To be passionate about teaching is not only to express enthusiasm but also to enact it in a principled, values-led, intelligent way... Passion is associated with enthusiasm, caring, commitment, and hope, which are themselves key characteristics of effectiveness in teaching.

Christopher Day

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

With reference to the hypotheses formulated, the scholar had initiated the study on *An empirical study on the proficiency of speaking skills among postgraduate students in Coimbatore and the instructional practices to enhance their speaking skills in English* with an objective of finding out the proficiency of postgraduate students in speaking and the scholar advocates the communicative approach to language teaching as an effective way to improve the communication skills of the students.

The findings reiterated the scholar's view that there is no significant difference in the speaking ability of the postgraduate students irrespective of the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Parental education, economic position and the area of domicile do not have a direct correlation to English language acquisition. Instructional practices, the curriculum, and the examination system have a great role to play in language acquisition and communicative competence of a learner.
The knowledge that language is primarily speech has brought into focus spoken English and oral work in the classroom. The awareness that language is constantly changing and evolving has resulted in the teaching of descriptive and not prescriptive grammar. Communicative Approach to language teaching is a very exciting development in the field of English Language Teaching. In the recent past, a significant development has taken place in the English Language Teaching especially in its shift in the emphasis from ‘accuracy’ to ‘fluency’ and from ‘structural competence’ to ‘communicative competence’.

6.1 The present study – The researcher’s perspective

A number of researches have been carried out across the globe in the field of English Language Teaching. Recent researchers have done many studies on the methods and approaches of teaching English. Most studies have catered to teaching English as a Second Language or more precisely English as a Second Language Acquisition, with particular reference to school students and undergraduate students from Tamil medium background. Apart from this, a lot of research has gone into the use of technology for teaching English, for teaching English has been considered a technique.
The present study *An empirical study on the proficiency of speaking skills among postgraduate students in Coimbatore and the instructional practices to enhance their speaking skills in English* is the result of experimental work conducted by the scholar and provides authentic information obtained by the scholar in the course of the research. The difference is based on the scholar's current understandings of the communicative proficiency of English at the postgraduate level. Further, the scholar concentrates on the inconsistencies and confusions in teaching practices, which has reflected in the plight of the students in the present scenario - students who have studied for approximately fifteen years in English medium institutions are still unable to communicate in English. The inadequacies mentioned in Chapter IV hinder the development of communicative competence. The present teaching methodology and evaluation systems fail to contribute effectively to enhance the speaking skills of the students. The scholar wishes to highlight the importance of the learner-centered curriculum for effective learning of the target language.

### 6.1.1 Learner-Centered Curriculum

According to Nunan (1988), a curriculum differs from a syllabus in that the former is "concerned with making general statements"
whereas the latter is "more localized and based on accounts and records of what actually happens at the classroom level as teachers and learners apply a given curriculum to their own situation." Some teachers might claim that teaching is essentially a practical activity and has very little to do with the theoretical deliberations of educational philosophers, psychologists and curriculum designers. As Stern (1983:23) puts it:

Language teachers can be said to regard themselves as practical people and not as theorists. Some might even say they are opposed to 'theory', expressing their opposition in such remarks as 'It's all very well in theory, but it won't work in practice'.

Any comprehensive curriculum needs to take account of both means and goals and must address to both product and process. A major impetus to the development of learner-centered language teaching came with the advent of communicative teaching. Though like other theories, the theory and practice of communicative language teaching has come under the scanner. However, a basic principle underlying all communicative approaches is that learners must learn not only grammatically correct, propositional statements about the experiential world,
but must also develop the ability to use the language. Communicative language teaching sees language ability as being developed through activities which actually simulate target performance.

6.1.2 Differences between traditional & communicative approaches

It is common to see teachers who adhere to a communicative view of language teaching also incorporating elements of structural practice and grammar teaching into their classes. Nunan presents differences between traditional approaches and communicative approaches to language pedagogy in a number of ways.

The scholar in the following page produces the characteristics of traditional and communicative approach to teaching as proposed by Nunan.
Traditional approaches

1. **Focus in learning:**
   Focus is on the language as a structured system of grammatical patterns.

2. **How language items are selected:**
   This is done on linguistic criteria alone.

3. **How language items are sequenced:**
   This is determined on linguistic grounds.

4. **Degree of coverage:**
   The aim is to cover the ‘whole picture’ of language structure by systematic linear progression.

5. **View of language:**
   A language is seen as a unified entity with fixed grammatical patterns and a core of basic words.

6. **Type of language used:**
   Tends to be formal and bookish.

7. **What is regarded as a criterion of success:**
   Aim is to have students produce formally correct sentences.

8. **Which language skills are emphasized:**
   Reading and writing.

9. **Teacher/Students roles:**
   Tends to be teacher-centered.

10. **Attitude to errors:**
    Incorrect utterances are seen as deviations from the norms of standard grammar.

11. **Similarity/Dissimilarity to natural Language learning:**
    Reverses the natural language learning process by concentrating

**Communicative approaches**

Focus is on communication.

This is done on the basis of what language items the learner needs to know in order to get things done.

This is determined on other grounds, with the emphasis on content, meaning and interest.

The aim is to cover, in any particular phase, only what the learner needs and sees as important.

The variety of language is accepted, and seen as determined by the character of particular of communicative contexts.

Genuine everyday language is emphasized.

Aim is to have students communicate effectively and in a manner appropriate to the context they are working in.

Spoken are interactions are regarded as at least as important as reading and writing.

Is student-centered.

Partially correct and incomplete utterances are seen as such rather than just ‘wrong’.

Resembles the natural language learning process in that the content of the utterance

**Fig: 6.1 Characteristics of Traditional and Communicative Approaches**
(Adapted from Quinn by Nunan 1988)
6.1.3. Application of learner-centered curriculum in classroom

With communicative approach to language teaching gaining popularity among English teachers, learner-centered curriculum has become the most preferred in designing the curriculum. The key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. In a curriculum based on the traditional ends-means model, a fixed series of steps is followed. Thus, in the curriculum planning process proposed by Taba (1962), planning, implementation and evaluation occur in sequential order, and most of the key decisions about aims and objectives, materials and methodology are made before there is any encounter between teacher and learner.

One of the major assumptions underlying the learner-centered philosophy is that, given the constraints that exist in most learning contexts, it is possible to teach learners everything they need to know in class. What little class time there is must therefore be used as effectively as possible to teach those aspects of the language which the learners themselves deem to be most urgently required, thus increasing surrender value and consequent
student motivation. In consequence, while one major aim or set of aims will relate to the teaching of specific language skills, other aims will relate to the development of learning skills. Such aims may be to provide learners with efficient learning strategies and assist learners to identify their own preferred ways of learning. The focus should be to develop the skill needed to negotiate the curriculum and to encourage learners to set their own objectives. Finally, the aim should be to encourage learners to adopt realistic goals and time frames and most importantly, to develop learners' skills in self-evaluation.

The adoption of a learner-centered orientation implies differentiated curricula for different learners. This is because it is unrealistic to expect extensive participation in curriculum planning by learners with little experience of language and learning. When dealing with inexperienced learners, it is often necessary for the teacher to begin by making most of the decisions. For this reason the curriculum is conceptualized as much by processes for carrying out curriculum tasks as by products. Understandably, teachers need assistance and support in assessing the needs of their students. Teachers also need a broad framework within which they can negotiate the curriculum.
6.2 A Passion for Learning and Development

Teaching and learning are interdependent and teachers are primarily learners and they engage in unraveling the learning process both for themselves and for the students. Teachers with a passion for teaching will possess a passion for learning – about the subject or topic they teach, about the students' backgrounds, learning styles and preferences, about the different teaching approaches and tools available, about change, about the contexts in which they teach and students learn, most importantly about themselves. Understanding the self is part of learning to grow personally and professionally as a teacher in changing and sometimes challenging circumstances. It follows that teachers should not only be knowledgeable about their students, their needs and learning processes, they should also be knowledgeable about themselves. It is clear that teachers need regular opportunities to exercise discretionary judgment; to reflect upon their moral and social purposes; to work collaboratively with colleagues in and outside their schools/colleges, to engage in self-directed search; and to struggle for continuous learning related to their own needs for growth of expertise and maintenance of standards of practice. Christopher Day gives a comprehensive and holistic picture of a passionate teacher which
paves way for the initial and continuing development of all teachers.

Fig: 6.2 The Passionate Teacher as proposed by Christopher Day. (2004)
An important trend in language teacher development in recent years has been a move away from the teacher as passive recipient and implementer of other people's syllabus and methods, towards the idea of the teacher as an active creator of his her own materials, classroom activities and so on. Richards (1987) says that the various methods of teaching have something in common.

... common to all of them is a set of prescriptions as to what teachers and learners should do in the language classroom. There are prescriptions for the teacher as to what material should be presented, when it should be taught and how, and prescriptions for learners as to what approach they should take towards the teaching materials and classroom activities.

6.2.1 Importance of lesson plan

Teachers must be passionate about their work and prior to their entry into their classroom should possess considerable self-knowledge and clear sets of values and principles that will guide their actions. Moreover, teaching is complex, and it requires sustained amounts of intellectual, social and emotional energy. Hence, the teacher needs to put a great deal of thought into preparing the lesson plan.
The scholar reproduces a lesson-planning system as proposed by L. Walklin which illustrates how lesson should be planned.

Fig: 6.3 Lesson-planning system (Adapted from L. Walklin. 1982)
It is very important for a teacher that before teaching commences, the teacher's primary concern should be the role of language in the process of learning. Language and learning are mutually dependent and without adequate knowledge of the language related to a given task, little or no learning may occur. Teacher talk should be pitched at a level to suit the class and should not generally take up too much of the available time. The mode of instruction and conditions for learning should also be considered when producing such a plan. The lesson plan should therefore provide for the appropriate activities and conditions needed to achieve the desired outcome.

6.2.2 Designing a lesson plan

Before designing a lesson plan, due consideration should be given to the content of the lesson, category of students and methods to be employed. The lesson aims and objectives should relate to the contribution the lesson will make in learning the language and the sources of information should be explored and the structure and sequence of the lesson decided. The extent of the material to be used and methods appropriate to the content to be taught should be determined. Aids and equipment needed should be recorded and subject-matter notes prepared. The lesson plan should be used as a basis for controlling the timing and
content of the lesson. Moreover, it should provide a framework for development of the subject so that the teacher can make effective use of the available time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparing a lesson plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse task in terms of concepts, principles and skills involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify important elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine special skills involved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State relevant learning objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide prerequisite knowledge required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set goals for the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make the lesson content interesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate new knowledge to that previously learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build on existing knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide continuity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure lesson in logical sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate learning with real-life situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design lesson around students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan for maximum student activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employ appropriate learning aids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include question and answer sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide for assessments of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide knowledge of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate: note-taking; frequent summaries and reviews; recapitulation of important information; final summary of lesson content; introduction of next topic together with book references.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Set homework

Fig: 6.4 Preparing a lesson plan (Adapted from L.Walklin. 1982)
Since teachers are responsible for the education of students which include imbibing in their students a positive disposition towards learning. Hence, reflective practice or appraisal is important and is an essential means of re-examination and renewal of passion by those who care about their work. Reflection is about the past, the present and the future and it is very essential to plan for progression and improvement. Critical reflection helps to create opportunities for choices that relate to values as well as purposes, practices, contexts, and change.

Appraisal of the teacher could be carried out regularly or the teacher herself could reflect on her teaching methods, the aids used and the presentation of the lesson and go in for self-evaluation. The teacher could get feedback on his/her performance and valuable guidance from colleagues and experienced teachers. Since the needs of society and students will change, it is necessary for teachers to be able to evaluate the part they play in meeting such needs. L.Walklin (1982) proposes a rating scale wherein marks could be allocated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness of objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of Content</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity of presentation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacing of lesson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group participation and attention</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending of lesson</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig: 6.5 Adapted from 'Stanford Teacher Competence Appraisal Guide (L.Walklin, 1982)

6.2.3. Teachers as individuals

Teachers are not all cast from the same mould. Personalities vary from person to person and the list of desirable traits required of a perfect teacher is long. No one person can hope to possess all of the traits required. Perhaps some of the best results are obtained by teachers who are described as sociable, friendly extroverts. It is important to be enthusiastic about the subject being taught, to be something of a showman, to be
knowledgeable and to establish a warm friendly atmosphere. But here the mode of instruction governs to a degree how a teacher behaves and how the students see him.

Early efforts should be made to establish rapport. Approval for good work and prompting or coaxing for the strugglers is better than punishing or showing disapproval. Learners often have several teachers during the same day and compare notes about their methods, attitudes and manner. Teachers tend to forget this and then wonder why they have a hard time when other teachers have no trouble with the same group.

Knowledge of results of tests, questionnaires and progress is a very important factor in the learning process. Try to provide feedback as quickly as possible when required, because it is important that the learner knows just how well he is doing—quickly. It is important that evaluation is not something which takes place summatively, at the end of six months or one year, but informal monitoring should be carried out right through the period of study.

However, even the most informal methods should embrace the measurement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The
methods used should be appropriate to the purpose of the assessment and make use of the best instruments and procedures available. Practice is one of the best methods of increasing a student's language store and developing skills in the use of words. Teachers should encourage their students to talk and write as much as is possible in order to get the best out of a given learning experience. This can be achieved by creating a rewarding atmosphere in which the students can attempt to put the concept being taught into their own words and are able to discuss the problem as they see it.

6.2.4 Coverage and Limitation

The researcher has taken up English language proficiency of students at the postgraduate level in Coimbatore. The researcher's aim has been to consider language teaching as skill training. Language can be fruitfully viewed as a skill, with language learning seen as skill learning and language teaching as skill training. The skills that can make the difference between minimal and effective communication can be taught, practiced, and improved. The method used for assessing oral communication skills depends on the purpose of the assessment.
Defining the domain of knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be measured is at the core of any assessment. Most people define oral communication narrowly, focusing on speaking and listening skills separately. Traditionally, when people describe speaking skills, they do so in a context of public speaking. Recently, however, definitions of speaking have been expanded. One trend has been to focus small group, one-to-one, and mass media. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve specific purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems. A third trend has been to focus on basic competencies needed for everyday life -- for example, giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information in an emergency situation. The researcher has carried out her research using the structured approach while assessing the performance of the students. In the structured approach, the students were asked to perform one or more specific oral communication tasks. Their performance on the task was then evaluated.

The abilities to listen critically and to express oneself clearly and effectively contribute to a student's success in school, college and later in life. The techniques to assess students' proficiency level range from observation and questioning to standardized testing. However, even the most informal methods
should embrace the measurement principles of reliability, validity, and fairness. The researcher does not claim to have propounded a theory to assess nor does the researcher stakes claim to the instructional practices mentioned as the ultimate in teaching English. Results of the questionnaire survey revealed that teacher assessment methods varied, suggesting that it would be difficult to compare students speaking ability across colleges. More innovative teaching techniques that will help both new and experienced teachers are open for research to stimulate the development of critical thinking.

**Conclusion**

Hymes (1972) introduced the notion of communicative competence which included 'not only grammatical competence (or implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of grammar) but also contextual or sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of the rules of language use)' (Canale & Swain, 1980: 4). Hymes (1972) also made the distinction between communicative competence and communicative performance (i.e. actual language use), with Canale & Swain (1980) noting the implications that this has for teaching and testing within a communicative program. They state: ...teaching methodology and assessment instruments must be designed so as to address not only communicative competence
but also communicative performance, i.e. the actual demonstration of this knowledge in real second language situations and for authentic communication purposes. (Canale & Swain 1980)

It is accepted that simply being able to create grammatically correct sentences in language does not necessarily enable the learner to use the language to carry out various real-world tasks. The importance of English can be seen from the emphasis given by the Indian University Education Commission:

   English however must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If, under sentimental urges, we should give up English, we would out ourselves from the living stream of our growing knowledge. Unable to have access to this knowledge, our standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and our participation in the world movements of thoughts would become negligible. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world.

The effectiveness of any education system rests with the achievement of the students. To maximize the achievement, therefore, should be the goal of every teacher. Teaching is
definitely difficult task, but despite the difficulties the teachers must not resist towards cynicism. They must look for and find incentives and rewards within the changing realities of teaching. They might wish to work with creative, hardworking and intelligent students but must understand this might not always the case. As Christopher Day (2004) says, teachers must possess a high degree of self-esteem:

Teachers with high self-esteem know how to value both themselves and others . . . This basic sense of self-worth is internalized, deeply embedded, so it is not easily susceptible to any gross distortion by life events, however calamitous . . . .

It is obvious that without a teacher or skilled language speaker who can present the knowledge to be experimented within a structured, graduated, and comprehensible manner, and who can guide, observe, and correct errors in usage, the students cannot learn the language effectively. Finally, without a teacher or other skilled speaker who can serve as a linguistic exemplar, someone whose example can be followed, a learner is likely to miss out on important nuances in language that can only be communicated from person to person. The scholar does propagate that in order to be effective, the English language classroom must always be
teacher-centered and didactic. But at the same time, the scholar is well aware that the nature of second or foreign language acquisition and learning in a classroom setting, especially in India, is such that a teacher-centered approach cannot always be avoided in the learning process. This approach will be necessary intermittently even at later stages as students struggle with more complex aspects of the language. To become a competent user of a second language, a student must partake of a linguistic inheritance different from his/her own. The teacher facilitates the learning process in the classroom. Teachers in all classrooms are expected to be knowledgeable and skilled practitioners, accountable for raising standards of achievement of all students in ways that will stimulate students' interests in learning.

Chapter I and Chapter II outline the importance of language as a means of communication and focuses on the research process and the role of English in India and the status of English in India respectively. In Chapter III, the scholar explores the reasons for considering language as a skill subject and also examines language teaching which requires great skill and sensitivity. Chapter IV explores the present level of competence in speaking English among postgraduate students. The scholar envisages the common reasons for the inability to communicate in English.
Chapter V stresses on the importance of the teacher as facilitator and a motivator. The scholar also showcases teaching strategies and materials that would enhance language teaching.

The scholar advocates the adoption of communicative approach to language teaching as an effective way to improve the communication skills of the students. The scholar based on the empirical study recommends a learner-centered curriculum to enhance language learning in the classroom. The importance of designing and implementing lesson plan contribute to effective language teaching. Finally, it is imperative that the language teachers should be knowledgeable and skilled practitioners of the language being taught.