CHAPTER – 2
RECENT TRENDS IN READING PEDAGOGY

At present language teaching everywhere around the world is carried out with reference to Communicative Language Teaching methodological principles. It is important to consider, therefore, how the teaching of reading is viewed and conducted according to this method. This chapter deals with trends in the teaching of reading in CLT in the following three sections:

1. Theoretical Bases-for the teaching of language in general, and reading in particular.

2. Course Design-in communicative language teaching.

3. Materials and exercises for teaching reading comprehension.
SECTION - I

1. Theoretical Bases:

Theory of Language: According to Richards and Rodgers, (1986) communicative language teaching is chiefly based on a theory of language as communication and the goal of language teaching in this paradigm is what Hymes (1972) calls, "communicative competence" as opposed to Chomsky's idea of grammatical competence. According to Chomsky, the aim of linguistics was to characterize the abstract abilities of speakers which enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in grammar. According to Hymes such a view of linguistic theory was insufficient since, linguistic theory requires to be seen as a part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture. According to Hymes, in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community in a person also requires the ability for language use with respect to whether something is feasible and appropriate according to the context or not.

Another linguistic theory of communication favoured in communicative language teaching is provided by Halliday's account of the functions of language. "Linguistics
is concerned”, according to Halliday, “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 meanings brought into focus” (Halliday, 1970:145).

Halliday in his powerful theory of functions of language attributes to language the following seven basic functions:

1. The instrumental functions which implies use of language to get things.
2. The regulatory function or using language to control the behaviour of others.
3. The interaction function which means employing language for creating interaction with others.
4. The personal function which means expressing personal feelings through language.
5. The heuristic function, implying using language to learn and to discover.
6. The imaginative function, which means employing language to create an imaginary world and
7. The representational function, which implies using language for conveying information.
Henry Widdowson (1978) has also contributed a great deal to the theoretical bases of communicative language teaching and makes a distinction between "signification and value" which is parallel to Hymes' distinction between usage and use. Canale and Swain (1980) extended the idea of communicative competence and gave a model of communicative competence which includes four components:

a. Grammatical competence
b. Socio-Linguistic competence
c. Discourse competence and
d. Strategic competence

a. Grammatical Competence: Grammatical Competence is equivalent to Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence.

b. Social Linguistic Competence: It relates to the ability to use language appropriately according to different social contexts.

c. Discourse Competence: It implies the ability to comprehend and produce text in terms of their interconnectedness, and how meaning is represented in relation to the entire discourse or text.
**d. Strategic Competence:** It refers to the coping strategies which language users employ when encountering a communication breakdown.

Thus communicative language teaching has a rich theoretical basis in terms of a theory of language. In a nutshell some of the characteristics of communicative view of language are as follows:

1. Language is a system for expressing meaning.
2. The main function of language is communication.
3. The form or structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. Equating communicative competence with grammatical competence is faulty because the ability to use language competently also means using it appropriately and in a logically connected manner in relevant social context.

**Theory of Language Learning:**

There is no particular view of language learning which claims to account for communicative language teaching. However elements of underlying learning theories can be perceived in communicative language teaching practices. First of all, it is obvious that communicative language teaching rejects the habit
formation behaviouristic theory of learning and adheres to the cognitive view of learning according to which learner's contribution in the language learning task is viewed as immensely significant. Thus, instead of being a mechanical exercise language learning is chiefly viewed as a problem solving activity which involves insight-formation, hypothesis-formation, and hypothesis-testing.

Learning a language is a creative process which involves trial and error and it is helped or assisted by previous knowledge which the learner brings to the learning task in the form of mental configurations. There are other recent theories of language learning processes which are compatible with the communicative approach for example-Krashen's monitor model (1981) which distinguishes between acquisition and learning. According to Krashen, acquisition refers to unconscious development of the target language system in a natural setting resulting from use of language as in real life communication. Learning is the conscious representation of grammatical knowledge resulting from formal instruction and it can not lead to acquisition. All language comprehension and production is the
outcome of acquisition. The learnt system can serve only as a "monitor" of the output of the acquired system. Krashen and his associates chiefly emphasized that language is acquired only through using language communicatively when the focus is on meaning rather than through practicing language skills when the focus is on form.

Johnson (1984) and Littlewood (1984) also present an alternative language learning theory which they consider to be compatible with communicative language teaching. According to their theory the acquisition of communicative competence in a language can be described within in a skill-learning model because language is a skill which involves both a cognitive and a behavioural aspect. The cognitive aspect involves the internalization of plans which includes learning of grammatical rules, vocabulary and rules of social conventions. The behavioural aspect involves the automation of these plans, so that they can be transformed into fluent performance. This is achieved mainly through practice in converting plans into performance. Thus, we see that their theory also encourages practice as a way of developing
communicative skills and to some extent subscribes to the behaviouristic principle of habit-formation.

**Theory of Reading:**

Under the influence of audiolingualism the goal of teaching reading was chiefly for the purpose of teaching grammar and vocabulary or to practice pronunciation. This continued till the late 1960s. During the 70s researchers and teachers raised their voice for giving greater importance to reading comprehension and taking into account a theory of reading based on the work done by Goodman (1967, 1985) and Smith (1971, 1979, 1982). The research and persuasive arguments presented by Goodman and Smith developed into a psycholinguistic model of reading.

This psycholinguistic model in fact rejects the traditional bottom-up approach to reading which implies considering reading as a process of picking up information from the page letter by letter and word by word. It proposes that reading is a selective process and good readers do not have time to read all the words on a page if they have to read rapidly. They bring their own background knowledge to the task of reading and then read by predicting information, sampling and selecting the text and confirming the prediction. Thus, reading was a hypothesis driven activity. Sampling of
the text was effective because of the redundancy built into natural language.

**Schema Theory:**

The importance of background knowledge in the task of reading is supported by schema theory proposed by (Anderson and Pearson, 1988; Carrell, 1987 and others). Though the theory has its origin in the Gestalt psychology of the 1920s and 1950s, its origin in the current sense has been attributed to the British psychologists Fredrick Bartlett.

Several terms have been used to designate abstract knowledge and memory structures. However, the most common term used for these is schema. Schemata are abstract knowledge structures for representing generic concepts stored in memory and abstracted by induction from experience. It is abstract in the sense that, “it summarizes what is known about a variety of cases that differ in many particulars” and it is structured in the sense that “it represents the relationships among its component parts” (Anderson and Pearson, 1988; 42). Rumelhart (1980) calls them as, “building blocks of cognition” and, “the fundamental elements upon which all information processing depends”. Schema theory has stressed the role of background knowledge in language comprehension which consists of an interaction between the resources of the reader and characteristics of the
Comprehension is efficient when there is a match between the two. Interaction between the reader and the text shifts along a continuum from reader-based to text-based processing. These two types of processing are the same as top-down, bottom-up processing of the text. When the text is familiar, the emphasis shifts towards reader-based processing. This results in greater recall of meaning, partly because prior knowledge background helps in assimilating the information provided in the text. However, when the text is unfamiliar, the emphasis shifts towards text-based processing. This results in lesser recall of meaning, partly because the reader has to create knowledge structures by using different strategies such as analogy, metaphors, inferences and summarization rules.

Schemata have been classified into two broad types, namely content schema and formal schema. While content schema is related to readers' world knowledge or knowledge related to the content of the text, a formal schema is defined as, "knowledge related to the formal, rhetorical, organizational structures or different types of texts (Carrell, 1987: 461). This knowledge of organizational structures of text has also been referred to as "text structure schema which includes the readers' knowledge of how authors structure their ideas as a narrative or as one of several types of
exposition, namely comparison, problem/solution, description or causation.

The functions of schema are given below:

1. A schema is said to provide ideational support for text assimilation.

2. It facilitates selected allocation of attention by providing part of the knowledge for comprehension.

3. A schema enables inferential elaboration, since no text is fully explicit and therefore requires the reader's efforts to go beyond the literal information.

4. The fourth function of a schema allows for systematic searching of memory by providing a certain perspective as to the type of information required.

5. A schema helps in editing and summarizing the information by including the important propositions and omitting the trivial one.

6. A schema helps inferential reconstruction by helping in generating hypotheses about the missing information. An indirect reference about any aspect may trigger of certain relevant details, substantiating the missing information. Schemata function as an important
knowledge bank for the reader and therefore it is important that they are activated and assimilated in order to assist in reading process.

Inspite of the fact that schema theory is not considered a very well-defined framework for the mental representation of knowledge. It has been an extremely useful notion for describing how background knowledge is integrated in memory and used in higher level comprehension processes. Furthermore implications for schema theory have proved to be very useful in enhancing reading instruction. Schema theory has provided a strong rationale for both pre-reading activities and comprehension strategy training (Carrell, 1985). The major implication of this theory is that students need to activate their prior knowledge of a topic before they begin to read a text. If they do not have sufficient prior knowledge they should be provided with at least minimal background knowledge from which to interpret the text.

**Bottom-up reading:**

As a reaction to the overemphasis on top-down models of reading in second language context there has been a reconsideration of the importance of lower level processes in reading, that is, recognition of letters, words and syntactic processing. Mclaughlin (1990), Eskey (1988), and Segalowitz (1992) have all expressed the automatic lower level
processing. They claim that less proficient readers remain "word-bound" because they are "stuck" on words. Previous view on this problem, in keeping with the psycholinguistic model of reading suggested that students who were deficient in reading were not sampling rapidly enough and were not making guesses, afraid to take chances. Recent view however, of this learner problem argues that students are word-bound precisely because they are not yet efficient in bottom-up processing. In other words they do not simply recognize the words rapidly and accurately but are only consciously attending to the graphic forms. No amount of guessing, which many poorer students appear to be good at will overcome this deficiency and lead to automatic recognition (Eskey and Grabe, 1988). An important issue related to automaticity is the recent recognition that knowledge of vocabulary and syntax are critical components of reading comprehension. From this perspective, it is believed that below a particular language proficiency threshold, comprehension processes are not used as effectively in L2 by students as in their L1. Thus, linguistic competence or grammatical competence is seen to play a critical role in reading proficiency. One possible consequence of this view is to see reading fundamentally as a language process rather than primarily as a thinking
process. Most second language researchers however propose a balance between the two (Carrell, 1989a; Eskey, 1986).

**Interactive approach to reading:**

The focus in the recent times is on an interactive approach to reading which can imply to two different conceptions. Firstly, it can mean the interaction between the text and the reader which includes both the top-down and bottom-up approaches. The basic concept is that the reader constructs or interprets the text partly on the basis of knowledge drawn from the text and partly from his/her background knowledge. The second meaning of interactive approach refers to the interaction of many component skills of reading simultaneously which is believed to result in fluent reading comprehension. In other words reading is believed to involve according to the interactive approach both an inventory of lower level automatic identification skills and array of higher level comprehension or interpretation skills.

**Components of Reading:**

Recent research (Grabe, 1991) on reading suggests that fluent reading should be **rapid** so that the reader can maintain the flow of information at an appropriate pace to create links and make inferences which are essential for effective comprehension. Secondly, reading is viewed to be **purposeful** or meaningful which provides motivation for
reading. Reading is also interactive in the sense that the reader makes use of information from his/her background knowledge as well as information from the printed text. It is also interactive in the sense that many skills work together concomitantly in the process. Another important feature of reading is that comprehension is an essential process in reading. Furthermore, reading is a flexible process which involves the employment of a range of strategies such as predicting, guessing, scanning, skimming etc.

On the basis of Grabe also recent research subdivides reading into at least six general components:

1. Automatic recognition skills
2. Vocabulary and structural knowledge
3. Discourse structure knowledge
4. Content/world knowledge
5. Skills and strategies
6. Metacognitive knowledge and skills.
SECTION – II

2. Course Design in CLT:

The most important development in recent course design seems to be the element of needs analysis. As Yalden (1987) says, "setting up a new course implies a skillful blending of what is already known about language teaching and learning with what the group of learners inevitably bring to the classroom: their own needs, wants, attitudes, knowledge of the world, and so on" (1987:3). In the past, most teachers depended heavily on text books containing grammatically graded materials. These books provided guidelines for the teacher about presenting the structures of the target language through drills and exercises based on behaviorist ideology. However in Communicative Language Teaching the aim of teaching is to help the learner acquire the ability to use a second language in real life, these courses can not rise to the occasion and fulfill the demands of the learning/teaching goals.

The course designers’ task has been expanded and modified because of changes in the theory of language and language learning. It is also important in the present day social setup to consider who wants to learn which language
and for what purpose. This brings us to the consideration of needs analysis.

**Needs Analysis:**

According to Yalden, a needs survey has to be conducted before course design frameworks are prepaid. First of all a general needs analysis about the characteristics of learners and about their language needs is taken into account. This will be followed by a second level needs survey including the following three categories:

1. General background information as well as information about educational level, previous language learning experiences, and current proficiency in the target language.

2. Language needs which specify the overall purpose for the course about, whether it is job specific, general education or for daily life. At this stage it is desirable to break down and specify topics and language skills according to different situations of use.

3. Learning styles and preferences: It is desirable that course designers and teachers do not believe in imposing a standard approach to learning because different learners learn better through their individual styles and strategies.
So, according to Yalden with the advent of more complex theories of language and language learning, as well as a recognition of the diversity of learners' needs, wants and aspirations, the concept of the syllabus for second language teaching has taken on a new importance and has become more elaborate. As a result, it has been examined at length, particularly in the context of English for specific purposes programmes, but also more and more in general planning for language teaching. It thus replaces the concept of method. The syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a certain coincidence between the needs and aims of the learner, and the activities that will take place in the classroom (Yalden, 1987: p.89).

**Organizing Principles:**

The syllabus should be a statement about content and only at a later stage of development a statement about methodology and materials to be employed in a particular teaching context. The need for efficiency demands the need for organization of content but it may also affect the organization of materials.

As Yalden reports, in view of the consideration of sociolinguistic and discourse competence as components of second language proficiency. There has been a lot of debate
regarding how to identify types of meaning and thus the components of communicative competence. This has in turn resulted in a concern over which elements of language which can be taught systematically and which otherwise; what can be approached in a linear fashion and what cyclically (Johnson, 1980).

Taking into account the present stage of linguistic theory Yalden proposes three options as organizing principles for a language syllabus. These are:

1. how language is learned (via conscious strategies),

2. how language is acquired (only via sub-conscious processes), and

3. how language is used.

If learning is viewed as the first option then organization of the syllabus will be based on structural code. This concept derives from the notion that structure is the only aspect or component of language that can be taught systematically and it implies therefore that it should form the "backbone of instruction".

If acquisition is taken as the organizing principle then the linguistic content of the syllabus need not be strictly
organized. Instead, the proper environment for the natural growth of the target language should be provided but no strict linguistic criteria need to be applied in selection and gradation. Psycholinguistic and motivational considerations are important here and one of the axioms of this theory is that language development occurs in a series of stages and classroom activities may be graded according to these stages (Terrell 1977, 1982; Krashen 1982).

If one prefers the third option, that is considering course design on the basis of how language is used in different situations, no particular organizing principle emerges, and one may take different things on different occasions as starting points. Yet whatever aspect of language is chosen, the others must also receive attention. With the focus on the "use" aspect of language this third type of organization reflected in functional syllabus is favoured by Yalden.

**The Ideal Communicative Language Teaching Syllabus**

In his succinct and balanced discussion of current trends in second language curriculum design, Allen (1983) mentions three approaches to curriculum design

1. **Structural Analytic:** This syllabus has focus on grammar and other formal features of language, and employs
controlled grammatical teaching techniques and form focussed practice.

2. Functional Analytic: This syllabus type has focus on discourse features of language and employs controlled communicative teaching techniques and meaning-focussed practice.

3. Non-Analytic, Experiential: This syllabus type has focus on the natural and unanalyzed use of language which employs fully communicative and experiential teaching techniques and meaning-focussed practice.

By the term analytic, Allen means the types of syllabus which break language data into discrete elements. So, while the structural and functional syllabuses present language input to the learner in the form of separate broken-down elements, in the experiential “natural growth” approach to communicative language teaching the data is not broken down analytically by the course designers or the teacher but is presented as whole chunk in the expectation that the students will discover the rules of language without formal instruction, as children do when they are learning their mother tongue.
The structural analytic syllabus was employed in the Audiolingual Method which was based on the hypothesis that an ability to communicate in L2 depends on having at least some prior knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and rules of pronunciation. An important feature of this type of approach is that all teaching materials are based on a grammatical inventory or syllabus which determines the order in which the structural and lexical items will be presented to the student. The syllabus is graded in terms of difficulty and also controlled strictly. This method is based on the concept of controlled cumulative progression. The underlying assumption is that it is possible to break language down into an inventory of grammatical features which can be learned one by one in such a way that they will ultimately build up into a complete system of usable meaningful language. As Allen remarks, “from one point of view, the use of a grammatical syllabus places undesirable constraints on the development of spontaneous language use; from another point of view such a syllabus provides an elements of guidance.

Recently, ALM has been much criticized for its apparent failure to recognize that learners need to be taught not only the formal properties of sentences or “usage”, but also the rules of communicative language “use”. However, in the words
of Allen, "... the designers of the best audio lingual materials were fully aware of the fact that at the end of pattern practice students would not necessarily be ready to speak spontaneously. Although at this stage they may have the patterns ready as a set of habitual responses, Most learners still need practice in using the pattern in acts of meaningful communication. He further says, that "pattern practice in itself is not intended to be communicative, but rather to establish the bases for communication at later stage."

Thus, Allen criticizes a "whole sale dismissal" of the structural syllabus and says that grammatical, discourse and sociolinguistic competence are complementary and students must develop an increasingly rich linguisticycleptence in order to carry out the complex communicative tasks that we require of them.

**Functional-Analytic Syllabus:**

The functional analytic approach to syllabus design is reflected through different types of functional-notional syllabuses. Whereas in the structural analytic approach the process was to select and arrange the learning items structurally, and then to devise a means of presenting them in contexts in a functional notional curriculum, this process is reversed. Here, first the situations in which the target language is to be used are defined, then the concepts and
functions which the speaker is most likely to employ in these contexts are identified. Finally, the grammatical, lexical and phonological elements which are typically used by native speakers to express such notions and functions are specified. So, there is a shift of emphasis from language form to language functions. As there is no one-to-one correspondence between language forms and language functions, the resulting materials are "functionally coherent" but "grammatically diversified". From the communicative point of view this is regarded as appropriate, since "what people want to do through language is more important than the mastery of language as an unapplied system" (Wilkins 1976: 42).

An advantage of this approach is that it requires course designers to focus on communication in context as the primary goal. Previously, structural syllabuses concentrated on establishing a repertoire of grammatical patterns which the learner would hopefully be able to utilize in the widest possible range of circumstances. A functional-analytic syllabus on the other hand is organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language.

This syllabus type is criticized on two grounds. First, it is said that it lacks in systematicity. Another criticism is that it is "a mere" relabelling of the old grammatical categories of the structural syllabus. Allen says that if we clearly
distinguish between syllabus design and classroom methodology, then this apparent contradiction can be resolved. Syllabus design is the level at which we define the objectives of the teaching programme. This involves compiling inventories of items to be taught and establishing basic principles of selection and gradation. Methodology on the other hand, is the level at which we create texts, games, exercises, simulations and other activities within which teaching and learning takes place. Allen argues that structural and functional syllabuses may have a great deal in common at the syllabus design level, but they have significantly different approaches at the level of methodology. For example, in an audiolingual course the main purpose of dialogues was to provide the examples of vocabulary and sentence patterns. Thus consolidating the students formal linguistic knowledge. In communicative materials we find that students are asked questions which make them think carefully about contextual appropriacy of the language being used and they are helped in building up dialogues step by step, progressing through sequences of speech acts and simple exchanges to complete conversational interaction. In other words the emphasis is no longer on the reinforcement of formal aspects of language but on a development of communicative proficiency in the given context.
**Experiential Approach:**

The aim of the structural approach is to provide a systematic grammatical foundation as a prerequisite for communication and that of the functional approach is to orientate the curriculum towards communicative language use without abandoning the principles of simplification, guidance and explanation. In contrast to these, the non-analytic experiential approach to syllabus design aims to provide naturalistic learner-centered practice without any detailed specification or planning of the linguistic items to be learned. This approach is based on the communication interaction hypothesis according to which, “one learns how to do communication, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed” (Hatch, 1978: 404). This approach is based on one or more of the following principles:

1. The natural way to learn L2 is to imitate spontaneous language behaviour of native speakers.

2. Learning is a process of interaction and negotiation.

3. Since the purpose of language is to communicate learning will be more effective if the learner’s focus
is on the message being conveyed rather than the form of the language.

4. The organizing principle for the experiential curriculum is in terms of tasks or problems designed to engaged in students' abilities in an integrated and realistic way.

In brief the experiential curriculum aims to encourage the use of language that is naturalistic, interactive, message-oriented and problem-based. The natural syllabus (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) and the process syllabus (Breen and Candlin, 1980) and the task-based syllabus advocated by Johnson and Brumfit and employed by Prabhu (1983) in his. Bangalore project are variants of the experiential approach to curriculum design. As already mentioned earlier, the natural approach is based explicitly on Krashen's monitor model, according to which form-focussed activities are of minimal benefit to the learner, since conscious "learning" can not be converted into the central process of unconscious "acquisition" which is responsible for all real comprehension and production of language (Krashen, 1982). In this approach the teacher provides comprehensible input by maintaining a constant flow of speech closely associated with the classroom situation. The teacher uses only the target language; errors
are not corrected unless communication is seriously hampered. Classroom activities center on topics of genuine personal interest to the students; the study of formal grammar is limited to homework and written exercises and speech is allowed to emerge naturally rather than being forced by the teacher.

Allen mentions a discrepancy in Krashen and Terrell's natural approach (1983) by saying that a close reading of Krashen and Terrell shows that it is difficult to avoid conscious learning. At one point they admit that students need knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in order to communicate; therefore, "we want to plan for both acquisition opportunities and for learning, possibilities where appropriate". They also admit that twenty percent of class time should be devoted to, "learning activities". In other words they acknowledge, the importance of form focussed instruction in antacit manner.

**Process Syllabus:**

According to Breen and candlin (1980) the proponents of the process syllabus, learning a second language is essentially a matter of learning how to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group and the conventions thereof. Within this framework, the learnert are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning and to
share that responsibility with one another and with the teacher, working together as interdependent participants in a cooperative milieu. The teachers' role is that of a counsellor, resource person and guide. Process materials are problem-solving in nature, differentiated to allow for a range of abilities, personalities and learning styles. Breen and Candlin criticized the traditional approaches to syllabus design in that they overemphasize the content material which is analyzed prior to the teaching learning process and often acts as a constraint on the learning teaching process. The process syllabus is a suitable alternative because it places less emphasis on prior specification of curriculum content and more emphasis on the development of a methodology of classroom interaction. This does not necessarily mean a rejection of traditional concerns about selection and gradation but a significant shift of emphasis leading to a priority of classroom process over syllabus content.

**Task-based syllabus:**

This type of experiential syllabus has been mentioned earlier in the discussion of Yalden's classifications of syllabus types. Their approach is based on the hypothesis that language is learned best when attention is focussed on meaning as in real life communication. As in the process approach, this type of teaching also does not require any
organized pre-specified and pre-selected syllabus. Classroom teaching revolves around the performance of task rather than language forms required to perform them. The teacher's task as in the natural approach is to provide comprehensible input and act as a counsellor and guide.

**Variable focus approach to syllabus design:**

After discussing different types of approaches to syllabus design Allen, recommends the variable focus syllabus which is independent of any particular curriculum position. "The aim of the model is to provide a coherent way of thinking about teaching which encourages the use of the widest possible range of classroom activities depending on the course objectives, the students' interest and abilities and the teacher's needs" (Allen, 1983: 86). This is similar to Yalden's proportional syllabus which integrates elements of analytic and non-analytic, or what Allen calls linguistic or nonlinguistic syllabuses. Since language learners do not constitute a single homogenous group but manifest an immense variety of individual needs and styles. It is also a fact that there is no single method or theory which is capable of taking into consideration all aspect of language and language learning. Various teaching practitioners have suggested that the teacher should be allowed to be
responsible for making informed and intelligent choices from among the large number of competing theories and methodologies available.

In this approach the basic unit of organization is that of communicative setting which may be expressed in terms of topic, theme or task. When the communicative setting has been established learning objectives are specified in terms of two related syllabuses linguistic and nonlinguistic. The linguistic syllabus includes grammatical categories, communicative functions and rules of discourse which will be taught over a period of time. On the other hand, the nonlinguistic syllabus includes details of conceptual content and knowledge of the world required for performing the task, a conceptualization of principles of problem solving and analyzing different ways of performing the task.

Allen notes that the three curriculum approaches, that is the structural-analytic, the functional-analytic and the experiential have many similarities as well as differences. For example, a language teaching programme may emphasize the systematic learning of vocabulary and grammar and at the same time include activities which are oriented towards communication. Functional-analytical materials have their main focus on guided communicative practice but they can
include remedial grammar exercises and at the same time cater to activities which require a fully communicative, spontaneous use of language. The purpose of experiential, problem-solving activities is to focus attention on meaning rather than on any specific features of grammar or discourse. However, even in this context, there is possibility of providing functional and structural practice.

According to Allen, the variable focus curriculum should be viewed as a classroom tool for broadening the interpretation of existing curriculum design. Second language curriculum should not be regarded as a “prescriptive formula” or “straitjacket” but rather as a collection of resources from which individuals are free to select in order to implement their own teaching programmes. Since, it is found on the basis of classroom experience that some students benefit more from an analytic, structural approach, while others respond more through a naturalistic meaning based approach. So, “there is a growing realization that the “bandwagon effect” in second language teaching should be recognized and guarded against” (Allen, 1983: p.85).
SECTION – III

3. Methodology:

Materials and Activity Types:

Littlewood has presented a useful model of activity types to be used in the CLT classroom which incorporate form-focused instruction as well as meaning focussed communicative activities. He believes in providing structural practice to the learners before free communicative activities. The model classifies classroom activities into two broad categories: “pre-communicative” and “communicative”.

Pre-communicative activities:

Pre-communicative activities are divided into two types of activities: structural and quasi-communicative. The teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or language skills which constitute communicative ability and provides the learners with opportunities to practice them separately. Thus learners will be given practice initially in part-skills of communication rather than practicing the total skill to be acquired. Examples of these activities are different types of drills and question-answer practice. Such exercises are labelled **structural activities**. The next stage in pre-communicative activities is that of **Quasi-Communicative activities** in which links are created between language forms.
and their potential functional meaning. These activities are called quasi-communicative because they take account of communicative as well as structural facts about language, as contrasted with purely structural activities such as mechanical drills. Littlewood remarks that many teachers now exclude purely structural practice from their classrooms in favour of other types of activities which might appear to be communicative. But since we are still not totally aware about the basic processes of language learning, it is wiser not to state dogmatically what can or cannot contribute to language proficiency. According to him structural practice may still be a useful tool specially when the teacher wants to focus attention directly on an important feature of the structural system.

The distinction between purely structural and quasi-communicative activities with in the pre-communicative category becomes clear while looking at the following examples (taken from Littlewood, 1981).

**Structural activities:** Here the learners are required to produce the correct form of simple past:

P: John has written the letter.

R: He wrote it yesterday.
P: John has seen the film.

R: He saw it yesterday.

**Quasi-communicative activities:** Littlewood mentions that the above example of structural activities can itself be modified into quasi-communicative activities by relating the structures to their communicative function by using language which is more communicatively authentic:

P: By the way, has John written that letter yet?

R: Yes, he wrote it yesterday.

P: Has he seen the film yet?

R: Yes, he saw it yesterday.

**Communicative Activities:**

The second type of activity is labelled as communicative-activities. In Littlewood's model, the learners have to use their pre-communicative knowledge and skill in an integrated manner. At this stage they are engaged in practicing total skill of communication. Here again Littlewood distinguishes two sub categories: **functional-communicative activities** and **social-interaction activities**. In functional communicative activities, the learners are placed in a situation where they must perform a communicative task as best as they can. The criterion for
success is practical, that is, how effectively the task is performed. Examples of such functional activities are describing a picture, reading a map, comparing pictures and information gap exercises. In social interaction activities the learner is expected to go a step further and is encouraged to take account of the social context in which communication takes place. He/she is required to go beyond what is necessary for simply getting the meaning across in order to develop greater social acceptability. Initially, this may simply mean greater linguistic accuracy; afterwards, however it may also mean producing language which is socially appropriate to specific context and role relationships.

*Littlewood’s Model of classroom activities:*

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         Structural activities
       /          \
  Pre-communicative activities  Quasi-communicative activities
                   /            \                  \
             Functional-communicative activities
         /            \                  \
Communicative activities  Social interaction activities
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*(Littlewood, 1981: 86)*
Finally, Littlewood makes it clear that there is no clear dividing line between the categories and sub-categories in real life classroom situations. They only represent a difference of emphasis and sequencing of activities can be done according to the needs of the student and the teaching situation. He remarks that the diagram does not necessarily show the temporal setting of such activities within a teaching unit. Whenever pre-communicative activities occur, their main goal is a subordinate one, that of preparing the learner for later communication. Most teachers therefore would be inclined to start that teaching unit/lesson with pre-communicative activities in which the learners would get practice in language forms or forms related to their functions. These activities will naturally lead into communicative tasks during which the learners will employ the newly learned language forms with the teacher monitoring their progress. Thus, they will be progressing from "controlled practice" to "creative language use."

This natural sequence, however, can also be reversed according to the demand of the situation. The teacher can start a teaching unit/lesson with a communicative activity such as a role play. It might be the case that this activity enables the teacher to diagnose the learners' weaknesses in a particular kind of communicative situation and the learners
themselves can also become aware of their shortcomings. So, on the basis of teachers' diagnosis and may be after discussion with the students, the teacher can organize, controlled practice of language forms which would lead subsequently to a further phase of communicative activity in which the learners can apply their new linguistic knowledge and skill.

Littlewood asserts that the main purpose of the framework or model of activities is to suggest a way of integrating various activities into a coherent methodology, irrespective of how these activities are grouped into actual lessons or units. The goal of foreign language teaching is to extend the range of communicative situation in which the learner can perform with focus on meaning without being hindered by attention to linguistic form, since in everyday language use. We normally focus our attention primarily on the meaning rather than on the form of the language. So, in relation to this goal the roles of two main categories of activities are summarized by Littlewood (1981) as follows:

1. Pre-communicative activities aim to give the learners fluent control over language forms so that the lower level processes can unfold automatically in response to higher level decisions based on meanings. The activities
may emphasize the links between forms and meanings (as in quasi-communicative activities), but the main criterion for success will be whether the learners can produce acceptable language or not.

(2) In communicative activities, the production of linguistic forms becomes subordinate to higher level decisions, related to communication of meaning. The learner is thus required to increase his/her skill in starting from an intended meaning, selecting suitable linguistic form from his total repertoire and producing them fluently. The criterion for success is whether the meaning is conveyed effectively.

**General Language Teaching activities in the classroom**

Richards and Rodgers note that the range of activities compatible with the communicative approach is unlimited, provided that such exercises help the learners engage in communication and require the use of such communicative processes as *information sharing*, *negotiation of meaning* and *interaction*. Johnson (1982) lists the activities as follows: showing out - of - focus slides which students have to identify; providing incomplete plans and diagrams required to be completed by asking for information; placing a screen between students and asking one of the students to place objects in a certain pattern and then communicating this pattern to students behind
the screen; jigsaw listening in which students listen to different taped materials and then communicate their content to other students. Most of these techniques are based on the principle of providing information to some and withholding it from others.

**Activities for the teaching of reading:**

As we have seen earlier, recent research suggest that reading is an interactive process in which what the learner brings to the reading text is as important as what the text brings to the learner. This implies the importance of activating student's background knowledge through pre-reading activities and instruction of strategies of reading such as predicting, guessing, skimming, scanning, monitoring and evaluating. In the well known book *Developing Reading Skills, A Practical Guide to Reading Comprehension Exercises*, Francoise Grellet (1981) has noted the following list of sub-skills within reading on the basis of which activities should be provided to the learners:

- Recognizing the script of a language
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
- Understanding explicitly stated information
- Understanding information when not explicitly stated
- Understanding conceptual meaning
- Understanding the communicative value (function of sentences and utterances)
- Understanding relations with in the sentence
- Understanding relations between the parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices
- Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
- Interpreting text by going outside it
- Recognizing indicators in discourse
- Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse
- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, an idea etc.)
- Selective extraction of relevant points from a text
- Basic reference skills
- Skimming
- Scanning to locate specifically required information
- Transcoding information to diagrammatic display

The basic considerations listed by Grellet (1981) for designing reading exercises are the following:

(1) **Understanding discourse structure**

If reading is to be efficient, the structure of longer units such as the paragraph or the whole text must be understood. In the past, materials and exercises concentrated on the sentence, assuming that a text was the succession of separate sentences. But this only leads to make the student dependent on understanding each and every single sentence in a text even when this is not necessary, and
thus retarding their speed. So it is important that one should start with global understanding and move towards detailed understanding later. Before reading the text in detail the students should be encouraged to gather the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working on vocabulary or more specific ideas. This approach is an efficient way of building up student's confidence and also of creating and awareness of the way texts are organized. It also helps in encouraging them to make guesses. Since reading is a constant process of guessing, from the very beginning they should be taught to use what they know, in order to understand unknown elements.

(2) Authentic text

Secondly, Grellet remarks that it is important to use authentic texts whenever possible. Getting the students used to reading authentic texts from the start does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on their part. The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students rather than on the text itself. In other words, one should grade exercises rather than texts. He also advocates the use of authentic text saying, that "simplifying" a text often results in making it more difficult. because the system of references, repetition and redundancy built in natural language is often removed or significantly changed.

(3) A multi - skill approach

Reading comprehension should not be separated from other skills
because in real life communication, usually reading is associated with speaking, listening and writing. It is therefore important to link the different skills through reading activities. For example, reading a passage and then preparing a written summary or reading an article and comparing it with an audio news - bulletin; or engaging in discussions and debates on the basis of read material

(4) Reading, an active skill

It has already been noted that reading constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions. This should be taken into account when devising reading comprehension exercises. This implies that exercises should be designed to enhance these strategies. For example, asking questions which encourage students to anticipate the theme of a passage from its title and illustrations or the end of a story from the preceding paragraphs. There should also be exercises which require the student's power of judgment and appreciation. A second aspect of reading as an active skill is its communicative function. It implies that exercises must be meaningful and be related as far as possible to what one is expected to do with a particular type of text in real life contexts. For example, after reading a letter, the students might be asked to write a reply.

(5) Flexible and Varied activities

Activities should be flexible and varied and ought to be related to student's needs and interest as well as the constraints of the teaching situation.
Exercise types for reading:

Grellet (1981) has classified reading comprehension exercises in four categories in his book *Developing Reading Skills*: reading techniques, how the aim is conveyed, understanding meaning and assessing the text. In section-I of the book in the category of Reading techniques, one finds exercises on sensitizing, improving reading speed and exercises on predicting, skimming and scanning. In the sensitizing group one of the exercises requires the students to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words through contextual clues (p. 32, ex. 5). Thus, the students are encouraged to guess the meanings of the words instead of depending on the dictionary in their reading. They are also made aware by another exercise of the relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices of synonymy and antonymy. After reading the given passage the students are asked to find the synonyms and antonyms of the given words (p. 157, ex. 3, see Appendix I). Another exercise in the sensitizing group requires the students to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words by asking them to do a close exercise in their L1 before doing it in English (p. 35, ex. 8). The skill involved in this exercise is deducing the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items through contextual clues. One also notes the employment of L1 as a teaching technique which was prohibited in earlier methodologies. Some other exercises in this section give practice in the skills of skimming and scanning. For example, in one of the exercises the students are
required to use a newspaper index in order to locate specific information. Another the exercise (p. 59, ex. 2) requires the students to survey a book by reading the text on the back cover, the preface and the table of contents (p. 160, ex. 3, see Appendix I). There are exercises to create motivation in the students in the form of quiz and interpretation of pictures as warming up activities. Exercises on linking devices are also provided (p. 48, ex. 2).

He advocates that the handling of the reading text should begin with a global approach encouraging the students to understand the aim and function of the text because it is impossible to understand the text if one is not aware of its functions. One of the exercises in this second section has a number of texts, for example an invitation, an advertisement, instructions, notice and so on and the students are required to find out the function which the text aims to perform (p. 162, ex. 1.1, see Appendix I). Another exercise in this group provides a dialogue and asks the students to find the communicative value of sentences and utterances within the text (p. 91, ex. 1.2). Yet another exercise in this category presents a passage in order to consider its structure and coherence (p. 163, ex. 2, see Appendix I). The students are required to understand relations between the parts of the text and find out which sentence is out of place in the paragraph. This will oblige them to consider the topic of the passage and to find out (a) whether all sentences
relate to this topic, and (b) whether the sentences follow each other naturally and logically.

The third section in Grellet’s book on understanding meaning requiring students to provide both linguistic and non-linguistic responses. For example, in one of the exercises the students are helped to understand the main information of the text through the help of the corresponding diagram (p.112, ex. 3). There are many examples in this section of authentic texts being used along with their pictures, diagrams and orthographic styles. In some of the exercises the students are required to transfer information given in the passage into tables and sometimes they are also required to transcode information in diagrammatic form. This section also contains exercises on note-taking (p. 168, ex. 5).

The last section aims to give the students practice in critical reading and requires them to understand the tone, style, attitude and intention of the author. The students are required to discriminate between facts and opinions in some of the exercises in this section. Obviously this section aims to develop higher level reading skills in the students and recognize slanted writing (p. 169, ex. 2, see Appendix I). Grellet’s book is largely representative of CLT practices in current reading pedagogy. It is noticeable however, that he does not allow adequate space to structural elements of language in his exercises. Though, there are reading exercise books which are based on the belief according to Littlewood’s model that structural
practice is also important. For example, Glendinning and Holmstrom's *Study Reading* has separate section on the teaching of grammar in each unit.

**Materials**

A wide variety of materials are used in communicative language teaching which views materials as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use. The primary role of these materials is to promote communicative language use. Richards and Rodgers classify CLT materials in three categories: Text-based, Task-based and Realia.

(1) **Text-based material:** There is a large number of text books designed to support communicative language teaching. The selection and grading in these text books is not similar to that found in structurally organized text books, though some of these are largely based on a structural syllabus with slight modification. Other text books are entirely different from previous language teaching texts. For example Morrow and Johnson's *Communicate* (1979) uses visual cues, taped cues, pictures and sentence fragments to start conversation instead of the usual dialogues, drills or sentence patterns used in structural text books. Another book *Pairwork* (1981) by Watcyn – Jones consist of two different texts for pair work, each containing different information needed to enact role plays and engage in pair activities. Another text book *Study Reading* by Glendinning and Holmstrom (1992) which is a course in
reading skills for academic purposes claims to be different from other reading text books in the following aspects:

(i) The reading point is to give the reader insight into his/her existing strategies and encouraging students to question their approach with the aim of refining their strategies. Only when the student has had time to think about reading in this way, direct advice is provided for improving reading efficiency.

(ii) Study reading recognizes that reading can become dull if it is seen as a passive activity. Therefore a variety of problem solving tasks are provided to motivate students think about reading as well as a range of information and opinion sharing activities.

(iii) The passages are appropriate to the needs of students and have been taken from a variety of text books, journals, reference works and study guides. This implies the emphasis on giving students exposure to authentic materials.

(iv) The authors acknowledge the influence of Goodman's view of reading as a psycho-linguistic guessing game. Without subscribing to schema theory they also accept the importance of background knowledge in reading and have attempted to activate it a variety of techniques, however bottom - up activities are not neglected and help is provided to the students with features of discourse and grammar.

(2) Task - based materials: A variety of games, role plays, simulations and task - based communication activities are also
employed in CLT classes. These are in the form of exercise handbook, cue cards activity cards, pair – communication practice materials, and students interaction practice booklets. In pair – communication materials, usually there are two sets of materials for a pair of students, each containing different kinds of information.

(3) Realia: Authentic and real life materials are strongly advocated in CLT. These might include language based realia such as science, magazines, advertisement, newspaper articles or graphic and visual sources around which communicative activities can be built such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, charts and even other kinds of objects.

**Authentic texts**

The authentic texts are widely advocated and employed in CLT readings but there are language teaching practitioners who have raised their voices against it. For example, Eddie Williams (1983:171) says, there appears to be no sustained argument as to why authentic texts are to be preferred in language learning. It may however be derived from the idea of relevance to learners’ needs, in that learners may eventually have to operate in situations where, ‘no account will be taken of their linguistic level’ (quoted from Morrow, 1979). Some of the theorists emphasize the use of authentic material on the premise that it is impossible to recreate ordinary spoken communication in the classroom. Though it is easy to provide examples of ordinary written communication.
However Williams feels that instead of helping the reader to read for the meaning of the message and authentic text which is usually too difficult for the learner forces the reader to focus upon the language form. Practical considerations must lead to compromise here; and in some cases selective and sensitive simplification may be required. The procedure of using simple original authentic texts on the other hand amounts to covert simplification by selection, which appears to be in conflict with CLT principles. Grellet’s argument in this context seems to be pertinent when he says that the difficulty of a reading text depends on the activity which is required of the student rather than on the text itself. To sum up the best approach in this regard seems to be a via media through which students are exposed to both simplified and authentic materials.

Looking in retrospect at the current reading pedagogy, one can easily perceive a trend towards eclecticism. As far as course design is concerned, we have already considered Allen’s views regarding a balanced and integrative approach towards curriculum design in which the structural, the functional as well as the experiential syllabuses, all have a place. Among activity types too, Littlewood’s model presents an integrative approach in which structural, functional and fullfledged communicative activities all have a role.