<242-356>

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE - PROFICIENCY ISSUES OF JAFFNA STUDENTS
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)

V. SUNTHARESAN, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer
English Language Teaching Center
University of Jaffna
Jaffna, Sri Lanka
suntharesan@yahoo.com

<242-356>

Foreword

English as a Second Language - Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students by Dr. V. Suntharesan is a significant contribution to our understanding of the problems faced by the students as well as teachers of English. The book focuses on Jaffna students' proficiency in English.

Jaffna has a special place in the history of Tamils as well as in the history of modern education of Tamils. The first-ever science textbook written in Tamil was from Jaffna. It was the scholars from Jaffna who should be considered as the founders of modern prose in Tamil and its use in textbooks as well as in other domains.

Jaffna Tamils were known for their great competence in English as well. Administrators, lawyers, engineers, medical doctors and other professionals from Jaffna excelled in their careers using English as the primary language of communication. In recent years, for various reasons, education in general and collegiate education in particular, was severely affected.

Skills in English have become a prerequisite for pursuit of knowledge in various fields. *English as a Second Language - Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students* by Dr. V. Suntharesan will help both students and teachers use English effectively.

We need to follow Professor Nadaraja Pillai's (2002) declaration that "unless the learner is exposed to two sets of rules, one for grammatical competence and another for some sort of ethnography of speaking, he will not be able to correctly understand the meaning of … sentences. This overall competence may be described as communicative competence. This communicative competence includes both grammatical competence and variable rules." This textbook will help not only the Jaffna learners and teachers of English but also all South Asian learners and teachers of English.

M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.
Dean of Academic Affairs (Retired)
Bethany College
Bloomington, MN 55438

CONTENTS

<242-356>

<242-356>

CHAPTER – 1

COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Introduction

Communicative Approach focuses more on meaning than form of the language. It emphasizes the simulation of real life situation within the classroom. It recommends that students should be adequately exposed to the target language. Hence the adoption of communicative approach would prompt the students to use the language for communication with ease and comfort outside the classroom

Communicative approach provides teachers with insight regarding the modern developments of theories and practices of second language teaching. Teachers are also made to realize that mere mastery of grammatical rules will not lead to the expected outcome of language learning and the ultimate aim is to achieve communicative competence.

As Communicative Language Teaching aims at communicative competence, students will be more competent in the use of English for communication. A good level of English will help them to graduate confidently from universities; to obtain jobs; to read technical and scientific materials; and secure scholarships and jobs abroad.

In Sri Lanka, students undergo certain difficulties such as exposure to language and motivation and improper adoption of communicative language teaching methods and subject demotivating factors like inadequate vocabulary, and difficulties in structure and listening that restrict their communicative ability. Hence, this volume analyzes the factors that hinder the students' communicative competence and suggests strategies for developing their communicative ability.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 3
<242-356>

Communicative Competence

Even though the meaning of 'Communicative' is assumed to be fairly stable in modern language theory, when the use of this term by various writers in the field is considered one could find that there is no generally accepted meaning of this term. Thus each individual teacher may develop his own sense of what 'communicative' implies to him based on a thorough knowledge of how it is used with different interpretations in the literature.

Various definitions of communicative competence proposed by various linguists and scholars are quoted and discussed in this section.

In the view of Stern (1992), the term 'Communicative' centres on involving learners in "Authentic communication" and in "real communication". This definition attempts to separate 'real' language from language which is typically used to teach and learn language. In other words, the focus is not on learning specific language features but on putting the language to use as the circumstances require. Stern appears to contrast the concepts of message – oriented language and medium – oriented language in order to distinguish between language code and communicative intent. He further claimed that children learn their first language in the process of communication and continued to define communicative activities by contrasting them with classroom ones.

For Morrow (1977, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 129) communicative activities have three salient features: (1) some type of information gap, (2) a degree of choice and (3) the existence of feedback. Stern went on suggesting that all of these are possible within the classroom environment. Stern's view of communicative competence which requires authenticity can be contrasted with that of Morrow, who has no such requirement. A close look at the activities suggested by Stern reveals many instances where information gap, choice and feedback are not present. For example, when a student is asked by a teacher to open a window in a warm room and the student obeys, Stern may claim that the sequence of events was genuinely communicative. It could be recognized that Morrow would do the same but not under

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   4
<242-356>

communicative method. It is possible to state that when Morrow presents students with contrived activities, Stern's authenticity requirement is missing.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998, p. 371) defines 'communicative' as "willing, eager or able to talk or impart information". In the same source, the verb 'communicate' is defined as "to share or exchange information, news, or ideas" or to "impart or pass on information, news or ideas: convey or transmit in a non-verbal way: succeed in conveying one's ideas or in evoking understanding in others".

A communicative activity is one where some or all of the available information necessary to complete the activity is accessible to a student only by that student asking another for the information (Smiley, 2005).

Pirasad (2003) maintained that when learners are able to perform the communicative functions that they need, they achieve "communicative competence" in the language.

Kathleen and Kitao (1996) commented that the basic idea of communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively and productively, in real situations.

"Communicative competence refers to the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication" (Canale, 1980 as cited in Beale, 2002, p. 1).

For Nunn (2007, p. 30) "Competence in communication is a holistic, global and international concept encompassing various interlocking components of usable knowledge and the skills and abilities needed to put these into practice within a variety of communities and types of community. Competence includes skills in areas related to both written and spoken language and certain adaptive skills such as the ability to negotiate meaning with people of different backgrounds."

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   5
<242-356>

"Competence in communication in the local partial individual context involves various interlocking components of usable knowledge and the skills and abilities needed to put these into practice both within the local community and in preparation for communication with a variety of communities and types of community. Developing competence involves developing transferable skills and creativity in areas related to both spoken and written genres" (Nunan, 2007, p. 31).

Savignon (1972, as cited in Moss, 2005) described communicative competence as being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar, and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down.

Nadarajapillai (2002) stated that unless the learner is exposed to two sets of rules, one for grammatical competence and another for some sort of ethnography of speaking, he will not be able to correctly understand the meaning of such sentences. This overall competence may be described as communicative competence. This communicative competence includes both grammatical competence and variable rules.

Communication is not just a matter of language. When we speak, our speech is accompanied to a greater or lesser extent by so-called non – verbal communication: gestures, facial expressions, distance, body attitudes, sight etc. We furthermore transmit many signals about ourselves, via our clothing, hairstyle etc. Therefore communicative competence is extremely comprehensive and complex. The verbal part of communicative competence comprises all the so - called four skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing. It seems to emphasize this since there is a very common misunderstanding that communicative competence only refers to the ability to speak. Thus it can be claimed that communicative competence is both productive and receptive. Communicative competence no longer describes just a particular proficiency or skill, even though the word competence invites such a narrow interpretation. Communicative competence also covers conditions that affect communication and, for example, facilitate international communication (Margrethe, Iversen & Ledstrup, 1996).

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   6
<242-356>

Lund (1996) argued that communicative competence is not simply a matter of being orally able to keep one's end up. A too one sided emphasis on teaching this proficiency is perhaps one of the reasons why our pupils find it so difficult to fulfill the demands made on them. Communicative competence means competence in all four proficiencies – both the productive and the receptive.

Xiaohong (1994) remarked that according to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, communicative competence includes:

1)   Knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language.

2)   Knowledge of the rules of speaking (knowing how to begin and end conversations, what topics may be talked about in different types of speech events, which address forms should be used with different persons in different situations, etc).

3)   Knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks and invitations : and

4)   Knowing how to use language appropriately. (p. 31)

Spitzberg and Capach (2001) claimed that communicative competence is the ability to choose a communicative behavior that is both appropriate and effective for a given situation. Interpersonal competency allows one to achieve her/his communication goals without causing the other party to lose face. Competence includes three components: 1) knowledge, 2) Skill, and 3) Motivation. Knowledge simply means what behaviour is best suited for a given situation. Skill is having the ability to apply that behaviour in the given context. Motivation is having the desire to communicate in a competent manner.

Widdowson (1989, as cited in Erton, 2007) wrote that communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as and when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre–assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according

<242-356>

to contextual demands. Communicative competence in this view is essentially a matter of adaptation, and rules are not generative but regulative and subservient.

According to Canale and Swain (1980,p.5 as cited in Erton, 2007), it is common to find the term 'communicative competence' used to refer exclusively to knowledge or capability relating to the rules of language use and the term "grammatical (or linguistic) competence used to refer to the reciprocal rules of grammar". They find the rules of language useless since the language user is unaware of the rules of language use. In other words, there is reciprocity between the language rules and the rules of language. To be brief, Canale and Swain consider the term 'Communicative competence' as a mediator which refers to the relationship between grammatical competence (the knowledge of the rules of language) and the sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge of the rules of language use)

Linguistic Competence and Communicative Competence

Linguistic competence is defined "as a speaker-hearer's ability to speak and understand language in a grammatically - correct manner" (Ottenheimer, 2006, p. 95). Linguistic competence is an area of study in the field of intercultural communication founded by the linguistic grammarian Noam Chomsky. Linguistic competence is the use of grammatical use of a language, whereas communicative competence is the use of social language rules. Chomsky founded the idea of communication with the understanding of grammatically correct expressions. Chomsky chose more of a text - book approach to analyze language than a real world use of the language. Chomsky claimed that language should consist of an undiversified speaker – hearer environment. He felt that it is difficult for a speaker – hearer to exercise their linguistic competence in real – world situations. According to Ottenheimer (2006), Chomsky thought of real situations as "distractions". Chomsky believed that the linguistic competence of people gets affected by "distractions" such as social norms. The interference caused by social norms in communication forces the speaker to develop communication competence. A linguistically competent person may use perfect grammar and a communicatively competent speaker would take into consideration the appropriateness of the situation.

Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching at the University of Jaffna

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   8
<242-356>

Jaffna had a reputed past history of English education and Gunesekera (2005) commented about it.

"The most prestigious, however, was the American Mission's Jaffna College (1879), the former Batticotta Seminary, which prepared students for London examinations and higher degrees in India and trained students in a wide range of subjects in an atmosphere of liberal discussion and freedom-----The Missionaries learnt Tamil, translated texts, produced a Tamil-English dictionary and gave priority to the teaching of English; as a result, the levels of English education were higher in Jaffna than in the rest of the country" (Jayewardene, 2003:205 as cited in Gunesekera, 2005:38)

But presently, due to the inevitable changes in the sociolinguistic and political arena in Jaffna, English language proficiency has declined. Thus, it is imperative to adopt measures to implement the CLT approach successfully in schools and in the tertiary level educational institutions in Jaffna in order to maintain the functional use of English for academic as well as administrative purposes.

Despite the popularity of the use of communicative language teaching approaches in schools in some parts of Asian countries, communicative language teaching approaches are not yielding full effect in elementary and secondary classrooms in government schools in Jaffna and many teachers remain uncertain about the effectiveness of communicative language teaching and are unsure about how to implement it in classrooms. While most teachers prefer to be following a communicative approach, in practice they are following more traditional approaches. Despite the theoretical development of communicative language teaching, understanding among teachers remains limited. Classrooms in which communicative language teaching is effectively used are rare.

Several reasons have been put forward for the unsuccessful CLT classes in some cases. While there is general agreement about some of the characteristics of communicative language teaching, other aspects lack consensus or even clear definition. Harmer (2003, p. 289) has stated

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   9

<242-356>

that the "Problem with communicative language teaching is that the term has always meant a multitude of different things to different people".

Savignon (2002) maintained that teacher education in the use of communicative language teaching approaches has not received the attention it warrants and that teachers have not been given the necessary tools for using communicative language teaching by teacher educators. The needs of teachers have not been thoroughly studied and communicative language teaching approaches have not been disseminated in ways teachers face in local programmes and classrooms. A notion put forward by Bartels (2005, p. 748) that "Researchers and teachers have different ways of validating ideas in journal articles and have different knowledge" is related to this idea of dissemination of information about communicative language teaching approaches. He pointed out that appropriate (or appropriately designed) experiences may provide better assistance to teachers to transfer knowledge about communicative language teaching approaches into actual practices.

It is worth mentioning the comments made by Sunthareswaran (2004:183) in this context. "From observation in classrooms and discussions carried out with teachers of English, one fact has emerged that a good number of teachers of English do not know much about what is meant by communicative approach to language teaching. Many of them still use the Grammar Translation Method. Some use the Structural Method getting the students to repeat the sentences with the teacher and memorize them."

The negative assessment of teachers' knowledge and use of communicative language teaching may also have arisen because, as a study indicates (Mangubhai et al, 2007), teachers probably use a mixture of communicative language teaching and non communicative language teaching features in what they call communicative language teaching approaches.

The general situation pertaining to English language teaching and learning in Government schools in Sri Lanka is discussed below briefly.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   10

<242-356>

Though students may have obtained higher grades for English in the GCE (O.L) and GCE (A.L) examinations, they are unable to communicate in English. They achieve the linguistic competence while they are far behind in their knowledge of the communicative competence. In other words, students' knowledge of the structure (Grammar) of the language may be satisfactory whereas they fail to master the functional aspects of the language. The teaching methods followed by teachers fail to promote the students' communicative ability. The evaluation system too is designed to test the students' knowledge of the linguistic structure of the language alone.

By the time students enter the university, their English language proficiency is disappointingly low. There are certain reasons for the low level language proficiency of the students.

- Most of the GCE (A.L) students concentrate on the main subjects and neglect learning English as their immediate objective is to enter the university.

- In case of the undergraduates following courses in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jaffna, majority of them are from rural areas where there are schools that suffer for the want of teachers of English.

- In the Jaffna peninsula, there are schools where unqualified teachers who don't have any training or experience in the field of teaching have been appointed.

- Teachers of English do not have access to attend seminars or workshops to receive appropriate knowledge or practice to teach English for communicative purposes.

- Students are not sufficiently exposed to English. It is their mother tongue, Tamil that they use in the family circle, in the society, among their peers, and in the school.

- The motivation to learn English is purely instrumental. That is, they do not intend to use English for social integration, but for pragmatic needs, specially for getting through examinations. There are frequent instances where students show interest in following English classes to pass international examinations like IELTS and TOEFL for migration purposes and for admission to foreign universities.

Drawback of 'Situational Language Teaching'

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 11

<242-356>

In the situational presentation the teacher demonstrates meaning by reference to objects or events actually present or enacted in the classroom. These objects and events represent the situation. For example, the teacher holds up a pencil, points to it and says: This is a pencil. This is a well organized English sentence, which is an instance of correct usage. The question arising here is whether it is an instance of appropriate use. The situation created by the teacher does not normally require him to make use of such a sentence. The pupils know that a pencil is an object. What they may not know is what this object is called in English. This sentence would be appropriate only if it were necessary to identify an object: the sentence would normally function as an identification. But the learners do not require the identification of the object as a pencil, but they need to have it named as 'a pencil'. Hence the correct form of the sentence in order to demonstrate use is as follows.

The English word for this is 'pencil' or this is called 'a pencil' in English. However it should be noticed, that a structure similar to "This is a pencil.' may entail an appropriate communicative function in another situation. For example, in a science laboratory a teacher may have to identify a particular instrument or a substance to students when conducting an experiment. During the course of the experiment he may hold a bottle of nitric acid and say: This is nitric acid.

Here he is not merely demonstrating a structure but using the language for a required communicative purpose.

Here is another example in which the limitations of the situational presentation can be observed. To demonstrate the present continuous tense the teacher performs some activities like writing on the blackboard or touching the wall and says:

I am writing on the blackboard.
I am touching the wall.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   12

<242-356>

The situation devised by the teacher makes his sentence inappropriate in terms of use. Since all pupils in the class very well know his actions of writing on the black board and touching the wall, there is no need for him to announce what he is doing.

However there are situations in which sentences similar to the above would be appropriate as an instance of use. For example a person to whom the teacher is not visible wants to know what the teacher is not doing. In such situation the above sentences are appropriate as an instance of use as they represent communicative functions.

The sentence patterns of the kind exemplified by:

> I am walking to the window.
> He is walking to the window.

It can be an instance of use if the speaker of such a sentence performs an act of communication like explaining something or giving a commentary. With regard to explanation, the speaker makes clear what he/she is doing or what someone else is doing, on the assumption that this is not self evident. In the case of a commentary, the speaker relates to someone else who is not present at the scene going on. There are certain contextual conditions represented by explanation or commentary which determine the state of the sentences of the form in question as actual instances of use and not simply instances of usage.

But when considering the teacher saying a sentence of this kind while performing the activity, the following conclusion can be reached. It is self evident of what he is doing and no explanation is required for his actions and since everybody can watch what he is doing, no commentary is called for either. The language is being manifested but it does not represent any communicative behaviour.

Classroom Activities

<242-356>

This section discusses how this distinction could be applied to certain language teaching procedures. In the early stages of English courses, the following sentences are of quite common occurrence.

This is a book.

This is my mouth, etc.

By presenting sentences like this in a classroom demonstration either by pointing to a part of his own anatomy or by using a picture, the teacher might provide practice in manipulating these structures enabling his pupils to take part in question and answer series as illustrated below.

Teacher   :   What's this?

Pupils   :   It's a hand.

Teacher   :   What's this?

Pupils   :   It's an eye and so on.

This type of practice can be effective in teaching the signification of structures and a wide range of vocabulary items which can be introduced into the sentences. However it is to be noted that sentences like 'This is a hand' are rarely used in actual communication. To this effect the value of such sentences as use is low. Furthermore, the question of the teacher doesn't resemble the normal question, but it, of course is a prompt for the pupils to come out with required instance of usage. The exchange between the teacher and the pupils doesn't represent a normal instance of language use, but it only serves as a teaching device that instills the signification of a certain structure and vocabulary in the minds of pupils.

The situation above is an exchange as question and answer between the teacher and pupils, and this indicates the kind of meaning called signification. However it is possible to conceive of situations in which similar exchange of question and answer achieves value and thus becomes instance of use.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   14

<242-356>

For example imagine the situation of someone trying to work out what a rather obscure picture is intended to represent. The interrogative sentence that is used to identify a figure in this context and the answer has high value here and hence became an instance of use.

It is recommended that portions from other subjects on the school curriculum can be the area of use for teaching a foreign language. Language teachers usually suggest that the language they are teaching should be associated with situations outside the class. But the fact to be stressed here is that school is also a part of the child's real world where familiar experience is formalized and extended into new concepts. Subjects like history, geography, general science and so on harmonize with the child's own experience and hence a foreign language may relate to the outside world indirectly through these subjects.

When a foreign language is associated with areas of use represented by other subjects on the school curriculum, there is the possibility for a link with reality and the pupils' own experience and for providing the means of teaching the language as communication as use, rather than merely as usage. The presentation of language use in the classroom should essentially be the same as the methodological techniques used for introducing the topics in the subjects from which they are drawn. To this effect, it may be argued that the language teacher should be familiar with the subjects taught by his colleagues and it would be an additional burden upon him. It should be admitted that he is to familiarize himself with the topics drawn from other subjects. Besides he must possess knowledge of something other than the language he is teaching. It is obvious that this knowledge refers to the culture and literature associated with the language in question. Hence the suggestion is that the language teacher should possess some basic knowledge of the subjects which his colleagues teach.

It's appropriate to mention two other advantages in the above approach of language teaching. One can be aware of the practical relevance of the foreign language one learns, as a means of communication, since he can use the foreign language to deal with topics which he is concerned with in his other lessons. He need not learn the foreign language to pursue his studies but it is presented to him as a means of practical usefulness. It's also a point that some pupils

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   15
<242-356>

may intend to follow further studies in the medium of foreign language which they learn as academic institutions in many countries require proficiency of a foreign language for higher education. For those aiming for higher education in such countries, the proposed approach would be of particular relevance. Even in countries where foreign language proficiency is not required for higher education, the learners have had an experience of language as communication. One can find it easier to extend his knowledge of use into new situations.

"The other advantage associated with the subject – oriented approach of language teaching is about the transfer from the learner's own experience. That is, the topics dealt with in the language class are dealt with in other lessons through the medium of learner's mother tongue. This condition will induce the learners to make use of translation in learning the foreign language. Many teachers pose an argument against this. They comment that the use of mother tongue may distract the learners' attention from the ways in which foreign language expresses its meaning. It will be true only when the translation operates at the level of usage. But as the proposed approach is concerned, translation operates at the level of use: the learner will realize that the acts of communication are expressed in the foreign language in one way and in his own language in another way" (Widdowson, 1978, p. 18).

Structural and Functional Aspects of Language

Littlewood (1981) observed that the structural view of language is concerned with the grammatical system and it describes how linguistic items can be combined. For example, it may explain the operations of forming the passive "A parcel has been sent' rather than the active, 'somebody has sent a parcel' or describe the word order rules to interpret the difference between the two sentences, 'The man hit the woman" and "The woman hit the man".

The structural view of language and the functional view of language are separate aspects. However the mere consideration of structure alone cannot determine the communicative functions of language. For example, let's consider the sentence "Why don't you buy that book? From a structural viewpoint, it is unambiguously an interrogative. But from a functional view point it is ambiguous. It may be a question in certain circumstances. The speaker may genuinely

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   16

<242-356>

want to know why his companion hasn't bought that book. In other circumstances, it may function as a command. It may be the case of a teacher who addressed it to a student who hadn't bought that book. In yet other situations, it could be a plea, a suggestion or a complaint. It can be said that while the structure of the sentence is stable and straight forward, its communicative function varies and depends on specific situational and social factors.

As a single linguistic form expresses more than one function, a single communicative function can be expressed by a number of linguistic forms. For example, a speaker who expects someone to buy him a lunch parcel has many linguistic options such as "Buy me a lunch parcel, please', 'Could you please buy me a lunch parcel?' 'Would you mind buying me a lunch parcel? or 'Excuse me, could I trouble you to buy me a lunch parcel? 'Among these forms, some might perform this directive function in the context of certain social relationships. For example 'You've failed to buy me a lunch parcel.' could be a directive from boss to peon but not from boss to an officer in a superior position. Other forms may depend on shared situational knowledge for their correct interpretation (e.g. 'It's lunch time, isn't it?')

The most efficient communication in a foreign language can't always be achieved by manipulating its structures. But successful communication often depends on the skillful processing of the complete situation with the involvement of the speaker and the hearer, taking account of the knowledge already shared between them and selecting items that may communicate the message effectively. Foreign language learners should be provided with sufficient opportunities to develop these skills by being exposed to situations where the emphasis on using their available resources to communicate meaning efficiently and economically.

Similarly for better comprehension, both a repertoire of linguistic items and a repertoire of strategies for using them in a concrete situation are necessary for the learner.

Intercultural Communication

Culture which is an integral aspect of language learning sometimes fades into the background in the language classes in Sri Lanka.

<242-356>

Several researchers (e.g. Alpteking, 1993; Coffey, 1999) have stressed on the importance of cultural information in language teaching. According to them communication is an interrelationship between a language and its people and if cultural information is not taught as a part of communicative competence, complete communication cannot happen. As English has emerged as the chief medium of international communication in Sri Lanka, there is an inevitable need for proficiency in English to communicate with people of other countries. Whenever two people from different cultures meet and use English to communicate with each other, they will use it in culturally distinct ways. Hence it is clear that teaching intercultural interaction competence in English may well be among the most significant understandings of the future. It implies that culture should be integrated into the teaching of all language skills so that learners can learn to speak, but also write, in culturally appropriate ways for specific purposes.

Concept of Intercultural Communication

The term *intercultural communication* refers to communication between people from different cultures (Damen, 1987). More precisely it refers to "symbolic exchange processes whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive situation". (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 16) In the symbolic exchange process people from cultural communities encode and decode the verbal and nonverbal messages into comprehensive meaning. This definition obviously emphasizes the influence of cultural variability and diversity on communication. It is obvious that two or more people of different cultural backgrounds engage in communication, cultural barriers to communication often arise due to the differences in their life patterns, social style, customs, world view, religion, philosophy and so on. This is often the case when the communicators share a foreign language.

Presently the role of intercultural communication is very important partly because English assumes the role of an international language which is used by millions of people outside its original geographic boundaries to convey national and international perceptions of reality which may be quite different from those of English speaking cultures. As the role of English as an international language gets expanded further and further, the number of L2 users of English

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   18
<242-356>

will continue to grow, much surpassing the number of native speakers of English. English is the main link language across cultures today. Thus the goal of learning English shifts to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture with not only the speakers of English but also those of other cultures.

The term *intercultural communicative competence* maintains a link with recent traditions in foreign language teaching, but extends the concept of communicative competence in significant ways. Generally it has been described as the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. More precisely, it is defined as the overall internal capacity of an individual to manage key challenging features of intercultural communicative competence to efficiently negotiate a mode of communication and interaction by ability to use and adapt language use appropriately in culturally different contexts. "The distinct features of intercultural communicative competence are cultural differences, unfamiliarity and incompatibility between interactants. Teachers and learners encounter many challenges because of this status of English as a means of international and intercultural communication. It justifies that successful communication is not merely about acquiring a linguistic code; it also concerns different cultural values reflected in language use. It lays out the philosophical base for a growing awareness that communicative competence should be conceived as intercultural communicative competence including not only the knowledge of basic values and norms; verbal and non-verbal interactional competence in using English in intercultural communication; competence in using language as social action; competence in creating and interpreting linguistic aspects of social reality, but also the cognitive, affective and behavioural adaptability of an individual's internal system in all intercultural contexts" (Schinitzer, 1995, p. 38). L_2 learners intending to perform intercultural interactions effectively must possess these abilities to cope with the dynamics of cultural differences on account of the inseparable link between foreign language learning and intercultural communication.

It is apparent that if a teacher determines to maximize students' communicative effectiveness when interacting with members of other cultures, the students should be offered an opportunity to receive cultural awareness training as an integral part of their English courses. It is

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   19

<242-356>

also to be borne in mind that teaching cross – cultural awareness in the English language classroom is not an easy task.

Teaching a L2 devoid of focus on its speakers' culture won't be fruitful. In a similar vein, promoting communicative competence without considering the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures which may enhance or even inhibit communication. After all communication requires understanding and understanding requires the acquaintance with the culture of the foreigner while always putting the target culture in relation with one's own.

Certain language difficulties Sri Lankan students encounter due to cultural variation between native speakers of English and Sri Lankans are quite apparent in many instances. For example, the expression, 'going to bed' referring to the act of sleeping, by native speakers of English may cause some extent of confusion or embarrassment particularly among students from rural areas in Jaffna, as they often lie down on mats or on bare floor, to sleep. Likewise the expressions such as 'warm welcome', 'warm reception' etc. may suggest pleasantness or cordiality for the English whereas the word 'warm' implies discomfort for Sri Lankans because of climatic variation between the western regions and Sri Lanka and the corresponding meaning associated with this word. Another interesting example is the usage of the word 'owl' by the English in a particular context. For the English, owl is a symbol of wisdom while the presence and the cry of this bird are regarded as a bad omen or misfortune by Jaffna Tamils.

In such instances, it's the role of the teacher to explain the cultural variation between languages concerned.

<242-356>

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)
21

<242-356>

SCHOLARLY NOTIONS ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

===

This chapter deals with the findings of various research studies carried out by various researchers, which are partially related to the current topic. This chapter runs into four different sections. The first section comprises research views which maintain that the main objective of L_2 teaching is to develop the learners' communicative competence. The views in the second section are concerned with the claim that communicative competence can be effectively achieved through teaching in real world contexts. The third section presents negative views about communicative language teaching, held by scholars and the author's justifications in favour of the adoption of CLT approach in the classroom. The fourth section deals with how tasks can be effectively exploited in communicative language classes and how computer mediated lessons be successfully taught to develop communicative ability among students

Second Language Teaching

Mangubhai, Marland and Dashwood (2007) stated that Communicative Language Teaching(CLT) as an approach to teaching secondary languages in elementary and secondary schools has been in practice since the early 1970s, as a result of a greater focus on communication in second language education. This approach recommends extensive interaction in the second language between students and teachers and among students, with advocacy of this method resting on a number of key assumptions such as the following: learning a second language can be facilitated through using the language for communication purposes; such communication should be both authentic and meaningful; a greater emphasis should be placed on language use rather than language knowledge; learner autonomy in language use and learner risk – taking should be encouraged; and fluency and appropriacy in the use of the second language should take precedence over structural correctness. Therefore, CLT incorporates several different techniques and does not insist on the structural set of procedures that teachers should follow.

Canale (1983) noted that communication entails meaning negotiation and continual evaluation on the part of the participants. The characterization of meaning provided by Canale

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   22

<242-356>

verified the fact that communication constitutes a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Moreover, from a methodological stance it represents a starting point towards the comprehension of the varied factors at play in teaching L_2 students to efficiently communicate in L2 –which is the ultimate goal of the communicative approach. Unlike previous language teaching methods which focused on grammatical structures and vocabulary, the communicative approach advocates developing the ability to use language in specific communicative contexts. Thus, pursuant of the premises of the communicative approach, the main objective of L_2 teaching is to foster the capacity to communicate in L2, as opposed to guaranteeing the assimilation of L_2 structures (Luchini and Garcia, 2007).

Raheem and Ratwatte(N.D, p.23) have stated about the steps taken by the educational authorities in Sri Lanka to promote the communicative competence of students in government schools

.

"In the school system, a new course in English proficiency, the 'General English' course was established in 1999 for the G.C.E (A.L) examination. This course unlike its parallel counterpart, focuses on competence in language skills rather than on an ability to deal with English literature."

According to Widdowson (1984), the mere utilization of real texts in the classroom does not guarantee that students will learn how to use language to fulfill their communicative needs. He established a contrast between the teaching of language as communication and the teaching of language for communication. He maintained that the goal of L_2 class is to teach language for communication. In other words, it is to promote the communicative abilities which are necessary for coping with real-life situations. Communication is not a simple matter of acquiring knowledge of language items, however they are labeled. It must involve the use of procedures for negotiating meaning within predictable routines.

Widdowson (1972) held the view that the root of the problem, the learners' deficiency in the ability to use the language lies in the approach itself.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   23
<242-356>

According to Littlewood (1981), many aspects of language learning can take place only through natural processes which operate when a person is involved using the language for communication and the learners' ultimate goal is to communicate with others. Therefore the research designs to adopt CLT approach to improve students;' communicative competence.

Cumaranatunge (N.D) observed that curriculum change leads to a greater focus on in-service programmes. Today, in Sri Lanka, all aspects of ESL teaching materials, methods, evaluation and teacher education are introduced. However, it is doubtful if the intended objectives of the language planners, curriculum developers and text book writers are realized in the schools. Usually in Sri Lanka curriculum change is implemented through a method called 'Cascade Model.' NIE takes the responsibility of training a small group of personnel at provincial level and then the members of this group brief the proposals to the regions through seminars. But drawbacks of this model are reported as the information regarding the proposals gets diluted and distorted in transmission. Those who are involved in the process of curriculum change are not the people who implement change at grassroots level. In order to effect change at this level more 'teacher-driven' strategies based on collaboration and problem solving which will give teachers a sense of ' ownership' are needed. Even though the current text books including the G.C.E (A.L) General English course book are intended to develop the students' communicative competence, due to the reason as discussed here, teachers fail to handle the text materials properly to reach the intended goal.

Krashen (1988) conveyed that L_2 acquisition is the unconscious process of using language, not directly obtained by conscious learning. Thus the major task for a teacher is to create an environment or a setting for students to acquire English by using it through activities in class. Whether a person is a good language learner or a poor one depends largely on his/her understanding of language. To be regarded as successful language learners, students need to get the information from reading and listening, and express themselves clearly.

However the problem is how to make full use of the limited time in class to improve students' overall language competence by communicating in class. Widdowson (1978) pointed

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   24

<242-356>

out that overemphasis on grammar would lead to prevent the learners from developing their communicative competence. In grammar- translation classes teachers' detailed explanations and exercises of grammar might be a waste of time. In these classes, there is little chance for students to communicate with language.

According to Snow (1996), students learn effectively about language, when they take part actively in the communication with language rather than only passive accepting only what the teacher said. Brown (1991) noted that a language learner can and must take control of his/her own language learning and assume responsibility for his/her success or failure.

Littlewood (1981) described several distinguishing features of CLT. As communicative competence is the desired goal in CLT, meaning is paramount. In socio-cognitive perspectives, language is viewed as a vehicle of conveying meaning, and knowledge is transmitted through communication involving two parts, for example, speakers and listeners, and writes and readers, but is constructed through negotiation. As a consequence, communication is not only a matter of following conventions but also of negotiating through and about conventions themselves. It is a convention –creating as well as convention following activity.

Therefore there are three elements involved in the underlying learning theory: communication principle, task- based principle, and meaningfulness principle. Based on this perception, when applied to language learning, functional activities and social interaction activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaning and authentic language use; learning is interpersonal to learn to communicate; attempt to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning; dialogues, if used, centre around communicative functions and not normally memorized; and contextualization is basic premise; drilling may occur, but peripherally; any device that helps to communicate and understand is acceptable. To some extent, that is to say, students do not simply learn the linguistic structures and grammar rules. Rather they should be actively making meaning through activities such as collaborative problem solving, writing for a purpose, discussion of topics of genuine interest, and reading, viewing and responding to authentic materials.

<242-356>

Brumfit and Johnson (1979, p.118) claimed: "…..the ability to compose sentences is not the ability we need to communicate. Communication only takes place when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature. Thus we do not communicate by composing sentences, but by using sentences to make statements of different kinds, to describe, to record, to classify and so on, or to ask questions, make requests, give orders etc. Knowing what is involved in putting sentences together correctly is only one part of what we mean by knowing a language, and it has very little value on its own; it has to be supplemented by a knowledge of what sentences count as in their normal use as a means of communicating."

Canagaraja (1992:12) observed, "Presently with the sociolinguistic revolution, language teaching has further shifted emphasis from(grammatical) accuracy to (communicative) fluency. While constant practice and over-learning were encouraged by behaviourist approaches to stamp out errors, the contemporary aim is to get students to meaningfully interact with their contexts to get their communicative goals achieved with the available grammar."

Allwright (1979, p.167) claimed: "It has been accepted for many years that 'communication' is the proper aim for language teaching. More recently increasing attention has been paid to what this might mean if taken seriously. The implied charge that only lip-service has normally been paid to the aim of communication is difficult to prove, but perhaps not so difficult to accept, given that it does seem generally accepted that language teaching globally, has not led to a satisfactory level of communicative skill in the vast majority of cases. Inspection of text books and national syllabuses (as well as of actual teaching) suggests that this failure could be blamed on the apparent failure to ensure that communicative skill is adequately represented in language courses. Text books and national syllabuses, typically and for obvious reasons, present an analysis of language rather than of communicative skill. To put the position very simply, 'communication' has become fully accepted as an essential and major component of the 'product' of language teaching, but it has not yet been given more than a token place, as an essential and major component of the 'process'. A logical extension of the argument would suggest that if communication is the aim, then it should be the major element in the process."

<242-356>

Canale and Swain (1980) remarked that communicative competence was understood as the underlying system of knowledge and skill required for communication (e.g. knowledge of vocabulary and skill in using the sociolinguistic conventions for a given language) Furthermore a distinction was drawn between communicative competence and what is here labeled actual communication – the realization of knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions and interfering noises. The term actual communication is preferred here. Canale and Swain emphasized that communicative competence is an essential part of actual communication but is reflected only indirectly, and sometimes imperfectly (e.g. in random and in advertent slips of the tongue, mixing of registers) due to general limiting conditions such as those mentioned above.

Allen and Widdowson (1979) stated that in recent years English language teaching overseas has taken on a new character. Previously, it was usual to talk about the aims of English learning in terms of the so – called 'language skills of speaking, understanding speech, reading and writing, and these aims were seen as relating to general education at the primary and secondary levels. Recently, however a need has arisen to specify the aims of English learning more precisely as the language has increasingly been required to take on an auxiliary role at the tertiary level of education. English teaching has been called upon to provide students with the basic ability to use the language, to receive and to convey information associated with their specialist studies. This is particularly so in the developing countries where essential teaching material is not available in the vernacular languages. Thus whereas one talked previously in general terms of ELT, in the 2nd half of the 20th century we had such acronymic variants as ESP (English for special Purposes and EST (English for Science and Technology).

Moss (2005) remarked that notions about how best to teach adult English language learner have changed over the years and have been influenced by research in how second languages are learned. Today perhaps the most accepted instructional framework in adult ESL programme is communicative language teaching. The goal of CLT is to increase communicative competence, which means being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   27

<242-356>

contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down. With CLT, instructional emphasis shifted from grammar translation, memorization of dialogues and drills and practice of structural patterns to using language in real life contexts for meaningful purposes. Grammar practice with drills can be appropriate at certain times, but CLT demands authentic use of language, which means people interacting with other people.

The primary principle underlying CLT is that language learners need opportunities to use the language in authentic conversations. After all, daily life requires people to communicate in a wide range of contexts for many diverse purposes. This interactive view of language teaching has its roots in second language acquisition research studies that have examined how interactions contribute to second language acquisition. Studies report how negotiation of meaning an exchange between a speaker and listener to solve a comprehension problem affects what learners produce. Researchers have studied interactions between native speakers and language learners as well as interactions exclusively between language learners. They have also examined social interaction between individual and interaction that occurs in our mind (e.g. the interaction among our knowledge of the first and second languages, the context and context of a message, and our background knowledge).

Khan (2007) stressed that the purpose of any second or foreign language learning should be to enable the learner to acquire communicative competence in the target language so that he can employ the target language for performing the same functions which it performs for the members of the target speech community in everyday life. Language ability involves more than just learning grammar. Grammar and other aspects of language need to be used suitably and meaningfully for different communicative purpose. Thus the focus on learning and teaching should be on learning to use language and not on the knowledge of the language. CLT helps the learner to learn to communicate by communicating. To elaborate the difference between the focus of traditional approach and CLT an analogy of learning driving can be presented. Detailed explanations and description of various parts of the engine of a vehicle can not help a learner to drive a car unless he is actually put to driving the car by using these various parts of the engine,

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   28
<242-356>

and coordinating the functions of all parts of the engine. The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence of the learner by doing the following.

It helps learner in developing skills for the spontaneous and flexible use of the linguistic system of the target language to express his meanings. It helps him in distinguishing and mastering the communicative functions of the linguistic forms of the target language. Learner develops skills and strategies for effective communication of his meanings. Learner learns the social meaning of the language forms of the target language and can put his language to appropriate use.

Thus learners in learning language through CLT, learns the meaning, functionality and use of the target language and these are the aspects which play an important part in using the language as an instrument for social interaction and functions. To realize this goal of developing learner's communicative competence CLT works on the following principles:

Communication principle: This principle holds that learner's participation in activities which involve real communication assists learning of the target language. The implication for the classroom practice is that everything done in the classroom should involve some kind of communication leading to the use of language. This can be realized by involving learners in activities like role – play, games and problem – solving tasks. To be truly communicative, these activities should have the quality of information gap, choice and feedback. These qualities generate the need for communication for the learners and brings into play the abilities and skills which can ultimately culminate in the development of the communicative competence in the target language.

Erton (2007) emphasized that in order to communicate successfully in the target language, the pragmatic competence of the language learner must be well developed. Thus the grammar of the target language should not be taught in isolation with its use. In this respect, it may be important to remember that grammatical competence is to recognize and produce grammar structures and rules for effective and meaningful communication. The learner should

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   29

<242-356>

have the ability to put the knowledge of the language into practice. Such an experience can take place in different communicative settings and situations. That is to say that the language course should be designed to provide learners the opportunity to learn and practice different functions of language.

This simply reflects the idea that form and function go hand in hand in language teaching. The functional study of language means, studying how language is used. For instance, trying to find out what the specific purposes that language serves for us, and how the members of a language community achieve and react to these purposes through speaking, reading, writing and listening. Therefore in order to structure a good pragmatic competence, functional study of the target language should be one of the vital goals of the language curriculum. In this way, however, the language learner not only learns to participate according in classroom discussions, but also experiences the ways of interaction in natural settings.

May (1993) observes that it is possible to distil a number of activities that are useful for pragmatic development for the foreign language teaching. Some of these have already been mentioned, however, activities aimed at raising students' pragmatic awareness should also be taken into account. The tern awareness raising is used for activities which require the development of socio pragmatic and pragma – linguistic knowledge of the language learner, a variety of tasks could be assigned to students for practice. To illustrate, students can be assigned to observe the particular pragmatic features in the spoken, written or audiovisual sources.

In this case, open observations (observing the education in a village, observing the ways of interaction at a train station) provide the opportunity to experience different context and discourse factors in the target language. Such observations enable the language learner develop his / her socio – pragmatic competence. On the other hand studying the contexts in which different functions of language are used to enable to study a combination of socio pragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects in the target language. By focusing on what the student has learned from those observations help learners to establish the connection between pragmatic functions and linguistic forms. Such a study also enables the way to experience different social contexts

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   30
<242-356>

and cultural meanings. Linguistic behaviour is social behaviour. People talk because they want to socialize in the widest possible sense of the world: either for fun or to express themselves to other humans or for some serious purposes, such as building a house, closing a deal, solving a problem and so on. Thus language is a tool for human beings to express themselves as social creatures and the language used in that particular context is important in terms of linguistic interaction that takes place. Such a context naturally presupposes the existence of a particular society, with its implicit and explicit values, norms, rules and laws and with all its particular conditions of life. However the actual development of the pragmatic competence is to learn to communicate meaning appropriately in the target language.

Harlow (1990) maintained that most importantly both teachers and text books alike need to emphasize to the learner that language is composed of not just linguistic and lexical elements; rather, language reflects also the social context, taking into account situational and social factors in the act of communication. Since pragmatic competence is a combination of these factors, the development of the pragmatic ability should be accepted as one of the primary teaching goals. If considered carefully, the students find the opportunity to experience language in different social contexts; they practice functions of language in a variety of interactional patterns, by using the right utterance at the right time; they learn how to be socially responsible language learners. Moreover the study of different communicative patterns not only helps students to be the active participants in the classroom but also encourage them to think critically and creatively in foreign language. In sum, language learning is a socio – cultural process which requires the application of linguistic rules in a variety of contexts, audiences and purposes. The development of the pragmatic competence is with all its aspects helps the language learners to broaden their education and shape their world views.

If   the language learner does not achieve most of these goals through the language learning process, the result will absolutely be a pragmatic failure. In other words, it is the misunderstanding or the lack of the ability to understand the message uttered by the speaker. Although an utterance is grammatically well formed it may be functionally confusing or contextually inappropriate. Therefore the message conveyed by the speaker can be

<242-356>

grammatically accurate but because of the contextual factors the message might sound inappropriate. The reason of this inappropriateness can result from social factors (traditions, customs, values, etc.), the lack of interpersonal skills, cultural differentiations, lack of critical and creative thinking etc. Therefore, it should be borne in mind that the development of the pragmatic competence in language learning and teaching today is very indispensable, because pragmatic competence not only shapes the world view of the individual through language but also provides teachers the opportunity to better understand their students by keeping in mind the necessary interactional, psychological, social and cultural factors in language teaching pedagogy.

Sunthareswaran (2004:169) noted the negligence in the part of teachers in adopting proper methods in the classroom in Jaffna schools. "For school students, school text books are used and for the others Head Way series, Oxford English Course and Grammars books of different types are used. Some of their own materials in these classes are mostly based on traditional methods of teaching."

Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan (1992, pp. 20 – 21) argued that grammatical knowledge alone is not enough to help us participate effectively in communicative situations. In addition to knowing the forms of a language, one must know the following in order to communicate appropriately.

The socio-cultural situation: the attitudes, values, conventions, prejudices and preferences of the people who use the language.

The nature of the participants: the relationship between the speaker / speakers, and the hearer / hearers, their occupation, interests, socio – economic status, etc.
The role of the participants : the relationship in the social network , like father – son, teacher – student, boss – subordinate, doctor – patient etc.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   32

<242-356>

The nature and function of the speech event: whether it is a face – to – face talk for persuasion, confrontation etc or a casual conversation, or a request in a formal situation or a telephonic conversation, etc.

The mode (medium) of communication: spoken or written or reading from a written script or unprepared speech, etc.

Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence does not capture all the factors mentioned above. Even as late as 1980, Chomsky claimed:

"By 'grammatical competence' I mean the cognitive state that encompasses all these aspects of form and meaning and their relation including underlying structures that enter into that relation which are properly assigned to the subsystem of the human mind that relates representations of form and meaning …. Pragmatic competence underlies the ability to use such knowledge along with the conceptual system to achieve certain ends or purposes .... I assume that it is possible in principle for a person to have full grammatical competence and no pragmatic competence, hence no ability to use a language appropriately though its syntax and semantics are intact." (Chomsky, 1980. p.59 as cited in Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan, 1992, p. 21).

Hymes (1971, as cited in Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan, 1992. p.21) on the other hand said that one who studies language should be able

"… to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events and to evaluate their accomplishment by others."

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   33
<242-356>

Sunthareswaran (2004) explained about certain drawbacks in the Sri Lankan educational system which inhibits the promotion of communicative competence among students. The text series 'Let's learn English' used in the primary classes in Sri Lankan schools aims to promote communicative skills. In the foreword to these series it is stated "This new series of text books-Let's learn English will promote formal learning of English by strengthening the communicative abilities of the pupils." Yet sometimes these text books do not reach students in time and in most schools there is a dearth of competent English teachers and in some schools the methods employed and the approaches to teaching of English have been found to be unsuccessful.

Teaching / Learning in Real World Contexts

Engaging students in activities which are closely related to their day – to – day experience may be effective means to develop their communicative competence. Such activities may provide exposure as well as motivation for interaction among them and between the teacher and them. Learning environment which is relevant to the familiar experience of students will make them actively take part in the classroom sessions. It is believed that it will enable them to communicate in the target language outside the classroom with confidence and fluency. In this section, some views of linguists which endorse the notion that teaching / learning in real world context would give ample opportunities for learners to use the language meaningfully and appropriately sociolinguistically, are presented.

Palmer (n.d. as cited in Rivers, 1983) suggested what he called communication practice drills. In communication practice drills, the students find pleasure in a response that is not only linguistically acceptable, but also conveys information personally relevant to himself and other people. He maintained that the most powerful technique at the teacher's disposal is his ability to verbally create situations which could be relevant to the students' own life and then to force the students to think about the meanings and consequences of what he would say in such situations.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   34

<242-356>

Khan (2005) claimed that CLT theory proposes a focus on learning; it holds that learning is likely to happen when classroom practices are made real and meaningful to learners. CLT sets the goal of language learning to use the language effectively for learners' real communication needs. This goal is consistent with the long – term goal if not the immediate goal, of English language instruction in many contexts of the world. Thus while teachers in many parts of the world may reject the CLT techniques transferred from the west, it is doubtful that they reject the spirit of CLT.

Newmark (1968 as cited in Brumfit and Johnson, 1979, p. 163) stressed that since the actual classroom is only one small piece of the world in which we expect the learner to use the language, artificial means must be used to transform it into variety of other pieces; the obvious means for performing this transformation is drama – imaginative play which has always been a powerful educational device both for children and adults. By creating a dramatic situation in a classroom in part simply by acting out dialogues, but also in part by relabeling objects and people in the room to perform for imaginative role-playing – the teacher can expand the classroom indefinitely and provide imaginatively natural contexts of the language being used.

Rivers (1983) wrote that in recent writings on second language teaching, there has been increasing emphasis on communication and what have been called communication skills. Participation in the drill can be innovation: providing for practice in the repetition and variation of language segments, but with simultaneous practice in selection, as students express their own meanings and not those of a text book writer. Practice in selection should not be considered a separate activity for advanced classes: it can and should be included in class work from the very first lesson. The more students are interested in an activity in the target language, the more they feel the desire to communicate in the language and this is the first and the most vital step in learning to use language forms spontaneously.

Unlike activities in traditional settings, communicative activities are meaningful (Nunan, 1991). They incorporate many features of authentic communication such as information

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   35
<242-356>

gap, choice and feedback. They enable learners to negotiate the meaning, to nominate a topic and to follow up as opposed to mechanical drills which allow learners little more than responding.

Group work and pair work are maintained to maximize students' involvement in practicing genuine communication as well as to increase student – talk time (Long, 1977).

Larsen Freeman (2000) pointed out that in the communicative language classroom, the learner is more than a passive recipient : she/he is an active participant. The communicative teacher, in turn is an initiator of situations which engage learners in language production: a facilitator of the process of communication as well as its participant.

Chaudron (1977) illustrated that the new roles for teachers and students consequently create a new classroom atmosphere drastically distinguished from that existing in the traditional setting. CLT promotes a cooperative learning environment where teachers and learners support each other, and work together. In this environment, students have no fear of failure and they feel free to communicate. This also means that errors in communicative language classroom are treated differently. The traditional way of correcting learners' every single error immediately doesn't let them understand their mistakes. Moreover, it suppresses learners' motivation to speak out. On the other hand, error correction in the communicative language instruction facilitates language acquisition by taking the form of clarifications confirmations.

Allwright (1979) held the view that in contrast to the grammar – based methodology in which primary emphasis is on mastering grammatical rules, the main concern of the communicative approach is how to use those grammatical rules to produce a meaningful language. Put simply, communicative competence is on target. This shift in a focus from form to function has brought a lot of changes in language classroom instruction. In the classroom where the set goal is to develop learners' abilities to monitor the language, opportunities are provided to engage students in using real communication. That is to say, communicative activities are promoted.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   36
<242-356>

Negative Concepts of CLT

Several studies have pointed out some problems in implementing CLT, including lack of proper teacher training, teachers' traditional perceptions of the English language teaching, lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials as well as teaching equipment, grammar based examinations and syllabuses, lack of teachers' contribution to designing an innovation, learners' resistance to new methodologies, teachers' low English proficiency, large classes and needs for the English language.

Duquette (1995) noted that despite the use of CLT approaches in schools for over three decades, claims are still being made that CLT approaches are not effective in elementary and secondary classrooms and that many teachers remain uncertain about the concept of CLT and about implementing it in classroom. Such claims have been indeed a constant refrain in the CLT literature over the last twenty years. Communicative classrooms are rare and that while most teachers profess to be following a communicative approach, in practice, they are following more traditional approaches. In a parallel line of thought, Thornbury (1998) claimed that "from a communicative approach, CLT (in classroom usage) is not only weak but very weak" (p. 110), a judgment based on his observation of EFL classrooms in elementary and secondary schools and pre- and in-service teacher education courses over 20 years. A similar comment surfaced again in 2002: "Despite the theoretical development of communicative language teaching, understanding among practitioners remains limited. Moreover a growing number of studies indicate that classrooms in which CLT is effectively used are rare" (Sato, 2002, p.41).

Misconception about CLT or the pessimistic attitude toward CLT is a purely owing to the failure in educational policies in organizing necessary training for teachers to adopt CLT approach in ESL classrooms, making CLT based teaching materials and student work books available and a lack of clear perception about the actual objective of CLT among teachers.

Further, as far as the schools in the Jaffna district are concerned, educational authorities are not interested in conducting periodical monitoring to find out which type of teaching method is followed by teachers of English. Hence teachers take the liberty of having

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   37

<242-356>

their own choice of methodology. In fact, communicative language teaching would be thoroughly successful if proper and regular training in handling CLT classes is provided to teachers, carefully and thematically designed text books are made available to teachers in time, and seminars and workshops are periodically arranged to enable teachers to attain a better understanding and rationale behind CLT approach.

There is another argument put forward by Grenfell and Harris (1999) who have claimed that CLT describes competence or proficiency or what it consists of, but is not, itself, a means to acquiring it. They argue that statements of the type "Using skills is the means to learning them and learning is the means to their use" (p. 28), are circular. Their circularity makes them devoid of any meaning that can be used practically by teachers in classrooms.

In the view of the author, the above argument that CLT fails to enable students to acquire the language, becomes invalid. In fact, CLT approach recommends the introduction of real life situations in the ESL classrooms with the sole intention of motivating the students to use the second language in a natural environment as they use their first language.

A third reason for the alleged drawback of CLT is associated with the contexts in which it has been used. In some Asian context, there has been only a partial acceptance by the teachers of the legitimacy of CLT, which is a predominantly Euro – centric approach to language teaching. Anderson (1993) and Chowdhury (2003) opposed the practice of CLT, stating that it challenges traditional cultural beliefs and values and is at odds with traditional relationships between teachers and students.

The above deficiency of the CLT may be accepted. In order to overcome this issue, the author suggests that native cultural elements and conventional models need to be incorporated into the syllabus of CLT to be adopted in the local context. In this manner, the possible culture shock the students may suffer in the language class due to the cultural variation between the natives and foreigners could be eliminated.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   38

<242-356>

Stern (1992) argued that despite outstanding characteristics, CLT needs appropriate vocabulary for functional language use but it gives little guidance about how to handle vocabulary. However it has been realized that more exposure to language and practice with functional communication will not ensure the proficiency in language learning.

Therefore the best way to handle the ESL classes is to include an effectively worked out selection of vocabulary, according to frequency and an instruction methodology that encourages a meaningful engagement with words.

Significance of Tasks in CLT

The growing interest in tasks originates largely from the communicative approach to language teaching. Almost everything that is performed in the classroom is underpinned by beliefs about nature of language and about language learning. Dramatic shifts in attitude towards both language and learning can be observed in recent times. This has sometimes resulted in contradictory messages in teaching profession which in turn has created confusion.

It has been acknowledged that language is more than simply a system of rules. Language is regarded as a fertile source for the creation of the meaning. In the process of learning, one is expected to understand clearly the distinction between "learning what" and "knowing how". In other words, one should distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and have the ability to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating.

Pedagogically, task based language teaching has strengthened the following principles and practices.

- A need – based approach to content selection.
- An emphasis on leaning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   39

<242-356>

- An enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contribution elements to classroom learning.

- The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

(Nunan, 2006, p. 3)

Such task-based language teaching is believed to develop language acquisition by (a) providing learners with opportunities to make the language input they receive more comprehensible, (b) furnishing contexts in which others can understand and (c) making the classroom closer to real-life situations.

Definition of Tasks

Tasks have been defined in various ways. Nunan (2004) drew a basic distinction between real world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. Pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom.

The following is another definition of pedagogical task.

"… any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem – solving or simulations and decision – making" (Breen, 1987, p.23).

This definition appears to be very broad and it implies that just about anything the learner does in the classroom qualifies as a task. In fact, it can be used to justify any procedure at all as 'task – based', and as such, is not particularly helpful.

Ellis (2003, p. 16) defined task thus.

<242-356>

"A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes".

Nunan (2006, p. 5) defined task in the following manner:

"A task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the attention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and an end".

Lambert (2004, p. 18) maintained that "Communicative tasks are some pedagogical tasks which are effected through a planned diversion in the information held by learners, and which usually approximate to some extent to a real world task which learners will encounter outside the classroom. The need to share information requires learners to communicate functionally in a second language and the link with the real world enables them to acquire task specific language and skills."

TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching) and CLT

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   41

<242-356>

TBLT is based on the development of CLT, input and interactionist theory and learning theory. Its focus is on both learning by doing things meaningfully. The chief aim of TBLT is to integrate all four skills and to provide learners with opportunities to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language meaningfully to develop learners' communicative competence and in this process, a variety of tasks offers immense flexibility and the teachers will be able to design communicative tasks and lead to more motivating activities for the learners, as well. Teaching becomes a process of fulfilling tasks by using the target language under the communicative task design. Thus, how to design appropriate communicative tasks becomes a major problem in implementing this approach.

In the task-based language teaching, content of the syllabus and instructional processes are selected in relation to communicative tasks which learners will need to engage in outside the classroom and also in relation to theoretical and empirical insights into those social and psycholinguistic processes which facilitate language acquisition. This approach to language teaching includes the ideas of learning theories of Piaget's cognitive theory and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (WANG, 2006, p. 11).

Piaget explained that overall development is the result of children's interaction with their environment, with a complementary interaction between their developing perceptual cognitive capacities and their linguistic experience.

Piaget laid emphasis on the constructive nature of the learning processes. That is individuals are actively involved in constructing personal meaning right from birth, which is their personal understanding from their experiences. Another cognitive psychologist, Vygotsky affirmed that cognitive development and learning originate in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). He assumed that higher psychological functions such as learning develop in interaction between individuals. He hypothesized the existence of a zone of proximal development (ZPD) where functions learnt in a social dimension are transferred to a cognitive dimension. This theory implies that a learner learns under the guidance of an expert who provides assistance and support

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   42
<242-356>

by adjusting the difficulty of the task. Since a language classroom can also be considered as a social environment, the phenomena of interaction taking place there can be studied in the light of this theory.

Vygotsky (1978) agreed with many of Piaget's ideas about how children learn, but he emphasized more on the social context of learning. Piaget's cognitive theories have been used as the foundation for designing learning models in which the teacher's role is limited. In Vygotsky's theories, teachers as well as older or more experienced children play very important roles in learning. Much overlap between cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory is found. However, Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which paves the way for an active, involved teacher. According to Vygotsky, the culture offers the child the cognitive tools needed for his development. The type and quality of these tools determine, to a much great extent than they do in Piaget's theory, the pattern and role of the development. Adults like parents and teachers are conduits for the tools of the culture, including language. The tools of the culture provided to a child include cultural history, social context and language. Currently they also include electronic forms of information access.

Vygotsky's concept, the 'zone of Proximal Development' is supposed to be best known. It maintains that students with the help from adults or more advanced children, can master concepts and ideas which they can't understand on their own. No individual is able to achieve the full extent of his / her learning potential, but people can continue to develop their cognitive capacity throughout their lives and their social interaction. A social constructive model of the teaching – learning process, supported by social – interactive and constructive theory has come into being. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners and tasks, and provides a view of learning as arising from interactions with others. In this model, learner is an active meaning – maker and problem solver and tasks involve input in the form of a piece of text or language. Activities which are the cognitive process needed in order to carry out the activities which are incorporated to them. Together with the other two key factors, teachers and context, they interact as part of a dynamic ongoing process.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   43
<242-356>

In the view of Ellis (1999, as cited in WANG, 2006), the Input and Interactionist Theory is the theoretical base of task – based approach. The explanation of Input and Interactionist Theory which Krashen emphasizes refers to using language to learn and then learning to use language. Krashen and other L2 acquisition theorists stress that language learning comes about through using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills. In other words, one acquires a language mostly as the result of using language in the process of communicative activities, not the result of conscious language drilling.

In the view of Krashen (N.D., as cited in WANG, 2006, p. 13), one acquires a language through subconscious acquisition process not our conscious learning process. Language acquirers are consciously unaware of the grammatical rules of the language, but rather develop a sense for correctness. In a plain sense, acquisition is "picking – up" a language. On the other hand, language learning refers to the conscious knowledge of a foreign language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them.

Krashen also claims that students must receive comprehensible input to acquire a language. According to the hypothesis, a language acquirer who is at level "I" must receive comprehensible input that is at level "i+1". In other words, one acquirer only when one understands language that contains structures that is 'a little beyond' where one is now. This understanding is possible due to using the cultural background of the language one hears or reads and one's knowledge of the world.

Some deficiencies of Krashen's comprehensible input theory have been brought out by critics. They disagree with that more exposure to input, even if comprehensible can promote language learning. Learners do not have the access to interact with the source of language when reading a book, watching a T.V. programme or listening to a radio broadcast. In these instances, communication is one-sided. They do not have any means to express that they haven't understood the message, to seek clarification or repetitions. On such grounds, Long (1983), while accepting the comprehensible input theory, intended to study how input is made comprehensible. His research findings are evidence of how native speakers consistently modify

<242-356>

their speech when they interact with non – native speakers. Most native speakers naturally adapt their speech to the needs of the non – native speakers, for sake of facilitating communication.

In the view of Long (1983, pp. 177-193) only "Conversational interaction" promotes language acquisition. He also believes that the necessary language acquisition device is "modified interaction" which concerns (1) the modified interaction may make the input comprehensible; (2) the comprehensible input is good for language acquisition; (3) modified interaction benefits language acquisition. Hence, in ELT, the activity should be designed with the modified interaction (task) so that learners can naturally acquire language through the conversational interaction.

The great advantage in the task-based language teaching is that language learning in classrooms is made parallel to the natural route and higher rate of language acquisition can be reached as it provides learners with a clear communicative goal, interaction is needed to reach the goal, and comprehensive input can occur, and then language acquisition is facilitated.

Shavelson and Stern (1981, p.478 as cited in WANG, 2006, p. 21) suggested that tasks design should incorporate the following elements:

1. Content   –   the subject matter to be taught.
2. Materials   -   the things that learners can observe / manipulate.
3. Activities   -   the things the learners and teacher will be doing during the
                          lesson.
4. Goals   -   the teacher's general aim for the task (they are much more
                          general and vague than objectives).
5. Students   -   their abilities, needs and interests are important.
6. Social community -   the class as a whole and its sense of "groupness".

<242-356>

According to Wright (1987), tasks minimally include two elements, one the input data provided by materials, teachers or learners, and an initiating question instructing learners on what to do with the data.

Candlin (1987) maintained that tasks should include input, role, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback. Input is the data provided to learners to work on. Roles refer to the relationship between participants in a task. Setting refers to the classroom out – of – class arrangements decided in the task. Actions are procedures and sub – tasks which the learners are to perform. Monitoring is the supervision of the task in progress. Outcomes are the goals of the task and feedback denotes the task assessment.

Nunan's publication, Designing Tasks for the communicative classroom, was brought out in 1989. This manual is treated as a milestone of task – based approach to language teaching. In this work, Nunan has produced a framework for analyzing communicative tasks and tasks are analyzed based on their goals, input data, activities, settings and roles.

Two principal aspects of communicative tasks, (1) the distribution of task – essential information and (2) the goal orientation of learners are discussed by Long (1983). With regard to distribution of task-essential information, "one-way" tasks and "two-way tasks" are discussed by Long. In "one-way" tasks, one learner holds all task-essential information and communicates it to the others and in "two-way" tasks, task-essential information is distributed between learners, requiring them to share and integrate it. As with goal orientation, there is the reference to "open" task in which learners know that there is no correct solution to the task and "closed" task in which learners know that there is only one or a small range of solutions.

Yule (N.D, as cited in WANG, 2006) provided a second typology of communication tasks. He proposed three task types, i.e., descriptive, instructional and narrative and argued that discourse skills necessary for descriptive tasks are included in instructional tasks and that the skills for both are entailed in narrative tasks. The typology of Pica et al (as cited in WANG, 2006) demonstrated how learners need to interact on individual tasks and Yule's typology

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   46

<242-356>

provided a basis for sequencing tasks developmentally. The typology of Pica et al and Yule are representative of current practice in foreign language instruction.

Lambert (2004) introduced an approach for planning sequences of communicative tasks in which learners become personally involved. By drawing on their own ideas and experience, as a product of earlier tasks in a given sequence, learners generate the content and resource material on which subsequent tasks operate. Lambert, through this approach, believes to increase understanding of the potential of tasks as a planning tool in foreign language or second language teaching and offer some practical examples for teachers and material designers.

Breen (1984, pp. 52-53) proposed a syllabus based on processes rather than products. In his opinion, "an alternative to the listing of linguistic components would be to: priotize the route itself; a focus upon the means towards the learning of a new language. To this effect, the learner would give priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom – to the psychological and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context – a greater concern with capacity for communication rather than repertoire of communication, with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself and with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives, all indicate priority of process over product".

Breen (1984) opined that with regard to communication at the center of curriculum, the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of using the target language to communicate with others) and the means (classroom activities which develop this capability) begin to merge; the syllabus must take account of both the goals and the means.

Subsequent to the introduction of CLT, the place of grammar in the curriculum was not firm. Teaching of grammar was felt to be unimportant by some linguists in the beginning. They also believed that if the learners paid much concentration on meaning in using the language to communicate, their ability to use a L2 would develop naturally. Recently their assumption has suffered criticism and nowadays, there is emphasis on tasks that prompt learners to focus on

<242-356>

form. It is also widely accepted that knowledge of grammar gains significance using language for communicative purposes.

Littlewood (1981) stated that the following skills are essential in CLT. The learner should reach a good level of linguistic competence. He must have the ability to manipulate the linguistic system of the target language to use it spontaneously and flexible so as to bring out what he intends.

The learner must have the ability to distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence and the communicative functions that such forms are to perform.

The learner should practice necessary skills to use language for communicating meanings effectively in real situations.

The learner must inform himself of the social meaning of language forms. Hence the learner will achieve the ability to choose the socially acceptable forms and get rid of offensive expressions.

Thus it is understood that any comprehensive curriculum is to entail both means and goals and consider both product and process.
Undoubtedly CLT has had a tremendous impact on both methodology and syllabus design, and has promoted the status of learning "task" in the curriculum and TBLT contributes to the perfection of CLT approach.

As discussed above, Nunan (2006) suggested that learners should focus more on meaning rather than on form. CLT has been generally blamed for giving priority to fluency and not accuracy. This result seems to be the result of the fact that when learners communicate in the classroom, their performance is assessed according to their communicative effectiveness. The definition of Nunan may be considered to reinforce the misunderstanding about the role of

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   48

<242-356>

fluency and accuracy in CLT. In fact, Nunan's definition emphasizes the need of a non – linguistic purpose of the task and it doesn't mean that form can be ignored in the learner's language.

The issue whether the focus should be on form or on meaning has been under discussion. According to most applied linguists, both are important. However they do not fail to stress that grammar should not be presented out of context. In fact, effective language use involves achieving harmony between form and function. Learners should be made to realize that different forms could be used to express different meanings in different circumstances. At the same time, when a task or an activity is designed, a good guidance to each task, even a subtask is usually shown during teaching or learning so that learners understand and use language effectively in the communicative activity, through a series of sound task practice.

Learners can perform better if their attention is drawn to some typical features of language form.

Language data can be of two categories, 1) authentic data and 2) non – authentic data. Authentic data include the speaker and written language specifically prepared for the purpose of language teaching. Authentic data are genuine English expression. They are the result of real communication between two or more individuals. Non-authentic data entail the speaker and written texts and other samples language specially intended for the classroom use.

Non-authentic data becomes a good source that provides learners with examples of target grammar and vocabulary in text that would enable learners to understand and process the language. Thus they serve as fine means for learners particularly in the beginning of learning.

It is equally important for the learners to make use of the authentic data also. In the authentic data, target language items in contexts where they naturally occur are presented to learners. If learners do not have the access to authentic materials in the classroom, they will have to encounter many difficulties when they involve in real communication outside the classroom.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   49

<242-356>

When a task is designed, the relevance of the authenticity with the contents of the text should be taken into account so as to enable the learners to practice a language in an authentic language situation.

Input

It is generally accepted in second language theories that pertaining to the learning of a modern language learners must be exposed to sufficient language input either in artificial or natural teaching settings. Ellis (1999) stated that input refers to the language that is addressed to the FL learner either by a native speaker or by another F.L. learner. Input also means the language that the students hear or read. It should contain some new information that the learners have not known. In other words, the input should be at a higher level that the student is capable of using, but at a level he is capable of understanding. It is called "rough – tuning" and compared to the way adults talk to children. Students can acquire language on their own if they are provided with a great deal of comprehensible input.

Two different types of input are termed as roughly-tuned input and finely-tuned input. The roughly-tuned input refers to a language at a level a little above the learners' abilities and finely-tuned input is language to be selected precisely to be at exactly the learners' level. In the current context, finely – tuned input is considered to mean the language selected for conscious learning and teaching.

Communication through Listening Activities

Most of the learners will be interested in spending more time to listen to the L2 than to produce it. They must understand what they listen during face-to-face interaction. Also they will have to silently receive messages channeled to them from radio, television, seminars etc. In the view of some, listening is a passive skill. This is misleading since listening involves active involvement of the hearer. The hearer must possess both linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge to understand the speaker's intended meaning. During the course of an interaction, he may have the access to many clues to receive the message. However he should be made aware that all clues are not equally relevant to the message. Thus even if he misses a portion of language, he need

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   50
<242-356>

not bother about it as other clues will be helpful to him to know the message. It is also to be borne in mind that knowing the whole message may depend on this particular missed item. This won't affect the general point being made here since the learner will soon realize his own misunderstanding if he keeps himself involved in the communication rather than allowing himself demotivated due to a sense of failure (Maley & Duff, 1978).

In order to make listening to be active, the learner must be motivated by a communicative purpose. This purpose will determine what meanings he must listen for and which parts of the spoken text are most important to him. For example, there may be parts on which he need not focus attention for every detail, but only listen for the general gist. There may be other parts which require him to listen for more detailed information. There are even other causes where he must listen for specific pieces of information out of the text.

The most popular and familiar activity for providing a purpose for listening is by means of questions which prompt learners to listen for specific information or to make inferences from what they hear.

Following are some activities through which learners can develop their listening skills (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 68-73).

1.   Performing physical tasks (e.g. selecting pictures)
2.   Transferring information (e.g. tabular form)
3.   Reformulating and evaluating information.

In these activities, the main focus is on listening for functional information. Some techniques applied in these activities can be used to motivate learners to listen for social meanings also.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   51
<242-356>

Choosing Course Content

A communicative approach does not abandon the inclusion of structural aspects to its course content. Mastery of the structural system is still considered the basic requirement for using language to communicate one's own meanings. Yet, a communicative approach stresses the idea of going beyond structures and taking account of other aspects of communication. Thus it enables us to relate the content more closely with the actual communicative uses. For example,

When deciding which linguistic forms should be emphasized within a limited time, the teacher can give priority to those which seem to offer the greatest value in broadening the learners' communicative capacity. For example, 'can + infinitive' can be used to express several important communicative functions. Hence the teacher may focus more on this pattern. Whereas the teacher need not emphasize much on the distinction between 'I will' and 'I shall', since it is not so important for effective communication.

When designing creative activities, the teacher may take learners' probable needs into consideration. For example, in discussions and problems – solving activities, topics related to learners' interests can be incorporated. In role – playing activities, situations and topics which the learner will encounter outside the classroom can be included (Littlewood, 1981, p. 77).

In this section we have discussed how communicative approach can be used to make the content of a course to reflect not only the structural demands of the L2, but also the communicative demands of learners. However it should be noted that the exact nature of these demands cannot be predicted since they depend on the uncertainties of day – to – day life and communication. The leaner should have the ability to negotiate these uncertainties and this ability partly depends on whether we have exposed him to particular portions of relevant language. In addition, it depends on his creative ability for using the L2 grammatical system to communicate new meanings in unpredicted situations.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   52
<242-356>

Organizing Course Content

This section deals with the possibilities of organizing the course content based on the aspects of language use other than the structure of the language.

Functional – Structural Organization

Shaw (1977) held that it is important to organize a course into units based on necessary communicative functions while retaining the structural aspect of the language to be taught. Then the learners will be able to follow the course from function to function rather than from structural pattern to structural pattern. With regard to functional – structural form of organization, the teacher can recycle functions, introducing each time a more complex language to suit the learners' developing linguistic competence. For example, when dealing with 'asking directions' can be first expressed by 'where's the church, please?' later by 'Can you tell me the way to the church, please?' and later still by 'Excuse me, I wonder if you could direct me to the church?' Learners also become aware of the social meaning of alternative forms.

Functional Organization

In a class consisting of learners who have already acquired knowledge of the basic structures of the language, the teacher can decide on a form of organization that represents the communicative uses of the L2. It can be done by relating the course units to communicative functions.

This type of organization implies the functions of English. Each teaching unit relates to a set of communicative functions such as 'offering', 'asking permission' and 'giving reasons' and each function is represented by a series of linguistic forms. Language of widely varying grammatical complexity is thus grouped together for functional purposes. For example, 'asking permission' can be expressed by the simple form 'I'd like to leave early' and the complex 'I hope you don't mind, but would it be at all possible for me to leave early?'

Topic-Based Organization

The course – units can be organized on basis of topics. The teacher can select an area of meaning which he believes useful to learners such as literature or history. He may provide useful language within this area and make learners involve in a variety of practice activities. The activities may include reading, listening, comprehension, discussion and role – playing.

The Teacher's Part

The development of communicative ability occurs through processes inside the learner. The teacher should decide on the kinds of stimulus and experience these processes require and provide them to students. But he shouldn't exercise direct control over them. It is found that even though the teacher applies techniques to influence the course of development, the learner will follow the learning process determined by him. If the environment in which the learning takes place provides necessary stimulus and experience, the learning process can occur without the presence of the teacher. The teacher, further to his role as an 'instructor' is a facilitator of learning. Stevic (1976) summarized the various roles the teacher should assume in the classroom.

As general overseer of his students' learning, he must aim to coordinate the activities so that they can progress toward greater communicative ability.

As classroom manager, he must take the responsibility of organizing activities into lessons satisfactorily at the practical level.

There may be many activities where he must perform the familiar role of language instructor: he must present new language, exercise direct control over the learners' performance, evaluate and correct it and so on.

In other activities, once the teacher has initiated the proceedings, he will not intervene, but will let learning take place through independent activity.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   54
<242-356>

When students are involved in independent activity, he must act as consultant or adviser, giving his help where necessary. He can also move around the classroom to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the learners as a basis for planning future activities.

There may be occasions when he wishes to participate as 'co-communicator' with the learners in an activity. In this role, he can stimulate and present new language.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC): Exploiting CMC to Develop Communicative Competence

Schumin (1997) illustrated that in addition to greater level of exposure to the target language, learners can have more opportunities to participate in the social and cultural context of the target language and learn the pragmatic knowledge, which is very difficult to be achieved in EFL cultures. For example, by using e-mails to send photos, audio or video attachments, learners can introduce their families, countries and cultures to their e pals; by using microphones and web cameras, learners have the opportunities to participate in online communications that is almost similar to the traditional face – to – face conversations although the interaction cannot be as immediate as real – life communications due to transmission time. Nevertheless audio and video communications help learners to obtain both verbal (e.g. intonation) and non – verbal (e.g. facial expression) cues that are essential factors to develop social competency.

Use of CMC tools in Language Learning

By integrating CMC into language learning, learners can be exposed to as much language input as possible and motivated to learn with more interest. In order to maximize the efficiency of CMC in language learning, teachers have to focus on designing learning tasks, monitoring learners' learning process and evaluating their language progress (Robertson, 2003).

To transform the learned knowledge into competence, adequate opportunities to put the learned knowledge into use is essential. Hence, teachers should design learning tasks with clear objectives and decide on the learning tasks or materials for learners to acquire both the target linguistic and pragmatic knowledge.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 55

<242-356>

A careful planning on the design of learning tasks would create motivation to learn, among learners. Teachers can involve learners in doing a collaborative project with another learner; for example, the project may be to involve learners in writing a story journal together online. By using the features of blocks, learners can exploit their imagination, exchange ideas online to maintain a story journal together. With motivation, learners will have higher level of enthusiasm in taking part in the discussion and engaging in learning.

Through learning task with a clear objective, it is possible to control the learners' learning progress. If there is no such control, learners may be lost in the process of learning. For example, if a task is not designed to achieve (e.g. to know more about your friend and introduce him/her to the class), learners will get confused about what is needed to be discussed, learned and achieved. They may also face unpredictable difficulties during the interaction which was not taught prior to the task.

In the psychological perspective, when a learner learns a new word, or phrase, initially it is registered in his short term memory and when the learner is exposed to the same term several times, he / she is able to acquire it and store it into his / her long term memory (Moras & Carlos, 2001).

What it implies is that involving learners in a single task will not develop acquisition and competence of the target new language. Therefore it is essential for the teacher to plan several different tasks with the same goal; different tasks with similar goals would provide learners with more exposure and practice and lead them to acquire the target knowledge.

The use of CMC in language learning creates an environment where learners interact between them. In addition to one-on-one e-mail interactions, constructing a discussion board to extend classroom discussion is another way to help develop the learners' ability to express learners' agreement or disagreement with others' opinions. When learners engage in a group discussion on a classroom discussion board, the teacher acts as the key figure to encourage

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   56

<242-356>

online opinion exchange and help learners when communication breakdown takes place (Campbell, 2004).

Although the discussion board should be student centred, teachers continue to have great responsibility to monitor learners' interaction and learning progress. For example, when the teacher finds a learner speaking less or not responding to others' opinions, the teacher should induce him to respond to comments (Campbell, 2004).

Whether CMC tools can fully develop learners' communicative competence depends on further research. Nevertheless, the use of CMC tools both inside and outside of the classroom can certainly contribute to the success of learning and develop communicative competence of learners to a considerable extent.

Conclusion

All the above stated views in sections 1, 2 and 3 collectively stress the fact that the main objective of CLT approach is to develop the communicative competence of learners. Proponents of CLT regard CLT as an innovation with many specific features. CLT views language as a tool for communication. It insists that interactional speaking activities in classrooms can be excellent instances of real communication. It also concerns the coordination of the language skills, viz. speaking, writing, reading and listening in order to achieve the communicative competence in a sound manner. It ensures that students have sufficient exposure to the target language. Thus it recommends real world contexts for teaching the language to provide students with proper and adequate exposure. Therefore the application of CLT in classrooms would result in a positive effect on the part of teachers, students and the government. It is also noted that there are some negative views about CLT approach but the implied notions in such negative views emphasize that the grammar is the means through which linguistic creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of grammar would lead to a serious limitation on the capacity for communication. There is therefore no question that grammar needs to be imparted to target language learners.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   57

<242-356>

CHAPTER – 3

FACTORS INFLUENCING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

==

Introduction

In the initial part of this chapter, the current status of English and the historical background of ESL teaching in government schools in Sri Lanka are briefly stated. The decline of English language proficiency among the Jaffna Tamils at present and the reasons for this are specially focused on. Then a theoretical foundation pertaining to the impact of the main factors, viz motivation, attitude and exposure to English in achieving communicative ability has been presented. Finally, factors that impede the development of communicative competence of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka are discussed.

Teaching ESL in government schools in Sri Lanka, irrespective of the socioeconomic and geographical background of students has been a vital concern of successive governments since the early 1950s. Since the 1990s, much emphasis has been laid on ESL teaching in view of solving the Sinhala – Tamil ethnic conflict adversely affecting the economic and social development of the country. In addition, it has been felt that providing students with necessary knowledge and technical skills which the modern employment market demands is crucial. To achieve this objective also, a good knowledge of English is felt essential. Despite the efforts taken by the governments with regard to the school ESL programmes, the overall unsatisfactory performance of students in English in the G.C.E (O/L) and (A.L) examinations and the poor performance of youths in job interviews are evidence of the inefficiency of the programme.

British colonial rule which lasted from 1796 to 1948 in Sri Lanka had a great influence on the status and function of English in this island. The British founded some schools namely the 'Superior Schools' that imparted education in the English medium (Jayasuriya, 1976). Only the economically privileged Sri Lankan natives could afford to receive education in these schools by paying a fee. The poor lower class Sri Lankans were deprived of the facility of English medium education which lowered their standard of living.

<242-356>

Gunesekera (2005) remarked, " From 1796 to 1956, English was the official language of the country. In 1948, when we gained independence from the British, English remained the only official language of the new dominion. In July, 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, Sinhala, Tamil and English are declared official languages of Sri Lanka. In November, 1987, 13th Amendment to the Constitution, English is the link language and Sinhala and Tamil are the official languages of Sri Lanka." (p.14)

The link between the English language and the economic status resulted in making English language proficiency a necessary requirement for upward social mobility in the country. This is still the case in contemporary Sri Lanka. In post – independent Sri Lanka, the British education system was subject to many changes.

The local politicians were very much concerned about providing equal opportunities to people of all strata of society. Free education in the vernacular for all in government schools has been prominent among these changes. English instead of being the medium of instruction became one of the subjects in the wider school curriculum; i.e. the second language. Though English has been replaced by the students' mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the role of English in social life in Sri Lanka is unchallengeable.

Raheem and Ratwatte (2004 as cited in Vignaraja ,2005) remarked that in Sri Lanka the national language policy has quite recently been ignored at the institutional level- in the field of higher education and some of the then existing faculties continue to teach in English. They continue to discuss the influence of the invisible or unplanned forces on language policy and implementation and in Sri Lanka it appears to be moving away from the dictation of the planners to the choice of the individuals. "This is essentially true of the University of Jaffna, in spite of the great hue and cry for a monolingual State, English persists to play the dominant role in most of the academic affairs." (Vignaraja, 2005:5)

There were different factors that contributed to the influence of English in Sri Lanka. Some members of the middle class used English as the means of establishing their distinct

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   59

<242-356>

identity among the people with whom they lived. Another factor considered sociopolitical is associated with the presence of the separate ethnic groups, the Sinhalese speakers and the Tamil speakers. English became the effective lingua franca between these two communities. The third factor known as 'reactive' was determined by external realities. Here the participants have a keen inclination toward the language of power. As Sri Lanka is considered, it's interesting to note that that the keenness to cultivate English by certain section of people emerged at a time when the language of power was Sinhala and not English.

Samarakkody (N.D:39) stated, " The position privilege and status occupied by English continued even during the period of post independence nationalism, since the elitism bilinguals of the national bourgeoisie had no desire to do away with the language that had brought them to these positions of power and privilege."

In Sri Lanka, the direct method and subsequently the grammar translation method had been in practice since English as a second language was included to the school curriculum. The direct method recommends the target language itself as the medium of instruction while the target language is taught in the students' mother tongue in the grammar translation method. These methods are found to have been unsuccessful in promoting the students' English language proficiency. Thus the Communicative Language Teaching has been adopted in schools since the late 1980s.

Decline of English Language use in Jaffna, Sri Lanka

During British colonial rule in Sri Lanka (1796-1948), the Governor took the initiative in persuading the American Missionaries to function in Jaffna. The main objective of the Missionaries was to propagate their religious faith. Yet their contribution to the educational development of the Jaffna Tamils was tremendous. Vast employment opportunities and better prospects in life were available for the natives who had English language proficiency. The American Missionary realizing the need of the hour established several schools in various parts of Jaffna.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   60
<242-356>

Kailasapathy (1986:86 as cited in Sunthareswaran,2004:21) commented, "There was something unique in the educational facilities available in Jaffna during the middle of the last century(19th century) that have an important bearing on the relation between Tamil and Western scholarship ------ . Due to a number of factors, some of which were fortuitous and others intrinsically historical, Jaffna was in the forefront of this renaissance. The educational contribution of some of the Christian Missionaries in Jaffna, to this efflorescence cannot be exaggerated."

A predominantly Tamil monolingual situation in Jaffna today leads to the lesser extent of the use of English in this region. In the government departments and state corporations, the verbal communication among the employees, pertaining to both official and unofficial dealings is entirely in Tamil. Cases of code – switching and code – mixing may be observed but only to a very limited extent. Most of the circulars and notices dispatched are found in Tamil, owing to the state language policy. The 1978 constitution of Sri Lanka declared through its 16th amendment passed in 1988 that "Sinhala and Tamil be the languages of administration of all the provinces in Sri Lanka, other than the Northern and Eastern provinces where Tamil shall be so used, etc. All laws and subordinate legislation shall be enacted or made and published in Sinhala and Tamil together with a translation thereof in English. Sinhala shall be used as the language of courts situated in all the areas of Sri Lanka except those in any areas where Tamil is the language of administration" (Thirumalai, 2002). Department meetings and discussions are held mostly in Tamil. In the case of the private sector, the employees of the Colombo based commercial organizations like Brown & Co.Ltd, Singer Co. Ltd, Commercial Bank of Ceylon Ltd etc. and some insurance companies may use English to some extent since they have to communicate with their counterparts in the south in English.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001:149) stated, "In Jaffna, the use of English in the family and friendship domains has been limited to the English educated elite from the British rule. One rarely observes English being used in these spheres by the rural communities, whether agricultural, and fishing groups or sub groups."

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   61

<242-356>

"In the total Jaffna English speech community, a small minority of these people use English for all communicative purposes." (Saravanapava Iyar,2001:81)

No public forums or seminars are addressed in English. Even the periodical get – together and meetings of major clubs such as the YMCA, the Lions Club and the Rotary Club are held mostly in Tamil. Very few people read in English. No English Newspapers or magazines are published in Jaffna. Only a few members of Jaffna society subscribe to English newspapers like the Daily News brought from Colombo. People rarely show interest in viewing English T.V.programmes or listening to English programmes on the radio.

Sunthareswaran (2004:80- 82) observed, "English magazines, journals or periodicals are not published in Jaffna since the English reading population is very small now. People in Jaffna do not take much interest in English programmes broadcast by SLBC. On the whole, the use of English in the family domain in Jaffna is very much restricted."

When commenting on the post-independence status of English, Suseendiraraja (1997, as cited in Sunthareswaran, 2004:74) noted, "English became socially restrictive and did not meet the need for popular participation. The day to day use of English in the Jaffna society was reduced.------ even among the older generation who had their education through English, the need for the use of English has declined considerably. They have given up using English in their conversations and writings as they did earlier because the younger generation is not in a position to respond in English. In fact, the percentage of people who read in English too has become very low. Among the Jaffna Tamil population the regional and national newspapers command the highest circulation as against the national English newspapers published in Jaffna at present."

Even the teachers of English serving in government schools are not suitably qualified and although they complete courses in training Colleges and Colleges of Education, their competence in English is not satisfactory.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 62
<242-356>

Professional courses like Accountancy, CIMA etc. which are conducted in the English medium are not available in Jaffna presently for want of qualified resource persons in English. But a good number of avenues are open to follow courses in information technology and computer literacy in the English medium. Youngsters show much keenness in following these programmes with the hope of finding job opportunities. Such pursuits of youngsters have undoubtedly led to the progress of English knowledge of youngsters considerably.

Suntharesan (2009) observed that teachers serving in government schools should have a moral consciousness in performing their duties with perfection by covering the syllabus in time, strictly following the instructional guidelines to handle the text books, attending seminars to update their knowledge etc.

Sunthareswaran (2004:176) noted the decline of English language proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna. "-----the overall performance of the students has not been very encouraging in the recent years according to the Instructors and the Head of the ELTC of the University of Jaffna."

The Impact of Social Stratification on Students' Proficiency in English in Jaffna

Proficiency in English among school students varies depending on the area or location in which the schools are situated. Classroom conditions and facilities, teaching methods and teachers' proficiency levels also vary considerably. Although one can assume that an average student after certain years of study, acquires knowledge of basic structures of English, however, it would be a misconception to assume that an average student across different villages, towns and cities knows equally the structures of the language. The following remarks by Thorat (2007, p.2) are worth mentioning in this context. "It is clear to all of us that the standard of English in rural areas in India, Pakistan, Bangaladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal is very poor when compared with the skills students in the urban areas demonstrate. Generally the learners in rural areas are poor with not many facilities to improve their performance in studies"

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   63

<242-356>

Since the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna are students from schools situated in different locations and surroundings, their proficiency levels in English are found to vary by the time they enter the university. Their proficiency still varies even during their course of studies in the university due to certain factures which are dealt with later in this section.

People assume various statuses in the social strata and their social roles also vary. The markers of peoples' identity include occupation, education, economic status, gender, age, colour, caste, social rank etc. Linguistic correlation of all these markers can be found at all levels.

The organization of people into hierarchically ordered social groups or classes becomes one of the sources of sociolinguistic identity. Classes made up of people with similar socioeconomic variables in social stratification can be stated in terms of urban versus female etc. Proficiency levels in English found to vary across these variables in turn may lead to students' different attitudes, different levels of motivation and different levels of exposure to English. Besides, the teaching materials used and the teaching methods adopted in the university influence the English proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna.

Urban versus Rural

When compared with the students from rural areas, students from urban areas have better proficiency. The urban students have more opportunity to use English outside the classroom. In some urban families, students have their personal computers and they are able to learn and use English words and vocabulary items related to information technology. These facilities enable them to have higher proficiency levels in comparison with students from a rural background. It should be noted that in case of the undergraduates of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jaffna, the majority are from rural surroundings. Canagaraja (1992:15) endorsed it with his observation.

"More of the arts students come from remote rural schools (where English was never taught),their families are uneducated, poorly employed, unexposed to English."

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   64
<242-356>

Perera (N.D:88) observed, " ------ in considering the attitudes toward the second language we find two extremes. Where the urban class is concerned the majority have positive attitudes. They are both instrumentally and integratively motivated. Most children have English speaking parents with positive attitudes towards the second language."

On the other hand, in the rural sector the attitude toward the second language is self evident by the term given to it-"Kaduwa." The Youth Commission Report (1991:91 as cited in Perera, N.D:88) stated, "The notion of 'Kaduwa' has two components. The first refers to the pervasive discrimination in all spheres of life, especially employment, directed against monolingual Sinhala and Tamil speaking youth. The second aspect of 'Kaduwa' relates to question of social mobility."

Rich versus Poor

It's a usual feature that economically privileged students perform better than economically underprivileged ones across the towns and villages. However, inevitably there are a few exceptions in all areas. But as per observation, students from the upper class are more proficient in English than the middle and lower class students and the middle class students are more proficient than the lower class. McPortland (1991, p.2) supported this notion thus. "The different capacities of poor and wealthy homes to support students' learning activities continue through the elementary, middle and high school grades. Students from deprived backgrounds may not have a quiet place and home to study while well – to – do students will often have not only a quiet place but also home libraries and computers to support their learning activities. While parents who are not well educated can give strong emotional support in the education of their children, they will not have the academic strengths to help with homework as students progress through the grade levels to more challenging courses."

Another notable phenomenon of family lineage is education. Particularly students whose parents are educated, have more opportunity to use English in their family environment. This situation enables them to develop their English proficiency and they do better than the students whose parents are not educated.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   65

<242-356>

The above discussion by no means, implies that all poor students will perform worse than the rich students.

Male versus Female

Sunthareswaran (2004) stated that Jaffna society was traditionally a male- dominated one .Education and employment were considered as the sole concern of the men folk. But due to the influence of Missionaries, females had avenues for English education.

"English education for women prospered earlier and better in Jaffna than in the South--- 'The Jaffna female Seminary' a model of women's education in 1864 provided a complete English education that included French, drawing, Music, Needle work and the making of artificial flowers." (Gooneratne, 1968 as cited in Sunthareswaran, 2004:23)

The above comments are evidence of the keenness of females of Jaffna society to be proficient in English.

Theoretical Foundation

The issue that some students perform well in a subject while others though with similar background, academic preparation and experience encounter more difficulties in learning it baffles most teachers. In the case of the subject being language instruction whether in a native or a second language, a series of factors are involved. One set of factors contributing to the success in language classroom are the attitudes and motivation of both students and teachers. Even though these factors are not only ones that account for differences in classroom processes and student outcomes, it is undeniable that they influence the environment for instruction, teachers' individual roles and students' efforts significantly.

<242-356>

According to Mckay and Hornberger (1996), there are clear indications that the relationship between a person's prior linguistic and academic experience, the social context of instruction, and the result of formal language instruction has complex and reciprocal correlation with each other. Positive attitudes about language and language learning may be as much the result of success as the cause. However, it should be borne in mind that students with positive general attitudes are not linked with effective strategies that enable them to take advantage of instructional opportunities presented to them. In addition, there are still other factors such as the attitudes and examples of the peers, teachers and parents with respect to language study and social and institutional language policies as reflected in, for example, required courses of language study, both first and second, in schools which affect students. The language study depends also on the social status of the language. The report of Mckay and Hornberger (1996, p.19) rightly fits into this context. "Learners of English as a second language are in a rather different situation: their level of comprehension of the standard or any dialect is influenced by amount of exposure to the language. As learners increase in second language proficiency, typically but not always after ever – longer periods of residence in an environment in which the second language is widely used, they become more knowledgeable about and sensitive to dialectal and contextual variation in language."

Definition of Motivation

Theorists find it difficult to reach a consensus on a single definition for motivation. In the view of Gardner (1985,p.10) the term motivation in a second language learning context is found as 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity.'

According to Keller (1983), motivation is the degree of the choices people make and the degree of effort they will exert.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) stated that motivation is a desire to achieve a goal combined with the energy to work toward that goal.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   67

<242-356>

Motivation was defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal seeking acts, by Ames and Ames (1989).

Motivation plays an important role in learning and teaching English as a second language. In the task of encouraging slow learners to work harder, creating an attractive learning atmosphere or rewarding the hardworking students, the role of motivation is felt.

Since motivation is one of the key factors in language learning, the low motivated learners experience difficulties to learn English as a second language. Dornyei (1990) clearly stated that motivation is one of the main determinants of second / foreign language learning.

Oxford and Shearin (1994, as cited in Qashoa, 2006 ; 5) analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models including those from socio psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology and identified six factors that impact motivation in language learning.

1. Attitudes (i.e., sentiments toward the learning community and the target language),
2. Beliefs about self (i.e. expectations about one's attitudes to succeed self – efficacy and anxiety),
3. Goals (i.e. perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning),
4. Involvement (i.e. extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process),
5. Environmental support (i.e. extent of teacher and peer support, and the integration of cultural and outside – of – class support into learning experience)
6. Personal attributes (i.e. aptitude, age, sex, and previous language learning experience).

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

Integrative Motivation

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   68

<242-356>

Falk (1978, as cited in Norris-Holt, 2001) believed that the most successful learners of a target language are those who like the people who speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used. This form of motivation is known as integrative motivation. When someone becomes a resident in a new community that uses the target language in its social interactions, integrative motivation is a key component in assisting the learner to develop some level of proficiency in the language. It becomes a necessity in order to function socially in the community and become one of its members. It is also theorized that "integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native like pronunciation" (Finegan, 1999, P.568, as cited in Norris-Holt, 2001).

As far as integrative motivation is concerned, as noted in the previous section, only 2% of the students express clues regarding their integrative orientation. However, it should be borne in mind that the true assessment of the integrative motivation among students in the Jaffna peninsula is impossible owing to the closed avenues for the English oriented programmes and the visit of English speaking Westerners to Jaffna at present. The fact to be recognized in this context is that a genuine assessment of any project is possible only in an environment where all the needed facilities are made available to achieve a target in the project under question. The same is applicable to the assessment of the integrative motivation of the students in Jaffna. Subsequent to the recent end of the civil conflict in the beginning of the year 2009 and the restoration of normalcy in Jaffna, transport services and communication modes have been fast developed. Considerable trade investments and the arrival of experts in various fields including academics, politicians and business magnates in Jaffna are witnessed. Professional courses like CIMA and computer programmes have been introduced and the natives of Jaffna show great interest in being proficient in these fields. Meetings and panel discussions between Southern and Northern authorities are held frequently. The newly transformed situation compelling the need of a lingua franca seems to restore and revive the English environment gradually in Jaffna. Such situation is expected to promote the integrative motivation among students of English as a second language, in Jaffna, in course of time.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   69
<242-356>

Instrumental Motivation

In contrast to integrative motivation, is the form of motivation referred to as instrumental motivation. This is generally characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language. (Hudson, 2000). With instrumental motivation, the purpose of language acquisition becomes more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, reading technical material, translation work or achieving high social status. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place or in some instances is even desired.

Exposure to Language

Learners generally do not have sufficient access to the target language outside of the classroom and practice what they have learnt in the classroom. Learners usually step into the real world using their mother tongue soon after they leave the classroom. In classrooms, although teachers now have gradually adopted approaches that focus on meaning and language use, due to the linier mode of face – to – face interaction, the learning outcome is still not efficient enough. Teachers now urgently need a solution to increase exposure and use of the target knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom.

Factors of learners' different personalities, learning and response pace, motivation and language proficiency can all lead to individual inequality to speak up in class or in groups. For example, learners who are shy, slow or afraid of making errors may choose to speak less in the classroom or group discussions. Insufficient access to the target language both inside and outside of the classroom certainly is an obstacle to foster learners' language proficiency.

Sometimes learners' previous language knowledge may help communication to some extent but they have to learn how to use this effectively in real life situation. As long as they make progress in communication, adjustment becomes easier. Language learning means learning to communicate i.e. learning to use language appropriately for the communication of meaning in social contexts.

<242-356>

Extent of the Students' Use of English

The choice of methodology in the language class depends on the extent of the use of the language of the students in everyday life or outside the classroom. In a monolingual language situation like in Jaffna, students have very limited scope to use English in everyday life. However, owing to the influence of globalization, some students have access to internet, satellite television, mobile phone etc. which provide them knowledge in information communication technology. These students have an opportunity to use English on occasion. This opportunity is not available to all the people across towns and villages. Differences between the urban and rural surroundings and the economically advantaged and the economically disadvantaged people can be observed always.

Vignaraja (2005) commented that though the vernaculars were developed languages, they grew insignificant before the presence of English and they couldn't be the source of modern learning. Though English is declared as a link language its role in domains such as education and law is high. "This could be better evidenced in the University of Jaffna where English dominates in the areas of education and law and plays the minimal role or rather a negligible role as a link language. This may be due to the fact that the region where the Institute is established is predominantly monolingual." (Vignaraja, 2005:2-3)

Nowadays there is a growing tendency of abandoning the 'focus on form' teaching approach such as Grammar Translation and Audiolingualism as more language teachers have observed the failure of form focusing approach in developing learners' communicative ability in real life situations and shifted to adopt the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communication in real life situations. (Hymes, 1972 as cited in Chen, 2005). In order to do so learners are expected not only to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgecock, 2002). It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use (Kasper, 1997). It has been admitted that without sufficient exposure which is essential for learners to notice and acquire the

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 71
<242-356>

language input and chances to use the knowledge, communicative competence can't be promoted (Chen, 2005)

Extent of Students' use of English in the Classroom

Wang (2006,p.51) said, "In class where all or a number of the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it; because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue."

Many research findings show that students are verbally more comfortable in the bilingual instruction class. Cummins (2004) claimed that when students continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality. Bilingual students develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through two different languages (Cummins, 2004).

Suseendiraraja (1997:11 as cited in Sunthareswaran,2004:164) stated, "We must note that a good section of students have begun to feel that they could study in Tamil, work, earn and prosper in life comfortably. Today the pattern of life in our society is such that only a very few learn English for intellectual satisfaction."

While English can be reserved for certain functions like lecturing, the students' mother tongue can be used for other functions including explaining grammar to students particularly when the grammatical concepts in the target language do not occur in students' first language, explaining tasks to the students, explaining a particular methodology used in class, explaining aims of a lesson, checking students' comprehension etc.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   72
<242-356>

Students' Use of English in Real Situations

The following remarks by scholars to stress the importance of learners' exposure to the target language to achieve communicative ability in real life situations are appropriate to be quoted here.

"Learners' whole learning system is greatly marked by constraints caused by culture and also lack of institutional supports. Thus language learning becomes incomplete if it lacks the practice in real communication" (Khan, 2005, p.7)

According to Wang (2006) facilities should be made to offer learners sufficient exposure to a considerable amount of language input either in natural or artificial teaching settings. Ellis (1999 as cited in WANG, 2006) considered that input is a term used to refer to the language that is addressed to the foreign language learner either by a native speaker or another foreign language learner. Input also means the language that the students hear or read.

Speaking requires some degree of real time exposure to an audience. Learners are often found to be ashamed about what they are expressing in a foreign language in front of other students in a classroom; worried about making mistakes, fearful criticism or losing face or simply shy of attention that their speech attracts." (WANG, 2006, p. 50)

Based on the scholars' views, the author sums up that as far as classroom teaching is concerned, bilingual instruction is beneficial in the English language class as students are found to be more comfortable and at ease in following the class. Further, certain teaching items necessarily and inevitably require the use of students' mother tongue for explanation. Use of mother tongue creates a tension free environment that induces students to interact with the teacher and the other students independently. Nevertheless, an adequate exposure to English outside the classroom is recognized as a strong factor that influences the students' use of English in real life situations.

Although difference in the ability of individual adults to learn a second language exists, if enough time and enough opportunity are provided to any adult of reasonable abilities, he can learn to communicate in any language. But the extent of fluency achieved will differ considerably from individual to individual. Motivation is another important factor in language learning and societies that recognize the value of multilingualism will increase the motivation level of learners and thus increase the success of second language learning in general.

Among various methods, the most important tools for adult language learners include exposure.

The views of O'Brien (2002, p.16) are in further support of the importance of exposure in the development of second language learning. "In order to proceed along the 'natural order' of language, a L2 learner needs exposure to L2. The input hypothesis states that this progression occurs when the language "input" is one step beyond the current level of competence. The formula "i + 1" has been used to represent this idea; with "I" signifying the stage the language learner is at and "i + 1" is the level where acquisition would take place."

When considering the formula "I + 1", in the context of the students of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the University of Jaffna, learning ESL, "i" may be the exposure to English they receive as they follow their main course of studies in the English medium.

Attitude of Students, Teachers and Parents to English

The entire student population in the University of Jaffna has a positive attitude to the use of English in the classroom and outside the classroom, as well.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001:68), "Even monolingual speakers of Jaffna society had a positive attitude towards English language during the British period. They were not prejudiced against the English language."

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   74

<242-356>

According to the Youth Commission Report (1991,as cited in Perera, N.D.:88), "The liberalization of trade, access to Middle East job market, tourism, mass and electronic media led to a need for English among potential job seekers. This in turn, it is presumed will result at least in instrumental motivation to learn English which once again will create positive attitudes towards the language and its users."

Sunthareswaran (2004:148) observed, "The teacher of English has a favourable attitude towards the use of English not merely as a subject in the school but also outside the school. It goes unstated that the teacher of English realizes the importance of English as a global language and a medium of higher education better than a teacher of any other subject."

Sunthareswaran (2004) noted that in Jaffna, parents feel that opportunities are rare for students pursuing their higher degrees in their M.T. which is Tamil. So every parent wants the child to study English earnestly. Despite the cry for posterity and development in their native Tamil language, parents encourage students to study English.

Perera (N.D:94) stated, "---- the most important factor in attitude formation toward the second language is the teacher and the learning situation. Therefore second language teachers have a major role in developing positive attitude in their students toward the target language and thereby facilitating acquisition of the language."

Perera (N.D:84) remarked, "In spite of nearly a half a century of English for all, 15% of those who sit the G.C.E. (O.L) examination receive zero marks in English. Cumaranatunge (1983:3, as cited in Perera, N.D:84) referring to the second language learner in Sri Lanka stated, "The presence of negative attitude may be one reason why students otherwise competent, reveal low attainment of English."

Hence the author is of the opinion that the attitude of the learner, the teacher, and the society toward the target language and the community that uses that language as well plays a

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   75
<242-356>

great role in learning that language, In case of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, they all have a positive attitude toward English. They thoroughly realize the recognition English receives in the international arena, the value assigned to it in the job market and its role as a lingua franca among various communities in the world. Yet the major reason that hinders them from communicating in it is the lack of exposure to English.

Correlation between Exposure and Attitude

Thorat (2007, pp.4-5) summarized the attitudes of the weaker learners in rural areas as follows.

1. English language is considered as an imposition as it is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.
2. They think since they are not native speakers of English, they may never succeed in mastering it. Thus they lack confidence and joy in learning it.
3. They believe that only intelligent learners can understand English. So they consider that the study of English is beyond their reach.
4. Many learners do not attend English classes as they label these as boring.
5. Many, anyhow, memorize the materials in English and reproduce the answers.
6. Many do not know even the very basic grammatical rules because they never have had an opportunity to use full and complete sentences in English. Their functional contexts do not require or encourage them to use English. If they try to use English, they will be ridiculed by their peers.
7. They are deprived of the opportunities like seminars, group discussions and other similar activities because of their negative approach to the language.

Almost all what is outlined above is applicable to the weak learners of English of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, also.

Saravanapawa Iyar (2001:114) observed, "In Sri Lanka at present, the learning/teaching of English differs from the situation during the British period. Now the teaching of English is almost confined to the classroom with the limited time and using reinforcement and exposure to English outside the classroom is minimal or nil. On the other hand, M.T. dominates among peer interaction, family affairs and other social domains. In the English classroom also the usage of M.T. is very high. It is true even in the University of Jaffna English language classroom."

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   76
<242-356>

Language Exposure and Learning Difficulties

In the opinion of the author, students' lack of speech skill can be attributed to the lack of opportunities for them to use English. In plain terms, in Jaffna there are no situations that demand them to function in English. For instance, it is their mother tongue, Tamil that is used in work places, shopping activities, domestic circles, entertainment etc. If there is any context that may compel them to use English, they would themselves attempt to use it for satisfying their needs. For example, if they work in an organization where there are employees for whom Tamil is not their mother tongue, English will naturally serve as the link language.

Teaching Materials used in the ESL Classroom in the University

The English Language Teaching Centre of the University of Jaffna does not prescribe any text books to be used in the ESL classes. However, the Lecturers / Instructors in English use certain recommended materials as supplementary readers. These materials including American Kernel Lessons, Changing Times Changing Tenses, Developing Writing and Reading Sampler series do not incorporate elements in their contents to teach communicative competence.

Teaching Methods

Cumaranatunge (N.D) reported that hitherto the favoured method of developing the teachers' professional skills has been the "pull out" model. NIE, The Zonal Directorate or Universities design and conduct courses for teachers. The course-based model is still the widely recognized approach to the development of teachers. These courses come under several categories. The long, award-bearing courses such as the Dip. in TESL or the B.Ed. in TESL are intended to enhance the teachers' qualifications. Other courses of shorter duration are to further develop the teachers' existing skills, such as the course in 'ELT Materials and Techniques.' conducted by the NIE. In addition, there are remedial courses intended to assist teachers in areas in which they face difficulties, and the course in 'Second Language Testing and Evaluation' is of such type. Still there are courses to meet the specific needs of teachers required to take on new

responsibilities. For example, the course in 'Supervision and Observation for Prospective Teacher Educators', conducted by the NIE in 1999 can be mentioned. Yet these courses are, of course not considered to fulfill participants' needs and such courses conducted in Sri Lanka are based on what course designers perceive as being the needs of teachers. Instead of considering the actual needs of teachers, courses are based on what providers have the expertise to provide.

The above discussion reveals a part of the reason why students' performance is unsatisfactory in the public examinations. Furthermore, all the teachers of English do not have the access to follow the above mentioned course programmes. Besides, these course programmes do not aim to develop learners, communicative ability.

There is no recommended teaching method for teaching ESL in the university. Lecturers / Instructors choose methods which they find appropriate, according to the proficiency level of students and the classroom context. Hence a uniformity in the choice of teaching method is lost.

Undergraduates' Instrumental and Integrative Orientations

With the view of enhancing or instilling motivation for learning L2, the educational policy makers and syllabus designers usually identify the L2 learners' needs and goals. Besides, the identification of the L2 learners' needs and goals would enable the teacher to adopt teaching methodologies and strategies to meet and satisfy the students' needs. This perceived relevance between personal needs and learning activities could be a prerequisite for sustaining motivation to learn. According to Dornyei and Oxford and Shearin (1994 ; 1994 as cited in Qashoa, 2006,p.30), the following list of needs for learning a L2 has been produced.

- getting a better job, getting access to target language media or conducting business with the target language country (the instrumental orientation)
- traveling to other countries (the instrumental motivational subsystem)
- friendship, or in Dornyei's term, Xenophobia (the integrative motivational subsystem)
- broadening one's view and avoiding provincialism (the knowledge orientation)

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   78
<242-356>

- interests in foreign language culture, and people or satisfying curiosity about cultural secrets (the socio cultural orientation)
- seeking new intellectual stimulation and personal challenge;
- enjoying the elitism of taking a difficult language (e.g. American High School students learning Japanese);
- showing off to friends, parents and society.

In fact, the afore-stated needs are by no means universally applicable or exhaustive. It should be borne in mind that not all language learners have the same motives and needs on account of their different learning contexts. Nevertheless, the above list could be treated as general information which language teacher can take as a starting point to lead to the more specific needs in the individual context.

However instrumental motivation is strongly goal oriented and doesn't seem to involve any identification or feeling of closeness with the other language group (Gardner, 2001). L2 learners might apply instrumental motivation, operating whereby they persuade themselves to enjoy in L2 learning even though they have no liking for the language and culture. (Zimmerman, 1989) Instrumental motivation will be found more prominent in situations where there are utilitarian benefits.

With regard to the integrative orientation of the undergraduates, only six students reported about their interest in understanding and appreciating the British and American literature. The non-existence of the English speaking people in Jaffna is the sole reason for the absence of the integrative motivation among the undergraduates. Further, in the ESL classes in the university, only the linguistic features of the language are taught. Moreover some students stated that they hate watching English films and plays as most of them include events contradicting with the values and beliefs of their native culture.

The value of the integrative orientation should be duly recognized in view of the foreseen instability of the instrumental motivation as it can be such as the economic and political changes.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   79

<242-356>

Those who focus on learning English only for the purpose of getting a good job or because English is the dominant language of technology and economy ought to realize the fact that the supremacy of English won't last forever and the rise of a super power might change the situation. Greater emphasis on instrumental motivation and the negligence of the integrative motivation might tend to affect the learners' general motivation for learning L2. For example, most of the respondents in this study learn English for getting jobs, passing the examinations and or applying for foreign scholarships. This follows that after fulfilling these purposes, instrumental motivation has run its course for most of the learners. So the strength of the integrative motivation lies in the stability of its goals. Compared to the instrumental language goals related to career or passing examinations, the goals of integrative language are more stable.

Demotivating Factors

Demotivation related to some subject aspects (Vocabulary, spelling and structural difficulties) has been identified. Other types of demotivating factors including the lecturer's personality and teaching methods and reduced self confidence also have been found to have their own influence. The subject demotivating factors are taken for discussion first since they are the most frequent.

Subject Demotivating Factors
Vocabulary

Most of the undergraduates feel demotivated to learn English because of the large number of English words which they have to memorize. Vocabulary plays such an important role in learning a foreign language and it is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. For communicating well in English, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. Although the undergraduates realize the value of vocabulary, most of them learn vocabulary passively due to many factors. First the testing system of ESL in the university requires undergraduates to memorize long lists of vocabulary by heart. Students are still following the traditional ways of learning and memorizing vocabulary. Practice of memorizing long lists of new words with the

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   80

<242-356>

meaning in the native language without any real context lays heavy burden on the learners and spoils their motivation for learning. In the view of Nation (2000, p.6) words should not be learnt separately or by memorization without understanding. Further, "learning new words is a cumulative process with words enriched and established as they are met again." The author is of the opinion that the learning context in the university (evaluation system, teaching methods and learning strategies) can be partly blamed for demotivation among students in learning vocabulary.

Structure Difficulties

For most ESL students in the university, learning grammar is tedious and they complain about the difficulty of structures. A misconception among the undergraduates is that without the mastery of English grammatical rules, they won't be able to communicate in English. The negligence of other major skills as listening and speaking and extra concentration on structural rules of learners are the reasons for these misconceptions.

Being a lecturer and in the light of the discussion with the undergraduates, the author believes that the difficulty of English structures the students experience stems from the difference in the grammatical and syntactical structures between Tamil and English.

The tenses in English are considered one of the most difficult structural points facing the Tamil students learning English since there is a difference in the number of tenses in English and Tamil. Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) conducted a study to investigate the Jordanian students' writing errors and they found tense errors are the most frequent ones committed by the Arab learners since Arabic like Tamil, has 3 tenses only.

According to en.wikipedia.org.wiki(N.D.:8), Tamil is a constantly head-final language. The verb occurs at the end of the clause and the typical word order, Subject Object Verb (SOV) is found. However Tamil also exhibits extensive word order variations and as a result surface permutations of the SOV order are possible with different pragmatic effects.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   81
<242-356>

Tamil is a null subject language. Not all Tamil sentences have subjects, verbs and objects. One can find valid sentences that have only a verb – such as 'mudintuviddatu' (completed)- or only a subject and object, without a verb such as atu en vi:du (That my house). Tamil does not have a copula (a linking verb equivalent to the word is), Whereas, the word order in a sentence in English is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).

e.g. avan coru unkiran. (He rice eats.)

The English equivalent of the above sentence is as follows.

He eats rice.

While the sentence structure "coru unkiran avan." (rice eats he.) is recognized as an accepted form in Tamil, the corresponding word order in English, "rice eats he." is totally incorrect.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001) illustrated that in Jaffna English, speakers use the past perfect tense very frequently instead of the past tense. For example, I have no work to continue today. I had finished it yesterday.

In the above example, Simple Past tense can be used, but Jaffna English speakers use the Past Perfect." (Saravanapava Iyar, 2001:91)

Further, Saravanapava Iyar (2001) stated that some verbs such as appear, feel, seem, look etc. which cannot be used in the Present Continuous tense are used by the Jaffna English speakers to construct sentences in the same tense.

"I am hoping to see you.

I am believing you.

It is appearing to be a planned affair." (p.90)

Spelling Errors

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 82

<242-356>

One of the handicaps the undergraduates have in writing paragraphs and compositions is their fear of making a lot of spelling mistakes. English spelling seems to be difficult for many Tamil ESL learners for several reasons. First, students perceive English as not representing the pronunciation of words; silent letters are there and there are many ways to spell one sound. Second, some learners have the difficulty in identifying pronunciation distinctly enough to spell words. Some sounds such as /f/, /g/, /z/ and /b/ have no equivalents in Tamil. Some consonants with phonic alternation as "c" in cow and pencil or "g" in green and ginger become a challenge for the learners with regard to spelling.

Being unaware of the reasons for difficulties in mastering English spelling the learners are haunted by the fear of making mistakes in spelling. This fear affects negatively their writing skill, makes students learn in an insecure atmosphere and reduces their motivation for learning English.

Listening

Many students are demotivated when they encounter difficulties in understanding the recorded materials in the listening classroom.

The importance of listening as a basic language skill is widely recognized and many researchers emphasize the influence of listening on the other language skills and on the learners' schemata. In the view of Rost (1990), listening is the most broadly used language skill and it is the primary vehicle for learning language as it is a medium through which people gather tremendous information and understanding of the world. Furthermore, listening being a receptive skill paves the way for productive skills and communicative competence. Thus the need for finding measures to increase the students' motivation toward listening texts and exercises and to identify the demotivating factors so as to reduce the anxiety about the difficulty of recorded texts.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   83

<242-356>

In the listening classes in the university, for most students understanding the accent of the native speakers is hard since they are familiar with only the speech of their lecturer who is a nonnative speaker of English.

Seliger (1995) stated that a loss of respect for the natural patterns of the language in English teaching for many years has been observed; teachers have got in the way of accepting all sorts of artificial or adapted tests. Hence the researcher views that authentic teaching material which provides a true representation of real speech should be used in the listening classes in order to motivate learners to cope with real life situations.

Infrequent Use of Technology

Students will be more interested in following the English classes if technological devices such as T.V, video, computer etc. are used in the classroom. Most students are demotivated to learn English as their Instructors / Lecturers rarely use technology in conducting the English classes. To increase motivation, several types of technology can be used. Marshal (2002) claimed that what an experienced teacher does naturally can be complemented by educational technology and expands students experience beyond the classroom. With ever expanding content and technology choices from video to multimedia to the internet, Marshal suggests that a need arises to understand the recipe for success involving the learner, the teacher, the content and the environment in which technology is used.

It is urgent for the English Instructor / Lecturer in the university to appreciate the benefits that can be derived from the use of technology in motivating the learners and enriching the teaching and learning process. The use of technology in classes leads to positive change in the educational process. For example, the teachers' perceptions of their students' capabilities can shift dramatically when technology is integrated into the classroom. Also when technology is in use, teachers frequently find themselves acting more as coaches and less as teachers. Further the use of technology would foster collaboration among students which in turn would create a positive effect on students' attainment levels.

<242-356>

Also it is to be noted that using technology has other advantages such as preparing students for today's information society. Since web technology has become a part of today's social fabric, computer technologies and the internet can be considered powerful tools to be used in language classes. Besides language learners can now learn through writing e – mail and conducting online research. (WANG, 2005)

It's notable that utilizing technology in the university is correlated with other variables such as teachers' training, curriculum, cost effectiveness and teacher – students ratio. For example, unless the teachers are familiar with the technology to be used in teaching students won't be able to benefit from it. Instructors/Lecturers in English should be provided with adequate support in using technology. Lack of acquaintance with technology prevents the teacher from using it. Wenglinsky (1998) found that teachers who have received professional development with computers are more likely to use computers in effective ways than those who have not participated in such training.

Infrequent Use of Tamil

The use of students' mother tongue in second language classes still remains a controversial issue and a lot of arguments and counter arguments have been taking place among linguists regarding the impact of such issue on 2nd language acquisition. Students are expected to have maximum meaningful input of the target language for communicating in the target language. For the acquisition of any language, both maximum "input" (Krashen, 1987) and "output" (Swain, 1985) are felt to be very important. Yet, the findings of some studies maintain that some extent of the use of students' mother tongue in the second language classroom is important (Atkinson, 1987, Guthrie, 1984).

The teacher's rare use of Tamil in English classes is viewed as motivating and demotivating at the same time by different students. Those who referred to the rare use of Tamil as a demotivating factor may be satisfied with temporary achievements such as passing the

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   85
<242-356>

examination whereas for some other students in the same classes, it is a motivating factor since they want to communicate fluently in English.

Under such circumstances, the Instructors / Lecturers are in a difficult situation because on one hand they are expected to maximize the use of English and on the other hand they need to ensure that the less proficient students in their classes are able to pick up what they say. It is understood that the choice of language can be determined by the consideration of the realistic classroom situations.

Conclusion

Widdowson (1984) has rightly claimed that the aim of L2 class is to teach language for communication. However, a distinction between aims and procedure is indispensable. If the goal of ESL teaching is to get students to communicate effectively in L2, the procedures through which the goal is to be attained should exhibit a balanced combination of both the teaching of language as and for communication. Exposition to real texts is not enough to achieve this goal; but it remains as an essential component of ESL programme. Most of the university students lack exposure to English at home, in the university and outside. It is also evident that greater the level of exposure to English of the students higher their use of English in real life situations.

With regard to the attitude, the majority of the undergraduates of the university have a positive attitude to the use of English in the household, university and outside. Yet some students have developed a negative attitude to the language due to certain misconceptions of the language and lack of facilities for learning it.

Instrumental motivation is found to be common among the students.

Hence the necessity to provide students with adequate exposure to English is essentially felt. Introduction of real life situations in the ESL classroom is a good practice to achieve communicative competence among students.

<242-356>

CHAPTER – 4

CLASS ROOM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

===

In this chapter, two types of teaching techniques namely (1) Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and (2) Teaching through Language Activities, to develop students' communicative competence are under discussion.

TBLT which has been popular since its introduction in the 1980s basically reflects communicative teaching and learning. It refers to a type of language teaching which includes "tasks" as its prime units for designing and implementing L2 instruction.

Language activities are intended to provide students with adequate practice for expressing meaning effectively and appropriately as social context requires so that the students' communicative competence could be developed in a natural manner.

In chapter III, it has been observed that a major factor hindering students to achieve communicative competence is the lack of exposure to language. Hence the techniques to be discussed in this chapter are believed to overcome this problem by providing necessary exposure to students, particularly through real world experience.

Task – based Pedagogy – A Brief Review

In 1976, the British Applied linguist Wilkins (1976, p.2 as cited in Nunan, 2006) made a basic distinction between what he called 'Synthetic approaches' to syllabus design and 'analytical approaches'. According to him, all syllabuses fitted one or other of these approaches.

In synthetic approaches, "Different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up" (Wilkins,1976,p.2 as cited in Nunan, 2006, p. 2)

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   87

<242-356>

Such approaches are based on the traditional way of organizing the syllabus and reflect the idea that the central role of instruction is to simplify the learning challenges for the student. One way to simplify learning is to break the content down into its constituent parts and to introduce each part separately and step by step. A related concept that was popular in the 1960s was that of mastery learning. In mastery learning, the subject matter was broken down and sequenced from easy to difficult and each content item was introduced to the learner in a serial fashion, and a new item was not supposed to be introduced until the correct item had been thoroughly mastered.

The dominant approach to language teaching in Asia and most of the rest of the world has been a synthetic one. Teachers who have learned their own language through a synthetic approach consider it as the normal and logical way of learning language.

In the book titled *Notional Syllabus*, written by him, Wilkins (as cited in Nunan, 2006) offered an alternative to synthetic approaches. These approaches are known as analytical approaches as the learners are presented with holistic chunks of language and are required to analyze them or break them down into their constituent parts.

"Prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous. Such approaches are organized in terms of the purposes of which people are learning language and the kinds of language that are necessary to meet these purposes" (Wilkins,1976,p.13 as cited in Nunan, 2006, p. 2).

All syllabus proposals that do not depend on a prior analysis of the language belong to this second category. In addition to task – based syllabuses, they all have one thing in common – they do not rely on prior analysis of the language into its discrete points. Then, Task – based language teaching grew out of this alternative approach to language pedagogy. Since then the concept of task has become an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learner assessment.

<242-356>

Prabhu has been the pioneer to apply TBLT in teaching programmes. He conducted his studies in Bangalore of Southern India in 1979 to put his theories into practice. He believed that students may learn more effectively when they concentrate on tasks rather than on the language they are using.

Tasks

Tasks have been defined in various ways. Nunan (2004) drew a basic distinction between real world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. Pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom.

According to Long (1985, p. 89) "A task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes , making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant, the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between" This definition is non – technical and non – linguistic. It describes the sorts of things that the person in the street would say if asked what they were doing.

Here is a definition of a pedagogical task.
"… an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction while performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative …. since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake." (Richards, Platt and Webber, 1986, p. 289).

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   89
<242-356>

In this definition, the authors take a pedagogical perspective. Tasks are defined in terms of what the learners will do in class rather than in the world outside the classroom.

Those who advocate TBLT have stressed the importance of incorporating authentic data into the classroom while it has been pointed out that authenticity is lost when a piece of language is shifted from the communicative context in which it occurred and taken to the classroom. However, it is to be borne in mind that if learners are exposed only to contrived dialogues and texts, learning the language will be meaningless.

The above discussion endorses the fact that tasks should be related to learners' real experience of daily life. Hence learners need authentic data to make learning meaningful. Tasks can be made authentic via following means.

a. **Through genuine task purposes**

Willis (1998) asserted that one of the prime aspects of task authenticity is whether real communication takes place. In order to make tasks authentic, it is necessary to find out a genuine purpose for the language to be learned; unless there is a purpose, real meaningful communication will be impossible. When there is a genuine communicative purpose, students will find the chance to interact naturally. Communicative purpose in turn, will lead to increased fluency and natural acquisition.

b. **Through real world targets**

Long and Crookes (1992) argued that pedagogic tasks must be related to real – world target tasks. Examples given by them include buying a train ticket, renting an apartment, reporting a chemistry experiment, taking lecture notes and so on. Classroom – based pedagogic tasks may not be similar to the target tasks. However they can be regarded as authentic if they have a clear relationship with real – world needs.

c. **Through classroom interactions**

A classroom is a typical environment in which students and teachers work toward for a common goal. Classroom interactions make pedagogic tasks to be authentic. Teachers should

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 90

<242-356>

have the ability to look for the potential authenticity of the learning environment in classroom. Learning tasks, the materials to be selected and worked on and the actual needs and interests of all people who have gathered in the classroom provide adequate authentic potential for communication.

d. **Learners' engagement**

Whether the task is relevant to the learners is another important aspect to be considered. When designing a task, it is necessary to take learners engagement into account, so as to make tasks more authentic. While some tasks may be authentic to some learners, they may not be so to others. Therefore by engaging students in the tasks, tasks can be made authentic to a good extent.

Task Types

Ellis (1999) held that there are two main types of task, i.e. (1) Unfocused tasks and (2) focused tasks. Unfocussed tasks are further categorized into (a) pedagogic tasks and (b) real world tasks.

Pedagogic Unfocussed Task

An example of a pedagogic unfocussed task is shown below.

A group of four students is formed and each of the four students has one picture and describes it to the rest of the class.

Students from the rest of the class ask the four students questions about their pictures.

One student from the class tries to tell the story.

If necessary step 2 and 3 are repeated.

<242-356>

Real – world Unfocussed Task

An example of a real – world unfocused task is shown below.

The following instruction is given to students to try the exercise.

Look at the e-mail message below. Listen to Mr. Joy's instructions on the tape. Make notes if you want to. Then write a suitable reply to Ranjan.

Dear Mr. Joy!

Please send flight number, date and time of arrival and I will arrange for someone to meet you at the airport.

Ranjan

Focussed Task

An example of a focused task is as follows.

You are the Director of a private language institute and have advertised for a new English teacher. Below are summaries of the CVs of two applicants. Discuss each applicant and then decide which one to offer the job to.

Nimal, aged 30.

B.A. in Social studies.

Has spent a year working his way round the world.

Has spent six years teaching economics in government schools.

Has written a highly successful novel about teachers.

Has been married twice – now divorced, two children.

Has been running local youth group for three years.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   92
<242-356>

Betty, aged 45.

Has been married for 24 years, three children.

Has not worked most of the time.

Has done evening courses in youth guidance.

Has spent the last year teaching pupils privately.

Has been constantly active in local government.

Has been elected to local Council twice.

It is hoped that the above discussions will enlighten the teachers to easily understand the basic procedures and advantages of TBLT; the teachers may also find some practical principles to apply them to their communicative task design.

Components of Communicative Tasks

Nunan (1989) stressed that communicative tasks will incorporate a goal, input, activities, settings and rules. Task goals are to develop students' communicative competence. Tasks include some form of input data that may be verbal, for example, a dialogue or reading passage or non-verbal, for example, a picture sequence. Activity refers to tasks not exercises. An activity is derived from the input and sets out what the learners are expected to do in relation to the input.

There are many sources from which input can be derived. These sources include the teacher talking to students, the reading passage, a listening text on tape etc. The necessity of providing students sufficient reading and listening materials is felt, since one of the main aims of input is to teach students how to read and listen to English. For example, students may be required to read a text to extract some specific information. The same can be applicable in listening activities also. Adequate practice in reading and listening activities will lead them to perform well.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   93
<242-356>

Input Approaches

In communicative classroom, the approaches of input include listening to extract specific information and reading to extract specific information. These two main approaches are discussed in the following sections.

a)   Listening to extract specific information.

Teaching listening involves the training of students to understand what is being said in such conversations and to enable them to disregard redundancy, hesitation and ungrammaticality. Since they practice it in their own language, we can optimistically assume that they can be trained to practice it in English also. After they listen to the text, they can be allowed to go through the transcript of conversations quickly to check the information they have extracted during listening and again the tape can be played.

b)   Reading to extract specific information

It is generally hard for a teacher to convince students of ESL that texts in English can be understood even though they contain vocabulary items and structure which may be new to students. Students may not be able to understand the whole text but it is possible to extract specific information.

It is important to train students in skills such as the ability to understand what is important even though the reader is unable to understand everything as they may well have to comprehend reading in just a situation in real life. The same is true for listening. Anyhow as the reading text is static, students have the tendency to read slowly with the greater focus on the meaning of each word of their interest. If they go on reading in this manner, they will encounter difficulties in quickly scanning a text for information. Therefore the teacher should stress on the comprehension task being carried out in a limited time frame.

Activities

Activities are the participants' behaviour in relation to the input. Nunan (1989 / 2000) suggested three ways of characterizing activities.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   94

<242-356>

1.   rehearsal for the real world;

2.   skills use;

3.   fluency and accuracy.

Speaking is considered the most important activity, of all the four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking activities are regarded important in a language course as they are means used to promote the learners' ability to express themselves. Designing speaking activities of course involves strategic efforts. Learners encounter some problems when they take part in speaking activities. It's the responsibility of the teachers to work out effective speaking activities to cope with the learners' problems.

Activity Types

Researchers have shown great interest in exploring activity types that stimulate interactive language use in real situations or classrooms. Pirabhu (1987) proposed one of the most general classifications, and these types are based on three principal activity types including information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap activities. On the other hand, various findings are put forward, related to the most effective activity in facilitating L2 learning. Pica and Doughty (1985, as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006) illustrated that the two – way information gap games (e.g. all learners in a group discussion have unique information to contribute) stimulated more modified interactions than one – way information gap activities. (e.g. One member of the group possesses all the relevant information). Role – pays can be effectively used to add variety to the kinds of activities students are to perform by encouraging them to develop and practice new language and by creating the motivation and involvement required for real learning. Grellet (1981,as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006) devised some method in which learners may develop flexible communication strategies through matching activities based on inferring the meaning of unknown elements. Here each activity type manifested its effectiveness in promoting language learning, thereby encouraging learners to develop their own strategies.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   95
<242-356>

Classroom Setting

Jeon and Hahn (2006) spoke about classroom setting as another component of task. Classroom setting refers to a kind of environment in which tasks are performed. There can be different arrangements by which learners can be grouped physically based on individual, pair, small group and whole class mode. Many researchers favour the effectiveness of group work in comparison to individual work for general pedagogic reasons. Group work is believed to increase the cooperation and cohesiveness among learners. Group work promotes a linguistic environment which may assist L2 learning. In contrast, in the view of Li and Adamson (1992), advanced students preferred individual work to group work or whole class work, on their belief that group activities would not improve their academic grades. The research findings regarding classroom settings are found to represent some mixed results. Therefore the classroom arrangement should be flexible rather than fixed. Depending on the learning situations, different settings are arranged for task participants and the rules for the teacher should be dynamic in order to control class modes.

Summary

TBLT provided learner with the opportunity for 'natural' learning inside the classroom. It emphasizes meaning over form, but can also cater for learning form.

It is intrinsically motivating. It is compatible with a learner – centred educational philosophy but also allows for teacher input and direction.

It caters to the development of communicative fluency while not neglecting accuracy. It can be used alongside a more traditional approach.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   96

<242-356>

CHAPTER – 5
CONCLUSION

Issues

The major issues regarding students' impediments in developing their communicative competence in ESL are summarized here.

The English language proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna is very low when they enter the University. Most of them have failed in General English in the G.C.E. (A/L) examination. It is found that no training or expert guidance with regard to the use of General English course material is provided to teachers in Jaffna. Specialists or qualified resource persons to guide teachers of English to handle this course material are not available in Jaffna. In some schools in the remote areas of the Jaffna district, English classes are not held in the G.C.E. (A/L) classes since no teachers of English have been appointed in these schools.

The ELTC of the University of Jaffna does not prescribe any textbooks designed for teaching communicative competence in the ESL classes. Certain recommended materials used as supplementary readers only in the first year of the ESL course do not incorporate elements to teach communicative competence. Materials produced by the ELTC staff panel to be used in the classes are based on the traditional methods of language teaching.

Since there is no fixed teaching method for teaching ESL in the University of Jaffna, Lecturers /Instructors in English have the freedom of choosing their own method which they find appropriate according to the proficiency level of students and the classroom context. CLT approach is almost neglected.

Majority of the undergraduates lack exposure to English at home, in the University and in the social surrounding. It is also discovered that students with greater extent of exposure to English, use this language to a higher extent in real life situations.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   97

<242-356>

Most undergraduates are found to hold a positive attitude toward English. Yet a very small number of undergraduates have a negative attitude due to certain misconception about the language and lack of facilities for learning it.

Almost all the undergrads have instrumental motivation to learn English. Their concern mainly involves the fulfillment of ESL requirement of obtaining a pass in English. Subsequently they do not have the urge to develop their communicative competence.

Demotivating factors related to some subject aspects such as vocabulary, structural difficulties, spelling and listening and rare use of technology are stated by the undergraduates.

Most undergraduates feel demotivated to learn English because of the large number of English words which they have to memorize. For effective communication, students should have an adequate stock of vocabulary and should know how to use them appropriately. Although the students have a clear understanding of the value of vocabulary, most of them have the tendency to learn it passively due to some factors. First the testing system of ESL in the University compels the students to memorize a long list of vocabulary by heart. Students haven't yet moved away from the traditional ways of learning vocabulary. They practice of memorizing several new words at a time with their meaning in Tamil, without any context. It lays heavy burden in the learners and their interest for learning is lost. The evaluation system, teaching materials and learning strategies are factors that demotivate learners from learning vocabulary.

Grammar is a boring portion for most of the ESL students in the University and they complain about the structural difficulties of the language. The undergrads also have a misconception that they won't be able to communicate in English without the mastery of its grammatical rules. The difficulty of English structures is mainly due to the difference in the grammatical and syntactical structures between Tamil and English. As there is a difference in the number of tenses in English and Tamil, the tenses in English are believed to be the most difficult structural point for Tamil students learning English.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 98
<242-356>

The undergraduates have a great handicap in writing paragraphs and compositions because of their fear of making spelling mistakes frequently. English spelling system is difficult for many Tamil ESL learners for various reasons. First, students believe that they do not find a regular correlation between spelling and pronunciation in English as they find the presence of silent letters and of many ways to spell one sound. Second, some learners have the difficulty in identifying pronunciation distinctly enough to spell words. They are not aware of the reasons for difficulties in mastering English spelling. Their fear of making spelling mistakes grows further. This fear adversely affects their writing skill and makes them learn in an insecure environment and ultimately reduces their motivation for learning English.

Nearly half the number of undergrads has difficulties in understanding the recorded materials in the listening classroom. Most students in the listening classes find it hard to understand the accent of the native speakers since they are familiar with only the speech of their lecturer who is a nonnative speaker of English.

Some undergrads feel demotivated to learn English as their lecturers rarely use technology in the English classes.

Solutions

The author wishes to make the following recommendations in order to overcome the difficulties the students face in following the ESL classes and develop their communicative competence which is the aim of language teaching and learning.

(i) English Language Proficiency at School Level

Pertaining to the low level English language proficiency of new entrants to the university, ministerial instructions should be given to educational zones to arrange for seminars and training programmes to guide teachers of English in handling the General English course material in school. Teachers' participation in such programmes should be made compulsory. Further, the schools which have a dearth of teachers of English or which do not have teachers of English at all should be identified and immediate steps should be taken to effect teaching appointments in

<242-356>

these schools. These measures are supposed to increase the quality of teaching, which may, in turn, lead to the development of English language proficiency among students. Hence, the students will have achieved a satisfactory level of L_2 proficiency before they enter the university.

(ii)   Text Book and Teaching Methodology

Appropriate text books and teaching materials should be introduced to meet the English language needs of the country and to fulfill the expectation of the nation – expectation of different parties – the government, the students, the guardians and the employers. The use of traditional text books that focus only on form should be replaced by specially designed text books that focus on meaning. Again, these materials should be used as they are intended to be used. That is, teachers and students should possess a clear idea of how to use them. Both teachers and students should be trained for this purpose.

Teachers should be aware that students need English to use it in real communication. To ensure that students are learning English with the aim that they will use it, the teaching methodology and the testing format must be modified. CLT approach is generally approved to achieve this aim.

(iii)   Exposure

To provide adequate exposure of language to students, the teacher should introduce task – oriented activities which can make learners use the target language to persuade and negotiate their way to desired results. This process involves the productive and receptive skills simultaneously. During these activities, students can have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way, after learning and practicing new vocabulary. For example, while playing games, the learners' attention is on the message, not on the language. Most participants will do all they can to win, rather than pay attention to the correctness of linguistic forms. Also it will ease the fear of negative evaluation, the concern of being negatively judged in public which is one of the main factors inhibiting language learners from using target language in front of others. During the course of these activities, anxiety is eliminated, speech fluency is generated and thus the communicative competence is achieved.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   100

<242-356>

Activities selected should be motivating also. Games which are motivating, for example, introduce an element of competition which may provide valuable impetus to a purposeful use of language. In other words, these activities create a meaningful context for language use. The competitive ambiance also makes learners concentrate and think intensively during the learning process which enable the learner to unconsciously acquire a good amount of inputs.

In sum, the activities to be introduced in the class should have the following characteristics:

They should be learner centered.

They should promote communicative competence.

They should create a meaningful context for language use.

They should increase language motivation.

They should reduce learning anxiety.

They should integrate various linguistic skills.

They should encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.

They should construct a cooperative learning environment.

They should foster participatory attitudes of the students.

(iv) Vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary is a great handicap of students in achieving the communicative competence.

Communication becomes impossible without mastery of words. It is mainly the words that convey our feelings and thoughts to others. A second or foreign language learner of English is required not only focus upon the sentence structures but also upon the acquisition of words. The teacher, in order to establish the words in the learner should repeat the newly introduced words in different contexts.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   101

<242-356>

Lexical study may include units that compose the words such as prefixes, suffixes, stems, and inflectional and derivational patterns.

In case of unfamiliar words, observing how they are used and making intelligent guesses would help students to learn the meaning of them. Over time guesses will get refined and meanings turn out to be specific.

Reading is an effective means to learn new words since the reader will be able to guess the meaning of the word from the context.

Students are also advised to develop the habit of using dictionaries and the Thesaurus.

Understanding and application of word formation processes will be a fine way of building vocabulary.

(v)   Structure / Grammar

CLT is perceived as a departure from grammar in favour of focusing on the meaning only. It enables students to perform spontaneously, but does not guarantee the linguistic accuracy of the utterances. On the other hand, form – based approaches focus on the linguistic and grammatical structures which make the speech grammatically accurate. But this accuracy can be observed in prepared speech only and students are unable to operate spontaneously.

In learning L_2 grammar, students are forced to be in a dilemma. On the one hand, they need to know the rules, since they are mostly tested on grammar knowledge in examinations. On the other hand, they have to develop the communicative competence as it is the main aim of language learning. Here the teacher is expected to look for ways to combine form and meaning in teaching ESL.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   102

<242-356>

The EEE method, consisting of three stages (exploration, explanation and expression) as recommended by Sysoyev (N.D) can be an appropriate method for combining form and meaning.

In the first, exploration stage, learners look at certain sentences and discover a grammatical pattern under a lecturer's supervision. Instead of giving an explicit rule, students are allowed to discuss and discover grammatical patterns. It will help students understand the rules. A teacher is given the role of the monitor. In the second, explanation stage, the teacher will explain explicit rules and it will make the students' speech more grammatically accurate. In the third, expression stage, students use new structures in interaction, producing meaningful utterances. This stage prepares L_2 learners for spontaneous L_2 use by helping them focus equally on form and on meaning in using their language in communication.

(vi) Spelling

English spelling system poses big impediments to students. Cronnell (1979, as cited in Thirumalai, 2002, p. 77) pointed out that since the second or foreign language learners of English do not yet speak Standard English, they are likely to commit more errors in spelling, especially with regard to those sounds which they are unable to discriminate between. Therefore, if students are to learn the English spelling better, they must use the Standard English.

A programmed text may provide more individualized learning without creating much burden on the teacher. Also students should be encouraged to identify the spelling of words in which there are sounds with two or more possible spellings. Proof reading sentences with spelling errors can be a good exercise.

There are rules which are somewhat more regular than others. Teachers can organize the words into groups and then touch words group by group. For example, the letter C is pronounced as k before a, o, u or a consonant: cat, cold, cute, cream. Several such rules, not only for consonant, but for vowels also are there. Therefore, the teacher can explain these rules for students to understand the underlying spelling system.

<242-356>

The researcher suggests that students may memorize and copy the spelling. Dictation by the teacher can be an effective exercise to assess the spelling skill. Depending on the capacity of students, the number of words to be memorized must be limited. Spelling bee contests with some rewards is an appropriate reinforcement technique.

(viii) Listening

As pointed out in the previous section of this chapter, half the student population in the university loses interest in following the listening classes. Hence proper techniques should be adopted to arouse their interest by effectively organizing the teaching of listening skill. Listening, like other language skills, can be acquired through wide exposure to the target language. Sufficient facilities should be made to enable the students to listen to native speakers' speech from the beginning, so that they can familiarize themselves with the native speakers' accent and understand their speech.

In the part of students, outside the classroom, they have several needs to satisfy only by listening to the speech in the surrounding in which they function and express what they need actually. If they are studying or working in an English speaking country, they have to understand the native speakers of English they contact in their day to day life. In case, they have no access to native speakers of English, they should listen and comprehend the native tongue used in the electronic media. It is important to have focus on exposure to the native speakers' speech in contexts that are relevant to the L2 learners' goals in learning English.

In selecting appropriate materials for students, Morley (1991, as cited in Thirumalai, 2002) suggested three important principles: relevance, transferability / applicability, and task – orientation. The materials should be relevant to the interests and level of the students. The content, structures and words in the listening materials should be transferable and utilized in other classes or outside the classroom. Task – oriented materials focus on performance based on what is presented as listening material.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   104

<242-356>

(viii)   Use of Technology

By using more technology in language learning and teaching, the interaction pattern can be changed. Teachers can encourage greater amount of interactions by using technology both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, through internet learners find opportunities to communicate and learn collaboratively with learners worldwide. ESL learners do not need to passively listen to audio tapes alone after class, through the use of the internet and other tools, they can more keenly participate in more interactions by posting and replying messages on discussion boards, writing and replying emails to their key pals or joining online chartrooms anytime when they feel comfortable or have free time. This new way of learning may engage learners in authentic social interactions and greatly expose learners to the TL and practice what they have learned in the classroom. Further, learners have more opportunities to take part in the target social and cultural context and learn the pragmatic knowledge.

Through audio and video communications, learners are able to obtain both verbal (e.g. intonation) and non – verbal (e.g. facial expression) cues which are necessary to develop social competence.

Use of technology can also promote motivation for learners to keep learning. This motivation enables learners to become more responsible and willing to engage in their own learning. Teachers can involve learners in doing a collaborative project with another learner; for example, the project can be writing a story together in which learners are more likely to actively participate in the discussion and engage in the learning.

For ESL learners who desperately need more authentic exposure and the opportunities to exploit the knowledge obtained in the classroom, the use of computer mediated communication tools both inside and outside of the classrooms will certainly develop learners' communicative competence.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   105
<242-356>

Summary

The resources like text books and audio- visual aids such as tape recorders should be produced with the aim of promoting students' communicative ability. Adequate opportunities should be made for listening practice, although learning outcomes are addressed in terms of four skills. Lessons should be conducted in a manner to motivate students to involve themselves in real life contexts, think and act independently and exchange ideas to fulfill a genuine purpose. When producing text books/ teaching materials, focus should be on providing maximum exposure to students so that they will be able to function in English confidently when they are outside the class room.

===

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   106

<242-356>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen,J.P.B. and Widdowson,H.G.(1979). "Teaching the communicative use of English." In Brumfit,C.J.and Johnson,K. The communicative approach to language teaching. Oxford University Press.

Allwright, R. (1979). Language learning through communication practice. In C. Brumfit & K. Johnson. (EDS), The communicative approach to language teaching. Oxford University Press.

Alpteking, C. (1993). Target – language culture in EFL materials. ELT Journal, (47(2), pp. 112-142.

Ames, C and Ames, R. (1989). Research in motivation in education Scan Diego : Academic Press.

Anderson, J. (1993). Is communicative approach practical for teaching English in China ? pros and cons. System, 21(4), pp. 471 – 480.

Atkinson, D. (1987). The mother tongue in the classroom : ELT Journal, 41/4. pp. 241 – 7.

Bartels, N. (2005). Applied linguistics and language teacher education : what we know. In N. Bartels (Ed.) Applied linguistics and language teacher education. (pp. 405 – 424). Boston : Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Beale, J. (2002). Is communicative language teaching a thing of the past ? Babel, 37(1), pp. 12 – 16. http : //www.jasonbeale. com/essay pages /clt – essay. html.

Breen, M. (1984). Processes in syllabus design. In C. Brumfit (Ed.). General English Syllabus design. Oxford : Pergamon press.

Breen, M. (1987). Learners' contribution to task design, In C. Candlin and D. Murphy (eds.). Language learning tasks. Englewood cliffs NJ : Prentice – Hall.

Brumfit, C. J. and Johnson, K. (1979). The communicative approach to language teaching . Oxford University press.

.

Campbell, A. P. (2004). Using life journal for authentic communication in EFL classes. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. 10, No. 9 httpilliteslj. orj / Techniques / Campbell / live Journal.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 107

<242-356>

Canagaraja, A.S. (1992). English in Jaffna Tamil society: Towards a sociolinguistic and applied linguistic appraisal. ELTC, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Canagaraja, A. S. (1999). Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Canale, M. and Swain, M. (1980). 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing'. Applied linguistics, 1/1, 1 – 47, Toronto : Ontario Ministry of Education, 1979.

Candlin, C. (1987). Towards Task – based language learning, In C. Candlin & D. Murphy (eds). Language learning Tasks. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. : Prentice – Hall.

Chaudron, C. (1977). A descriptive model of discourse in the corrective treatment of learners' errors. Language learning, 17, pp. 29 – 46.

Chen, Y. H. (2005). Computer mediated Communication : The use of CMC to develop EFL learners' communicative competence. ASIAN EFL JOURNAL, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Article 10, March 2005.

Chowdhury, M.R. (2003). International TESOL training and EFL contexts : The cultural disillusionment factor. Australian Journal of Education, 47(3), pp. 283 – 302.

Coffey, M. (1999). Building cultural community in English language programmes. TESOL Journal, 8(2), pp. 26 – 30.

Cumaranatunge, L.K. (N.D.) Sustaining the ESL teacher: A school based option for professional development. OUSL, Sri Lanka.

Cummins, J. (2004). Bilingual, children's mother tongue. http. www. itechilearn. com / Cummins / mother . html.

Damen, L. (1987). Culture learning : The fifth dimension in the language classroom, Massachusetts. Addison Wesley.

Dornyei, Z.(1990).Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. Modern Language Journal, 78, pp. 273 – 284.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   108

<242-356>

Ellis, R. (1999). From communicative language teaching to developmental pedagogy. English in Ao tearoom 38/9.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil languages

Erton, I. (2007). Applied pragmatics and competence relations in language learning and teaching. Journal of language and linguistic studies, vol. 3, No. 1, April 2007.

Richard N. Language and communication. Longman Group Ltd., Longman House, England.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning : The role of attitudes and motivation. London, UK.

Grenfell, M. and Harris, V. (1999). Modern languages and learning strategies : in theory and practice. London : Rout ledge.

Gunesekera, M. (2005). The post colonial identity of Sri Lankan English. Katha Publisher, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Guthrie, M. (1984). "Contrasts in teachers' language use in a Chinese English bilingual classroom". In J. Handscombe, R.A. Ovem and B. P. Taylor (eds.), In TESOL 1983 : The question of control, 39 – 52, Washington, D. C : TESOL.

Harlow, L. Linda.(1990). "Do they mean what they say ? socio pragmatic competence and second language learners". The modern language Journal 74.

Harmer, J. (2003). Popular culture, methods and context. ELT Journal, 57(3), pp. 283 – 294.

Hedgcock, J. S. (2002). Facilitating access to communities of practice in language teaching : Toward a socioliterate approach to teacher education. The Modern Language Journal. Vol. 86, Number 3, Retrieved on 02, Nov. 2004 from http://polyglotlss.wisc.edu/mly/v 86 n3 htm.

Hudson,G. (2000). Essential Introductory Linguistics. Blackwell Publishers.

Jayasuriya, J.E. (1976). Educational policies and progress during British rule in Ceylon, 1796 – 1948, Colombo : Associated Educational Publishers.

Jeon, J. I. and Hahn, J.W. (2006). Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of task based language teaching : A case study of Korean secondary school classroom. The ASIAN EFL JOURNAL Quarterly, March 2006, Vol. 8, Issue 1.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   109

<242-356>

Kasper, G. (1997). Can pragmatic competence be taught? Honolulu : University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center. Retrieved 02 Nov, 2004 from http://nflre.hawaii.edu/ No.1 works/NW 06/default.html.

Kathleen, S. and Kitao, K. (1996). Communicative language teaching. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. II, No. 5, May 1996, http://iteslj.org.

Keller, J. M. (1983). Motivational design of instruction. In C.M. Reigeluth (Ed.), Instructional Design Theories and Models : An overview of their current status (pp. 383 – 434). Mahwah, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Khan, H. A. (2007). A needs analysis of Pakistani state boarding schools secondary level students for adoption of communicative language teaching. A communicative language teaching. A dissertation submitted to the school of Arts and Education of Middlesex University, London in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA. http://www.asian-efl-journal. com/thesis.

Khan, H. R. (2005). Speaking strategies to overcome communication difficulties in the target language situation – Bangaladeshis in New Zealand, Language in India, Vol. 5 : 12 December 2005.

Khuwaileh, A. and Shoumali, A. (2000). Writing errors : A study of the writing ability of Arab learners of Academic English and Arabic at University. Language, Culture and Curriculum, pp. 174 – 183.

Krashen, S. (1987). Principles and practice in second language teaching and acquisition. Prentice Hall International.

.

Krishnaswamy, N., Verma, S.K. and Nagarajan, M. (1992). Modern applied linguistics. An introduction. Macmillan India Limited, Macmillan India Press, Madras 600. 041, India.

Lambert, C. (2004). Reverse – engineering communication tasks. ELT Journal. Oxford : Oxford University Press. 58/1 : 18 – 27.

Larsen – Freeman, D. (2000). Techniques and principles in language teaching. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 110

<242-356>

Li, A. K. and Adamson, G. (1992). Gifted secondary students' preferred learning style : cooperative, competitive or individualistic. Journal for the Education of the Gifted. 16(1), pp. 46 – 54.

Littlewood, W. (1981). Communicative language teaching. An introduction. Cambridge UP, Cambridge.

Long, M & Crookes, G. (1992). Three approaches to task – based syllabus design. TESOL Quarterly 26/1.

Long, M. (1983). Linguistics and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers. Students in second language Acquisition 5 : 177 – 193.

Long, M. (1985). A role for instruction in second language acquisition. In K. Hyltenstam and Pienemann, M (eds.). Modelling and assessing second language acquisition. Clevedon Avon : Multilingual Matters.

Luchini, P. L. and Garcia, A. M. (2007). Integrating the teaching of Language as and for communication in the EFL reading class : A case study. ASIAN EFL JOURNAL, Vol. 22, Article 2.

Lund, K. (1996). Communicative competence – where do we stand ? Sprogforum, No. 4, 1996.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978). Drama techniques in language learning. Cambridge University Press.

Mangubhai, F., Marland, P. and Dashwood, A. (2007). Framing Communicative language teaching for better teacher understanding. Issues in Educational Research, Vol. 17.

Margrethe, K., Iversen, N. and Ledstrup, M. (1996). A look at communicative competence. Sprogforum, No. 4, 1996.

May, L. Jacob, (1993). Pragmatics : An introduction. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers.

Mc Partland, J. M. (1991).   How departmentalized staffing and interdisciplinary teaming combine for effects on middle school students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago.

Mckay, S. L. and Hornberger, M. (1996). Sociolinguistics and language teaching. Cambridge University Press.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescrethe as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   111

<242-356>

Moras, S. and Carlos, S. (2001). Teaching vocabulary to advanced students : A lexical approach. Retrieved on 02, Nov. 2004 from http://www.3.telus.net/ linguistic issues/teaching vocabulary. html.

Moss, D. (2005). Teaching for communicative competence. Basics, Vol. 7, Issue C, March 2005.

Nadaraja Pillai, N. (2002). Teaching Communicative competence in diglossic Indian languages. Language In India. Vol. 2, 2 April 2002.

Nation, P. (2000). Learning Vocabulary in lexical sets : Dangers and guidelines. TESOL Journal 9(2), pp. 6 – 10.

Norris – Holt, J.(2001). Motivation as a contributing factor in second language acquisition. TESOL Journal, Vol. VII, No. 6, June 2001. http://iteslj.org/Articles/Norris-Motivation.html.

Nunan, D. (1989/2000). Designing tasks for the communicative classroom. Beijing : People Education Press, Foreign language Teaching and Research Press and Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1991). Language teaching methodology. A textbook for the teachers. Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. (2006). Task – based language teaching in the Asia context : Defining task. Asian EFL Journal 2006. Vol. 8, Issue 3, Article 1.

Nunan, D. (2004), Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. http://www.ecp.com. en/in 2004. ca 1789. htm.

Nunn, R. (2007). Redefining communicative competence for international and local communities, ASIAN EFL JOURNAL, Vol. 9, Issue 4, Article 6.

O'Brien. T. (2002). Second language acquisition and teaching. TE 802 Journal, Thornton.

Ottenheimer, J. H. (2006). The anthropology of language : An introduction to linguistic anthropology. Belmont : Thomson Higher Education.

Oxford, R. L. & Shearin, J. (1994). Language learning motivation: Expanding the theoretical framework. The Modern Language Journal, pp. 12 – 28, 78.

Perera, M. (N.D.). Role of attitudes in learning English in Sri Lanka: Has there been a change after independence ? NIE , Sri Lanka.

Pirasad, U. (2003). The Hindu, India http://www.hindu. com/ 2003/07/29.

Prabhu, N.S. (1987). Second language pedagogy. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates) 112

<242-356>

Qashoa, S. H. H. (2006). Motivation among learners of English in the secondary schools in the eastern coast of the UAE. Institute of Education, British University in Dubai, Dubai – UAE. Dissertation for M.Ed. in ELT.

Raheem, R and Ratwatte, H. C. (N.D.) Regional variation in student proficiency and its implications for language planning. Dept. of language studies, OUSL., Sri Lanka.

Richards, J., Platt, J. and Webber, H. (1986). Longman dictionary of applied linguistics. London, Longman.

Rivers, W. M. (1983). Communicating naturally in a second language. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London.

Robertson, P. (2003). Teaching English pronunciation skills to the Asian learner. A cultural complexity or subsumed piece of cake? http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/june 2003 subpr.phd.

Rost, M. (1990). Listening in language learning. London : Longman.

Samarakkody, M. (N.D.) Motivation and the acquisition of English in Sri Lanka: A linguistic and social psychological study. Dept. of English, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Saravanapawa Iyar, M. (2001). Status, features and functions of English in Sri Lanka Jaffna Tamil society. University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation.

Savignon, S.J. (1972). Teaching for communicative competence : a research report : Audio – Visual Language Journal, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 153 – 162.

Savignon, S. J. (1972). Communicative competence : An experiment in foreign language teaching : Philadelphia : The center for Curriculum Development Inc.

Savignon,S.J. (2002). Interpreting communicative language teaching.Cotexts and concerns in teacher education. In S.J.Savignon(Ed.)Interpreting communicative language teaching.(pp.41-81).New Haven and London:Yale University Press.

Schinitzer, E. (1995). English as an international language : Implications for the interculturalists and educators. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 19(2), pp. 227 – 236.

Schumin, K. (1997). Factors to consider development of adult EFL students' speaking abilities. English Teaching forum Online. Vol. 35, No. 3, July – September, 1997.

Seliger, H. (1995). Second language research methods. Oxford : OUP.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   113

<242-356>

Shaw, A. (1977). Foreign language syllabus development : some recent approaches : Language Teaching and Linguistics : Abstract Vol. 10. No. 4, pp. 217 – 233.

Smiley, J. (2005). Defining "Communicative". Proceedings of the 4th annual JALT pan – SIG conference, May 14 – 15, 2005. Tokyo, Japan : Tokyo Keizai University.

Snow, D. (1996). More than a native speaker. Alexandra, Virginia, TESOT, Inc.

Spizbery and Cupach, (2001). Communicative competence : knowledge skills – motivation.Spring,2001TheoryworkBook.

http://www.uky.edu/drlane/capstone/interpersonal/competence.htm as retrieved on 20 May 2007.

Stern, H. H. (1992). Issues and options in language teaching. Oxford : OUP.

Stevick, E. W. (1976). Memory, Meaning and method. Rowley, Mass : Newbury House.

Suntharesan,V. (2009). English tuition in Jaffna. SLELTA Quarterly, Vol.9, Issue 1, 2009,Sri Lanka.

Sunthareswaran, S. (2004). Language use in Jaffna society. University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation.

Suseendiraraja, A. (1992). English in our Tamil society: A sociolinguistic appraisal. University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Thirumalai, M. S. (2002).   Sri Lanka's language policy – A brief introduction. Language in India, Vol. 1:9 Jan 2002. http://www.language inindia.com/jan2002/srilanka1.html.

Thirumalai, M. S. (2002).   An introduction to TESOL. Language in India. Vol. 2.

Thorat, S. K. (2007). Teaching English as a second language to meet the needs of the learners in rural areas : A challenge. Language In India, Vol. 7 : 9 Sept. 2007.

Toyoda, E. (2001). Exercise of Learner autonomy in project – oriented CALL. CALL – EJ Online Vol. 2. No. 2, January 2001. Retrieved on 20, Oct. 2004 from http://www.clec.ritsumei.ac.jp/english/callejonline/5-2/toyoda.html. .

Vignaraja, S.   (2005). The psycho- social context of English in Sri Lanka. M.A. in TESL Assignment . OUSL, Sri Lanka.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge : MIT Press.

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940** **14:7 July 2014**
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   114

<242-356>

Wang, C. (2006). Designing Communicative tasks for college English Course. A Dissertation submitted as a partial fulfillment for the Degree of MA in English Language and Literature. Chongtze Normal University of Yangtze Normal University, China.

Wang, L. (2005). The advantages of using technology in second language education. Technology Horizons in Education Journal, p. 38 – 41.

Wenglinsky, H. (1998). Does it compute ? Princeton, N. J. : ETS Policy Information Center.

Widdowson, H.G. (1979).The teaching of English as communication. In Brumfit,C.J. and Johnson,K. The communicative approach to language teaching.Oxford University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1983).   Learning purpose and language use. Oxford : Oxford University Press, UK.

Widdowson, H. G.(1984). Teaching language as and for communication. In H. Widdowson (Ed.), Explorations in applied linguistics (pp. 229 – 246). Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Willis, J. (1998). Task – based learning – What kind of adventure ? The Language Teacher, Vol. 22, 1998.

Wright, T. (1987). Instructional task and discoursal outcome in the L2 classroom. In Candlin and Murphy. UK.

Xiaohong, D. (1994). Communicative Competence. English Teaching forum, Vol. 32, No. 4.

Zimmerman, B. (1989). A Social cognitive view of self – regulated academic learning. Journal of Educational Psychology 81, pp. 329 – 39.

===

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:7 July 2014
V. Suntharesan, Ph.D.
English as a Second Language – Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)   115

<242-356>