretation of a sentence/utterance is extended to include a pragmatic component in addition to the linguistic properties because “words have not only value-free denotations but value-laden connotations” (Cazden 1989:121). His notion of “intrinsic intertextuality of all utterances” confirms the societal network of relations and the psychological processes that underlie all uses of language.

In both linguistic and communicative competence, ‘description’ is dominant; grammar too often remains the hidden agenda: the ‘generalization’ —based on either grammatical rules or ‘sociolinguistic, pragmatic and discourse rules’ —about the working of the abstract system does not provide directions for actually producing or comprehending language. Bakhtin (1981 : 294) seems to have foreseen this:

*Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated-over populated - with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.*

Moreover, language processing (production and reception) seems to be a cyclical matter where there is a possibility of beginning the cycle anywhere; decision to use language, conscious or unconscious, goes on at different levels—linguistic, communicative and pragmatic; these decisions may be simultaneous and they may be at odds with each other too, in accordance with the requirements of a situation. It might result in the listener querying the speaker, “Do you really mean it? You don’t sound like you do” (Halliday 1985 : xxii-xxiii).

All these arguments cannot, in any way, underestimate ‘sentence linguistics’ as old fashioned because, it is true that the ‘rules of form’ of a foreign language are totally different from those of the learner’s first language and so they have to be learnt
as the basis of communication. What is raised as an issue here is that 'forms' alone cannot make communication; the 'other factors of communication' — knowledge of the world, social roles and their relationship—that create coherence are equally important.

The theories of Linguistics and Pragmatics have left behind many unanswered questions:

1. How to select what is relevant from the context?
2. How to account for writing as well as speech?
3. How to account for discourse where there is no feedback from the receiver?
4. Is it possible to account for the degree of subjectivity in identifying a stretch of language as discourse and if so, how?
5. How would 'culture specificity' be explained?
6. In the absence of a neat one-to-one relationship between terms and discourse types, how could it be taught?
7. What could be done with the culturally heterogeneous students in the same class?
8. What makes the difference between 'monocultural class-room' and 'multicultural class-room'?

These questions bring into sharp focus the dichotomy of 'accuracy' and 'fluency'. The most relevant question in this context is whether 'fluency' can be privileged over 'accuracy' at the tertiary level (the ESL curriculum in question).

The 'accuracy factor' has always dominated the ELT scene because of its accountability. The generally understood positive aspects of this are:

a) 'Accuracy' has easy 'acceptability'.
b) 'Accuracy' has well-defined limits (grammatical vs ungrammatical).
c) Teaching 'accuracy' is more easily facilitated by ready-made materials (grammar books, linguistic theories and so on).

d) 'Accuracy' is associated with a sense of comfort because of its 'acceptability' and 'the principle of closure'.

e) The 'goals' are well-defined for the learner as they enjoy the backing of 'historicity'.

f) Testing is also a 'closed' activity when it comes to testing of 'accuracy'.

g) In the politics of class-room, the age-old 'power' enjoyed by the teacher is ensured of its continuance when accuracy is at focus.

In all disciplines, be they Humanities or Sciences, it is 'accuracy' that is privileged over 'fluency'. The powerful emergence of communicative language teaching turned the focus on fluency. In a detailed discussion on the differences between the 'Audio-lingual Method' and the 'Communicative Approach', Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-93) make the following observations: In Audio-lingual Method, “Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is the primary goal”. In the Communicative Approach, “Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal. Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context”. Again in the Communicative Approach, “The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate”. This view is the counter-point to the view of Audio-lingual Method: “The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system”.

Be that as it may, it becomes necessary to privilege ‘fluency’ over ‘accuracy’, especially in the area of ‘composition’. The difference that this researcher has all
along been maintaining between 'linguistic creativity' (in the Chomskyan sense) and 'composing' provides a clue. 'Fluency' needs to be the keynote to make 'composing' truly 'learner-centred'. This is especially so because 'fluency' is involvement-oriented, la-parole — strictly individualistic that might, in all probability, lead to more thinking as it always does in real life and consequently to more 'writing'. Cook (1989:7) states:

What matters is not its (discourse) conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent.

But to what extent can 'fluency' be privileged over 'accuracy' is the question that needs to be answered. This research project is an attempt to characterize this 'fluency' factor at the tertiary level especially in relation to 'composing'.

2.1.6. NOTIONS OF 'GRAMMAR' AND 'COMPOSITION' DOWN THE AGES

The earlier sections presented a historical perspective of the notions of grammar and grammar teaching. This section makes a brief survey of the relationship between the teaching of grammar and composition.

A careful study of FLL down the ages would reveal that it had always been an important practical concern. For a long time, from 1500, Latin enjoyed prominence in almost all fields of life—education, commerce, religion and government. Very soon, English took over the place of Latin, attaining the status of an international language. When English along with French and Italian was in the forefront, the study of Latin took on a different function. An analysis of grammar and rhetoric in Latin became the model for language study from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century. A rigorous practice in Latin grammar through rote-learning of rules, study of declensions and conjugations and translation was believed to improve the basic proficiency, directly leading one to advanced study of grammar and rhetoric. Strange enough, the new justification that was attributed to the study of Latin grammar—that of developing
intellectual abilities — made the learning of grammar become an end in itself. To quote Mallison (cited in Titone 1968: 26):

*When once the Latin tongue had ceased to be a normal vehicle for communication, and was replaced as such by the vernacular languages, then it most speedily became a ‘mental gymnastic’, the supremely ‘dead’ language, a disciplined and systematic study of which was held to be indispensable as a basis for all forms of higher education.*

This method of teaching grammar became the established one for teaching ‘Modern’ languages. Any ‘new’ language has to be learnt/taught in terms of the Latin model with the goal of achieving ‘proficiency’ and ‘intellectual abilities’. Grammar points were listed and sentences were constructed to illustrate the point which bore no relationship to the real aspects of communication. A rigorous training accompanied by brutal punishment was supposed to have driven the students to take a giant leap from translating sample sentences which have no connection whatsoever even among themselves to ‘written exercises’—supposed to be an advanced skill—woven around the grammatical points to substantiate them. As Titone (1968: 27) points out:

*Oral work was reduced to an absolute minimum, while a handful of written exercises, constructed at random, came as a sort of appendix to the rules (emphasis added).*

The inference one could make out of that kind of context was that ‘grammar’ was ‘abstract rules’ and ‘writing’ was ‘appendix to the abstract rules’. These notions of grammar and composition edged out the communicative proficiency which should have been the real goal in FLL. The teaching of grammar had traditionally been the main component of language learning courses inspite of the fact that the term ‘grammar’ had become the object of derision almost to everyone. There seemed to be a continuum along which grammar became increasingly more important or less important depending
upon learner variables and instructional variables.

There had been changes in language teaching methods based on the kind of proficiency the learners needed — oral proficiency, reading comprehension or writing coherent passages. Inspite of the awareness of the changing needs, the belief that ‘mastery of grammar’ (structures) would automatically lead to proficiency was gaining momentum. The himalayan task of ‘reaching the learner’ had been indefatigably taken up by enthusiasts throughout the ages: ‘needs’ analyzed, ‘techniques’ devised and the ‘problems’ focussed upon.

Vernacular languages, English being one among them, did not have their own descriptively codified grammar; hence language teaching had to rely on ‘written texts’ and ‘dialogue form’ — ‘the slice of linguistic life’ which was already familiar to the learners of the elementary Latin. Verbatim learning of the written texts was the goal of learning in the Middle Ages; to achieve that, texts were sliced into manageable chunks; questions were used as prompts to the memory to bring out what had been learnt by heart. Even the simple dialogues — the catechistic technique — woven around all aspects of life, as represented in the texts to be preserved, were not used to draw out the originality of the language learners. The questions might vary in their form and presentation but the answers had to be ‘lifted sentences’ from the texts to be preserved. For example:

Q: *What is Grammar?*
A: *Grammar is the art of using words properly.*

Q: *Of how many parts doth Grammar consist?*
A: *Of four: Orthography, Etymology, Syntax and Prosody.*

Q: *What is Orthography?*
A: *Orthography is the art of combining letters into syllables, and syllables into words (Priestley 1761: 1).*
The question 'what is grammar' was very much like 'what is farming' or 'what is hunting'. The learner had to start and stop with memorization while the teacher concentrated on 'hearing' the lesson.

In the early sixteenth century, English was one among the other foreign languages to be learnt as 'survival language'. 'Double manuals' entered the continent with Meurier - a Frenchman, in the mid-sixteenth century, who concentrated upon 'commercial interests'. In the late sixteenth century, the flourishing trade necessitated teaching of English which resulted in the designing of English books. The double manuals of William Caxton—the forerunner in ELT—were bilingual. Linguistic information about English or French was forbidden and was strictly practical in its content: useful vocabulary of every day life and dialogues of 'selling - buying' types — commercial affairs. The commercial trend in ELT dominated the eighteenth century British society which was obsessed with 'social ambition and commercial enterprise'. Effective and socially acceptable communication with the traders of the other parts of the world determined the successful position in the world:

*Letter writing became more important than composing tracts, and a polished style expressed in correctly spelt grammatical sentences became a sought-after accomplishment (Howatt 1984: 107).*

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, "rote-learning" of Latin texts, and Latin grammar rules and definitions — whether understood or not — was made compulsory. A close familiarity with the great literature of the ancient world was believed to refine their 'culture and sensibility'. The learner was expected to learn the grammar inductively by the study of simple authentic texts and then move on to 'produce' or 'create' Latin and Greek texts of his own — an upward move to 'rhetoric'. In the mid-seventeenth century, Lily's 'sample sentences' had been replaced by 'concern
for text’. The ‘anti-grammar’ stand of language culminated in Joseph Webbe. Influenced by Cominius, Webbe was proposing a form of ‘direct method’ of language teaching, without the use of reference grammars, focussing on spoken interaction. Cominius argued that grammars were either long and tedious or short and confusing and concluded that any definition could be imperfect as language was in constant flux and variations as per time and region are irresistible. Hence he recommended that languages should not be taught by ‘rules’ but by ‘use and custom’. ‘Custom’, he said, ‘is the best approved school-mistress for languages’ (Webbe 1622:26). While Ascham had made the learning of grammar subservient to the study of original texts, Webbe dispensed with grammar altogether:

No man can run speedily to the mark of language that is shackled and ingiv’d with grammar precepts (ibid.:9).

‘Familiarity’ with the texts and ‘fluency’ in producing them by constant repetition was given priority. Teaching of grammar came at the end of the practice session; the learner had to find the ‘rules’ by himself by what might be called inductive approach; and ‘composition’ was practising the ‘text’ in writing, following Ascham’s method:

Children, turn your lessons out of French into English and then out of English into French (Holyband 1609:28).

The overall picture of the eighteenth century, whatever be the purpose of learning the second language, reveals that the learner never ‘took off’ from the ‘learning of grammar’ to ‘composition’. The grammar translation method started out, as a simple approach to language learning for young children around 1793. The sentence was the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Earlier, grammar was used as an aid to the study of texts and that was reversed by an attempt to teach grammar in an organized
and systematic way — deductively. Accuracy was emphasized; attaining, high standards in translation — may be 'composition' — was the highest priority. It was considered to be the "prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations" (Howatt 1984: 132). Composing seemed to have meant attempting to produce perfect translations of literary works — what others had composed.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, many factors attributed to the rejection of grammar - translation method. Opportunities for communication among Europeans increased tremendously, by way of trade, adventure, love for literature and travel. That created the need for oral proficiency in foreign languages. Britain was in the process of becoming an empire and English had become a prestigious language to be learnt and to speak in.

Conversation books had become very popular with 'Gouin's Series'. The Reform Movement had contributed to the study of spoken language and the International Phonetic Association was founded. By the 1920s teaching of conversational skills was considered impractical and irrelevant due to factors like restricted time, and the limited skill of the teachers. Instead 'reading' was recommended and emphasis on reading continued till the second world war.

World War II completely changed the ELT scenario. The allies supplied the US government with military personnel who were fluent in their own languages and the need of the hour was to set up a special language training programme. The intensive oral-based approach - 'Army Method' to the learning of a foreign language gave excellent results with the mature and highly motivated military personnel as students. It was gaining popularity. In the meantime, America had emerged as a major international power. Thousands of foreign students who entered America for higher studies needed a crash course in English, to begin with. The launching of the first Russian satellite in 1957 proved to be a boost to devise a suitable methodology to
teach foreign language. The need arose out of the necessity to prevent Americans from becoming isolated from scientific advances made in other countries. These factors led to the emergence of Audiolingualism backed by behaviourist psychology which promoted oral proficiency. The teaching of listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary were all related to oral fluency; ‘writing’ was exploited to present new language items in a highly structured manner. In short, ‘writing’ was a highly controlled activity, devoid of spontaneity, meant mainly for ‘reinforcement’.

The cold-war era maintained, sometimes reassembled, the various groupings of countries under different banners of committees, and organizations. The world was shrinking fast with the increasing interdependence of European countries. Changes occurred everywhere and the changing educational realities in Europe created the need for international conferences on language teaching. A major shift took place from the concept of ‘money is power’ to ‘knowledge is power’. The investigation of the experts in developing better language courses culminated in Wilkin’s Preliminary report which highlighted ‘meaning’ and the ‘needs’ of the learners. Linguists like Widdowson, Firth, Halliday, sociolinguists like Hymes, Labov and philosophers like Austin and Searle extended their insight and Communicative Language teaching was born. The interests, needs, goals of individual learners were incorporated. Teachers were encouraged to develop learning materials “on the basis of the particular needs manifested by the class” (Applebee 1974: 150).

2.1.7. THE INDIAN SCENE

2.1.7.1. Overview

From the beginning, Indian ELT scene has not been very different from the global scene in terms of methodology and materials. In the ELT class-rooms, ‘received methods’ and ‘received materials’ have been used to teach ‘grammar’ and
‘composition’ irrespective of the local factors like student-teacher ratio, the professional efficiency of the teachers, the aptitude of the learners etc. Consequently, the ‘imported-modified-versions’ based on research-findings have been incorporated into the sentence-grammar pattern.

2.1.7.2. The beginning of English Language Teaching

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the preoccupation was not with language nor with English education because it was a period of power struggle among the European colonial powers to get a foothold in India. Indigenous education dominated the scene almost till the end of the eighteenth century. Sanskrit and Persian were the most important languages taught as these were mainly used by various rulers for administrative and legal written functions. Educational activities by the British started only when the company became a political power and English was introduced “to instruct the Gentoos that shall be servants or slaves of the same company or of their agents, in the Protestant religion”. In fact,

*English was not taught in the schools in England till the nineteenth century; thus when the British came to the Indian subcontinent, England and the English language were still in the making. It was only in the nineteenth century that ‘English educated’ Englishmen interacted with Indians (some of them English educated) in India (Krishnaswamy forthcoming).*

There is no evidence of English being taught as a subject before 1800. But there was a kind of non-formal way of spreading English language through the people who got acquainted with English language when working for the English masters. Private tutoring came into being in the course of time. But this was only an urban local phenomenon. It was more a spill-over effect of the compulsory communication between the English and those who necessarily came into contact with them. This ‘cantonment
influence' was a kind of silent but perceptible development in the spread of non-formal English education.

The education policy was formulated only in 1854. But by then, missionary schools and the District English Schools by the East India Company had begun to provide English education at the school level. In the course of time, English education got entrenched into higher education. The content of education was purely European; it was English language through English literature because they believed that only their literature could discipline and enlighten the uncivilized Indian minds. The proximity of the natives, the restricted use of English which did not call for originality or creativity and the grammar translation method seemed to have helped the Indian recipients of English education to use it to the satisfaction of their colonial masters.

2.1.7.3. Notions of 'grammar' and 'composition'

From the beginning, English education in India seemed to have identified the notions of 'grammar' and 'composition' with 'Nesfield' and 'the classical literature' respectively. 'Nesfield' was the Bible of the grammar classes and the literary texts were used as models of 'good writing' and illustrations of the grammatical rules of the language. The same situation continued even after Independence with only one difference i.e. Wren and Martin have usurped the place of Nesfield. It was assumed that 'mastery of rules' (grammar) and 'models' of writing (excerpts from great writers) (composition) would successfully lead the learners to master the language and the 'literary texts' would serve as a field for reinforcing the skills learnt.

It was only as late as 1950s and early 1960s that language teaching was given a scientific dimension. The Audio-lingual Method of America and the Oral/Aural Approach or Situational Language Teaching of Britain got fused in India and came to be known as S-O-S— Situational-Oral-Structural Approach. Textbooks patterned on this model entered the class-rooms but even those were taught from Wren and Martin's
perspective. Even today, in majority of the schools 'grammar' is Wren and Martin and 'composition' is Current Indian topics, following the 'definitions' and 'principles' (of writing) of Wren and Martin.

2.1.7.4. A critique of books on 'Grammar and Composition'

Writing and composition were regarded as highly controlled activities primarily because these skills were always taught in relation to grammar. Writing was considered an exercise in contextualising grammar - items. Hence we have quite a number of textbooks which combine Grammar, usage and composition. It cannot be denied that there is a natural bond between these three aspects of language study but certainly not to the extent as manifested in books like Nesfield, Wren and Martin, S.K.Chettur and other books which fall into this category.

Nesfield’s treatment of ‘composition’ seems to follow a specific pattern in his classic book, *Manual of English Grammar and Composition*: presentation of an idea/topic, explanation and practice through exercises. The following are the topics dealt with under the section ‘composition’.

- Punctuation
- The normal order of words - Rule of proximity
- Structure of Sentence
- Purity of diction, propriety of diction, perspicuity of diction
- Elegance of diction

Considering the needs of our students, one can easily claim that most of these topics are ‘irrelevant’ in our context.

Wren and Martin’s *High School English Grammar and Composition* (1969) enjoyed the status of a ‘textbook’ for too long a period. *It was sanctioned by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary Education, Poona.*
In this book ‘composition’ is divided into three parts:

Part I - Analysis, transformation and synthesis (of sentences)

Part II - Correct usage

Part III - Written composition

For the authors, it appears, ‘composition’ is a ‘repeat’ of grammar in the sense that it starts with ‘composing’ accurate sentences with proper ‘punctuation’. The ‘written composition’ that comes at the fag-end provides ‘models’ which are ‘out-dated, literary and colonial’.

S.K. Chettur’s *College Composition* was equally popular during the early decades of the twentieth century. As far as grammar teaching was concerned, it was considered to be a book of biblical proportions. It is similar to Wren and Martin’s with regard to the treatment of ‘grammar’ but we find more of composition exercises in this book. Grammarians like Nesfield, Wren and Martin and S.K. Chettur have limited themselves to the formal features of writing; their goal seems to be imparting skills of accuracy and organization in writing and hence these grammarians are called ‘sentence grammarians’.

Aggarwala’s *A Senior English Grammar and Composition* (1992) is widely used in Schools today. He claims to have included “Exercises in Functional Grammar, Correct Usage, Sentence Structure, Comprehension and Creative Composition”. In the ‘Introduction’ he starts stating that the book “has been written with a view to teaching the fundamentals and basic principles of Functional Grammar and correct usage to Indian children …..” but ends up stating that “the grammar that has been
introduced is a beautiful synthesis of the traditional grammar and the modern structural approach”. Liberal space has been devoted to written composition. But Wren and Martin’s ‘writing exercises’ are repeated with slight modifications in ‘definitions’ and with more number of current Indian illustrations.

The communicative movement had a long-lasting impact on teaching English, in India too. There was an emergence of several books on writing skills:

1. Narayanaswamy, V.R. (1979) *Strengthen your writing*
2. Freeman, Sarah (1986) *Written Communication in English*

*Strengthen your writing* by Narayanaswamy is used in some of the colleges in India. According to the author, the writing tasks represent the forms of continuous writing which the student might, sometime later, be required to perform either in his academic or professional life. Taking sentence construction as the take-off point, the book aims to train the student to look at the communicative function of sentences and the development of written discourse through inter-sentence relationships. Different types of discourses are discussed under different units and they are followed by a number of exercises for practice in the composition of the discourse. The graded exercises aim at leading the student from a controlled use of language to free and individual production of appropriate language.

Freeman’s *Written Communication in English* provides more scope for practising different types of written communicative activities for a wide variety of purposes. She states that her aim is to train the students to perform tasks which stimulate, as nearly as possible, those which they will have to perform in English then or later. For example, the students are asked to draft reports, write various letters, take notes and write accurate descriptions. Through a control over ideas, language and organization of material, the exercises progress from relative control to relative freedom.
It is commendable that these books incorporate some of the significant features of communicative approach as mentioned below:

- shift of focus from teaching structures to more authentic use of language.
- enough material for providing practice in various discourses of writing; thereby bridging the gap between theoretical and practical aspects of teaching writing
- non-conventional techniques like groupwork and discussion to provide a flexible outlook to teaching writing in the class-room.

Inspite of the emphasis given to communication through the written medium, one cannot help feeling that the activities mentioned in these books are highly controlled, conforming to structural requirements of various types of composition activities.

2.2. THE POST-STRUCTURALIST OPTION

2.2.1. THE PERSPECTIVE

Structuralists, with their strong commitment to the logic of identity, were concerned with a series of systematic procedures to unravel the workings of language and sought to bring language into a neat framework. Treating language as a system, they attempted to develop ‘grammars’ which consisted of ‘systematic inventories of elements’ and the various possibilities of their combinations, thereby ascertaining the neat relationship between form and meaning. The conviction of the structuralists that systematic knowledge of the elements of the language is possible became the target of attack for the post-structuralists who implied the impossibility of that kind of knowledge. The term ‘post-structuralists’ should not confuse one to the extent of expecting an improved version of structuralism from them. As historical developments would have it, the post-structuralists set out to ‘dismantle’ the traditional ideas of

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stable forms vis-a-vis stable meanings; and the term associated with this kind of undoing is referred to as ‘deconstruction’. Norris (1982: 1) rightly introduces it:

To present ‘deconstruction’ as if it were a method, a system or a settled body of ideas would be to falsify its nature and lay oneself open to charges of reductive understanding.

Deconstruction is post-structuralist in the sense that it refuses to accept the idea of structure or system in language/text/discourse. It is neither a theory nor a method; neither does it define the meaning nor does it direct one to find it; rather, it demonstrates the impossibility of any established theory by critically undoing the hierarchical oppositions on which the various theories depend. Defining meaning in a univocal way is undone when Derrida says that “there are two interpretations of interpretations”; he sees the ‘play of meaning’ in the context of the ‘play of the world’ where there is an endless circularity of connections, correlations and contexts.

Culler (1975) offers “a kind of regulative matrix for perceptions” based on the assumption that the “structures of meaning correspond to some deep-laid mental set” (ibid: 2-3). Deconstruction questions the correspondence between mind, meaning and the resultant concept of method. Despite the overwhelming influence of Saussure and Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes (1977) could manage to come out of structuralism and sound a caution on the non-transparency of language. The ‘stable structuralism’ was unsettled with Barthes’ reference to it as an “activity, an open-ended practice of reading, rather than a ‘method’ convinced of its own right reason” (ibid: 10).

Many of the established dichotomies which always privileged one by suppressing the other, came under severe criticism in the hands of Derrida. The crucial dichotomy of speech/writing, initiated by Saussure was shaken and dismantled by exploring the endless possibilities of ‘writing’. Derrida questioned the western prejudice which
tried to reduce writing to a stable meaning. For Derrida, "writing" is 'the free play'
or element of undecidability within every system of communication" (ibid:28) and in
that sense, 'writing' is closely related to that element of signifying difference which
Saussure thought essential to the workings of language; Saussure perceived 'the
arbitrariness of the sign' —when he claimed that, "In language there are only differences
without positive terms" — the one that, "Saussure saw without seeing, knew without
being able to take into account" (Derrida 1974:43). Consequently, 'writing' becomes
the precondition of language. Problematizing the divide of 'phonocentrism' and
'logocentrism' of metaphysics, Derrida perceived a threat to 'writing' in the notions
that led to 'conceptual closure' or reduction to an ultimate meaning. He deployed
terms like trace, differance and supplementarity against reduction, where Saussure's
'to differ' shades into to defer, the French verb. Meaning is always deferred by a
chain of signifiers because nothing is closed and there is an inherent lack in everything
which leads to an endless supplementarity.

No signifier has positive value in terms of signification and no signified has
any intrinsic positive value to offer for signification. Both derive their value only in a
differential network. So the system is responsible for meaning; meaning is derived
through oppositions and contrasts within the system. Any signifier is always already a
signified and the signified is always already a signifier. In other words, a sign is a sign
of another sign, a 'supplement'. There are only traces and "if all begin with a trace,
there is above all no originary trace" (Derrida 1974/76:61).

If 'writing' involves 'traces', 'differance' and 'supplements' and is not mere
representation of speech as had been established, then 'writing' turns out to be the
best illustration of the complexities of human mind. As curiosity breeds knowledge
and vice versa, 'writing' leads to 'interpretations' (more writing) and interpretations

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generate more writing; it is an endless process as Derrida says: “writing always leads to more writing and more and still more” (in the translation of Culler 1983:70).

In the light of Derridian thinking, the terms ‘grammar’ and ‘composition’ come to mean things that are radically different from the traditional understanding of these notions. To break new ground, one has to critically examine the older as well as the newer perceptions. This section posits that necessity is not only the mother of invention but also a cause to modify, reverse, exchange, displace and substitute things. As needs — commercial, academic, functional or war time — could bring about fundamental changes in the process of learning/teaching, we have to review the language learning situation of today more minutely to assess and to contribute for better learning. It is with this perspective that the post-structuralist insights have to be exploited for establishing a link between grammar and composition. The endless play of signifiers implied in language as a system has to be extended to perceptions leading to interpretations, to make ‘composition’ an ‘open-ended activity’.

2.2.2. GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION - SYMMETRICALLY ASYMMETRICAL OR ASYMMETRICALLY SYMMETRICAL

A critical analysis of writing/composing cannot be made a language-specific study as something that is restricted to second language pedagogy. When we talk of writing as a natural development of ‘critical thinking’, there is no status restriction in terms of first or second language. One often finds that writing becomes a problem even in one’s mother tongue when critical thinking is not encouraged. Consequently, any theory on composition can break new ground if and only if the artificial boundary of first and second language is removed. The corollary of this formulation is that it is critical thinking that is at focus and not any particular language.

For long, language learning has been considered to be a linear developmental process involving the mastery of four skills - LSRW - either one by one or a selective
one at a time. No attempt has been made to capture the synergic processes in language learning. The following diagrammatic representation of the 'synergic model' given by Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1995:40)

ORAL 'COMPOSITION'

LISTENING <-----------------------------------------> SPEAKING
UNDERSTANDING WITH CRITICAL THINKING

AND

READING <---------------------------------------------> WRITING
CREATIVE PRODUCTION

WRITTEN 'COMPOSITION'

makes it clear that without listening there can be no speaking and without reading there can be no writing. Even listening and speaking are mental representations of what is called 'conventional writing'. In real-life situations, all these happen simultaneously with understanding and thinking; hence language learning must also take place based on this principle of 'co-operation' wherein the skills interact with each other and produce 'a whole that is larger than anyone of its parts'. Thinking precedes all these skills and that is 'writing'. Language learning, whether it is of a first or of a second language, is a process of creative construction and this dynamic, synergic process of language learning will bring in the creative process.

The dominant ideology that has lasted in colleges for too long contends that grammar and composition are complementary to each other but, nevertheless, 'asymmetric skills' (Kaufer and Waller 1985:72), to mean that 'essentials' of grammar can be taught without the 'essentials' of composition and vice versa. In early training, grammar is a matter of rules and composition is a matter of generating words and sentences as per the teacher's instruction. Hence 'good composing' is a matter of following rules and 'bad composing' is a matter of violating them.

Offering instruction within the limited ideology has become the main task at
the tertiary level. Grammar and composition are being treated as distinct intellectual activities divorced from each other, grammar being treated as a set of rules isolated from actual language use and composition as the territory of systematic writing. Despite this practice, most of the practising teachers would concede that grammar and composition serve one another asymmetrically ignoring the fact that grammar means ‘to write’ and ‘to write’ is ‘to critically think’ and ‘to compose’. But for most of the learners, grammar and composition are complementary to each other in the sense that ‘to compose’ is ‘grammar-conscious writing’. The essential passport ‘to compose’ is to know grammatical rules. They “regard themselves ‘superior’ because they know what’s in the grammar books” (David Kaufer and Gary Waller 1985:74). Knowledge of grammar helps to compose and so any composition is more ‘grammar based’ than ‘concept based’; and the ‘concept’ is more often the prescribed or ‘the only one’ accepted. Consequently ‘composition’ is grammatically error-free and ‘ideology-bound’, and never thought of as an act of examining possibilities that are unexplored or systematically suppressed or undefined.

Writing/composing is manipulating linguistic units to describe ‘the summary’ and the ‘appropriate’ manipulation of the outer shells (linguistic units or words and sentences) is governed by inflexible and external rules. The problem arises when they misidentify external advice with ‘inner goals’ to be set for their ‘own’ needs. Composing is never driven by problems; it is for displaying knowledge. Composing does not provide any sense of achievement but instead provides a sense of relief — ‘It’s over’ — at the end. The specific target (theme) with the specific route (cues in the form of informative, instructive phrases) is provided so that the learner is saved from ‘highly anxious risk-filled situation’. Kaufer and Waller (1985:77) aptly summarize the situation:
Writing assignments are the problems. Professional writers see completing a writing task as a means to a goal (to inform, persuade, entertain), but student writers seldom have writing goals beyond “finishing the assignment". Closure is primary.... Once it is completed, then what is desired is, presumably, somehow “there”. Thus the logocentric tradition and the need for closure remain triumphant.

The grammar translation method has made ‘seeing beyond or more deeply into the text’ very difficult; manipulating the surface text provides a sense of comfort and achievement; and knowledge remains “inviolate, finished”. As done conventionally, composing moves round ‘the theme’ in the permitted path ways. It serves no autonomous function as a vehicle for discovery or explanation but remains a sterile activity. Victimised by comfortable non-productive beliefs and by a lack of skill, “students are wont to view reading as processing linguistic units to uncover the theme” and to view writing as “manipulating linguistic units to describe the summary” (Kaufer and Waller 1985:70). Finding it difficult to break the beliefs which appear to be coherent, well-integrated and extremely functional, the learners try to ‘improve’ within the limited conception—look for ‘better’ themes and ‘better’ summaries; they won’t give up this ‘defined’ practice unless they feel intellectually and emotionally primed to embrace viewpoints they have previously failed to notice. They commence their university studies with the sets of previously acquired and culturally sanctioned interpretive schemes which, more often than not, are equally mystifying as the texts are, through which they read/write. To dislocate such beliefs and the dominant ideologies, a critical reading, can be proposed as an alternative strategy; it might allow the reader to move around within a text, to discover for himself the contradictory arguments inherent in the text. Meaning is illusory and it could be arrived at only by
ignoring or mystifying textual contradictions. The learners must be taught the art of

...the careful teasing out of (the) warring forces of signification within the text

(Barbara Johnson 1978:3).

We might direct the learners “towards the always already interpreted nature of interpretation” and “to the omnipresent, untrustworthy, yet unavailable, power and powerlessness of language” (Kaufer and Waller 1985 : 68).

Grammar and composition vis-a-vis symmetry can be viewed from different angles. If the two are characterized as asymmetric, grammar and composition become independent of each other as pointed out earlier and there is no logical link; if grammar and composition are considered to be symmetric, they are inter-related, logically linked. This dichotomous pair can be problematized by the following formulations:

a) They are symmetrically asymmetric — that is to say, they appear to be symmetric because the human mind tends to impose a structure on the otherwise chaotic reality and once the ideology of definite meaning is opened up, the asymmetric character of the symmetricity of the perceived behaviour surfaces.

b) They are asymmetrically symmetric — that is to say, though they appear to be independent of each other, they are underlyingly related. It is for the practising teacher to unearth and enliven the symmetric character of the skills understood earlier as asymmetric.

c) They are asymmetrically asymmetric — that is to say, the asymmetric character is perceived as such and there is no point in making an effort to bridge the gap. This leads one to absolute ‘nothingness’.

d) They are symmetrically symmetric. This is an instance of absolute ‘closure’ and ‘counter intuitive’.
Language is dynamic and the growth that has been registered in the socio-historic processes cannot be overlooked or dismissed. Hence the fourth (symmetrically symmetric) possibility that forecloses growth stands rejected. By opting for the third possibility, (asymmetrically asymmetric) one lands in absolute 'nothingness' which is also 'counter intuitive'. Humans have imposed an order, however imperfect such an order be, for social and collective existence in the otherwise disorderly mass of ontological possibilities. Thus, the third option too stands rejected by a simple and logical extension of socio-historic perspectives. In fine, the choice lays between the first two options — grammar and composition are symmetrically asymmetric or asymmetrically symmetric. But, whether one can make such a definite choice is a disturbing question.

Considering these two options along with the divide of 'linguistic creativity' and 'composition', a logical possibility emerges. Linguistic creativity (as defined by Chomsky) is more closely related to the second formulation than the first. That is to say, it has relevance to the formulation that grammar and composition are asymmetrically symmetric. 'Composing ability', on the other hand, can be explained only if the relationship between grammar and composition is considered to be symmetrically asymmetric. In other words, in the perspective of this thesis both deserve to be concentrated upon.

Such vague generalizations are neither practically useful nor theoretically satisfying. But the complexities of human perceptions and language, being what they are, do not permit the comfort of a wholly satisfying theoretical formulation and an all time successful methodological framework. In fact, this is the character of the dynamic continuum of human life and existence. To expect theories to be different from these ground realities is neither legitimate nor feasible of compliance. A theoretician of
second language teaching cannot afford to overlook the fact that each class is a different class and each student is an individual. Theories can only show a vague direction and in this sense these formulations are valid and enlightening.

2.2.3. 'KNOWLEDGE-TELLING STRATEGIES' vs KNOWLEDGE- DISCOVERING STRATEGIES

According to Hairston (1982), 'writing' is an act of discovery; that is to say that thinking and writing cannot be methodical; the process of writing enlarges one's vision and as the ideas get developed, they 'grow' in all directions. With the result that

writers write, plan, revise, anticipate and review throughout the writing process moving back and forth among the different operations involved in writing without any apparent plan (Hairston 1982:85).

From the learner's point of view, writing assignments are occasions for displaying knowledge or what Marlene Scar Demalia and Carl Bereiter (1982:81-101) call "knowledge - telling strategies". The essential ingredient of 'knowledge - telling strategy' is 'to paraphrase'; paraphrasing the author's views as interpreted by the teacher; and paraphrasing is mostly done in the form of summaries.

'Problems' in the text, if any, are the routine ones and are tackled by the reproduction of surface facts through short question answers, true / false tests or fill-in-the-blanks exercises. Kaufer and Waller (1985:74) recall:

The significant number of studies (including those by Sommers and by Faigley and Witte) that show the proclivity of student writers to make only surface-level revisions also attest to their association of the "Text" with the outer shell of words and sentences.

Knowledge - discovering strategy, on the other hand, could encourage the learners to look for prompts, to open up thinking by sifting, interpreting and regenerating
the ambiguities, paradoxes, puzzles and gaps which remain unnoticed. Going deep into the prompts, which might be termed as 'irrelevant diversions' in the 'Knowledge - telling strategies', would make the learners realise that language starts to slip in the multiplicity of contexts. At this point of realization, the teacher can reinforce and redirect the writing sessions by persuading the learners to be more critical and subversive about their residual assumptions about writing; 'texts' don't mean something definite; no 'text' is coherent and organic; hence the residual assumptions can be dislocated and extended by knowledge - discovering strategies. The objective of this strategy could be to scrutinize how language both reads and writes us and not vice versa. Sharon Crowley (1985:93) puts it thus:

*Texts are occasioned by other texts. They are produced in order to be read, to be rewritten, and hence to generate other texts. The overt reference or subject of a text is irrelevant; covertly the text is an emblem of the desire to write and a display of one's capacity to insert one's pen into the textual flow.*

In order 'to generate other texts' one has to be aware of the 'knowledge of the intricacies of tropes' (Miller 1985:101). Every word is a 'trope' in the sense that it reflects political, cultural, social and ethnic considerations. Each word / sentence has the potential to mean and demean, inherent in itself as atomic energy which has the potential to produce and destroy. Hillis Miller (1985:102) argues:

*Writing well is not writing well unless it is guided by all of those ethical, political and even metaphysical considerations that cannot be excluded from the teaching of writing.*

Words mean differently in different societies—democratic, communist and fascist. The word 'Peace' generally means co-existence resulting in happiness. But in Bosnian context, 'Peace prevails' means few deaths and little blood, and 'Uneasy
silence' in Lankan context. What could be 'violence' in one context becomes 'peace' in another context; that is to say that every word is a trope consisting of the disruptive power and they stand

...equally justifiable, but logically incompatible readings of the text in question (Miller 1985:101).

This accounts for the fact that the scientists and philosophers read the same world differently in different ages and that is why we have new inventions and theories of what is 'always already there'. The tropes expose the inextricable inter-involvement of the opposites; a careful observation of the tropes would show how the hidden incompatibility is uncovered by the apparent affirmations of the text. Most teachers of English grammar and composition are aware that their learners can learn and remember the rules of grammar and idiom but when it comes to writing, there is neither grammar nor composing. The fact that the "text reads itself" exposes the dangers lurking in the pedagogy of grammar and composition; each rule, almost all, is dismantled as soon as it is proposed; though the sad necessity of using them is at the same time affirmed.

This awareness exposes the bankruptcy of ideology in the traditional understanding of the role of the composition teacher and the potential of learners as something reductive or condensable. Alexander Bain's (1866: V) formulation that the "Principal vocation" of the composition teacher is to condense the principles of writing so that he "can impart in a short compass, what, without him, would be acquired slowly, if at all" speaks for the above said view. In the absence of a teacher who can 'impart' the 'skill' of 'composing' or in addition to his/her teaching 'composition', books on 'grammar and composition' provided the learners with 'models' (the writings of great writers) to model their composition on them. This kind of composing once again
restricted the notion and methodology of composing and also seemed to reaffirm the conventional understanding of narrative closures. Consequently the students got confined to the prison house of language and only overall decomposing can break all shackles and relieve them from the conventionally transmitted notions. The notions of 'imparting' make composition teaching a closed affair, 'top-down' and truly teacher-centred and there is no role whatever for the learner in this perspective. If there is no 'imparting', the learner is said to have the potentiality to 'acquire'. This formulation, in other words, equates 'imparting' and 'acquiring' as two alternatives of equal ideological implications. By extension, this would equate 'knowledge telling' and 'knowledge discovering' strategies which are being symmetrically opposed by this researcher through this thesis.

2.2.4. PROCESS-CENTRED PARADIGM vs PRODUCT-CENTRED PARADIGM

The traditional belief that dominates the current ELT class-room is what is teachable can be evaluated; and logically it gets privileged in the teaching of composition too. Consequently the product of writing -- style, grammatical correctness and appropriacy of form — is privileged over the process of writing which involves creativity and originality. This product-oriented paradigm left the teachers with a large number of students who

...come to them writing badly ... leave writing badly (Hairston 1982: 76-81).

The process of writing is totally neglected under the assumption that “writing is a mysterious creative activity that cannot be categorized or analyzed” (ibid:76 - 77). This develops the tendency of the current - traditional practitioner to neglect invention almost entirely:
Invention is the secret part of writing, the part that cannot be taught but must — nonetheless be learned (emphasis added) (Crowley 1985:97).

‘The Paradigm shift’, from the product - centred to process - centred proposed by Hairston (1982) might help turn the dull, drab composition teaching / learning into an enlightening and enjoyable one.

For long, teaching writing has been relegated to the secondary position and referred to as “service courses and skills courses” (Hairston 1982:79) and composing has been equated with ‘writing’. In Saussurean Linguistics, speech was privileged over writing and this promoted powerfully the view that composition is a skills course.

“Writing” as Sharen Crowley (1979 : 283) notes, “is thought of as a recording or representation of speech and often not a good one at that”; this reflects the traditional view that speech itself is a representation and writing is the representation of a representation and hence twice removed from reality.

In the product - centred paradigm, the teacher becomes the master of privileged information and his/her knowledge of the logos is the target of the students for writing formally correct essays. But in the process-centred paradigm, it is believed that meaning is ever-shifting and no person, be it the teacher, can be said to have mastery over it; teachers also become the students’ fellow explorers on the quest to read the oscillations in meaning which must occur in all language, inherently figurative as it is (Northam 1985:123).

That is to say that the potentiality of language with the multiplicity of meanings breaks the privileged position of the teacher, making him a co-explorer. Thus writing/composing ceases to be a ‘skills course’. The proposed analytical reading leads to original insights which instill inspiration and the better writing attendant upon it.
Whether ‘reading well’ would result in ‘writing well’ is still a question but a more critical and attentive reading, unlike the traditional logocentric monotonous reading, will help in forming the intermediary steps: ‘inspiration’ and its resultant ‘invention’.

“The impulse to write”, as Richard L. Larson (1975:150) stresses, “comes from the discovery of a comment worth making”. Anything that is fresh, original and new is worth writing; it gives confidence; confidence leads to competence. As it was pointed out in an earlier section, it is possible to bridge the gap between ‘fluency’ and ‘accuracy’. An ‘inspired’ student discovers a new outlook, worth exploring, worth considering and worth caring about. ‘Inspiration’ is the first essential step to ‘invention’; inspiration can be stimulated by a sense of freedom and fun with the language in addition to the confidence.

“Invention”, according to W.Ross Winterowd (1975:39), is “the process whereby a writer discovers ideas to write about”, but Paul Northam (1985:116) emphasizes the essential step ‘inspiration’ in the process of invention which has invariably been neglected by the invention theorists. He defines inspiration as “...the act through which writers discover that they have something worth saying about a topic which they want to write about”. Richard Young’s (1976:1-2) contention that inspiration is, “the imaginative act or the unanticipated outcome” and it is unteachable because, “the processes involved ... are too unpredictable to be controlled by rule-governed procedures” is answered by an alternative strategy. When the students are taught to play intellectually with the “many possible significations inhabiting a given signifier or a chain of signifiers” (Northam 1985:116) their reading ability is enhanced. The arbitrary, univocal and logocentric reading gives way to a more close analytical free reading which in turn provides competence and confidence to write. The following is the diagrammatic representation of the discussion held so far:
The new kind of reading, by itself, cannot make them write; but it gives them the analytical skill and positive attitude that provide the spirit of invention and inspiration. It is not a rule-governed procedure; rather an inspiration-governed procedure or insight-governed procedure; that which develops an inquisitive attitude towards the 'texts' surrounding us. "Put otherwise", as Sabrina Johnson (1981:234) notes, "students, like the rest of us, will care most about how they say something if they care about what it is that they are saying".

Scholes (1985:8) equates the production and consumption of a text to writing and reading respectively. Reading ceases to be 'consumption' and becomes a productive activity when the reader passes through the meaning-making process in the light of the previous 'textual experience'. As against this, writing involves reading or 'consumption' when the writer writes about the experiences which he has 'read'.

Consequently, writing (production) and reading (consumption) come to be inextricably linked with each other. This post-structuralist view of Scholes encourages the learner to be a consumer as well as a producer of texts. To facilitate this, Scholes recommends that

...textual studies must be pushed beyond discrete boundaries of the page and the book into the institutional practices and social structures that can themselves be usefully studied as codes and texts. (ibid : 8).

The composing process is too complex a process to be approached by a specific pedagogy; Paul Northam (1985:117) proposes "a pluralistic approach to writing
Learning the deconstructive mind-set encourages students to examine closely and critically not only their diction and syntax but also their conventions of naturalizing personal beliefs and social and academic experiences. Thus, introducing it into the class-room will stimulate the putting into question of all such conventions. In this way, writing classes will encourage the evaluation of typically accepted metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, psychological, and cultural conventions, thus converting the writing class into an arena in which learning is done in the most esteemed of liberal-arts fashions—for its own sake, for the intellectual growth of the individual.

In this context, the composition teacher becomes the performer of a significant educational function, especially so in higher education. The learner might extend his experience in critical and exploring analyses of texts to texts in culture, in society, in aesthetics, in politics, in brief, to all aspects of life because language speaks man, the intricacies of the human mind and human society (Northam 1985:125).

It comes to mean that inculcating such an inquiring mind-set will be teaching more than a skill; achieving the most desired goal of the educational system; and most of all, teaching a way of life, a better way of life.

2.2.5. LEARNER AS CONSUMER vs LEARNER AS PRODUCER

In our schools and colleges, textbooks and courses on literature dominated the scene for many decades. With the advent of new theories in ELT the label ‘Language through Literature’ made its rounds for sometime later to be replaced by the label ‘Teaching Language skills’ but the traditional critical approach or as Comley (1985:1-9) calls it, “artifactual approach” still continues. It works under the following assumptions:
1) There is a deeper meaning which is hidden in the similes, metaphors and symbols.

2) The key to unravel the mysteries and to arrive at the meaning is with the teacher.

3) Once the 'language master' reveals the secret clues, language becomes transparent resulting in writing a critical summary.

So, 'writing' meant penning down isolated facts or information collected through the teacher's mind. There is no independent reading to write interpretively or creatively or critically. Reading for information results in writing the correct facts and there is no way "to think by writing about what they read" (Comley 1985:130).

By this approach, learning/teaching is made easier and the student-consumers silently accept and memorize 'the content'; they neither question nor interpret. For the student, 'writing' means 'tests' and 'practice for tests'; the 'tests' expect the students to write what happened, why, how and where in a story, a play, a prose-piece, a poem or a novel and memorizing 'this means this' helps them better. Paulo Freire (1982:58) rightly describes this mode of teaching/learning as a

...'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of education allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits.

According to Zamel (1981 and 1983) 'composing' is a process involving thinking, planning, pre-writing, writing, re-thinking, revising, re-drafting and so on in the case of both native and non-native learners of English. The above-mentioned 'activities' very often criss-cross, defying any demarcated linear sequence. Zamel (1983:168) describes this nature of composing as

...a non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and re-formulate their ideas when they attempt to approximate meaning.
Krishnaswamy and Nagarajan (1994:108) state:

*The term 'teach' is being used in a very restrictive sense. Teaching in a majority of cases has come to mean the transmission of ready-made knowledge.*

This is, in the words of Postman and Weingartner (1969:32), the Vaccination Theory of Education:

... *a subject is something you 'take' and, when you have taken it you have 'had' it and if you have 'had' it, you are immune and need not take it again.*

A radical change in the attitudes and approaches might turn 'the learner as consumer' into 'the learner as producer'. Comley (1985:131) recommends thus:

*Students should be writing in, through and upon texts and not simply "about" them (emphasis added).*

Their writing assignments must actualise their intertextual references achieved through their experiences in their different social, political and ethnic contexts.

**FRAMES OF REFERENCE**

![Diagram](image)

In that way, 'writing' becomes a gratifying exploration. This kind of writing becomes 'texts' in their own rights. The crucial role of the teacher, at this stage, is to privilege these 'students' texts' over the 'prescribed texts'; the students could be encouraged to expand their inference ignoring the lack of textual evidence. This
expansion of inference is referred to as “ghost chapter” by Umberto Eco (1979:214-15). At the level of discourse, there are always gaps—eventual, factual or conceptual. The discourse allows the learner to take his own recourse to fill in the gap by his own inferences. This process of writing ‘ghost chapters’ offer tough challenges for bringing in different frames of references which they are familiar with; these challenges naturally result in spontaneous writing sans inhibitions. Eventually, the prescribed text becomes the ‘context’ by providing them with gaps to explore different possibilities; freedom to take upon themselves the different roles provided by the gaps makes writing ‘a play’; and Comley (1985:133) puts it succinctly:

*Writing in voices other than their own is a liberating experience for most students, since their own voices are as yet unsure and still very much in the training stage. They consider an assignment like this “creative” (a synonym for “fun”), and while it certainly is that, it is also one that required close reading of a new kind.*

Working *within* the text expands the horizons of creativity and originality, and curiosity to write more grapples the learner. The idea of working *through* the text might offer more challenges and keep his/her interest alive. It requires the learner to deconstruct the text and re-construct a new one. In Eco’s terms (1979:217) possible worlds are

*...sketches for another story, the story the actual one could have been had things gone differently ... they are worlds imagined, believed, wished.*

The notion of creativity discussed so far in this thesis needs further discussion here. It does not signify ‘literary creativity’ which is, perhaps, the highest and the most organized and well-orchestrated presentation of creativity. A child acquiring a language may use creativity in narrating its own experiences. In this sense, ‘creativity’
is opposed to mechanical reproduction of highly structured information.

The text itself is a possible world with a possible set of events constructed by the writer. The term ‘text’ used in these discussions needs to be differentiated from the term ‘text’ as used by the exponents of the ‘lemon-squeezer’ criticism. In the post-structuralist parlance, a ‘text’ is not a finished product. In fact, considering its ‘decomposing’ character, Derrida terms it ‘a gas’. Roland Barthes (1971) differentiates between ‘work’ and ‘text’. The ‘text’ practises the infinite deferral of the signified. It is a methodological field. Etymologically the ‘text’ is a cloth (textus-woven). In the new critical school a text is a finished product and has definite meaning. In Text Linguistics and Discourse Analysis a text is an ‘actualised system’, while language is a ‘virtual system’ (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). This researcher has used the term ‘text’ as a text book used in a class-room as well as in the post-structuralist sense. This text can be made an open-ended text to facilitate the learner for reconstruction of possible worlds with his own possible set of events. There are many texts which leave the learners depressed, shocked, morose or sad; in many such cases the learner would have wanted to take the writer’s chair to rewrite the text in his own way. This experience is a very common one with almost every learner especially when watching movies or T.V. Serials. The urge to reconstruct or recreate is the result of deep involvement. In that upbeat mood, the learners are to be encouraged to explore into their own possible worlds, through writing; but

...to create a possible world beyond this text, readers must consider why they should leave as well as where they would go (Comley 1985:135).

Finding answers to these questions might raise questions on cultural codes and ideological biases which might guide or stumble their efforts. But these experiences of emotional and intellectual fall and rise would prove valuable in the process of
reconstruction; that is to say, it might make the learners realise that only reconstruction is possible; or it might get them ready to break into a 'Brave New World'.

2.3. REVIEW

The second chapter is the ‘cause’ of the first chapter in the sense that all methods of teaching English and the various linguistic theories from the West had their ‘effect’ on the East, especially on the Indian ESL curriculum notwithstanding the fact that the grammar-translation method, the first to enter the ELT scene still enjoys a privileged position. The first section is an attempt to study the structural paradigm and the communicative paradigm in ELT with reference to their impact on the notions of grammar, starting from Saussure through Chomsky to Hymes and Halliday. It also provides a survey of the grammar and composition activities down the ages wherein it becomes clear that ‘needs’ decided upon the ‘choice’ of the ‘skill’ to be concentrated upon (LSRW) and how the ‘methods’ and the ‘text books’ were produced to suit the varying ‘needs’ of the society. It summarizes how the structuralistic teaching of grammar has been making slight changes on the basis of the ‘improved upon’ theories and how ‘composition’ has been treated as an appendage to the consolidation of learnt ‘structures’. The second section is an attempt to postulate the post-structuralist perspective with reference to ‘deconstruction’ that might provide the basis for attempting alternative strategies to bridge the gap between the teaching of grammar and the teaching of composition. It provides theoretical background in the form of dichotomies to ‘dismantle’ the ‘privileged’ notions and to pave the way for constructive critical writing—‘composing’. Thus this chapter while analyzing the various trends in language teaching at the international level, also suggests a plausible strategy to redefine the notions of grammar and composition and to deprivilege the established hierarchies in the ELT scenario to help in learning to ‘use’ the language effectively, appropriately and creatively.