CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communicative Language Teaching is a powerful theoretical model in ELT and is recognized by many applied linguists and teachers as a useful approach to language teaching. Communicative Approach that has its origin in the late 1960s in Britain, spread throughout the world within a short span of time. A lot of research has been conducted to investigate if the Communicative Approach, a Western innovation, can be applied to and followed as an English language teaching method in second or foreign language contexts (Burnaby and Sun 1989; Ellis 1996; Li 1998; Xiaoju 1984; Mookerjee 1986; Anjaiah 2010; Das 2010; Vishwanathan 2003; Dheram 1982; Kumar 2000; Sumalini 1993; Saraswathi 1981; Tulasi 2012; Satyanarayana 2012).

Communicative approach is not the direct result of any one way of looking at language teaching and language acquisition, but is an outcome of contributions by various approaches. Therefore, initially it is necessary to understand the second language teaching and learning process. Thus, this chapter discusses in detail the literature pertaining to language learning and teaching with special reference to the communicative approach.

2.1 Theories of Language Learning and Teaching

Research in the field of second language learning has been extremely dynamic and enterprising in the recent decades and the communicative approach is partly a response to the perspectives that have evolved and deepened over the years. This section tries to present some of the influential trends in the field of English language learning and teaching in the recent decades.
2.1.1 Behaviourist Theory

Behaviourist theory views language learning as an acquisition of new behaviour. A child learns a language by imitating sounds and structures that she hears in the environment. All behaviour is explained solely with reference to the external factors in the environment. Watson (1924) denied the existence of internal mental process.

Behaviourist theory is based on the works of psychology which saw the learning of any kind of behaviour as rooted in the notions of stimulus and response. For example, to Skinner (1957), verbal behaviour like other behaviours is controlled by consequences. Thus, if a child produces an utterance that brings positive response, she is likely to do so again. If there is no response or positive response she is likely not to do so again. Therefore, in behaviourism to learn a second language one must imitate correct models repeatedly. That is, a teacher of English should engage students in many drilling exercises in order for them to produce sentences correctly.

In the 1950s there was a shift from structural linguistics to generative linguistics. Chomsky (1965) criticized that behaviouristic theory does not account for hypothesizing processes and creativity as seen in child's comprehension and utterances. Chomsky claimed that children have an innate faculty which guides them to learn a language. The theory of linguistic universals is close to Chomsky's nativist theory. This too explains how the human brain processes language. According to the theory of linguistic universals there exist basic patterns or principles that are shared by all languages. These patterns are called ‘universals’ and enable children to learn language.

2.1.2 Nativist Theory

Noam Chomsky is a firm advocate of the nativist theory in the field of linguistics. He argues that the brain plays a decisive part in creating the ability to
produce an unlimited number of sentences with the knowledge of a limited number of grammatical rules. Chomsky claims that children are born with a language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains. According to the nativist theory, when the young child is exposed to a language her LAD makes it possible for her to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles, because the principles are innate, human beings inherit these principles. This explains where grammars come from and how people come to produce sentences which they have never heard before. In this regard, Cook (1997:262) remarks:

Universal Grammar is a black box responsible for language acquisition. It is the mechanism in the mind which allows children to construct a grammar out of the raw language materials supplied by their parents.

The works of Klima and Bellugi (1982), Slobin (1970) and Brown (1973) showed that there are similarities in the language learning behaviour of young children all over the world, whatever language they may learn. Brown (1973) through the ‘morpheme’ study established that there is a consistent order of acquisition in children learning a language. Study by Berko (1958) showed that child language is rule governed. All the above studies support Chomsky's claim that language is innate (Mitchell and Myles 1998).

2.1.3 Cognitive Approach

Research by Piaget and Inhelder (1966) paved way to cognitive theory of language acquisition. Language development is related to cognitive development, that is, the development of the child's thinking determines when the child can learn to speak and what the child can say. According to Mitchell and Myles, “cognitivists … are primarily interested in the learning component of second language learning and … they believe we understand the second language acquisition process better by first understanding how the human brain processes the new information” (1998:73).
Mitchell and Myles (1998) however, pointed out that this theory ignored the social and psychological variables which affect the rate of learning process. Linguists began to see that language is not something that could be detached from the cognitive and affective framework. The nativists and the cognitivists failed to capture the ‘functions’ of the language.

2.1.4 Functional Approach

Halliday (1973) produced one of the best constructions of language functions. He used the term function to mean purposive nature of communication. He outlined seven different functions of language:

- The Instrumental Function: Using language to gratify material needs.
- The Regulatory Function: Using language to control other people’s behaviour.
- The Interactional Function: Using language to interact with people around.
- The Personal Function: Using language to express individual feelings.
- The Heuristic Function: Using language to learn and to explore.
- The Imaginative Function: Using language to create a world of imagination.
- The Representational Function: Using language to communicate information.

Instead of describing the basics of language through traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary, Wilkins (1976) endeavored to highlight the systems of meaning underlying the communicative use of language. He detailed two kinds of meanings:

- Notional
- Functional

A ‘notion’ is a particular context in which people communicate. A ‘function’ is a specific purpose for a speaker in that given context. For example the ‘notion’ of
‘shopping’ requires numerous language functions such as enquiring about the travel expenses, duration of journey and buying tickets.

However, the functional approach did not explain the internal processes like the context of the utterance, the state of mind of the speaker, and his life experience. Contextualization is putting language items into a meaningful and real context rather than treating them as isolated items of language for language manipulation and practice only. Contextualizing language tries to give real communicative value to the language that the learner uses. The concept of ‘function’ and ‘notion’ become inoperable if we extend them to include internal processes such as human experience, state of mind and context which are unpredictable. Language users are real people and are not some machines working in predictable situations.

The focus of this approach is on how learners make meaning and achieve their personal communicative goals in some predictable situations. However, the Socio-interactionists hold a different view. They stress the role of context and environment in language acquisition. To them language is not universal it is time bound and context bound.

2.1.5 The Socio-interactionist Approach

Vygotsky laid the foundation for the interactionist view of language acquisition. Interactionists see language as a rule-governed cultural activity, learned in interaction within a community. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. He proposed the zone of Proximal development (ZPD), where learners construct the new language through socially mediated interaction. The zone of proximal development is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. For example, during the learning process, a child may not be able to achieve a given task. However, the same
child may achieve a more complex task with guidance and encourage from a skilled partner, termed by Vygotsky (1978) as the more knowledgeable other (MKO). The difference between these two accomplishments is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Accordingly, the role of education is to provide children with experiences which are in their ZPD, thereby, encouraging and advancing their individual learning.

Like Vygotsky, Krashen (1982) puts a great emphasis on the role of interaction in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Although, Vygotsky and Krashen can be categorized into distinct positions, the application of their theories to second language teaching shares a number of similarities.

### 2.1.6 Second Language Acquisition Theory

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory, stresses that language learning comes about through using language communicatively. He felt that Second Language Acquisition occurs subconsciously as a result of communicating in situations where the focus is on meaning. Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drills. This subconscious process is similar to the process children use in acquiring their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, that is, natural communication in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding.

Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:

- The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis,
- The Monitor Hypothesis,
- The Natural Order Hypothesis,
• The Input Hypothesis,
• The Affective-Filter Hypothesis.

2.1.6.1 The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis

Krashen considered ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’ to be separate processes used for developing competence in a second language. Where, language 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process, very similar to the process by which children develop their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language in which speakers concentrate not on the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

The 'learned system' or 'learning' is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.

2.1.6.2 The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. While only acquisition can initiate utterances, learning can act as an editor or monitor of these utterances and affect performance (Krashen 1982). The monitor involves utilization of formal rules or conscious learning.

2.1.6.3 Natural Order Hypothesis

The Natural Order Hypothesis predicts that features of L1 (first language) grammar are learned by children in a sequence predetermined by innate universal processes of acquisition. For any given language, certain grammatical structures are acquired early while others are acquired later in the process. This hypothesis suggests
that this natural order of acquisition occurs independently of deliberate teaching and therefore teachers cannot change the order of a grammatical teaching sequence.

2.1.6.4 The Input Hypothesis

The Input hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language. This puts forward the idea that language learners acquire language when they understand messages or receive “comprehensible input”. For example, if a learner is at a competence level 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she understands input which contains 'i + 1'. Krashen gives the example of the language teacher who uses pictures to assist in illustrating meaning and provide a context for examples.

2.1.6.5 The Affective-filter Hypothesis

Finally, the fifth hypothesis is the Affective-filter hypothesis. According to it, when the filter is 'up' it hinders language acquisition. For example, low motivation, low self-esteem, and anxiety can combine to make the filter ‘high’ or ‘low’ and thus, limiting access to the comprehensible input. However, positive effect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory is relevant to communicative approach. Like in the communicative approach, natural approach does not stress on tedious drills. Meaningful interaction in the target language and natural communication in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding, facilitates language acquisition according to Krashen. Similarly, the communicative approach is based on the idea that when learners are involved in real communication, they learn to use the language.

2.2 Communicative Approach

Since the mid-1960s, the focus in linguistic theory has shifted from the study of language in isolation to the study of language in a social context (Savignon 1991, 2002).
It is this socio-linguistic aspect, which is the unifying principle and the driving force behind the communicative approach to language teaching. Although the communicative approach is basically a language theory and not a learning theory, considering Richards and Rodgers' (2001) definition of approach, CLT includes a theory of language and a theory of language learning, and see it as an approach than a method. In brief, an approach can be defined as a set of theories about the nature of language and of language learning. A method, on the other hand, is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented. Besides, Richards and Rodgers claim, “at the level of language theory, CLT has a rich, if somewhat eclectic theoretical base” (2001:71).

2.2.1 Language Theory

The rise of interest in the individual and in relationships among individuals, which characterized the sixties, marked the emergence of socio-linguistics- the branch of science where sociology and linguistics meet. A new light was shed on language, not simply as a system of structurally related elements, which form a rule, but as a vehicle for the expression of meaning and social interaction. In other words, the structural view was supplemented with a functional, a semantic and interactional view. It was this idea of language as communication that started off the whole communicative movement (Widdowson 1978, 1979; Savignon 1991). And it was Hymes that made history by giving us the term ‘communicative competence’ in 1966 by challenging Chomsky's view on ‘linguistic competence’ (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Savignon 1991).

In the words of Canale and Swain (1980:7), communicative competence refers to the “interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and socio-linguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use”.
In other words, rules of use and rules of usage are complementary and not mutually exclusive. According to Canale and Swain, “the primary goal of the communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these two types of knowledge for the learner” (1980:25). Savignon notes that communicative competence characterizes the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers to make meaning, and “[it] is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved” (1983:9). Broadly speaking, communicative competence is an aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts.

According to socio-linguistic theory, the act of communication is seen not as basically an exchange of linguistic messages, but rather as a social phenomenon in which the use of language plays a part. In the field of the ethnography of communication, which Stern (1983:220) defines as “the study of the individual's communicative activity in its social setting”, language is a sub-ordinate yet integrated part of social and situational systems, which are actually behaviour patterns. Halliday (1978) argues, the existence of a semantic network is the linguistic realization of patterns of behaviour. He postulates that “the more we are able to relate the options in grammatical system to meaning potential in social contexts and behavioural settings, the more insight we shall gain into the nature of the language system” (1978:44). In his functional account of language use, Halliday has criticized Chomsky's linguistic theory of competence. He says, “Linguistics ... is concerned ... with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus” (1970:145). This view complements Hyme's opinion of communicative competence, and we can only understand language if we view it as an instrument or as a communicative tool. To
which Widdowson (1979:50) adds that “once we accept the need to teach language as communication, we can obviously no longer think of language in terms only of sentences”. This statement provides the justification for the emphasis on discourse in CLT.

2.2.2 Learning Theory

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) little has been written about learning theory unlike theory of language. However, two of the general learning theories, which emphasize common features among learners, are:

- Cognitive Theory
- Skills Theory

2.2.2.1 Cognitive Theory

According to cognitive theory, learning involves the ability to understand, to anticipate, and to relate new information to pre-existing mental structures. This focus on meaningful learning is derived from an attempt to make sense of the world. The heavy reliance of CLT practitioners on the mental schema theory is exemplified by Brumfit's statement that “new learning must be closely assimilated with what is already known, and if language is being learnt for use, then new learning must be directly associated with use” (1979:189). Hence, at the level of learning theory this view supports Halliday's claim about the semantic network as a bridge between linguistic form and behaviour pattern, a link between words and the world. As Stern (1983:261) posits, “the learner must become a participant in a real-life context of language use as a condition of effective learning”. Macdonough (1981:27) describes the cognitive process as “hypothesis testing”, and adds significantly that “rules can only be found if the risk of error is run” (1981:29). This view is reflected in the great tolerance of CLT towards errors. Errors are not to be avoided at all cost; they are not to be seen as
evidence of non-learning, but being an external manifestation of the continual revision of the inter-language system. They are essential elements in the learning process.

### 2.2.2.2 Skills Theory

This theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive learning and practice. However, advocates of this theory reject mechanical practice altogether as being totally irrelevant to genuine learning. Skills theory links mental and behavioural aspects of performance through a hierarchically organized set of plans, in which low level of automation is necessary to free attention for high level of planning. In this regard, Littlewood states the following:

> The cognitive aspect involves the internalization of plans for creating appropriate behaviour. For language use, these plans derive mainly from the language system. They include grammatical rules, procedures for selecting vocabulary, and social conventions governing speech. The behavioural aspect involves the automation of these plans so that they can be converted into fluent performance in real time. This occurs mainly through practice in converting plans into performance. (1984:74)

Skill practice is considered as a legitimate learning principle (Richards and Rodgers 2001), provided that it “offers natural options of language use which reproduce the kinds of choice that occur in spontaneous communication” (Stern 1983:260).

### 2.3 Origins of Communicative Language Teaching

Educators such as Galloway (1993), Savignon (1987, 1991) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that the origins of communicative language teaching are many, in so far as one teaching methodology tends to influence the next. Galloway says that the communicative approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2001), on the other hand, claim that the origins of communicative language teaching are to be found in the changes of situational language teaching approaches, which influenced the British language
teaching tradition till the late 1960s. Meanwhile, Savignon (1991) asserts that the emergence of CLT can be traced to concurrent developments on both sides of the Atlantic, i.e., in the Europe and the United States. Educators and linguists, as Candlin (1981) and Widdowson (1978) saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language in those methods, i.e., situational language teaching, audio-lingual or grammar-translation method (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Savignon 1987, 1991; Galloway 1993). Students did not know how to communicate using appropriate social languages, gestures, or expressions; in brief, they were at loss to communicate in the cultures of the language studied. In respect of this point, Widdowson remarks the following:

The problem is that students, and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in spoken or written mode. (1972: 15)

To him, knowing a language means more than the ability to produce correct sentences. It is the ability to know “how sentences are used to communicate effectively” (Widdowson 1978). Similarly, Howatt says that “the original motivation for adopting a communicative approach in the early seventies was remedial, an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing, structural syllabuses, materials, and methods” (1984:287). There was a positive response from linguists, methodologists and classroom teachers offering the best hope for the elaboration and diffusion of language teaching methods and materials that work, encourage and support learners in the development of their communicative competence (Savignon 1991).

A case in point, as Richards and Rodgers (2001) describe, British language teaching specialists emphasized another fundamental dimension of language that was addressed in current approaches to language teaching at that time- the functional and
communicative potential of language. To put simply, the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers; and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centers, and even governments gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative approach or simply Communicative language teaching.

Although the movement began as largely British innovations focusing on alternative conceptions of a syllabus since the mid-1970s, the scope of communicative language teaching has expanded since then. Interest in and the development of communicative style of teaching mushroomed in those years; authentic language use and classroom exchanges where students engaged in real communication with one another became quite popular. Also, numerous textbooks for teachers and teacher trainers expounded on the nature of communicative approaches and offered techniques for varying ages and purposes (Brown 1994). In the intervening years, the communicative approach has been adapted to the elementary, middle, secondary and post-secondary levels, and the underlying philosophy has spawned different teaching methods known under a variety of names, including notional-functional approach, functional approach, teaching for proficiency, proficiency-based instruction, and communicative language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Savignon 1991, 2002; Galloway 1993). In this study the terms communicative approach and communicative language teaching refer to the same thing and they are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

2.4 What is Communicative Language Teaching?

Communicative language teaching has served the language teaching profession for many years since 1970 (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Bax 2003). However, despite
the wide use of CLT in English language classrooms for the last three decades, claims are still being made that CLT method is not finding its full expression (Richards 2006; Bax 2003; Thompson 1996) in that practitioners perceive CLT in different ways. Does CLT mean teaching conversation, neglecting the teaching of grammar or paying much attention on open-ended discussion activities as the main feature of a course? This question is posed because many language teachers consider CLT as if it were a method that focuses only on speaking, role play, or drama and that neglects grammar; thus they are uncertain about what CLT is and are unsure about how to implement it in language classrooms (Thompson 1996; Gatbonton and Segalowitz 2005).

As the name implies, any versions of CLT poses that ‘meaning’ is primary and that teaching should center on communicative function rather than mere linguistic knowledge and structural patterns (Brown 1994; Widdowson 1979). In other words, social, cultural and pragmatic features of the language should be taught alongside linguistic structures; and knowledge of the target linguistic system must be matched by a practical ability to use the linguistic resources to achieve communicative purpose. This is what is termed as communicative competence (i.e. the acquisition of both knowledge and the ability for language use) as a goal of language teaching which in turn the current understanding and the central theoretical motto of CLT is (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Savignon 2002; Alright 1979).

It should, therefore, be clear that CLT is not only concerned with oral communication or speaking tasks; rather it is based on the notion of amalgamating the knowledge and use of language as mentioned earlier (or it is accuracy plus fluency to yield appropriacy). Thus, CLT does not neglect the teaching of grammar, nor has it the notion of excluding language form. Accordingly, Savignon (2002) argues that attention to ‘form’ is necessarily required while its involvement in communicative events is seen
as central to language development and to make meaning clear (Widdowson 1979); language items are presented in classrooms and practiced as formal structures to sustain the interests of the learners and to establish the structures in the learners’ memory. So we should be clear that communication cannot take place without the involvement of grammar or language forms; and grammar teaching has an important place in CLT. Supporting this idea, Savignon (2002:7) says, “Communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meanings”. Therefore, CLT puts balanced treatment and pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. According to Savignon (2002) communicative approach has meant looking at language in context, analysis of learner expression, negotiation; and that the terms that best explain what goes on in communication are ‘interpretation’, ‘expression’, and ‘negotiation’ of meaning.

Brown aptly describes the "march" towards CLT:

Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for 'real-life' communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance 'out there' when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential. (1994:77)

2.5 Communicative Competence

The term ‘communicative competence’ was first used by Dell Hymes in deliberate contrast to Chomsky’s ‘linguistic competence’ which was felt as being limited in its concerns since it ignored the use of language in social contexts. Hymes reacted to this by saying, “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar
would be useless” (1972: 278). Communicative competence, according to Hornburger (1989:127-8), is a concept that “…describes the knowledge and ability of individuals for appropriate language use in the communicative events…” which Spolsky (1989) and Romaine (1994) elaborate as specific and varied language related functions i.e. the acquisition of language competence as to when to speak and when not; and as to what to talk about and with whom; when and where, in what manner- what Harmer (1991) termed as ‘appropriacy’.

By appropriacy, Romaine (1994) explains that though anyone is grammatically competent enough (knowing the underlying rules of grammar), he uses not all grammatical sentences in the same situations. In different situations, he may say -‘Bring me a glass of water’, ‘Would you mind bringing me a glass of water, please?’ or ‘I think, I need a glass of water’. Though these sentences are grammatical and convey similar meaning, they differ in their appropriateness for use of particular situation. This is what the concept of ‘communicative competence’ basically is.

Harmer (1991:15), while explaining ‘appropriacy’, based on some of governing features, puts the following variables:

- Setting- Where are we when we use language? What situation we are in?
- Participants- Who is taking part in the language exchange?
- Purpose- What is the purpose of the speaker or writer? Is it to invite or to complain? Is to apologize or to disagree? Is to explain or to demand?
- Channel- Is the communication face to face or does it take place over the telephone?
- Topic- What are the words? Is it about a wedding or particle physics? Is it about a child birth or the latest film?

All these variables of ‘appropriacy’ in turn are some of the elements of communicative competence which influence the communicators in their choice of words. Furthermore, all the variables (factors) discussed so far would lay their references to the key components of communicative competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence) as shall be discussed as follows.
2.5.1 Grammatical Competence

It is the aspect of communicative competence which is concerned with the mastery of grammatically correct language (Legutke and Thomas 1991) or that encompasses knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology or the competence of linguistic code of language (Brown 1994).

2.5.2 Socio-linguistic Competence

The knowledge of socio-cultural rules of language and of discourse that requires an understanding of social context in which the language is used is termed as ‘sociolinguistic competence’ (Brown 1994). It is relatively more functional aspect of communication requiring the learners to know the role of the participants, the information they share and the function of the interaction. Furthermore, Brown explains such a competency as a mastery of speech act conversations, norms of stylistic appropriateness, and the use of language to establish and maintain social relation. The mastery of speech acts may entail, for example, encoding apology, gratitude, refusal, complement and by far sensitivity to norms associated with turn-taking in conversational interaction, the ability to use appropriate register of the language or the use of language variants to indicate social group membership. All these reflections of sociolinguistic competence, according to Brown, suggest that any approach or method, the teacher employs, should aim at socio-linguistic competence that must then be integrative in nature with the goal of language teaching which is to sensitize learners to the social diversity of language rather than to teach them long lists of discrete sentences.

2.5.3 Discourse Competence

Discourse competence is a mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings/ encoding and decoding acts/ to achieve coherent written and spoken texts in different genres (Legutke and Thomas 1991; Hornberger 1989). Describing as a
complement of grammatical competence, Brown (1994) explains it as the ability we
have to connect sentences in a stretch of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out
of a series of utterances, and by discourse we mean everything from simpler spoken
cornerstone to lengthy written texts (articles, books and the like). In short, discourse
competence is concerned with inter-sentential relationship while grammatical
competence focuses on sentence level grammar.

2.5.4 Strategic Competence

The “verbal and non-verbal communication strategy”, as described by Canale
and Swain (1980:30), is that which can be put in to action when needed to compensate
for breakdown at the time of communication caused by performance variable or due to
insufficient competence; or it is paraphrased by Savignon (1983:40) as “the strategy
that one uses to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules or limiting factors in their
application such as fatigue, distraction, and inattention”. Generally, strategic
competence is kept as the competence underlying our ability to make repairs, to cope
with imperfect knowledge, and sustain communication through paraphrase,
circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance and guessing as well as a shift of
register and style (Brown 1994). It is not only “compensatory function” that strategic
competence has, according to Brown, but is used to enhance the effectiveness of
communication.

2.6 Major Characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative approach to language teaching is, relatively, a newly
adapted approach in the area of foreign/second language teaching. According to Wright,
CLT is a “hybrid approach to language teaching, essentially 'progressive' rather than
'traditional'…” (cited in Mulat 2003:16). CLT can be seen to derive from a
multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology,
philosophy, sociology and educational research (Savignon, 1991). The communicative approach is a hazy concept, which can have a variety of meanings along the continuum between a strong version and a weak one. Johnson (1979) argues that the weak version attempts to integrate communicative activities into an existing programme, whereas the strong version claims that language is acquired through communication. Howatt (1984:279) summarizes the distinctions between the two versions as follows:

There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The 'weak' version, which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching… The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use English', the latter entails 'using English to learn it'.

Although we have different versions and various ways in which CLT is interpreted and applied; educators in the area, Littlewood (1981), Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), Candlin (1981), Widdowson (1978, 1979), Johnson and Morrow (1981), Richards and Rodgers (2001), Larsen-Freeman (1986), Celce- Murcia (1991) and Johnson (1982) put some of the major characteristics of CLT as follows:

- It is felt that students need knowledge of the linguistic form, meaning and functions. However, CLT gives primary importance to the use or function of language and secondary importance to its structure or form (Larsen-Freeman 1986; Johnson 1982). This does not mean that knowledge of grammar is not essential for effective communication, rather systematic treatment of both functions and forms is vital. Stressing on this, Littlewood says “one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language”
“CLT suggests that grammatical structure might better be subsumed under various functional categories...we pay considerably less attention to the overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules than we traditionally did” (Brown 1994:245). In CLT, meaning is given prime importance, which is achieved through interaction between reader and writer, and through negotiation between speaker and listener. For Finocchiaro and Brumfit “meaning is paramount” (1983:91) since it helps the learners to manage the message they engage with the interlocutors.

- Fluency and accuracy are two factors that determine the success of the learners. “Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques” (Brown 1994:245). However, at times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy because “fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal” (Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983:93) and accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in contexts. Sometimes, fluency is given more importance over accuracy in communicative classrooms so that the learners are kept meaningfully engaged in language use. It is important, however, that fluency should never be promoted at the expense of clear, unambiguous, direct communication. As Brumfit (1984) phrased it, "In no sense is it [accuracy] meant to imply that fluent language may not also be accurate language."

- Language teaching techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Classrooms should provide opportunities to the learners to rehearse real-life situations and engage in for real communication. There are a variety of communicative activities (e.g. games, role plays, simulations, dramas and problem-solving tasks), which offer learners an opportunity to practice their communication
skills meaningfully in different contexts by providing them with spontaneity and improvisation. Similarly, it is also important to provide learners with the opportunity to develop strategies for understanding language as it is actually used by native speakers (Canale and Swain 1980). In this respect, using authentic materials can be helpful for language teachers to expose their students to the target language the way it is used by native speakers. In the classroom, everything is done with a communicative intent. Information gap, choice and feedback are thought to be truly communicative activities (Johnson and Morrow 1981).

- There is a mixture of beliefs regarding grammar instruction. Some scholars support the exclusion of grammar learning as is argued by Prabhu (1987) that grammar teaching is impossible as the knowledge used in a language by a speaker is too complex. Also, one line of argument is that grammar teaching is unnecessary as knowledge is a kind that cannot be passed on with rules, but can only be acquired unconsciously through exposure to the language (Krashen 1988). While, other researchers emphasize the need to include grammar teaching in CLT (e.g. Lightbown & Spada 1990; Savignon (2002:7) says “... for the development of communicative ability [communication depends on grammar], research findings overwhelmingly support the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience.” Grammar is important; and learners cannot achieve their communicative needs and experiences without the help of grammar. Disregard of grammar will virtually guarantee breakdown in communication (Savignon 1991, 2001; Thompson 1996). However, the development of communicative skills is placed at the forefront, while grammar is introduced only as much as needed to support the development of these skills.
But there are certain misconceptions also about CLT that makes it difficult for many teachers to see clearly what is happening and to identify the useful innovations that CLT has brought. One of the persistent misconceptions is that CLT means not teaching grammar although “explicit attention to grammar was never necessary part of CLT” (Thompson 1996:10). Actually, CLT does never refuse grammar teaching. In CLT, involvement in communicative event is seen as central to language development, and this involvement necessarily requires attention to form (structure). In fact, it is certainly understandable that there is a reaction against the heavy emphasis on structure at the expense of natural communication. Nonetheless, it would seem foolish to make mistakes on the side of using communicative approach exclusively and totally disregard grammar teaching. Regarding this, Celce-Murcia (1991:462) comments:

In spite of the intuitive appeal and the anecdotal evidence supporting proposal for exclusively communicative language teaching, there is equally appealing and anecdotal evidence... that a grammarless approach ... can lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidgenized form of the target language beyond which students rarely progress.

Nowadays, it seems that educators accept that an appropriate amount of class time should be devoted to grammar, but this does not mean return to a traditional treatment of rules. Rather “the focus has now moved away from the teacher to the learners discovering grammar” (Thompson 1996: 11).

- Communicative approach is not limited to oral skills. Reading and writing skills need to be developed to promote pupils' confidence in all four skill areas. Communicative approach focuses on integrating all the four language skills as it actually exists in the real world outside the classroom premises. Students work on all four skills from the beginning, i.e., a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening, and perhaps also writing (Celce-Murcia 1991). Of course,
oral communication is seen to take place through negotiation between speaker
and listener (most likely among students), so too is interaction between the
reader and writer, but no immediate feedback is received from the reader.
Hence, in the classroom, emphasis is given to oral and listening skills, as contact
time with language is important. It paves way for more fluid command of the
language. Learners do not hear the teacher all the time, but having personal
contact themselves with the language, practicing sounds themselves, per
mutating sentence patterns and getting chance to make mistakes and learn from
doing so. The idea of emphasizing the oral skills creates uncertainty among
teachers. They misconceive CLT as if it is devoted to teaching only speaking.
But it is not just limited to oral skills. Reading and writing skills are also
endorsed through a variety of ways such as summarizing, translating and
discussion that makes language more fluid and pupils' manipulation of language
more fluent. In other words, it is important to recognize that it is not only the
speaker (or writer) who is communicating. Instead, communication through
language happens in both the written and spoken medium, and involves at least
two people. Thompson (1996) further states that, though there is a complaint
that CLT ignores written language, a glance at recent mainstream textbooks
shows that reading and writing materials have been given attention too.

- In general education, cooperative or collaborative learning, such as groups or
pairs, has long been recognized as a strong facilitator of learning (Kagan 1989).
In second/foreign language learning environments, students work cooperatively
on a language-learning task or collaboratively by achieving the goal through
communicative use of the target language. Students regularly work in groups or
pairs to transfer (and if necessary to negotiate) meaning in situations where one
person has information that others lack (Celce-Murcia 1991). CLT emphasizes
more on group and pair work activities since it increases to a great extent the
time allotted to each student for learning to negotiate meaning.
Many teachers believe that group/pair work is applicable in all contexts.
However, these activities can be inappropriate in some contexts and may not fit
into all classroom settings. Thompson (1996) and Savignon (2002) claim that
group and/or pair work are flexible and useful techniques and, they are active
modes of learning which can help the learners to negotiate meaning and engage
in problem-solving activities. Pair/group work provides some degree of control
and choice to the learners; but that needs to be complemented by real choice
(learners need to be given some degree of control over their learning).
Therefore, the use of pair/group work needs to be complemented by real choice
for the following reasons: firstly, they can provide the learners with a relatively
safe opportunity to try out ideas before launching them in public; secondly they
can lead to more developed ideas, and therefore greater confidence and more
effective communication; thirdly, they can also provide knowledge and skills
which may complement those of their partners which in turn lead to greater
success in undertaking tasks (Thompson 1996).

- Wilga Rivers (1983:53) opines, "Nothing is more dampening of enthusiasm and
effort than constant correction when students are trying to express their own
ideas within the limitations of their newly acquired knowledge of the language."
Errors are seen as a natural outcome of the development of the communication
skills and should therefore be tolerated. Learners trying their best to use the
language creatively and spontaneously are bound to make errors. Constant
correction is unnecessary and even counter-productive. As Caleb Gategno
Kainth 54

remarks (cited in Blair 1982:194), "To require perfection at once is the great imperfection of most teaching and most thinking about teaching". Focusing on errors and the structure of the language is in direct opposition to Krashen's viewpoint that the focus should always be on the message (Krashen and Terrell 1983:1). This applies especially to the correction of errors in oral communication. Most researchers are in agreement that pupils should not be interrupted in their speech to correct an error made by that particular pupil. Krashen and Terrell (1983:177) elaborated:

> Our view is that overt error correction of speech even in the best of circumstances is likely to have a negative effect on the students' willingness to try to express themselves.

Let the students talk and express themselves and the form of the language becomes secondary. If errors of form are tolerated and are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills, students can have limited linguistic knowledge and still be successful communicators (Larsen-Freeman 1986).

- Evaluation is carried out in terms of fluency and accuracy. Students who have the most control of the structures and vocabulary are not necessarily the best communicators. A teacher may use formal evaluation by using a communicative test, which is integrative and has a real communicative function (e.g., Madsen 1983; Hughes 1989). A teacher can also informally evaluate his students' performance in his role as an advisor or co-communicator (Larsen-Freeman 1986). In order to assess students' writing skill, the teacher might ask them to write a letter, report, memo or instructions to a friend sitting beside. Speaking ability of the students can be evaluated in the form of an interview, a picture description, role play and problem-solving task involving pair work or group
work. Savignon (1991, 2002) reports that the communicative approach follows global, qualitative evaluation of learner achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete linguistic features.

- The students' native language has no role to play (Larsen-Freeman 1986). The target language is used both during communicative activities and for the purpose of classroom management. The students learn from these classroom management exchanges too, and realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication. According to Celce-Murcia (1991:8), whatever the case may be, “the teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.” However, for others (e.g., Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983) judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible. Teachers may provide directions of homework, class work and test directions by using the native language. It can also be used to convey and express meanings of certain complex language items in the L2. Treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up ways of employing the L1, for the teacher to convey meaning and explain grammar and to organise the class, and for the students to use as part of their collaborative learning and of their individual strategy use. The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs.

- In any teaching-learning situation, the role of the teacher in the classroom is of paramount significance because it is central to the way in which the classroom environment evolves. Moreover, the role adopted by the learner in the classroom also hinges on the role adopted by the teacher. The teacher is the facilitator of students' learning, manager of classroom activities, advisor during activities and a co-communicator engaged in the communicative activity along
with the students (Littlewood 1981; Breen and Candlin 1980). Other roles assumed by the teacher are needs analyst, counselor, researcher and learner. Since the teacher's role is getting less dominant (not less important), the teaching/learning process is becoming more learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. Long back, Dewey (1938) laid the foundation of what we now call as ‘learner-centeredness’, a term which has gained tremendous currency in English language teaching. He objected to the kind of spoon-feeding promoted by the traditional methods of language teaching and pointed out the importance of the role of learner as an active agent in his/her own learning. In the existing communicative classrooms, students act as responsible managers of their own learning. They are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in the writings. They are communicators and actively engaged in negotiating meaning in trying to make themselves understood. They learn to communicate by communicating (Larsen-Freeman 1986). Above all, in other words, it is the learner who plays a great role in a large proportion of the process of learning.

2.7 Classroom Activities in Communicative Language Teaching

Littlewood (1981:20-36) classifies the types of communicative activities into two major categories as ‘Functional Communicative activities’ and ‘Social Interaction Activities’. The functional aspect of communication includes activities like problem solving tasks as identifying pictures (comparison of similarities and differences), discovering sequences or locations, discovering missing information or feature, discovering secrets, following direction etc. The social interaction aspect includes activities like dialogue, role plays, conversation and discussion, simulation,
improvisation and debates. Most of the activities mentioned above are discussed in detail by Littlewood (1981:22-36) and are summarized as follows.

### 2.7.1 Functional Communicative Activities

- **Identifying Pictures**: Learner A has a set of five or six pictures which are very similar in content, but contain a number of distinguishing features. Learner B has a duplicate of just one of these pictures. Learner A must find out which of the pictures learner B is holding, by asking him questions about it.

- **Discovering Identical Pairs**: A similar set of, say, four pictures is now distributed among four learners, who thus have one picture each. A fifth learner in the group holds a duplicate of one of the pictures. He must question others in order to discover which learner has the picture identical to his own.

- **Discovering Sequences or Location**: Learner A has a set of, say, six pictures or patterns. These are arranged into a sequence from one to six (either in advance or by A himself). Learner B has the set of pictures, but these are not in sequence. Learner B must discover the sequence of A’s picture and arrange his own in the same way.

- **Discovering Missing Features**: Learner A has a picture, for example, a street or a country scene. Learner B has the same picture, except that various items have been deleted from it. Learner A (i.e. the partner with a complete picture) must take the initiative in asking questions. He must find out which details have not been reproduced in B’s version of the picture.

- **Discovering Secrets**: Learner A has a piece of ‘secret’ information, which Learner B in his class or group must discover by asking appropriate questions. The questions must be restricted to a certain kind, such as Yes/No questions, in
order to prevent the discoverer from simply asking directly for a piece of information.

- Discovering Differences: Learner A and learner B, each have a picture (or a map, pattern etc.). The pictures are identical except for a number of details. For example, two street scenes may be identical except that one of the people is in a different position, one car is in a different color and there is different number of clouds in the sky. The learners must discuss the picture in order to discover what the differences are.

- Following Direction: Learner A and learner B have identical maps. Only A knows the exact location of some building or other feature (e.g. a ‘hidden treasure’). He must direct B to the correct spot.

- Reconstructing Story-sequence: A picture-strip story (without dialogue) is cut up into its separate pictures. One picture is handed to each member of a group. Without seeing each other’s pictures, the learners in the group must decide on the original sequence and reconstruct the story.

In addition to Littlewood’s discussion, Richards (2006) mentions and discusses some important CLT classroom activities which are presented below.

- Task-completion Activities: Puzzles, games, map-reading and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using one’s language resources to complete tasks.

- Information-gathering Activities: Students conduct a survey, interview and search in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information.
• Opinion-sharing Activities: Activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs such as a ranking task in which students list six qualities in order of importance which they might consider in choosing a date or spouse.

• Information-transfer activities: These activities require learner to take information that is presented in one form, and represent it in a different form. For example they may read instructions on how to get from A to B, and they may read information about a subject and then represent it as a graph.

• Reasoning-gap Activities: These activities involve deriving some new information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning etc. For example, working out a teacher’s timetable on the basis of a given class timetable.

2.7.2 Social Interaction Activities

• Simulation and Role-play: Students pretend the real life situation in the classroom e.g. we might ask them to pretend that they are at the airport. We might ask them to take part as themselves (simulate) or to pretend to be someone else (role play) (Harmer 1991).

• Conversation and Discussion: Students are given conversational proposition and are then put into groups which have to prepare arguments either in favour of the proposition or against it (Harmer 1991).

• Drama: Activities like role play, simulation and mime are taken as part of the drama (Byrne 1986).

• Dialogue: For some advantages as argued by Byrne dialogue can be practiced at the early stage of the language program. The reason why dialogue is advantageous, as Byrne (1986:22-33) discusses:
a. They present the spoken language directly in situation in which it is most commonly used.
b. They help learners to practice language in a similar way.
c. They promote active participation in the class.

Most of the above activities are oral communicative activities. However, communication does not only rely on oral but also on written activities, and the oral activities can go in harmony with written ones. Relaying instruction (i.e. one student gives instruction and the other writes it), exchanging letters, writing reports and advertisements, cooperative writings are some of the activities considered to incorporate oral and/or written activities. It should be clear that the activities mentioned in this section are meant to be practiced in pair or small group (Littlewood 1981; Harmer 1995; Richards 2006).

2.8 Ways of Effecting Communicative Classroom Activities

It is important for the learner to be able to produce the language naturally and freely, as we have already discussed in the previous sections, and the language teacher should consider the needs to communicate and be able to provide situation and stimuli that will get all the students to make active participation in communicative classrooms. Scholars in the field especially the advocates of CLT recommend that teachers should know what communicative tasks to use and their role in teaching and learning. In line with this idea, Hedge (2000:57) says, “the communicative approach to language teaching is premised on the belief that, if the development of communicative language ability is the call of classroom learning, then communicative practices must be part of the process”. Communicative language practices are important because of their contribution to ‘natural’ way of language learning. To that end, Littlewood (1981:17-18) explains the effects communicative classroom activities have on language learning which are summarized as follows:
They provide whole task practices (practice in the part skill of which the performance is composed, and practice in the total skill) to suit the learners’ level of ability.

• They improve motivation.

• They allow natural language learning when the learners are involved in using the language for communication.

• They create a context which supports learning by providing opportunities for positive relationship to develop among learners, between learners and teachers.

As has been discussed so far, CLT theory proposes a focus on learning, holding the ground that learning is likely to occur when classroom practices are made real and meaningful to the learners. To facilitate learning and to make it meaningful, Brown (1994) suggests that a significant amount of pair work and group work should be conducted, authentic language input in real life context should be provided and students must be encouraged to produce language for genuine, meaningful communication as some of the activities to be used in the communicative language classroom proceed. Particularly at the stage of freer production, since there must be automatically less teacher control and more learner-centeredness in any communicative task, communicative activities are best practiced in pair or small groups (Harmer 1995; Fazili 2005; Richards 2006; Broughton et. al. 1978).

2.8.1 Group Work

The classrooms as a social context puts paramount importance for second language learning and hence group work, which is the manifestation (a miniature) of and the way to maintain certain social context and enable learners to play social roles, is of great benefit. As far as CLT puts the focus on the learners (Savignon 2002) group work gives far more chances for them to communicate in English (Brumfit 1984; Doff
In addition, the varieties of interaction and participation, provided to the students within a typical lesson framework, are accounts of group work. Breaking the class into smaller units (groups) will have some advantages for foreign language teaching. To that end, Broughton et. al. (1978:180) and Harmer (1991:245) forward the following points which are summarized as follows:

- It is much easier to develop the necessary confidence in a comparatively private situation than in the public gaze of the full class.
- The group provides much more intensive opportunities for practice than any full class situation can and they are potentially much more flexible.
- People can learn from each other.
- It increases in the amount of student talking time.
- Gives students opportunity to really use the language to communicate with each other.
- Students will be teaching and learning in the group exhibiting a degree of self-reliance.
- In some ways group work is more dynamic than pair work, there are more people to react with and against in a group (than pair work) and therefore there is a great possibility of discussion.
- There is a great chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises.
- Working in group is potentially more relaxing than in pair.

2.8.2 Pair Work

Pair work is one of the ways in which we teach language or help learners practice different language learning activities. In fact pair work is described as an integral part of group work (Doff 1988), and it holds its own distinctive as well as overlapping importance to second language learning. Some of the possible advantages of pair work, described by Harmer (1991:244) and Byrne (1987:31) are summarized as follows:

- It immediately increases the amount students practice.
- A number of students (e.g. 20 out of 40 students) are talking at once instead of one.
- Encourage students’ cooperation which is important for the atmosphere of the class and the motivation it gives to learning with others.
- Students can practice language use and joint learning.
- Students can face and talk directly to one another.
- The learners get chances to work independently.
- Pair work provides some variety during the lesson.

In general, through pair work and group work, students can work together and help each other to solve problems, prepare a presentation, make up a story and do different kinds of exercises. They can also gather knowledge and skills from each other which will lead them to greater success by undertaking different tasks.

2.9 Role of Teachers and Learners in Communicative Language Teaching

Perhaps the role, teachers and learners are supposed to play in language classrooms, is determined by the type and the nature of learning activities (Harmer 1991:235) which are in turn dependent upon the method the language teachers employ. To that end, the role teachers and learners play in communicative classrooms are also dependent upon the types of classroom activities proposed in CLT, and according to Richards (2006) new roles are implied by activities in CLT.

2.9.1 Role of the Teacher

The role, the language teacher plays, is of great importance as to help the learners master the necessary skills and develop communicative competence. The teacher plays a variety of roles which, Harmer (1991:57) claims may change from one activity to another or from one stage of activity to another. Harmer (1991:235) also classifies the variety of roles that a language teacher plays in ELT classes into two categories: as controller and as facilitator. Larsen-Freeman (1986), when defining the role language teachers play in communicative classrooms, says that teachers would find themselves talking less, listening more and becoming active facilitator of their students. In addition, Breen and Candlin (1980:99) cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001:77) describe the roles language teachers play as follows:
The teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first, as an organizer of resources and a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experiences of the nature of learning and organizational capacities. In addition to the above explanation or in other way round, scholars like Littlewood (1981:19), Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005:340), Harmer (1991:235-242), Richards and Rodgers (2001:77-78) have put the role, the language teacher plays in communicative classrooms, summarized as follows:

- Needs Analyst- takes the responsibility for determining and responding to the learners’ language needs.
- Counselor- exemplifies an effective communicator seeking to maximize matching of speaker’s intention and hearer’s interpretation through the use of paraphrase, confirmation and feedback.
- Group Process Manager- organizes the classroom as setting for communication and communicative activity.
- Resource/Knowledge Provider - offers help if it is needed (when the learners are missing on something and they wish help).

The teacher will find his job more varied and more challenging. As Van Ek and Trim (1984:17) relate that:

...much greater demands will be made on his creativity than on his highly developed knowledge of teaching techniques. The traditional teacher who might be regarded as ‘replaceable’ will give way to a teacher whose role in the process of developing the learner will no longer be based on the power conferred by hierarchical authority but on the quality and importance of his relationship to the learner.

This new role is illustrated by Proctorom (1991) in diagram 2.9.1. The teacher is shown to be surrounded by a number of constraints (the inner circle) and once he overcomes these constraints he is shown to play various roles.
Generally, we can see from the points raised about teacher’s role that teachers do not have direct teaching role in the CLT activities i.e. teachers are not dominant as they could be in the traditional (teacher-centered) classes. However, they would rather carry a burden of very important roles of creating conducive learning environment and enhancing learning by doing at least some of the above mentioned roles.

2.9.2 Role of the Learner

It is inevitably true that learners are not empty vessels when coming to language classrooms and are expected to play a number of roles in communicative language classes. Legutke and Thomas (1991:267) confirming this idea state, “the learner does not come in to the project classroom knowing nothing. Rather he brings with him a range of previous learning experiences, values, views and expectations … not only have rather fixed idea about which activities are most appropriate for them, but also how the teacher should go about her teaching”.
Learners are not merely passive listeners and Aston (1993) stresses that learners are not limited to the consumption of services provided by the teacher. However, they can become animators and creators of the self-access facilities, taking greater control of their own learning. Breen and Candlin (1980:110) cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001:77) describe the learners’ role in CLT as follows:

The role of the learner as negotiator-between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning-emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedure and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way.

Brown (2001:43) ascribes the following role to the learner:

Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with other.

To achieve the goal of foreign language learning/teaching i.e. the development of potential communicative competence by learners (as far as learners are pivot), learners should have positive attitude and motivation towards the learning activities triggered by the teacher’s facilitative role in the class. If so, the students would hopefully conduct the activities needed in the communicative classroom either in group or in pair. It is, therefore, very important for the teachers to identify their roles, to integrate with that of the learners, and to help the learners know their distinctive roles that CLT puts on and work in collaboration.

2.10 Perception and Classroom Practice of Communicative Language Teaching

Better understanding of a certain teaching method will lead to a kind of teaching/learning process shaped by that perceived and known method. The contemporary teaching method; thus, widely accepted by many scholars, language
teachers, curriculum developers; and still working world wide is CLT (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Thompson 1996; Nunan 1986). Whatever the case is, different kinds of perceptions inevitably prevail among different practitioners – language teachers, educators, material developers etc. In spite of the existing wide acceptance, the varieties of interpretations of CLT can be attributed to the fact that those practitioners who identify with CLT are from different educational and traditional backgrounds (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Nunan 1986).

2.10.1 Perception of Communicative Language Teaching

Coming towards the reality of different understandings of communicative language teaching by teachers, different studies reveal different outcomes. Mangubhai et. al. (2007:1) claim that CLT approach is not finding its full expression in elementary and secondary classrooms and that many teachers remain uncertain about what CLT is and are unsure about how to implement it in the classroom. In addition, Thompson (1996:913) reveals that certain disparate misconceptions about CLT still continue to exist, and a large number of teachers he has spoken to were seen to criticize and reject CLT for some reasons. He says that these teachers perceive that CLT means not teaching grammar which means teaching only speaking; CLT means pair work which means role play and it means expecting too much from the teacher. It is also expressed by Medgyes (1988) that language teaching professionals, who are working where English is a foreign language, most of the time complain that it is difficult or inappropriate to teach the language communicatively.

Contrarily, Nunan (1986:18) in his study reveals that teachers have been influenced by the current trends of teaching method- particularly the principles of communicative language teaching/learning. In addition to Nunan, Hiep (2007:197) in his study forwards that “… teachers highlighted the potential usefulness of CLT,
stressing that CLT primarily meant teaching students the language meaningfully for their future life and helping to improve the classroom atmosphere”. Kim (2008), based on his study, also agrees that teachers’ perception about the communicative approach is positive. Generally, we can see from the above points that; though, the language teaching practitioners do possess perceptual differences towards communicative language teaching, most of them advocate the implementation of CLT in ELT classrooms.

Since learners are equal stakeholders in CLT along with teachers, their voices need to be heard before reaching any pedagogical decision. Moreover CLT, being a learner-centered approach, needs to consider learners’ attitude towards the basic tenets of CLT as well. It is ironic that in discussions about CLT and its learner-centeredness, the attitudes of learners themselves are often neglected (Savignon & Wang 2003). Though a great deal of research has been conducted on the teachers’ attitude towards CLT in the Asian contexts, researchers have given limited attention to learners’ perception of the CLT principles and activities. Reports on the appropriateness of CLT in different contexts have been based mainly on teachers’ attitudes and practices (Hossen 2008; Ozsevik 2010; Mulat 2003; Thompson 1996). According to Williams and Burden, “learners’ perceptions and interpretations…have been found to have the greatest influence on achievement” (cited in Brown 2009:46). Reiterating the importance of students’ perceptions, Littlewood states, “if the kind of teaching that the teacher offers to the students creates opportunities for the kind of learning that the students feel is worthwhile and enjoyable, then the students will be more ready to engage with what is taking place and learning will be more effective” (2010: 47). As per a study conducted by Littlewood, “the stereotype of Asian students as ‘obedient listeners’ - whether or not it is a reflection of their actual behaviour in class - does not
reflect the role they would like to adopt in class’’ (2000: 33). Some studies have also shown that the perceptions of teachers and their students do not always match (Kumaravadivelu 1991; Block 1994). Block, for example, has found that ‘‘teachers and learners operate according to quite different systems for describing and attributing purpose to tasks’’ (1994: 473). Block’s findings (1994, 1996) are supported by Nunan’s study (1986), in which he found clear mismatches between learners’ and teachers’ opinions about which activities were important in the learning process. Learners’ disparate attitudes towards communicative language teaching inevitably act as a major deterrent in its practical application. Thus, there is a strong need to study and analyse the learners’ perception also along with the teachers in order to make CLT a success story in context of engineering institutes in Punjab.

2.10.2 Classroom Practice in Communicative Language Teaching

We may hear from language teachers that they are following a communicative approach to their English language teaching. However, scholars like Savignon (2002) and Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) point the fact that there is a low correlation between what teachers state (say) and their actual classroom practices (specially referring to CLT). The paradoxical disparities that exist between what teachers believe and profess and what they actually practice in the ELT classrooms are noted by many scholars. Among them, Karavas-Doukas (1996:187) says:

Despite the widespread adoption of communicative approach by textbooks and curricula around the world, research suggests that CLT principles in classrooms are rare, with most teachers professing commitment to the communicative approach but following more structural approach in classrooms.

In addition, Hiep (2007) criticizing the suggestion made by Bax (2003) which favours the teachers’ utilization of CLT principles in language classes; says, however,
when it comes to the level of practice, teachers often encounter many difficulties. Their desire to implement CLT which is manifest through efforts to promote common western CLT practice such as pair work and group work conflicts with many contextual factors.

In general, a growing body of classroom-based researches of actual communicative language practices can lead to some inclined conclusion that there are few opportunities for genuine communicative language use in English language classrooms and even those teachers who are committed to communicative language teaching fail to create genuine communication in their classrooms (Rayan 2011; Fazili 2007; Kumaravadivelu 1993; Seedhouse 1990; Nunan 1987). Some of the factors that make CLT impractical or hard to practice are- traditional examination, large class size, cultural constraints characterized by beliefs about teachers’ and students’ role and classroom relationship, personal constraints such as students’ low motivation and unequal ability to take part in independent active learning practices and even teachers’ limited expertise in creating communicative activities like group work and pair work (Hiep 2007; Jin, Singh and Li 2005; Fazili 2007; Bax 2003; Widdowson 1979, Medgyes 1988).

2.11 English Language Teaching Scenario in India

ELT pedagogy developed primarily in the West where political and social realities were different and the status of English was fixed whereas, in India, ELT pedagogy depends upon the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which the status of English keeps changing. The evolution of ELT in India, as in any other EFL country is linked with factors that are not pedagogic alone. Today, English cannot be termed a foreign language in the Indian context, but in times past, it was a foreign language and its teaching had to take cognizance of all factors, pedagogic or otherwise. The developments that have taken place in ELT methodology in the West took some time
to reach Indian classrooms. The causes behind this gap, as reported by Gupta (2005), are three:

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

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

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

In a similar wake, the Communicative approach to language teaching that reached both the regions (India and the West) between the years 1970-1980 could not establish itself on a firm ground in the Indian context until around the year 2000 when the context of the whole teaching situation actually started undergoing a change. Socio-economic factors played a major role in this change that is dynamic even today. The liberalization of the Indian economy resulting into the progression of India on the global front, led to the entry of many international brands into the country. Multi-national companies, call centers, shopping malls and trade fairs; all need young personnel, fluent
in English. The Internet has played a major role in creating a resource-rich environment by giving a wide range of exposure to English. Becoming web-savvy has emerged as the need of the day and this is possible only through English. Resultantly, India witnessed a mushroomed growth of private institutes and academies offering the whole range of proficiency in English from clearing the IELTS to speaking fluently. All these contextual changes in the Indian scenario have affected English language teaching in India positively showing some hopeful signs of modifications and modernization. These signs include introduction of CLT curriculum by Central Board of School Education in all its affiliated schools, introduction of ‘English for Specific Purposes (ESP)’ in some Indian schools, infusion of technology with the teaching of English in the form of Language Labs, availability of the native English Language to the Indian people with the widespread availability of cable television and satellite television in India, realization of English as the most preferred language of the global information highway by the new generation with the rise of computer expertise and internet and, reframing of the curriculum by some universities on CLT pattern (Gupta 2005).

In spite of all these developments in English Language Teaching and the popularity of CLT in many parts of the country as a comprehensive approach, there are many regions in India where English language teaching is still facing a very precarious situation. These include mainly the north Indian states. The overall scenario of teaching English in these states is dismal and thus, the graduates passing out from the colleges and universities here are unemployable (Daisy 2012). A special concern is sought by technical graduates (especially engineering graduates) since globalization and technological advancement has led to a huge demand for technically skilled workforce. But unfortunately, our institutes of engineering and technology are not being able to provide employable graduates to tap this demand. Most students are not industry-ready
and the sole reason is their lack of communicative competence. Poor knowledge of English is one of the major problems in the way of employing engineering graduates. As per the National Employability Report for Engineering Graduates by Aspiring Minds (a company that tests job seekers’ employability), sixty per cent of the engineering graduates failed to get jobs because they lack the required level of English (Tandon 2013). According to Karnik, former president of NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Company), only 25 percent of technical graduates are suitable for employment in the outsourcing industry because of their lack of abilities to speak or write well in English (Rayan 2008). An increasing body of evidence from the field is suggesting that verbal and written communication, coupled with a set of soft skills, has become as much of a hiring norm for the employers as the conceptual knowledge of the technical subjects. In this highly competitive society, proficiency in English has become an indispensable tool for employment as well as career enhancement. In other words, English language skills are considered as ‘life skills’ or ‘survival skills’ in the twenty-first century.

Despite the widespread acceptance of CLT in the second/foreign language contexts, a host of hurdles act against its successful implementation in the language classrooms. Different obstacles are encountered in using CLT, including the use of traditional methods featured by teacher-centered instruction, large class sizes, lack of communicative teaching materials, lack of well-qualified and trained teachers, misunderstanding by both teachers and students about CLT, local cultural constraints, etc. (Fazili 2007). Usha Prasad (1997) in her study talks about large heterogeneous groups of students herded together in tertiary classrooms especially students of science and technology background accounting it to the indifferent attitude towards English as compared to the greater importance given to scientific and technical subjects”. Similar
problems are also reported in various studies conducted in other countries of the Asian continent such as South Korea (Li 1998), China (Liao 2004), Thailand (Manajitt 2008), Bangladesh (Hossen 2008) etc. Ellis (1994) has doubt about the universal relevance of communicative approach in Eastern countries. He argued that the Western idea that “communicative competence shares the same priority in every society may not be true” (216) and so asserted that “communicative approach needs to be culturally attuned and accepted” (213) to make it suitable for Asian situation. Hence, he suggests a kind of “mediating” between the Western and Eastern teachers and integration of the two teaching methods to make language teaching successful in EFL and ESL contexts. Therefore, despite the fervent advocacy of the Communicative Approach by the industry and the academia and their positive perception about the Communicative Language Teaching many English teachers of this region (Li 1998; Gorsuch 2000; Burnaby and Sun 1989; Fazili 2007; Rayan 2011) have come to a consensus that some idealized imported solution to pedagogical problems cannot be expected to work in classrooms without any adaptation to local conditions in the recipient countries.
References


