Chapter I- Warming-up

1.1 The Voyage to Communicative Language Teaching

An approach to teaching can never exist in isolation. In the sciences, it may be possible to spot some phenomenon all of a sudden and marvel at its sudden appearance, but language pedagogy is far away from such marvel and miracle. In English Language Teaching, methods and approaches evolve and it is as if a cumulative action is at work. The changes may be rapid, the revolutions sudden, but the trend towards change can be spotted with a careful look. So it is with Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT). Any discussion of CLT may not, for instance, seem to need an over-view of the Grammar Translation Method, but to trace the growth of CLT, it is necessary to go down into the roots of ELT. Careful analysis shows that the history of ELT is like a cone - the apex of the cone begins with the Reform Movement and CLT and related approaches constitute the broad end of the cone. How the apex widens, what all it encompasses and whether CLT is really the maximum widening of the cone are questions which can only be
answered by a survey of the cone itself. It is remarkable to note how ELT grows and evolves from a closed classroom of a teacher-dominated environment to a gay and happy active room of a learner-centred environment; how the teaching of literature emerges from the strict shackles of a small, restricted field to the fresh air of communication and group activity.

To trace this process of emergence and development, to understand how the evolution took place, a brief recapitulation (assessment) of the earlier history of ELT is attempted below. This history can be divided into periods:

Period 1: 1880 to World War I

The late Nineteenth Century was marked by tremendous activity in language teaching for a period of about twenty years. Not only did many of the leading phoneticians of the time co-operate towards a shared educational aim (improvement in language teaching methods) but they also succeeded in attracting teachers and others in the field to the same common purpose. From 1882 onwards there was a spate of publications beginning with pamphlets and articles and later more substantial works like Sweet’s
THE ELT CONE

FIGURE 1
Practical Study of Languages (1899). Professional associations and societies were formed, notably the international Phonetic Association (IPA), and there were new journals and periodicals, of which the best known was the IPA's *Le Maitre Phonétique*, first published under that title in 1889.

The scientific temper of the time and the interest in applied linguistics have given all these activities the title 'The Reform Movement'. The Movement paved the way for modern language teaching methods. It was a remarkable display of international and interdisciplinary co-operation. The teachers took as much interest in the new science of phonetics as the specialist phoneticians took in the classrooms. One of the reasons for this was the fact that three out of the four principal phoneticians - Vietor in Germany, Passy in France, and Jesperson in Denmark - began their careers as school teachers. The fourth, Henry Sweet was the odd man out in the sense that he remained a private scholar for most of his life and his teaching was limited to individual students. He is regarded as the intellectual leader of the Movement. The Reform Movement was founded on three basic principles: the primacy of speech, the
centrality of the connected text as the kernel of the teaching-learning process and the absolute priority of an oral methodology in the classroom. Though these principles were variously interpreted by different writers, there were no serious disagreements about their basic objectives.

The work of Henry Sweet: an applied linguistic approach (1845-1912)

Henry Sweet is known as the man who "taught phonetics to Europe" through his *Handbook of Phonetics* (1877). But his work, *The Practical Study of Languages* (1885) is the one which has made him the leader of the movement. The contribution of *The Practical Study of Languages* was to devise 'a rationally progressive method of practical language study which included the teaching and learning of foreign languages in schools but it was also intended as a general overview of the whole field of language teaching. The plan of the book makes it clear what he had in mind. It is divided into three main sections. The first section (Chapter 2-7) deals in detail with the teaching of phonetics and its practical application in pronunciation teaching and the use of transcription, culminating in a statement of his fundamental principle: 'start with the
spoken language’. The next seven chapters contain a superbly sustained and coolly logical exploration of methodological principles and practices covering the five major areas of practical language learning: grammar, vocabulary, the study of texts, translation and conversation. It is unsurpassed in the literature on linguistic pedagogy. The book closes with a series of essays on specific topics such as the study of a foreign literature, the learning of classical languages and other such related topics. Otto Jespersen’s *How to Teach a Foreign Language* (1904) gave a human dimension to Sweet’s classic. Without Jespersen’s summarization of the practical implications of Sweet’s principles for the classroom teacher, Sweet’s work would have been too cold and clinical.

Paul Passy and the IPA

Most of Paul Passy’s work as a teacher was concerned with English and this, coupled with his later role as Daniel Jones’s phonetics teacher, makes him a particularly significant figure in the history of English language teaching. During his early years as a teacher, Passy devised a private phonetic alphabet and, impressed by
its usefulness in the classroom, drew together a group of other like-minded language teachers to discuss how such ideas could be expanded for the general good. The group comprised nine Frenchmen in addition to himself and his brother Jean and a Belgian. Calling themselves the Phonetic Teachers Association, they quickly attracted new members: Jespersen joined in May 1886 only a few months after its formation, Vietor in July, and Sweet in September. The first issue of their journal, The Phonetic Teachers, appeared in May and continued to appear under that title for three years when it was re-named *Le Maître Phonetique* (1889). In 1897, the Association took its final title International Phonetic Association (IPA). One of the major goals of the IPA was to improve the teaching of modern languages. It advocated:

(i) the study of the spoken language.

(ii) phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits.

(iii) the use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce conversational phrases and idioms.

(iv) an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar.

(v) teaching new meanings through establishing
associations within the target language rather than by establishing associations with the mother tongue.

Period II The Inter War Years to 1940

During the first half of the twentieth century, ELT emerged as an autonomous profession. The foundation for this autonomy came from the fusion of the two traditions of the previous century: the applied linguistic approach of the Reform Movement and the monolingual methodology of the Direct Method. The catalyst was the work of Harold Palmer and Daniel Jones. Towards the end of this period certain ELT strains started crystallizing into the Communicative Approach.

The first steps towards ELT as a profession were taken in 1906 when Daniel Jones, on return from his studies with Passy in Paris, gave a series of public lectures on the phonetics of French. Owing to the success of these lectures with local school teachers, a further course was arranged with an additional one in the phonetics of English. In 1910, the programme was expanded to include spoken English Grammar. Harold Palmer took over this course in 1915. During these years, Daniel Jones published an indispensable
source-book for the English language teacher: The Pronunciation of English (1909) and the English Pronouncing Dictionary (1917). Palmer's first major work, The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages, was published in 1917. This period was characterized by attempts to resolve the debate on teaching methods of the preceding era through practical and realistic solutions, for example, the recommendation of a reading approach by West. The need was felt for a methodology which would result in extensive foreign language use by the student. Bloomfield (1942) wrote:

The text books are far from perfect and some teachers have not sufficient command of the foreign language. Often enough the student after two, three or four years of instruction cannot really use the language he has been studying.

The work of Harold E. Palmer (1877-1949) Creating a foundation for ELT as an autonomous profession.

Palmer's career falls into two distinct phases: The first was primarily concerned with general principles of language teaching method and course design rather than the specific problems of ELT. This phase culminated in the publication of The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages (1917). The second phase was almost exclusively
devoted to English as a foreign language.

The central concern of 'The Study' is language and how it should be taught and learnt. Palmer's ambition was to rejuvenate the teaching of foreign languages in Britain by calling on his own experience of teaching English in Japan. As with Sweet, his chosen vehicle was 'a general methodology of language study':

Our survey of the problems must be on a most comprehensive basis. We must not be content with stating formulae for the teaching of French to English children; our outlook must embrace the study of any aspect of any foreign language by students of all ages and nationalities (Palmer 1917/1968:4).

In the second phase of his career, Palmer wrote two grammars: The Grammar of Spoken English on a Strictly Phonetic Basis (1924) and The New Method Grammar (1938). The former is the first large-scale attempt to provide a detailed description of standard spoken English for pedagogical purposes. It stands firmly in the great line of English grammars written since the end of the Nineteenth Century which aim to be comprehensive as both sources of reference and instructive to the serious student of the language. Before Palmer, the tradition had been set by Sweet, Jespersen and H.Pautsma and carried on after Palmer.
That Palmer was influenced by Bloomfield's *Introduction to the Study of Language* (1914), becomes clear when he has taken habit formation as his core methodological principle. Like Bloomfield, he has taken the starting point in acquiring a new language to be lexical, not grammatical. Here he has differed from the structuralist view of gradation as being a matter of ordering the grammatical and phonological features of the foreign language. 'In the ideally graded course the student first assimilates' a relatively small but exceedingly important vocabulary'' (Palmer 1921/1964:68). Only later on does he combine the words into sentences and longer stretches of language. Palmer has inherited from the Reform Movement a serious concern for the teaching of spoken language based on the science of phonetics and a desire to develop a methodology of language teaching that was theoretically well-grounded, intellectually ordered and practically workable. He has also been a follower of Sweet in one further respect. He has isolated the teaching of languages from the rest of the education process and treated it as a separate, almost 'technical', task that
requires no further justification than its own successful completion.

**Period III: World war II and the post-war decades to 1970**

By the time war broke out in 1939, the first steps towards a professional organization in English as a foreign language had been taken. In 1932, the Institute of Education at London University had started the first training course for teachers of English as a foreign language. In 1934, the British Council came into being. Its existence and its network of other centres overseas provided a professional sheet-anchor and a career structure to teachers of English. One of the first actions of the British Council after the war was to found a long-overdue professional journal - *English Language Teaching Journal*.

The entry of the United States into World War II had a significant impact on language teaching in America. To supply the U.S Government with personnel who were fluent in German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Malay and other languages, and who could work as interpreters, code-room assistants and translators, it was necessary to set up a
special language training programme. Thus the Army Specialized Training Programme (ASTP) was established in 1942. Fifty-five American Universities were involved in the programme by the beginning of 1943. It lasted only about two years but it did convince a number of prominent linguists of the value of an intensive oral-based approach to the learning of a foreign language. The programme changed the approach to language teaching in a radical way:

a) Linguists were given a leading role in the solution of the language teaching problems that had to be faced.

b) The programme demonstrated that language teaching does not necessarily have to take place in the conventional school-type language course.

c) The possible advantages of intensive language training and an oral emphasis were demonstrated.

During this period, linguists and applied linguists were becoming increasingly involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language. America had now emerged as a major international power and there was a growing demand for training in English. These factors led to the emergence of the American approach to teaching English as a foreign
language, which by the mid-fifties became the audiolingual method.

In 1929, the University of Michigan developed the first English Language Institute in the United States. It specialized in the training of teachers of English as a foreign language and in teaching English as a foreign language. Charles Fries, the director of the institute, had been trained in structural linguistics, and he applied the principles of structural linguistics to language teaching. For Fries, grammar or "structure" has been identified with its basic sentence patterns and grammatical structures. The language was taught by systematic attention to pronunciation and by intensive oral drilling of its basic sentence patterns. Pattern practice was a basic classroom technique.

Fries has set forth his principles in _Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language_ (1945) in which the problems of learning a foreign language were attributed to the conflict of different structural systems. Contrastive analysis of the two languages would allow potential problems of interference to be predicted and addressed through carefully prepared teaching materials. Thus was
born a major industry in American Applied Linguistics - systematic comparison of English with other languages with a view to solving the fundamental problems of foreign language learning. This was a period when expertise in Linguistics was regarded as a necessary and sufficient foundation for expertise in language teaching. Not surprisingly, the class-room materials produced by Fries and other linguists showed considerable linguistic analysis but very little pedagogy. If there was any learning theory underlying the Oral Approach, the Aural-Oral or Structural Approach, it was a commonsense application of the idea that practice makes perfect. It advocated aural training first, then pronunciation training, followed by speaking, reading and writing. Language was identified with speech, and speech was approached through structure. The combination of structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures and behaviourist psychology led to the Audio-lingual Method.

The basic principles of the Audiolingual method were the following: (Rivers 1964:19-22)
A. Foreign language learning is basically a process of
mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes. By memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills, the chances of producing mistakes are minimized. Language is verbal behaviour - that is, the automatic production and comprehension of utterances - and can be learned by inducing the students to do likewise.

B. Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned in the target language are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form. Aural-oral training is needed to provide the foundation for the development of other language skills.

C. Analogy provides a better foundation for language learning than analysis. Analogy involves the processes of generalization and discrimination. Explanations of rules are, therefore, not given until students have practised a pattern in a variety of contexts and are thought to have acquired a perception of the analogies involved. Drills can enable learners to form correct analogies. Hence the approach to the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive rather than deductive.

D. The meaning that the words of a language have for
the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Teaching a language thus involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak the language.

Advances in technology all over the world added a new dimension to language teaching. The gramophone had played a role in language teaching for some time but the old 78 r.p.m. system was clumsy and unwieldy. The arrival of long-playing records in the early fifties solved some of the problems, but it was still impossible for learners to record and listen to their own work. There were wire-recorders but it was not until they were replaced by tape-recorders in the mid-fifties that an extensive use of recording in class became practical. The language laboratory arrived in Britain in the 60’s, it had been in existence in the United States since 1943. **English by Radio** had been set up during the war with short 5-minute lessons that began transmission in 1943. The real breakthrough in language teaching technology came from France in 1961 with the development of audio-visual courses which married the tape-recorder and the filmstrip.
Period IV: Seventies and Eighties

The Bloomfield-Fries tradition in descriptive linguistics had been challenged in 1957, by Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* which offered a radically different approach based on a theory of transformational-generative grammar. In addition to his revolutionary proposals for making linguistic descriptions which replaced procedures for establishing 'patterns' by systems of rules for generating sentences, Chomsky pursued the theoretical implications of generative grammar into other areas of linguistic enquiry especially the psychology of language which was dominated at the time by behaviourism. Chomsky's assault on Skinner's behaviourism stimulated the growth of alternative theoretical models which reinstated the importance of cognition in accounting for human language activity. This dual interest in linguistics and what became known as psycholinguistics was expressed in the opening chapter of *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965):

By a generative grammar I mean simply a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assigns structural descriptions to sentences. Obviously, every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized a generative grammar that expresses his knowledge of his language (Chomsky, 1965: 8).
This knowledge he labelled 'competence' in contrast to the actual use of language in concrete situations which he called 'performance' (Ibid;4) reinterpreting in a psychological context the comparable sociological distinction that de Saussure had drawn between langue and parole in his *Cours de Linguistique Generale* (1916). Chomsky has categorically rejected the structuralist approach:

Language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy (Chomsky 1966 : 153).

His alternate theory of language learning to that of the behaviourists focused attention on the mental properties people bring to bear on language use and language learning. Behaviourism regarded language learning as similar in principle to any other kind of learning and subject to the same laws of stimulus and response, reinforcement and association. Chomsky has argued that such a learning theory could not possibly serve as a model of how humans learn language, since much of human language use is not imitated behaviour but is created anew from underlying knowledge of abstract rules.
In a narrow technical sense, the influence of transformational generative grammar on language teaching, for example, on the preparation of teaching materials, was limited. In a broader sense, however, the impact of Chomsky’s work on the thinking of the profession was quite considerable indeed. For example, the distinction between ‘John is easy to please’ and ‘John is eager to please’ would mean a thorough revision of the language teacher’s assumptions about ‘patterns’ which had held sway over the construction of teaching syllabi, texts and exercises for a long time. With the entry of sociolinguistics which concentrated on language as it is used within the social group and psycholinguistics which dealt with the cognitive aspect of memory, Chomsky’s competence-performance distinction was found to be too restricted to account for language in use. To Chomsky, competence was the internalized knowledge of the system of syntactic and phonological rules of the language that the ideal speaker-hearer possesses in the native language and performance was language in use by the individual which was not a faithful reflection of the individual’s competence. Consequently, to Chomsky, performance was of very little
theoretical interest. Thus critics felt that there were aspects of "performance" that were obviously rule-governed although the rules to which the speaker was conforming were not syntactic in Chomsky's sense of the term. They felt that these aspects of language behaviour related to sociocultural contexts should be considered a part of the language-user's competence. Hymes' "Communicative Competence" (Hymes, 1968:99-138) covered this extended notion of competence "What a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings" (Ibid) According to Hymes,

a child learning a language acquires, along with a system of grammar, a system of its use regarding persons, places, purposes, other modes of communication, ...patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines (Ibid).

Now teachers and writers of materials began to recognize the fact that students needed to be able to do more than express imposed ideas in correct grammatical form, or their own ideas in incorrect form, as they struggled to express meanings for which they did not yet possess the linguistics means. If they were really to communicate with speakers of the language, they needed also
to know the culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with others. Soon the study of the culture in which the second language is embedded became a preoccupation of second-language teachers and students who realized that lectures and readings were not enough. Exchange programmes, ethnic festivals and language camps became common.

Meanwhile, some theoretical linguists had become conscious of the neglect in linguistic research of meaning and context, and semantics and pragmatics also rose in importance. Meaning was seen to depend to a large degree on the sociocultural contexts in which speech acts occurred. Sociocultural aspects of language in use had been particularly stressed by the functionalists, who considered the purposes language serves in normal interaction to be basic to the determination of syntactic functions.

To language teachers, the functional approach seemed more promising for applications in the classroom than the other more abstract linguistic models, classroom activities centred more on stimulating interactional contexts in which language might be used in a normal everyday way. Teachers began to recognize how artificial and stilted many language exercises were and set about adapting them so that
they would reflect more authentic uses of language. In this
they were supported by materials writers. Textbooks soon
began to provide more realistic activities in which
language could be used in likely contexts.

There were proposals to reconstruct the language
syllabus so that learning communicative conventions would
become as important as learning grammatical conventions.
Wilkins proposed a notional syllabus, that is, a syllabus
organized in terms of the purposes for which people are
learning language and the kinds of language performance
that are necessary to meet those purposes (Wilkins 1976 : 13).
A notional syllabus, according to Wilkins, implies a
careful analysis of particular communicative situations in
order to identify what students should most usefully be
able to communicate in those situations. A notional
syllabus, then, places "emphasis on the meanings expressed
or the functions performed through language; in broad terms
on the speaker’s or writer’s intentions" (Wilkins, 1981 : 83).
The orientation of teaching is essentially towards the
purposes and social uses of communication, rather than the
understanding and acquisition of linguistic features alone.
Role playing becomes an important activity and students are
brought into contact with authentic language teaching materials.

H.G. Widdowson in his *Teaching Language as Communication* (1978) developed a distinction between the cohesion of texts as linguistic objects and the coherence of discourse as communication. He proposed a different kind of teaching syllabus of communicative acts which the learner would have to perform in using English for his particular purposes. In his teaching materials, written in collaboration with J.P.B. Allen, Widdowson built his course round texts specially constructed to illustrate the selected rhetorical acts in use. Widdowson’s view is quite clear: learners need specially written texts to bring them to the point where they can handle authentic material for themselves. Thus the focus shifts from the language to the user emphasizing the effectiveness with which the communication takes place and the skills which the user must muster in order to maintain and promote it.
1.2 Communicative Language Teaching

1.2.1 Influences

1.2.1.1 Malinowski and Firth

Bronislaw Malinowski had a deep influence on J.R. Firth. Malinowski represents in Britain an anthropological school of thought in which language played a very significant role. He believes that an understanding of language is impossible without constantly relating it with the operative. He eloquently argues for this point of view:

Language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of the people and.... it can not be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance (1923:305).

An utterance becomes intelligible only when it is placed within its context of situation if I may be allowed to coin an expression which indicates on the one hand that the conception of context has to be broadened and on the other that the situation in which words are uttered can never be passed over as irrelevant to the linguistic expression (Op.cit :306).

Firth acknowledges his debt to Malinowski while making 'context of situation' a central concept of his work:

A Key concept in the technique of the London group, the concept of the context of situation was first used widely in English by Malinowski.
In the early thirties when he was especially interested in discussing problems of language, I was privileged to work with him (1957: 181).

At the point at which Bloomfield argued that linguistics must restrict itself to the study of the speech signal, Firth following Malinowski, argues that language must be studied at all levels in its context of situation and with emphasis on meaning. The linguist has to study the ‘text’ i.e., the corpus of utterances (a) in their linguistic environment or context, i.e., in relation to surrounding language items and (b) in their context of situations, i.e., in relation to nonverbal constituents which have a bearing on the utterance, such as persons, objects and events.

These ideas on the social function of language, expressed by Malinowski in the twenties and by Firth since the thirties, were rediscovered in the sociolinguistics of the sixties and seventies. They also had a direct influence on the ideas of Halliday and Hymes.

1.2.1.2 Halliday and Hymes

Halliday gives a functional account of language use. His consistent concern is to preserve the unity of language
and language use, no matter how complicated the analytical procedures required that relate them. Almost all the writers on communicative language teaching accept Halliday's functional account of language use. Halliday describes seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their first language (1975:11-17).

1. The instrumental function.
2. The regulatory function.
3. The interactional function.
4. The personal function.
5. The heuristic function.
6. The imaginative function.
7. The representational function.

The more we are able to relate the options in grammatical systems to meaning potential in the social contexts and behavioral settings, the more insight we shall gain into the nature of the language system, since it is in the service of such contexts and settings that language has evolved (1973: 27).

Learning a second language is similarly viewed by proponents of Communicative Language Teaching as acquiring
the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions.

Halliday's work finds a parallel in the work of Austin and Searle. These two philosophers explored the nature of 'speech acts' - acts performed when one uses language. Their general orientation is expressed in the opening sentence of Searle's book: "How do words relate to the world?" (1969 : 1).

Searle saw a theory of language as part of a theory of action, a view which finds a parallel in Halliday.

Sociocultural factors were given prime importance by D.H.Hymes. Indeed, for him, it was a major characteristic of modern linguistics that it takes structure as a primary end in itself, and tends to depreciate use... (1979 : 8).

There are, in Hymes' words, 'rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (1979:15). Competence seen as overall underlying linguistic knowledge and ability thus includes concepts of appropriateness and acceptability and the study of competence would inevitably mean a consideration of such variables as attitude, motivation and a number of sociocultural factors. There are then, four sectors of communicative competence:
a) Whether or not something is formally possible.
b) Whether or not something is feasible.
c) Whether or not something is appropriate to the context.
d) Whether or not something is in fact done.

Thus, Hymes expands upon Chomsky's notion of grammatical competence.

1.2.1.3 The Threshold Level and D.A. Wilkins

Education was one of the Council of Europe's major areas of activity. It sponsored international conferences on language teaching, published monographs and books about language teaching, and was active in promoting the formation of the International Association of Applied Linguistics. The need to articulate and develop alternative methods of language teaching was considered a high priority.

In 1971, a group of experts began to investigate the possibility of developing language courses on a unit-credit system, a system in which learning tasks are broken down into "portions or units, each of which corresponds to a component of a learner's needs and is systematically related to all the other portions" (Van Ek and Alexander,
1980 : 6). Their model for the definition of language-learning objectives specified the following components: (Van EK, 1975 : 3).

1. The situations in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics which will be dealt with.
2. The language activities in which the learner will engage.
3. The language functions which the learner will fulfil.
4. What the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic.
5. The general notions which the learner will be able to handle.
6. The specific (topic-related) notions which the learner will be able to handle.
7. The language forms which the learner will be able to use.
8. The degree of skill with which the learner will be able to perform.

The group of experts used studies of the needs of European language learners and in particular a preliminary document prepared by a British linguist, D.A. Wilkins (1972) which proposed a functional or communicative
definition of language that could serve as a basis for
developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching.
Wilkins' contribution was an analysis of the communicative
meanings that a language learner needs to understand and
express. Rather than describe the core of language through
traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary, Wilkins
attempted to demonstrate the system of meanings that lay
behind the communicative uses of language. He described
two types of meanings: notional categories (concepts such
as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency) and
categories of communicative function (requests, denials,
offers, complaints) Wilkins later revised and expanded his
1972 document into a book called Notional Syllabuses
(Wilkins, 1976), which had a significant impact on the
development of Communicative Language Teaching. The
Council of Europe incorporated his semantic/communicative
analysis into a set of specifications for a first level
communicative language syllabus. These threshold level
specifications (Van Ek and Alexander 1980) have had a
strong influence on the design of communicative language
programs and text books in Europe.
1.2.2 Advocates

1.2.2.1 William Littlewood

For Littlewood, a communicative approach to language teaching means a wider perspective on language. It demands a consideration of language not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs.

We can therefore combine the newer functional view of language with the more traditional structural view, in order to achieve a more complete communicative perspective. This enables us to give a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language as a means of communication (Littlewood, 1981: X).

It is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate the structures of the foreign language, they must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. The structure of a sentence can be stable and straightforward, but its communicative function will be variable and will depend on specific social and situational factors.

Language carries not only functional meaning, but also social meaning. Students must link language forms with:
a) Communicative functions.
b) Specific functional meanings.
c) Social reality

Littlewood feels that students must also learn to relate language to the social meanings that it carries and to use it as a vehicle for social interaction. To this end, it is necessary to increase their sense of performing in a meaningful social context, rather than simply responding to prompts in the classroom, for example, through role-play.

Four broad skills make up communicative competence:

a) The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. He must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.

b) Items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system.

c) The learner must learn to develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete and learn to use feedback to attain success and remedy failure.
d) The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms.

1.2.2.2 H.G Widdowson

Widdowson regards Communicative Language Teaching not as a complete revolution but as a shift of emphasis in language teaching and learning from proficiency in structural forms to proficiency in communication through structural forms:

... in the familiar structural syllabus, the eventual communicative aim of language learning was freely acknowledged and the assumption was that a definition of objectives in terms of sentence construction would provide for the reaching of the aim. The recent shift of emphasis from structure to notion and function from formal to communicative categories does not alter the aim but leads to a reconsideration of the objectives in achieving it (Widdowson, 1983: 12).

The two skills, linguistic and communicative, differ at the presentation stage. Linguistic skill is the linking of an abstract linguistic rule with its concrete expression while communicative skill means a repertoire of linguistic forms tagged with appropriate situational indicators; the relating of form and situation.

Widdowson also differentiates between competence and
capacity. Competence means a state of knowledge which is stabilized by rules and is necessarily an idealized representation of reality. Capacity is a dynamic set of procedures for exploiting knowledge, for creating meaning which has reference to rules but is not determined by them.

Unlike competence, capacity is not language specific, but comprises a set of procedures for the communicative deployment of language in general. The learner of a second language will, therefore, come to his task already possessed of the capacity he needs to carry it out. The teacher’s responsibility is to provide the language data in such a way that this capacity is engaged and in such a way also that it helps in the acquisition of acceptable competence. What can be done is to make the learner realize that the foreign language operates by means of the same communicative principles as his own does.

Teaching is geared to the needs of the learner viz-a-viz the reasons for his learning the foreign language and the uses to which he would apply it. Needs analysis figures prominently in Widdowson’s idea of CLT and so does English for Special Purposes.
Brumfit's approach to Communicative Language Teaching is learner-centred. According to him, the communicative movement in language teaching is a response to the dissatisfaction with a 'package' view of language learning, one which appears to pass over to the learner a package of knowledge of language use which at the beginning is possessed by the teacher and at the end is possessed by the learner. The traditional attitudes to language and culture assumed that foreign languages were alien and would have to be approached from the outside. The learner was always in a deficit position, as language was viewed as an object. But, on accepting that all human beings possess a language faculty and that the characteristics of a particular language are determined by the universal mental constraints and the local constraints of culture, then it must be accepted that:

i) all human beings are equipped, before they start learning, with a great deal of implicit understanding of any new language.

ii) the learning of the new language must be closely bound up with the process of operating in a new culture.
It is important to emphasize that people use language, rather than have language and it is important to emphasize that as they use it they create new things from it as the craftsman does with clay.... we should teach them (learners) to use the language for their own purposes", (Brumfit, 1985:16). Our work is allegedly more learner-centred now ..... (1985:19). For Brumfit, understanding the learning processes fully means taking into consideration the cognitive and cultural processes in which language is embedded. These processes operate deep within the personality of the learner, and it is the duty of the language teacher to link the integrated and internal needs of the learner to external demands of society. This process requires sensitivity and a response to learners as individuals and not a faceless whole. Communication has nothing to offer if it means simply the substitution of one mechanical metaphor for another. Language teaching is not a package for learners, it is made by them. Language means people, individuals.

Brumfit draws a thin line between fluency and accuracy. The language learner finds it easier to be fluent rather than accurate. Thus, the focus of language teaching
should be how what is known is used, rather than the form of what is known. (Brumfit and Johnson, 1985:88) Accuracy-based teaching means a deficit position for learners because it does not start from what the learner does. Thus there is a permanent mismatch between what the teacher offers and what the learner can most easily do. The emphasis thus in the approach of Brumfit, shifts from the possession of the target language to the use of it.

1.2.3 Practitioners

1.2.3.1 Li Xiaoju

In 1979, Li Xiaoju, along with some other teachers started a project called Communicative English for Chinese Learners (CECL). After three years' work, Li Xiaoju wrote a paper on the project and its implications which focused on the question: How can and should an approach such as this (CLT), conceived in an alien environment on the basis of alternative views of the world and the individual's place in it best be applied in a totally different context? Li Xiaoju's paper is a lucid presentation of an EFL situation seeking to implement principles of CLT formulated in a non EFL context and hence has many implications for CLT in India.
For the CECL project, language use means communication and communication does not simply mean two people uttering sentences in turn. It implies three conditions that must be met before any activity can be called 'communicative' whether in the classroom or outside it. First, the English-using situations and roles must be 'real' to a Chinese foreign language learner. Just cramming up a few sentences cannot be termed communication-communication means down to earth communication practice in real situations and real roles. Second, there should be a need and a purpose for communication and something to be communicated. This need, purpose and substance are what give rise to communication in real life. Third, communication means freedom and unpredictability. Language learners need to learn to handle this freedom and tackle this unpredictability which are a part of communication everyday. These three conditions mean that the target language the learner comes into contact with should be real, that is, authentic, appropriate and global (Li Xiaoju, 1984:62). This means language that is actually used in real communication situations, as opposed to language
that is artificially made up for purposes other than communication. In the context of the classroom, it means language that is used in communication situations that are relevant to the students.

The learners take the central role in learning in the CECL project. The communicative syllabus is student-oriented because it gears its objectives to what students actually need after graduation, and it is so designed that the students are given a chance to do the learning themselves, instead of having everything done for them by the teacher. According to Li Xiaoju, the problem with the structural syllabus is that it deals with the structure of the target language as form existing independent of use and therefore as something that has to be taught according to its own internal system, regardless of the needs of the learners. In view of this, a structural syllabus cannot be called learner-centred as the important thing is that full rein should be given to the learner's initiative and the learner should be actively involved in communicative activities requiring speaking, listening, writing, reading or thinking. To learn the language, the learners themselves must go through the
process of learning. The teacher’s job is only to provide the conditions for the process, set it going, observe it, try to understand it, give guidance, help it along, analyze it and evaluate it. For the Communicative Language teacher, language learning is an active development process, not a passive one.

Li Xiaoju’s assessment of the reaction of the Chinese teaching community to the CECL project holds meaning for the Indian situation as well. Language teachers in China have not been very happy with the project because they are used to being the centre in the classroom and the CECL project places the learner in the teacher’s place. They are used to language learners as passive recipients, not active participants. Their knowledge-imparting plus disciplining theory makes it difficult for them to give the language learner the centre-stage.

1.2.3.2 N.S. Prabhu

Prabhu’s *Second Language Pedagogy* (1987) gives a clear view of the Bangalore Project and the compulsions behind it. According to Prabhu, dissatisfaction with the Structural-Oral-Situational method
led to the conception of the Bangalore Project. By about 1975, S-O-S had become a well-established method of teaching English in Indian classrooms but there was some doubt about the learner's ability to make correct sentences outside the classroom. These doubts had further been crystallised by an awareness of new pedagogic approaches like notional syllabuses, communicative teaching and ESP being explored abroad. The realization dawned that at the end of a structurally graded course lasting several years, learners' command of language structure was still quite unsatisfactory. Repetition and continuous drilling had made the classroom a dull place. Those who had been taught English for several years at school were still unable:
a) to use the language when necessary outside the classroom
b) to achieve an acceptable level of grammatical accuracy in their language use outside the classroom.
c) to achieve an acceptable level of situational appropriacy in their language use outside the classroom.

For Prabhu, the first two are more serious and central to pedagogy than the third, and communication in the
classroom is a form of pedagogy which can avoid these two problems, communication being meaning-focused activity. It was to indicate the difference between this particular interpretation of the nature and role of communication in pedagogy on the one hand and forms of pedagogy which addressed themselves primarily to the third problem above on the other that the project used the term 'Communicational' teaching instead of the more current 'communicative teaching (Prabhu, 1987:16).

These perceptions led to the setting up of a teaching project with the aim of developing pedagogic procedures which would:

a) bring about in the classroom a preoccupation with meaning and an effort to cope with communication and

b) avoid planned progression and pre-selection in terms of language structure as well as form-focused activity in the classroom.

c) create conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication.

In the context of the project, competence in a language meant an ability to conform automatically to language forms, and communication as a matter of
understanding and conveying meaning. The focus was not 'Communicative Competence' (situational appropriacy as distinct from grammatical conformity) but rather grammatical competence itself which would develop in the course of meaning-focused activity. Attempts to systematise inputs to the learners through a linguistically organised syllabus or to increase the practice of certain parts of language structure through activities deliberately planned for the purpose were regarded as being unhelpful to the development of grammatical competence and detrimental to the desired preoccupation with meaning in the classroom. Both the development and the exercise of grammatical competence were viewed as internal self-regulating processes and, furthermore, effort to exercise competence in response to a need to arrive at or convey meaning was viewed as a favourable condition for its development. Thus, teaching should be concerned with creating conditions for coping with meaning in the classroom, to the exclusion of any deliberate regulation of the development of grammatical competence or a mere simulation of language behaviour.

Prabhu's perception has been that a language teaching
approach is concerned primarily with:

a) a view of what is being taught and
b) a consensus on how it is best taught.

In the Communicational Approach, what is taught is seen in terms of both language structure (i.e. the rules of usage) and language use (i.e. the employment in successful communication of the rules learnt). This is best taught by bringing about in the learner a preoccupation with meaning or with a task to be performed, resulting in a desire on his part to communicate. The Working Group has felt that this perception of how language is best taught is the most distinctive characteristic of this approach, the addition of use under 'what' being almost a consequence of this methodological principle.

Each lesson would have a recurrent pattern. There would be at least two parallel tasks in each lesson. The first 'pre-task', would be attempted as a whole-class activity, under the teacher's guidance and control. The second, 'task' would be attempted by each learner individually with assistance from the teacher. There would also be a third component, a quick marking of students' individual work on the basis of context, not language, and
this would give the students some feedback on their level of success and also give the teacher some idea of the level of challenge the task had presented.

Language teaching includes four categories of classroom activity:

a) Rule-focused activity in which learners are occupied with a conscious perception or application of the rules of language structure.

b) Form-focused activity in which learners are occupied with repeating or manipulating given language forms, or constructing new-forms on the model of those given.

c) Meaningful activity in which learners repeat, manipulate, or construct language forms with attention not only to the forms themselves but to the meanings or contents which are associated with them.

d) Meaning-focused activity in which learners are occupied with understanding, extending or conveying meaning and cope with language forms as demanded by that process.

The project teaching would aim at meaning-focused activity to the exclusion of the other three. Thus
attention to the other three kinds of classroom activity would be incidental to perceiving, exercising and organizing meaning.

1.3 End of the Voyage?

Today English is the world's most widely studied foreign language. Five Hundred years ago, it was Latin because it was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and government in the Western world. With the gain in importance of French, Italian and English in the sixteenth century, Latin gradually acquired the status of an occasional subject, not a living language. As a result, the study of classical Latin and an analysis of its grammar and rhetoric became the model for foreign language study from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. 'Grammar School' meant a rigorous introduction to Latin grammar, which was taught through rote learning of grammar rules, study of declensions and conjugations, translation and practice in writing sample sentences. As "modern" languages began to enter the curriculum of European schools in the eighteenth century, they were taught using the same basic procedures that were used for teaching Latin. The language taught in the class bore no
relation to the language of real communication. This approach to foreign language teaching is known as the Grammar Translation Method.

This approach and method stands at the apex of the cone of the history of Language Teaching. After this, the cone begins to widen with the input of the Reform Movement and the Direct Method until at every step there are new ideas and methods widening the approach to foreign language teaching (Figure 1). At present, three different theoretical views of language emerge from the strains of the past and influence language teaching. They are:

a) The structural view that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The target of language learning is seen to be the mastery of elements of this system. The Audiolingual method embodies this particular view, as do Total Physical Response and the Silent way.

b) The functional view that language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. The communicative movement in language teaching, Wilkins's Notional Syllabuses and the ESP movement begin from a functional account of learner needs.
c) The interactional view that language is a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. According to this view, language teaching context may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified, to be shaped by the inclinations of learners as interactors.

The Communicative Movement, the widest part of the cone started with a group of educational linguists who used their own judgement and initiative in giving language pedagogy the linguistic direction they regarded as necessary. In the seventies and eighties educational linguists like Brumfit, Candlin, Corder, Oller, Widdowson and Wilkins did not wait for the dust between structuralists and transformationalists to settle; they found both these linguistic theories too narrowly concerned with the purely formal aspects of language. While not repudiating a formal linguistic analysis, they welcomed the shift of interest in linguistic theory towards discourse analysis, semantics, speech-act theory, sociolinguistics
and pragmatics. This has led to the Communicative approach that aims at:

a) making communicative competence the goal of language teaching

b) developing procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.

Widdowson (1978) has defined a set of contrasting concepts which distinguish between language as a formal system and language use as communicative events. The point of view that Widdowson has advocated is that it is important for language teaching to make these distinctions and that a shift of emphasis is needed from teaching a second language as a formal system to teaching a second language as communication. Examples of these concepts are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic categories</th>
<th>Communicative categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correctness</td>
<td>Appropriacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage</td>
<td>Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signification</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition</td>
<td>Illocutionary act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Coherence</td>
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</tbody>
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Linguistic skills Communicative Abilities
(for example, speaking (for example, saying, and learning) listening, talking)

In the same vein, Littlewood (1981:93) outlines the shift of emphasis in the teaching situation in a ‘formal’ set-up and a ‘communicative’ set-up. Teaching a second language as a formal system would mean a teaching situation where, for example:
- the learners remain constantly aware of their own state of ignorance before a teacher who possesses all relevant knowledge;
- they are expected to speak or act only in response to immediate stimuli or instruction from the teacher
- whatever they say or do is scrutinised in detail, with every shortcoming being made a focus for comment. Whereas teaching a second language as communication, would mean a classroom situation where, for example:
- the teacher’s role is less dominant, more emphasis is placed on the learner’s contribution through independent learning.
learners are not being constantly corrected. Errors are regarded with greater tolerance, as a completely normal phenomenon in the development of communicative skills.

communicative interaction gives learners more opportunities to express their own individuality in the classroom. It also helps them to integrate the foreign language with their own personality and thus to feel more emotionally secure with it.

CLT has emerged as an approach which is broad-based and open ended. No advocate of CLT has any one opinion about it; no two texts would hold the same view-point of CLT and no two teaching situations in CLT would be identical. All these factors lead up to the question: What next? And, is this the end of the Voyage?

Is CLT as advocated by Brumfit, Widdowson and others, the ultimate answer to the problems of ELT? These questions are answered by the CLT linguists themselves in further essays and books. They try to connect literature and CLT. Indeed, Brumfit time and again sees the evolution of CLT stopping at a certain point if it does not make literature one of its concerns. The distinction between
the language of every day use and the language of literature begins to fade. In the last few lines of his seminal work Littlewood (1981:95)

is aware that CLT would be broadening its horizons... communicative ability is a complex and many-sided phenomenon... This book like any other on the topic, is therefore no more than a small chapter in a story that has no end.

The next section would deal with further developments of the story and the widening of the cone of language teaching to include the teaching of literature.