Chapter V

Conclusion

This chapter presents a brief sketch of the research project, followed by the findings yielded by the analysis of data using the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The hypotheses proposed at the beginning of the project as well as those that evolved during the analysis of the data are tested in the light of the findings and verified. Certain plausible solutions for the problems identified by this study, the pedagogical implications of the study, and suggestions for further research in the area are also included in this chapter.

5.1. Recapping

The objective of this research was to look into a typical ESL classroom in Thiruvananthapuram city, so as to identify the potential features of CI that play a decisive role, and which could be exploited/modified for yielding better learning results.

For the collection of data, a pilot study was conducted in a government school (S II). It yielded insights that necessitated alterations in the research plan. Thus the focus was narrowed down to a single session in a government-aided school (S I), and it was analyzed in detail using both the quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. For the quantitative analysis, the time-line
display sheet of BIAS was employed, and the results were first tabulated in numbers, and then projected using the histogram and pie chart for better explication. For the qualitative analysis, the ethnographic approach was adopted. The session was analyzed in the order of occurrence, and important episodes of CI were studied closely. The results yielded by the quantitative analysis were supplemented with those from the qualitative analysis.

The data from S I was the principal material for detailed analysis. The data from S II, S III and S IV was not meant for in depth analysis, and were kept for cross-reference – to show how similar or how different or how better or how worse the situation could be.

The primary data for analysis was recorded using an audio-recorder. This was transcribed and analyzed using both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The secondary data included those obtained from observation and field notes, as well as those collected from interviews, casual chats and questionnaires designed to obtain further information about the situation. These were not brought in directly into the analysis of the classroom session because the primary aim of this study was to look at the CI as it happened inside the classroom, and what went into its making, the factors involved in its evolution within the classroom, and not those factors outside the classroom.
5.2. Findings

The results of the quantitative analysis of data from S I and S IV are given, and the implications examined. The results of the qualitative study, basically that of S I, are then listed out, and used to complement the results yielded by the quantitative approach. Both these results are then employed to build up a comprehensive picture of the CI.

5.2.1. Findings of the Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis using BIAS for the data from both S I and S IV shows that TL dominates CI. The number of occurrences is almost thrice that of the next major category, TQ, and more than all the other categories put together. TQ comes second to TL, followed by PR, which stands between TR and TQ. TR and TQ combined together will beat PR with a noticeable margin. S does not have a prominent role in the CI, though it is present. X was designated as “writing on the blackboard” in S I, and had a prominent role there. At S IV, the blackboard was not used at all, and X was designated as “confusion” which was very minimal during the session. PV, which ought to be the main factor, or at least a major factor, in the CI in a class of plus two students, is conspicuous by its absence in S I, and though present, is limited in S IV.

The results of this analysis can be numerically illustrated as shown in the table:
Table 2
Results of Analysis using BIAS - S I and S IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(S I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQ</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This result and the time-line display sheet, as well as the histogram and the pie-diagram show plainly that lecturing, questioning and response of the teacher dominate the process of CI with a clear margin over the response and volunteering of the pupils put together.

It indicates that the teacher dictates the terms for CI and classroom proceedings, and that her actions decide the evolution of CI. In short, the teacher becomes the major, the pivotal aspect of CI, without which the entire machinery of CI will crumble down.

Even though TL is dominant over PR and PV in both schools, as shown by the histogram and the pie-chart, the proportionate ratio is different. At S I, the teacher manages to elicit 67 PR and no PV with the help of 102 TQ. At S IV, the TQ is only half (50), but PR is 46, and PV is 4. The teacher at S IV manages to involve the students in CI with fewer amounts of lecturing and questioning. Silence and confusion are minor factors in the CI here as opposed to the session
at SI. At S IV, then, the participants share a better rapport than the participants at SI.

5.2.2. Findings of the Qualitative Analysis

For the qualitative analysis, the ethnographic approach was adopted, and the findings were used as complementary to the findings of the quantitative analysis using BIAS. The data from S I was treated as primary material for detailed analysis, and the major surmises are drawn from the analysis of this data.

The qualitative analysis took into account the session in general, and those aspects of teacher behaviour that had the foremost impact on CI, in particular. The session was analyzed in the order of occurrence, and specific sequences of interaction examined closely, with a critical eye.

It is found that the CI is limited to TL and question-answer between T-S/Ss. No interaction between students or interaction initiated by the students is found. This is perhaps the narrowest possible form of interaction to happen within a classroom. An exception to the situation, in the sense that the range could be narrower, will be the schools where TL is the only thing that happens, as in S II.

This limited pattern of interaction can be represented as follows:

\[ TL \rightarrow TQ \leftrightarrow S/Ss \]
Teacher Lecture leads to Teacher Questions, which is responded to by student or students. It is found that the crucial factor deciding the evolution, outcome and even duration of the interaction is teacher anticipation. The teacher anticipates a student or students to behave/respond in a particular way. If this expectation is met, it curtails the interaction to a short one. If, on the other hand, it is not met, it could lengthen, sidetrack and even derail the CI and the classroom procedures.

Especially important is the Teacher Expected Response (TER) because the verbal interaction is limited to the Question-Answer mould. TER emerges as the single-most important factor, which single-handedly turns the CI this way or that. It is an aspect of teacher anticipation that underlies the entire classroom procedure. It is the external manifestation of teacher anticipation. The fact that usually the PR is accepted, only if it is the exact TER brings to light the importance of TER in CI. Almost always the duration of the interaction is decided by the absence, rather than the elicitation, of TER. The teacher will resort to Socratic questioning, or prompting, or hinting, so as to shepherd the S/Ss finally to the TER.

The interesting thing to be noted is that the students already know the significance of TER. They always try to guess the TER, and try to give a PR that is as close to the TER as possible. If they have no clue as to the TER, they simply remain silent.

Another curious factor is that the teacher will resort to techniques for eliciting the TER only if she is sure of success, only when she knows that the
students are very close to the TER. Once she realizes that the students are nowhere near the TER, she herself quietly gives the response and moves on.

As the BIAS shows, the teacher rules over the classroom procedures, especially CI, with an iron-fist. It is reminiscent of the situation where you can have any colour as long as it is black. Teacher anticipation as manifested in TER is one good example of how she exercises her power. Even as she introduces the visual aid, which is meant to widen the scope of PR and PV, the TER limits it to mere Question-Answer pattern. Only those students who are nominated attempt the TER. There is no enthusiasm on the part of the others to volunteer any guesses. The students know that only the TER will be accepted, and it will have to be based on the TL or the text, mostly the TL. They never hazard to go beyond that, because they know that is not what is expected from them. Teacher anticipation thus rules the roost, with learner anticipation given no chance to survive, and no consideration at all. The students are always striving to meet the teacher anticipation, when in reality it ought to be the other way round. The teacher is so sure of what the learners want, that she never bothers to find out what they want, what their expectations are.

Spoon-feeding, which is a natural resultant of the underestimation of the students by the teacher is another aspect of the CI that happens here. The teacher tells the students to write down the meanings either after giving them the spelling, or making them spell them from the text. This again boils down to teacher anticipation, in the sense that the teacher expects the students to be
spoon-fed like little children, obediently and quietly. She ought to remember that they are 17-year-olds, with a mind of their own, and should be encouraged to be independent. This kind of an approach alone would strengthen their aptitude for English.

On the whole, the session gives the impression of a well-rehearsed drama. It almost always goes on perfectly from Act to Act, with not much deviance from the script. The teacher directs the entire enterprise, and the students are expected to follow the lead without any dissent. They are expected to enact their roles well, but they are not supposed to improvise at any point in any manner. Any indication or exhibition of defiance is quelled quickly, which is not resisted by the students also, because of the training they have had, and because of the school atmosphere.

The textbook emerges as a key participant in the CI. The text is mentioned right from the beginning of the session till the end. The TL, TQs, TRs and PRs (and the TERs) turn out to be based entirely on the text. Once the text is started, the pattern of reading-explaining-reading automatically sets in. The text becomes the corner stone of the session, on which is built the entire edifice of classroom proceedings, and the CI.

The creation and maintaining of the classroom atmosphere is also dependent on the teacher. At S I, the atmosphere is not very rigid, but is not casual either. At S II, there is a complete lack of cordial atmosphere in the classroom. Neither teacher wastes any time in small talk as a sort of warming up
the students for the sessions that follow. At S IV, the teacher takes the attendance, asks about a student who has been absent for a week, lets the students fall into gear. That sort of setting the atmosphere is very important for the establishment of a good rapport between the teacher and students, which will help the teacher in churning out the CI for the maximum benefit of the students. If the atmosphere is congenial and the rapport between the teacher and the students is good, they will understand each other better, minimizing confusion and silence, and resulting in a lively session with active involvement of all the participants in the CI.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses point to the same conclusion - that the entire classroom proceedings and CI, is designed, moulded and churned out by the teacher who is at the centre of the entire show. The quantitative analysis provides the factual/numerical proof of this. The qualitative analysis affirms this finding, and reveals that teacher anticipation is the most decisive factor in CI. Either its presence or its absence is bound to affect CI in no meager terms. Its presence in varying degrees will minimize the active participation of the students in the process of CI, as will its absence, again in varying degrees, maximize learner participation in CI.

One interesting factor to be noted is that though the observation had shown that the session at S IV is the most learner-oriented one among the classes chosen for this study, the quantitative analysis could not bring out this difference in its results. Only a close scrutiny of the categories can point out the
disparity. Neither would a qualitative analysis by itself show that despite the striking dissimilarity, both the sessions are teacher-fronted. Thus it shows that the quantitative and qualitative approaches should be used complementarily in order to gather a comprehensive picture of CI.

5.2.3. Summary of Findings

The major findings that emerged from the analysis of data can be summarized as follows:

i. TL dominates the CI.

ii. TL, TQ and TR come to more than three times than PR and PV put together.

iii. The teacher dominates and decides the CI and the classroom proceedings.

iv. The idea of CI is limited to question-answer sessions between the teacher and students/individual student.

v. Teacher anticipation is the fundamental decisive factor in CI and classroom proceedings.

vi. TER, the overt manifestation of teacher anticipation affects and decides the duration of interaction between T−S/Ss.

vii. The presence of TER may curb or boost the T−S interaction. The absence of it lengthens the interaction.
viii. The learners are conscious about the relevance of TER, and try to provide it on every occasion.

ix. The teacher resorts to techniques of elicitation to shepherd the students to the TER, provided she feels confident that the TER can be elicited.

x. Spoon-feeding is an index of teacher’s underestimation of students and their needs.

xi. The textbook emerges as the major participant in CI and the entire session.

xii. The teacher maps out the entire session based on the textbook, not on learner needs.

xiii. Teacher underestimation, teacher anticipation and teacher domination makes CI and the session a well-rehearsed drama performance, sans life and vitality.

xiv. All involved in the procedure of CI accepts the lopsided power relationship inside the classroom, and each behaves accordingly.

xv. In a co-ed group of learners of the same age group and similar societal standing, the boys tend to exhibit team spirit, but not the girls.

A few minor findings obtained during the course of the research work are the following:
i. Despite being in the teaching profession for a number of years, the teacher still feels apprehensive in the presence of an observer — no matter how much non-participant he may be inside the classroom.

ii. The teacher always tends to think that observation is evaluative in nature, despite repeated assertions from the researcher to the contrary.

iii. This results in teacher-resistance to research — which begins with giving false answers to research queries.

iv. Teacher-resistance soon gathers momentum into teacher non-co-operation (manifested as refusal to attempt the questionnaires and swapping periods with other teachers without informing the researcher) and finally snowballs into teacher hostility (expressed by ignoring the researcher completely outside the classroom).

5.3. Testing of Hypotheses

An ethnographic approach always advocates the evolving of hypotheses from the research and analysis of data, instead of having pre-conceived hypotheses. Thus there are six hypotheses, in addition to the ones proposed at the beginning, which evolved from the analysis of data, which are verified under section 5.3.2. The following section verifies the three pre-conceived hypotheses in the light of the findings, before proceeding to the verification of the evolved hypotheses.
5.3.1. Pre-conceived Hypotheses

There are three hypotheses, formulated as a sort of flexible framework at the beginning of this research.

*Hypothesis I*

The verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the teacher and students in a second language classroom affect each other, and this, in turn, decides the pattern of interaction that takes place in the classroom.

This has been proved beyond doubt by the analysis of data, especially the qualitative analysis. The almost derailed interaction between the teacher and Anitha perhaps clearly validates this hypothesis. Here, both the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the teacher and the student affects each other: Anitha’s making a face, and the teacher’s staring at her (non-verbal behaviour) affect each other, and the CI that followed. Both are perplexed at the outcome of this interaction, because neither expects it to take such a turn and end up the way it did. This gap in correlation results in the teacher reprimanding Anitha, and nominating Divya who gets up and reads. The CI has taken a sudden change of course. The teacher expected Anitha to read, and then to highlight the points with Anitha’s help. It is Divya who ends up doing it. The CI design is slightly altered here because of the discrepancy between the verbal and the non-verbal behaviours of the teacher and the student.
Hypothesis II

Classroom interaction has a direct and definite bearing on the language learning process as a whole, and oral communication skills in particular, which can be exploited for producing better learning results.

The qualitative analysis of the data proves this hypothesis to be validated. The interaction between the teacher and students, while eliciting the meaning of “shaggy” serves as an example. As the teacher tries to get the TER “untidy”, the students provide “raggy” and “ugly-looking”. Clearly this interaction has stimulated them to come up with synonyms for “shaggy”. The meaning is more clearly understood than if the teacher had given the meaning herself. It has definitely been an addition to their vocabulary, as was admitted by several students in their uptake recall charts.

The post-session casual chats with the students brought out the fact that this way, it was easier for the word to be retained. They said that if the teacher had provided the meaning herself, and asked them to write it down in their notebooks, it would not have left such a strong impression.

The students from both S I and S II confessed to this researcher that even though all the skills in learning English are important, speaking ability is more important to them than the rest. As the above-mentioned incident shows, CI has greater potential to improve oral communication skills than the rest of the teaching aids combined.
It shows that CI between teacher and students, however limited or squeezed into formulas it may be, is preferable for the language learning process to the monotonous TL. It also proves that CI does have a direct and definite bearing on the language learning process in general, and oral communication skill in particular, and that it can be exploited for producing better results.

**Hypothesis III**

Active participation of the learners in classroom interaction is a must for effective language learning to take place.

The analysis shows that learners ought to be given a free hand in interaction for effective language learning to happen. While introducing the visual-aid, for instance, the students could have been stimulated to think, and utilize their language skills – like asking them to guess the backgrounds of the two men in the picture, how they would connect it to the text and so on. That would definitely have necessitated active participation of the learners in CI which is a necessary accessory for successful and beneficial language learning to take place.

These hypotheses are considered as flexible frameworks for narrowing down the focus of the research. They are not meant as straitjackets into which the results of this study must fit in. It was hoped at the outset that this research would suggest new hypotheses, involving insights into what happens in an ESL classroom. Six hypotheses have evolved during the course of this research and analysis of data.
5.3.2. Evolved Hypotheses

As opposed to the experimental and other approaches, ethnographic approach stresses the importance of approaching the data without pre-conceptions and prejudices. At the beginning of the research, ethnographers do propose research questions, which need not amount to formal hypotheses, and quite often the data obtained may end up suggesting other questions/hypotheses, instead of supporting the initial ones.

Ethnography places great store on the collection and interpretation of data, and, in marked contrast with the experimental method, questions and hypotheses often emerge during the course of the investigation, rather than beforehand. [. . .] It is sometimes suggested that psychometry is an hypothesis in search of data, whereas ethnography is data in search of an hypothesis (Nunan, 1992: 56).

The term “evolved hypotheses” is used here to designate those hypotheses that evolved during the qualitative analysis of data. They are numbered in continuation after the three original hypotheses, which are treated as pre-conceived hypotheses.

Hypothesis IV

The lopsided power-relationship existing within the classroom between the teacher and learners results in the learners having to yield to the autocratic authority of the teacher.
The transcript and the qualitative analysis of the session (S I) illustrate this clearly. Any number of illustrations can be cited, beginning with “Good morning. Prayer” by the teacher. When the teacher asks a question, the student/students respond. When she asks them to write, they write – depending on whether she wants them to write in their books or on the blackboard. The introduction of the visual aid clearly exemplifies this hypothesis. The teacher never wants to ease her control over the CI, and the classroom proceedings. The students meekly respond to her guidelines. She wants certain answers to certain questions so as to relate it to the text. She never thinks that the picture might stimulate the interest and imagination of the students. It does not occur to her that left to themselves, the students will come up with better ideas on which the CI, and in turn, the session itself can be fashioned, for producing better results.

This yielding to authority seems to have become ingrained in the students by the entire school atmosphere and system. Most of the teachers resort to caning the students for a variety of reasons ranging from disobedience and forgetting the homework to inability to answer the TQs in the class. This teacher never resorts to asserting her authority overtly, but, does not brook any defiance as well. When she feels that her authority is threatened, she resorts to mild forms of punishment (as in the case of Anitha). When the boys’ murmuring seems to get out of hand, she simply moves to stand near them so as to quieten them down. A subtle form of assertion, but it still amounts to an assertion.
**Hypothesis V**

Teacher anticipation is the determining factor in the evolution of CI, and TER, the overt manifestation of teacher anticipation, is the deciding factor of the duration of the interaction.

This is proved beyond doubt by the qualitative analysis of the various spates of interaction between the teacher and students. Teacher anticipation sometimes results in the students being cut-off mid-sentence (example: the interaction between the teacher and Sudhir) and sometimes making the students repeat themselves, because the teacher does not anticipate them to give the right answer without prompting, and sometimes the wrong answer being ignored (when Divya says “blind” instead of “deaf” about Beethoven]. TER is the overt manifestation of teacher anticipation - it is the response that the teacher anticipates, and the teacher almost always tries to elicit that particular response from the students. Most of the spurts of interaction are proved to be decided by the presence or absence of TER.

**Hypothesis VI**

Teacher anticipation leads to teacher underestimation of learners, their needs and potentials, which in turn results in dictatorial teaching and spoon-feeding.

This hypothesis is validated in the light of the qualitative analysis of the session. Even if it be teacher anticipation leading to teacher underestimation of learners, or the other way round, it results in under teaching. When a new word is introduced, she may give the meaning herself, or try to elicit it from the
learners. But she will ask them to write it down in their notebooks for future reference. This spoon-feeding is the sort of scaffolding that weakens the independence of the learners. The teacher decides it is a new word that is to be added to their vocabulary, the teacher decides they should write it down, and the students obey her. It is the same dictatorial tendency that surfaces when she asks a student to read, or to write on the blackboard or even nominates one to give the answer. It is an underestimation on her part, because she thinks they do not know what they want, that it is the duty of the teacher to point out what they want. She plans the session, the classroom procedures and CI meticulously, all by herself. That is why right at the beginning she asks the students to get copies of textbook from other classes. When she knows that they had the other textbook with them, why could she not base this session on that textbook? She has planned out everything based on the other text, and so she cannot change her lesson-plan. The students have to comply with her plans, which give little space for their needs and potentials.

**Hypothesis VII**

Textbook is the cornerstone for the entire structure of the CI as devised by the teacher.

All the schools chosen for this study exemplify this hypothesis. In all the schools, the teacher structures the CI and the entire session around the textbook. At S I, for instance, the first thing that the teacher does is to ask the students to get copies of it. Without the text, her lesson-plan cannot be carried out. The
entire session is founded closely on the text. The general introduction, the author
introduction, the visual aid, the lesson itself and conclusion all have a direct
bearing on the text. The teacher never makes any small talk or asks any casual
questions to establish a rapport with them. The outside references are made only
because they are relevant to the lesson, and not in relation to language. The
magnitude of the role of the textbook in the CI and the classroom proceedings is
alarming to an extent. It slashes down the scope of interaction drastically, which
affects the language learning process in a big way. Language learning becomes
confined to the printed pages of the textbook. The teacher elevates the textbook
writer to the title role for the drama of CI that she chalks out. The pattern of
interaction definitely can be classified as

\[ T \leftrightarrow TB \leftrightarrow S/Ss. \]

Where the interaction between the teacher and students should have been direct,
the textbook is thrust in between as a channel. The TL and TQs are based on the
textbook, the TERs are based on the textbook, and the PRs become based on the
textbook.

**Hypothesis VIII**

The potential of TER is easily recognized by the learners who attempt to provide
it at every opportunity.

All the instances of interaction that have been analyzed prove the validity
of this hypothesis. The students know that they are expected to give particular
responses, and that their responses should match the TER. If they are not sure
about the TER, they simply remain silent. Or else, they try to guess the TER from the clues provided by the teacher. They never attempt to seriously threaten or defy the teacher’s power and authority because they are not supposed to do so. It is surprising how easily they realize that the PR is expected to match the TER. The interaction between the teacher and Renjith, for instance, exposes this. Renjith’s reply “study” is actually enough for the teacher to relate the lesson to their lives. But she wants to stress “all subjects”, and this spawns the lengthy interaction. Renjith does not complain that, that was actually what he had said. He lets himself be shepherded to the TER. That is the easiest way out. It shows that the students have assessed the teacher accurately, know her anticipations, and try to respond accordingly.

Anitha’s episode can be pointed out as an exception, but it is mere teenage-show-off on her part. She did not mean to threaten the position of the teacher. Probably it is the presence of the researcher that instigates the teacher to punish Anitha for her defiance. It is to be noted that once the teacher decides the matter, Anitha meekly obeys her, and stands there till the teacher lets her off. The other students are always careful not to create disruptions in the class or to defy the teacher. It does not mean that they are all-attention to what goes on in the class, but they judge their positions and the teacher well, and behave accordingly.
Hypothesis IX

In a co-ed group of learners of the same age group, boys tend to help each other with a strong team spirit, which is singularly absent among girls.

The analysis of this session, as well as the transcript of the session in S II and the gist of S III provide instances to prove this. Though of the same age group, and though belonging to similar social strata, the boys stand together as a team. When one of them is in a fix, others rally behind him and help him out. For example, at S I, when the student says Mckinley Kantor belongs to Pakistan, instead of America, and when Renjith seems confused the rest of the boys prompt and help them. The teacher does not mind this. But with Sudhir, this does not happen, because he is not in any difficulty. He will get the TER sooner or later.

The girls tend to exhibit individualism as opposed to this. If one knows the answer, she says it. If one does not, and remains silent, or is even groping for a response, that is her own business. A typical example is the interaction at the end of the session. The TQs are actually repetitions; many of the girls know the answer, and have already said it earlier. When this girl is groaning and struggling, no one bothers to help her. It simply does not occur to them. They do exchange notebooks and notes, but once the CI is set rolling, each girl is on her own.

These are the major hypotheses that took shape during the course of this research work and the analysis of data. They do not bring to light all the
intricacies of CI in an ESL classroom, but they point out certain major features of CI as it happens in an average ESL classroom in Kerala.

5.4. Reflections

The findings of the study reveal that the ESL classroom is very much teacher-centred, which is not at all conducive to language learning. The idea of CI for the majority of the teachers and school authorities is limited to the question-answer sessions between the teacher and students. The teacher asks the relevant questions, the students either provide the TER or they do not. The more privileged the students and teachers are, the better the session. It never occur to the teachers to let the learners have a free hand in learning and an active role in CI and classroom proceedings – let them read the text first, let them discuss it in class, let them do a brainstorming.

The unnecessary importance given to the textbook in CI by the teacher is yet another danger for CI. As the S IV teacher remarks, “it is the crutches of the teacher. Take it away from her, and she is lost”. This is a very derogatory situation. As the prefaces in these textbooks caution, those are materials meant to be used as guidelines for formulating the sessions, and the CI. What happens is that it becomes the main structure around which CI is built as a scaffold. Even the visual aids are introduced not to facilitate language learning (which they are meant to), but to improve the understanding of the text. The language learning process is thus pushed back at the expense of “covering the portions”.
Teacher anticipation, teacher underestimation and TER add themselves to this list of threats looming over the ELT scenario in Kerala. These are to be done away with completely, and the learners are to be given the central role in CI if they are to benefit from it. This is entirely dependent on the teacher. Because, even if the learners are willing to take up an active role, a teacher with the old-fashioned ideas will tend to snub these efforts. Being better judges of character than adults, as has been shown by the analysis of data, they will pick-up the trend fast. Stimulating the learners is the key thing in CI, if it is to benefit the learners. They should enjoy the challenges the CI offers, should look forward to these, should develop an earnest interest in language learning, and the language itself. The primary role of the teacher then, is to act as the facilitator to language learning, as has been the clamour of all ELT scholars irrespective of their creed and cult.

The socio-cultural, economic and religious backgrounds of both learners and teachers exert considerable influence on CI, and classroom proceedings. The lesser the gap, the better the scope for communication in CI. This, however, cannot be counted as an internal factor in CI, and hence has not been included in the purview of this research.

It all boils down to the fact that the teacher is solely responsible for CI, the session and the teaching-learning outcomes. Except for the teacher at S IV, all the rest of the teachers who collaborated in this research, and even their colleagues, always attributed the lack of CI to the lack of interest and non-cooperation on
the part of the learners. It seems a very convenient way of escaping from their responsibility, and unfortunately, the truth is that, that is what the teachers themselves believe. They find the dictatorial role passed down by their predecessors very comfortable, and hard to shake off. They cannot imagine losing their power and authority in the classroom, and letting the interests of the learners take over, instead of their beliefs about what is good for the students.

5.5. Plausible Solutions

One plausible solution to the issue is to give teachers adequate training before taking up the responsibility of teaching. Most of the teachers are dissatisfied with the present BEd course and syllabus, which has not been revamped for the past twenty-odd years. Only the young guest lecturers at S II feel proud of the BEd course, but many of their batch mates found it highly unsatisfactory. Even when many agreed that the BEd course helped them a lot, the answer to the question “how helpful in the classroom?” is, “well, in the classroom? eh, not much.” It is high time that the BEd course is re-structured, and made up to date, providing exposure for the graduates to the latest trends, developments and techniques in ELT. They should be trained properly to teach. Generations of students are being deprived of their chance for better learning because of the set ideas and idiosyncrasies of a teacher. Not all teachers and teacher-aspirants can be expected to be resourceful. What is lacking by nature should be supplemented by nurture. It can never be ignored that ESL teaching
and learning is an integrated structure, built with interlocking individual components. If the ELT scenario is to be improved, every component needs to be improved, beginning with the curriculum designing to the evaluation procedure. However, even if all the components go wrong, or are weak by themselves, a truly resourceful teacher can achieve the aim of language learning (not just passing the examination) with surprising success. It should be instilled in the teachers’ psyche that their aim is to help their students acquire the second language, English. That should be the ultimate goal of any English teacher, be it a government school or government-aided school or private school.

Many of the BEd graduates interviewed suggested the introduction of an entrance test to gauge the caliber of the teacher-aspirants before the admission to the course. The findings of this research fully support this view. The candidates must be sifted carefully for their proficiency in the subject they teach, the aptitude for teaching their subject, and the attitude to teaching/learning situation and learners. These short listed candidates can then be trained thoroughly and carefully to be groomed into responsible teachers.

5.6. Pedagogical Implications

This research was taken up with the hope of contributing its mite towards the improvement of ESL learning through an investigation of the prevailing mechanics of CI in schools. With this aim in view, an attempt has been made to
scrutinize, discover and verify the decisive factors that make up CI and which affect the language learning process in the context of ESL teaching/learning.

The findings of this study imply that CI is a multi-dimensional phenomenon comprising a variety of factors that can be altered and manipulated in order to yield better learning results. This study has revealed that CI can be a highly productive teaching aid to the teacher in improving the oral communication skills of her learners. If managed and utilized carefully, it has a great potential for improving the oral skills of the learners than other teaching-aids like the textbook, the blackboard and visual aids. The study also shows the inability of the teachers to gauge their learners appropriately. They fail to judge the needs and aspirations, and the scope for improvement in the learners. One culprit who can be held responsible for the situation is the lack of proper training for the teacher-aspirants. There is a pathetic lack of professionalism on the part of the teachers, which is the root cause of their sloppy approach to the learners.

The results yielded by this study can be a pointer for the teacher training programmes and the school managements regarding the initiation and maintaining of the quality of teaching so as to provide the students the best possible ESL learning situation. A teacher can tide over all the limitations that threaten to suffocate the future of ESL learners if she realizes the potential of CI, and exploit it skillfully. Realizing the dormant prowess of CI will thus be beneficial to both teachers and learners.
The findings of this study reveal only the tip of the iceberg. Further studies ought to be taken up in the area to unearth and unravel the different facets of CI, and usher in changes which will ultimately result in improving the ELT scenario in Kerala.

5.7. Suggestions for further research

The qualitative approach to studying CI has more or less yielded a much more voluminous result than the quantitative approach, in the sense that it could bring to light several key factors that lie beneath the apparent CI procedure. Studies of this kind should be conducted more often, both by teacher-training centers and school authorities. Teachers should be given a chance to collaborate and participate in these researches, which will help in opening up themselves to research, analysis and change. This will also enable them to understand what actually happens in the classroom as opposed to what they believe to have happened. The teachers can also be encouraged to take up such studies by themselves. They can observe and study their way of teaching, their approach to learners, their gestures and mannerisms, and find out for themselves those factors that are detrimental or otherwise to the ESL learning situation.

The advantages of the qualitative approaches include letting the teacher be a participant as well as a researcher, focusing on narrow, single themes, and also including the perspective of the participants.
The biggest obstacle to this approach to gain a footing in the milieu of Kerala, is time-constraint. Both the teacher and the learners are in a hurry to finish their workload. They scarcely get enough time to relax, let alone analyze the happenings of the day. As the unfinished uptake recall charts proclaim, they do not get enough time in-between the sessions to go over what happened, and at the end of the day, after so many hectic sessions they cannot recall the events of a particular session accurately.

Apart from teachers and institutions, the university-based, the ministry-sponsored and other researchers can also conduct similar studies to understand and explicate the intricacies involved in CI, and the classroom proceedings. Further studies in the area are bound to discover the as yet uncharted territories in CI.

Action research can also be conducted vis-à-vis qualitative studies. It can complement both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches, and also suggest new and better ideas for improving CI, to yield better learning results. Instead of latitudinal studies focusing on one batch and one teacher, longitudinal studies can also be undertaken, focusing on one particular learner or learners, and see how CI affects them. That will provide an entirely different perspective of CI.

Basically, teachers should be encouraged to experiment and modify their approach to CI. Letting them participate in seminars, encouraging them to present papers on their classroom experiences, subscribing to the ELT journals
are all ways of keeping them abreast of the latest trends in ELT. They should be encouraged to be innovative and resourceful. The teachers should by themselves feel motivated to do this, in the absence of external agents to encourage them.

Attempts should be made by the authorities to take up research of this kind, which looks into what happens within the four walls of the classroom. That would be the first step in improving the quality of teaching. It will naturally improve the quality of learning results.

The possible topics for further studies include classroom atmosphere, strategies for creating it properly, its relevance and complexities, organizational and managerial abilities of teachers, and how they can be channelised properly, how the superior position of the textbook in the classroom can be weakened or exploited for better language learning, whether the team-spirit exhibited by the students can be exploited for better learning results, how TER can be “kneaded” for the benefit of the learners, and even to identify more features CI.

The social, economic and religious inequalities that deprive many a child of the chances of a better life should be done away with by the teacher once inside the classroom. Despite their socio-economic and religious differences, all children should get an equal chance in learning.

The English teacher has upon her fragile shoulders a bigger responsibility than her colleagues. All the students who participated in this research agree that once they acquire enough competence in English, it will automatically help them in studying other subjects except perhaps other
languages. The English teachers should be selected carefully and trained appropriately. They should be made conscious of their huge responsibility, and it should be made clear that they should give their students the best they deserve. They might come from different backgrounds or similar backgrounds, but once inside the classroom, they should strive together to achieve the common goal – language acquisition.

CI is the best tool that the teacher should exploit in order to achieve this goal.