

USING THEATRE TO ENHANCE LEARNER LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: A SRI LANKAN EXPERIMENT

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to:

**my father Late (Mr.) SELLIAH KANDIAH, a retired Principal, for his
tireless encouragement in all my endeavours and**

**my mother, Mrs. THANGAMMA KANDIAH, a retired primary teacher, for
her timely support in all gestures....**

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Abstract

The thesis represents an attempt to explore the possibilities of using theatre in ESL classrooms at the secondary level in Sri Lankan schools. The study is based on the assumption that theatre will facilitate and enhance language learning especially when learners hail from a rich L1 theatrical culture.

The thesis therefore aimed to find out whether theatre could be used to promote oral and written communication skills and whether it would encourage community learning in groups and create a healthy collaborative learning atmosphere in order to open up possibilities for extending the scope of traditional classroom teaching and learning.

Being exploratory and essentially ethnographic in nature, the research methods used in the investigation were participant observation and open-ended interactions with students accompanied by researcher intervention and teaching. The texts that were analysed included classroom scripts, students' and teacher's diaries, the workshop journal of the researcher and comments from parents and well-wishers.

The theoretical framework of the thesis draws on the uses of theatre in education and language learning, the notion of a scaffolding device and concepts of dialogic and liberating pedagogy. The initial investigation in the form of a preliminary study paved the way for the main study and indicated the need for a longitudinal ethnographic oriented main study. This was carried out over a period of three months with secondary level Sri Lankan Tamil students transiting into English medium of instruction.

The findings reveal that the use of theatre promotes learning in a substantial manner. Students were able to create situations, enact scenes and then script plays, thus producing the necessary language for communication in those contexts. Their spontaneous and effective oral communicative capability which the theatre workshop enhanced was reflected in the performances that preceded the group-wise scripting and the enhancing of the written capability was captured in the scripts and diary entries.

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Chapter I

Behind the Scenes

1.1 Introduction

Human beings have always used gestures and sounds to express their feelings. One can assume that animals also used gestures to communicate with each other. Humans must have used facial expressions, hands, clothes, masks, paint and body language to convey a range of feelings and emotions before the verbal language came into use.

Theatre probably started with the first desire of human beings for interaction. Theatre has been an exciting medium to engage people for the purpose of entertainment and self-expression ever since human beings appeared in the world. It has developed into rituals, dithyrambic songs in Greek and many other ritual forms in many parts of the world. These rituals can be seen as the beginning of theatre. In various cultures of the world, it has been noted that rituals form theatrical traditions. The priest was the chief performer. Chants later on developed into dialogues and religious stories were fleshed out for performance. Language became a means of theatrical expression. It was further developed by Greek playwrights like Sophocles and others marking the language with its literary merit.

Theatre developed with the use of language and was called drama for entertainment; theatre represents the system of which drama is a part. The purpose of modern theatre is not only entertainment but also to educate the public. Whether it is politics, health and hygiene or any other awareness programme there is some kind of communication through which such awareness raising happens. Thus, theatre has been used for many purposes.

Theatre has been used for educational purposes occasionally. Unfortunately, it has never formed an integral part of any educational programmes. There have been attempts to use theatre in the language

teaching classrooms though no proper study has been made. Teachers have used plays to teach language and character study and helped students perform a script on the stage. The present work seeks to address the issue of using theatre for education, especially for the language development of second language learners.

1.2 My Roles in the Theatre of English Language Teaching

My involvement with theatre precedes my teaching career. As a 'boy scout' I used to be asked to 'script', act in and keep 'direct' plays around the camp-fire. The idea that theatre can be used for language enabling can be traced to the beginnings of my career, where in I drew on my confidence building experiences in scout camps to increase student confidence. Over the years, I have used theatre in my English classrooms to overcome students' inhibition, enable language learning and get students to communicate.

1.2.1 Theatre for Communication

The second scene of my involvement with theatre as a young teacher shifts to a remote village Kavutharimunai, in the Kilinochchi district in Northern part of Sri Lanka in the early eighties. It provided me with the necessary space to use some activities in the classroom. I became the first English teacher after five long years of having no teacher. It was, to say the least, difficult. Added to this difficulty, even teaching Tamil and other subjects in Tamil was a nightmare for the students who come from impoverished, illiterate backgrounds and parents. Getting food to eat was itself very difficult and many students came to school with empty stomachs. Teaching English was unimaginable. However, it had to be done. Using songs, rhymes, dance and enactments, the gestures, and expression was the answer. I assumed that the innate sense of rhythm and music would capture their attention. They forgot their hunger and their poor status and joined me to sing and dance with me. My facial expressions and the gestures were influential in making them understand the meaning of the songs, initially in Tamil and then with some English.

This led to conversations and then – gradually language enabling. The rudiment of ‘theatre’ in the language classroom began here.

1.2.2 Theatre in the Language Classroom

The curtain was raised for the third scene of my theatre involvement in my career in another school in the same area, a secondary school, where I worked after my teacher training at Palaly Government Teachers’ College, Sri Lanka in the mid eighties. Poor students, a thick jungle on the four sides, a small temple, some huts, a post office and a dispensary formed the village. Farming and fishing were main occupations. Students had no interest and motivation to learn English. ‘Use Tamil for everything and everywhere’ was the slogan of the day. But English had to be taught because it was a part of the curriculum. At another level, without English, nobody can imagine their higher education and better employment. Students without English have to stagnate. Therefore, skits were the answer. This made an impact on the students’ personality and they started learning the language with more interest and vigour. Moreover, their involvement in other school activities was exemplary. They became students’ leaders to take the school forward and now, according to information gathered from the sources in the village; those students have become teachers and government employees. Thus, they have emerged as social leaders with experience gained from the theatre productions.

1.2.3 Theatre at the University

I got an appointment about 15 years ago in a university college as a College Lecturer in English after my graduation in English literature, Linguistics and Drama and Theatre Arts. I had to teach college students who were registered for a two-year Diploma in English programme. Those who passed the Diploma programme in English were allowed to follow the Degree Course for another two years. One of the admission requirements to the Diploma in English course was a pass in the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination with an ordinary pass in English in their Class

Ten, General Certificate in Education (Ordinary Level) Examination. As a result, the students who registered for the course had a minimum knowledge of English. They had to follow the Diploma course in English, which has components of literature and linguistics syllabus. As such, many of them were unwilling to continue with the tough course but at the same time, they did not want to miss the chance of having a free education at a university college and receiving a degree certificate at the end of the four-year programme. Unfortunately, for getting higher education in Sri Lanka is a dream and chances are very rare.

Another phase of my 'theatre' task began here. I had to motivate the students who "dragged their feet unwillingly to college" to get involved in their English education by engaging them in more activity-oriented classroom sessions and other cultural programmes such as:

- participate in groups singing,
- perform story- narration,
- take on a role of a news reader
- act out a parliamentary debate and board meetings (simulations)
- take part in role plays and
- act out in short plays to be performed in College Festivals
- These theatre and drama activities made the students involve themselves actively with the learning of English. The syllabus is primarily grammar, accuracy oriented and initially, the students' attention was to learn some grammar tips to pass the exam. My engagement with the students was to shift their attention to communication skills and this was accomplished through theatre.

1.2.4 Experiential Learning

At varying levels of teaching, I had experimented with different aspects of theatre to reduce inhibitions and motivate students. This was done to get them to make meaning and communicate in English and thereby, enhance their English language capability. However, this

was at the individual level and as teachers of English, we in Sri Lanka, were still interested only in teaching grammar. It became a dry affair. Driven by the urge to make teaching more meaningful, I planned to attempt a research project on the use of theatre for language teaching. Initially, I wanted to make use of a full-fledged theatre performance to make students communicate in situations created for dramatic performance. But given the constraints of time and space, as well as financial requirements, the following plan was worked out. Realising that using full-fledged theatre-based methodology for language teaching as an alternative methodology is impossible, an attempt was made to explore the possibilities of using theatre workshop methodology as an additional resource to enhance learner language in English classrooms.

1.3. The present study

The present study, therefore, is carried out from an ethnographical perspective in order to examine the use of theatre for language teaching at secondary level classrooms in Sri Lanka. It will begin by providing the picture of English language teaching in Sri Lanka and outlines the problems faced by the students in attaining proficiency in the four skills. The study focuses specially on the effect of using theatre to promote communication skills of students who have studied through a vernacular medium in the primary school and need to continue their education in the English medium from class six onwards. The following three central questions are addressed in this thesis:

- Is it possible to lower the inhibitions of the students and bring language learning capabilities to the fore with the use of theatre in the teaching of a second language, namely English?
- Will it be possible to develop the communication skills (oral and written skills) of the students by deploying the methodology of theatre workshops?
- Will the use of theatre for language teaching empower the students to actively participate and raise their voice in the English classrooms and subsequently develop their personalities as successful students?

1.3.1 Statement of the Problem

English language teaching in Sri Lanka is unable to promote communication skills although there have been various methods from Grammar Translation Method, Structural and Audio Lingual Method to Communicative language teaching method that has been in vogue for years. Most of the Sri Lankan students learn English as a second language for eight years and seem to know grammar rules in isolation but they fail to communicate well mainly due to two reasons:

- lack of opportunities
- affective factors like fear, inhibition and shyness.

The study makes an attempt to explore the possibilities of using theatre for language teaching in order to provide opportunities through theatre workshops and lower the affective factors. Thus, an attempt has been made in this study is to examine whether and how theatre activities enable language competencies in young learners and try to capture the learners' achievement in both oral and written skills. The main assumption of this study is that the use of theatre motivates students to express feelings in contexts developed by them in a theatre workshop. An ethnographical approach has been adopted to investigate the research issues so as to gain more insights into the learners' ability to communicate and the process of language learning in the class. Before going to the discussion of the study, the status of English in Sri Lanka needs to be presented, for that is the backdrop for this exploration and experiment.

1.3.2 Background to the Study - English Language Teaching in Sri Lanka

This section reviews critically the status of English and ELT during the British Colonial Rule and after Independence in Sri Lanka. The importance of English in Sri Lanka after globalization and the attitude of the students towards learning English due to political and national

reasons are also discussed with a special focus on the problems faced by students in language education.

1.3.3 Status of English during the British Colonial Rule

English was introduced as a subject to the Island of Sri Lanka with the advent of the British Colonial rule in the latter part of the 18th century and was subsequently introduced as the medium of education in the early part of the nineteenth century. Raheem and Ratwatte (2004) remarks:

The central event in the establishment of English in Sri Lanka was the recommendations of the Colebrook-Cameron Commission of Inquiry (1830-2). This commission was intended to investigate the strengthening of the administration of the colony, and with this end in view Colebrooke made a strong plea, "Education should be held out to the natives so that they may in time qualify themselves for holding some of the higher appointments' (quoted in Education in Ceylon, 1969, p.93).

The Colebrook Commission recommended English as the medium of education in 1829 (Perera, 1969). However, in 1867, the Morgan committee stated that elementary education could well be imparted through the mother tongues of the children (Jayasuriya, 1978). At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were three kinds of educational systems in the country:

1. English education in English medium schools
2. The vernacular schools used the national language/s as the medium of instruction.
3. Anglo-vernacular schools used national language/s as the medium of instruction during the early years of the schooling (Jayasuriya, 1978, p.426).

The literacy rate gradually increased. English was taught in the primary classes and it was made compulsory in the classes 6, 7 and 8. Mother tongue education was gradually allowed at the time of Independence along with the English medium. However, at the university level English was the medium of education.

1.3.4 English Language Education after Independence

At the time of independence, in 1948, English was the medium of instruction in most of the leading schools and at the university level in Sri Lanka. There were moves to change the medium of instruction from English to the mother tongue of the learners at school level before it was done at university level. J.E. Jayasuriya describes the situation of the medium of instruction from 1944 to 1953 as follows:

As from October 1945, the primary school medium became Sinhalese or Tamil with no option of an English medium. In post-primary classes the medium could be a national language or English at the option of the school, and where a school desired to use English, it meant that students whose primary education had been in a national language had to switch over to the English medium (Jayasuriya, 1968, p. 73).

The Government continued to introduce the national language/s as the medium of instruction in the pre.H.S.C. class and H.S.C.class except for science, maths and Western languages. This situation had to face problems like shortage of efficient teachers to teach in national languages and the unavailability of text books in the national languages. Therefore, an option to switch over to the English medium was given at Prep. S.S.C. for practical reasons. However the Minister of Education declared in a notification in 1952 to impart education at the top level in the national languages only (Jayasuriya, 1968, p.77).

The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English in Ceylon schools (1960) recommended that English should be compulsorily taught as a subject to all, up to and including Eighth Standard and that thereafter it should be optional (Sessional paper No.5, 1960, p.24). However, there were oppositions to make English compulsory below Fifth standard for the reason that the child should be adequately adjusted both, emotionally and mentally, to his immediate environment, with ease and competence in the first language being satisfactorily established and with sufficient maturity to recognize broad ideas and concepts. After that, teaching of English could be

introduced as optional subject from grade 5. The National Education Commission reports:

We are also strongly opposed to the introduction of English earlier than grade 5 in any school as it would create unnecessary distinction between schools (Sessional paper 1, 1962, p.15).

By 1960, the University of Ceylon commenced teaching arts subjects in the national languages when the first batch of mother tongue (swabasha) medium students entered the university ((Sessional paper 1, 1962, p.11). However, the teachings of medicine, engineering, law and similar professional studies were continued in the English medium in the university.

Thus, the role of English as a medium of instruction has been reduced, especially as a subject in schools and in the university except for science courses. Even though the science students have been able to complete their studies in English their communicative ability has always been quite low.

1.3.5 The Importance of English in Sri Lanka

The political climate which pushed the country into a nationalistic fervour could not continue with the same stand due to the economic situation in the international plane. The country has to adopt itself to the international demands with regard to trade, business, education and science. With globalization knocking at the door of everybody in every state an international language had to be accommodated. In fact, it is a well-known fact that the citizens of a third world country must be well versed in an international language to communicate with the world.

In 1977, the country opened its doors to open economy and it meant accommodating the international community for business and other purposes. This resulted in the development of the private sector and it needed the services of an international language. In the Sri Lankan context, it was inevitably English by virtue of the colonial rule by the British from 1796 to 1948. Since English was somewhat familiar to

the people of Sri Lanka the government encouraged people to study English. Subsequently, the students in schools were motivated to learn English. The Education Reforms Committee of 1979 endorsed the situation as follows:

“In the context of the rapid growth of knowledge in modern times and the speed with which this knowledge is communicated, it is not possible for students pursuing studies at higher level to achieve and maintain proper academic standards without the first hand knowledge of an international language. For us in Sri Lanka English is the obvious choice (1982, p.163).

Therefore, the educational system of the country had to give due importance to English from the early eighties and the educationists had to search for better methods to teach English in an efficient manner for communicative purposes. The Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education tried to introduce the Communicative Approach in the teaching of English in 1984. As a first step it produced a set of text books to be used in the classes from Grade 3 to 10 with the communicative approach. Earlier, in the seventies, the textbooks had been based on the oral situational approach with pattern practice and drills.

1.4 Methods Adopted in the ELT in Schools

At the beginning of the British period, the American Missionaries used the grammar-Translation method (Wignaraja, 1994). This method was continued even after English became a second language in schools (Perera, 1994). The Direct Method was introduced in Sri Lanka in the early 1960s. The Report of the committee of Inquiry into the teaching of English in 1960 states:

The Committee believes that the language should be introduced in meaningful units. The Direct Method was favoured. Structures should be graded and wordlists should be prepared to suit conditions in Ceylon. Translation is to be used only for the purpose of explanation. It is not necessary to teach grammar at all in the earlier three stages. There is

plentiful literature available on the methods of teaching English as a second language (Sessional Paper No. 5, 1960, p. 24).

Nevertheless, it was refused by Prof. Doric de Souza whose words, as appeared in the Report say: “Without linguistic background the Direct Method is not successful” (1960, p. 47). The book designers of the sixties shifted the emphasis on teaching from literature to language skills. The Lanerolle’s report recommended the Graded Structural-Oral-Situational Approach which was widely used at that time in the world to be adopted in the Sri Lankan schools (Lanerolle, 1973, p. 58). In the late sixties there was an attempt to make use of the Bilingual Method advocated by C.J. Dodson and a modified bilingual method called ‘Reconstruction Method’ designed by D. Walatara, a Sri Lankan (Walatara, 1974, p.20). In 1968, it was withdrawn and in 1970 Transformational Generative Method was introduced at University level. Having seen that all these methods were not very successful in producing communicatively efficient students, the Ministry of Education introduced the Communicative Approach in 1984 (Perera, 1994, p.74). The set of books produced on the basis of communicative approach were expected to meet the demands of speech. They introduced more dialogues, role plays, reading comprehension pieces and poems, extracts from novels and stories selected from literature. The Chief Editor of the series titled ‘English Every Day’ had this to say:

The text book referred to is English Every Day, which since 1988-89 has completely replaced a structurally-based course, and is now used throughout Sri Lankan schools (Mosback, 1990, p.18).

The set of books tried to integrate the other subjects like science, social studies and others and taught Grammar in action with more real life situations. It also gave up the mechanical type of drilling proposed by the Structural-Oral-Situational Approach and introduced role plays for developing communication skills. However, these books and methodology did not produce the required proficiency and competency in using the language.

Although the communicative approach has been in vogue during the last twenty five years in Sri Lanka and there have been revisions of syllabuses and methodological innovations they were not successful. Therefore, another set of books entitled ‘The World through English’ was produced in the late nineties to cater to the demands of the modern Sri Lankan society incorporating texts related to local and global situations with a view to promote oral and written skills. That is to develop fluency as well as accuracy (From an interview with Director, NATE). However, the Sri Lankan society still faces the lack of English proficiency widely.

1.4.1 Current Status of English

In 2002, the Sri Lankan Government introduced English to all Sri Lankans who go to schools from Grade one onwards, year (class) one students started with Oral English – Conversational English. The students have a chance to study it up to Advanced levels. The Ministry of Education has made it a point to revise the curriculum from time to time in order to include the current trends in the series. At present, it has included many cultural and literary aspects in all these books from Grade three to Advanced Level General English. Most of the students in Sri Lanka follow regional medium instruction (Tamil/Sinhala) in schools. They learn English as a second language, which is only one of their subjects from class 3 onwards.

1.4.2 Linguistic Human Right and Empowerment of the Minority

Having discussed the background of English education in Sri Lanka one has to keep in mind the reasons for the deterioration of standards of English after independence. In 1956 the cry for Sinhala only led to the Tamils to asking for their linguistic rights. Thus, the resistance for ‘Sinhala’ only’ by the Tamils guided them to go against the English language. Historically, education in Sri Lanka was imparted in English, a kind of total immersion programme in English medium schools till the sixties. Then the country has seen that national languages have occupied the place of English. In fact, the people have been able to enjoy their linguistic human rights but lost the link language English

for communication. This situation affected the relationship between the communities as there has been no medium for them to communicate with each other and developed hatred for each other. Both the communities (Sinhalese and Tamils) have empowered themselves with the language weapons which led to the misunderstanding of each other and met in a civil war. Had there been a strong policy to promote English education along with the mother tongue education, the story of the country would have been different. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1994) points out that Linguistic rights should be considered as basic human rights. They further comment:

Linguistic majorities, speakers of a dominant language, usually enjoy all those linguistic human rights which can be seen as fundamental, regardless of how they are defined. Most linguistic minorities in the world do not enjoy these rights.

(Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994, p.3).

As the Tamil language was not regarded as the one of the official languages till 1987, there has been a war between the Tamils and the government forces in Sri Lanka. The myth that monolingualism is good for economic growth and the myth that minority rights are a threat to the nation state subscribe to the 'Sinhala only' policy of the government. As there has been resistance to learn other languages other than Tamil the students have to be educated by empowering them with mother tongue education. Cummins (1986) argues the case for empowering the minorities in the American contexts. It is in a way true for the Sri Lankan population as well. It is good for the two communities to maintain their affairs in their mother tongues for better development. However, it could have been better for mutual understanding and concern for each other had the English education been continued with a bilingual or trilingual programme accommodating the Sinhala/Tamil as the third language as is done in India. Therefore, the present scenario with the need for English education a new educational programme has to be implemented with the stress on the teaching of English at the universities.

1.4.3 Objectives of the Study

Most of the Sri Lankan students' communicative proficiency of English is not upto the mark though their knowledge of grammar is somewhat satisfactory. The present study is to find out the possibilities of teaching English through theatre to make students proficient in oral and written communication in English. It will be developed in a workshop format in order to meet the new demands of the emerging new groups of students with many social problems like cultural differences, socio economic differences and psychological difficulties. Provision will be made to take account of cognitive, affective and interactive factors. The study will focus on the use of theatre in English classrooms in order to make students communicate in English without inhibitions and shyness and also to speak fluently. While reading and listening will be treated as secondary skills the development of speaking and writing skills will be the focus of the study. The major objectives of the study are as follows:

- To find out the possibilities of teaching English through theatre to make students proficient in oral and written communication.
- To find out whether theatre can be used to lower affective factors like fear, inhibition and shyness and provide enough motivation to communicate in English in a fear-free & culture friendly situation.
- To promote personality development and make students aware that their 'voices' can be raised through active participation in the class.

1.4.4 Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that theatre skills promote language development. Students' fear, inhibitions and shyness would be driven out and their affective filters would be lowered once they are engaged in theatre activities. It is proposed that students' oral and written communicative skills would be promoted through theatre workshop by making them improvise and enact dramas. Subsequently, it is expected that students would be able to write short scripts. Thus they would be able to develop

their speaking and writing skills while the other two skills, namely, listening and reading would also be practised.

1.5 Methods of Investigation

The problems related to language learning cannot be discussed in isolation. They can be done by an examination of the socio, political and cultural context as these problems form part of the social problems in any community. Furthermore, the socialization of the learner needs to be kept in mind in his attempt to learn in any academic setting. Therefore, an analysis related to this kind of social activity should be in tune with a methodology developed for such a purpose. In this context, the use of ethnographic research is eminently suitable to many of the problems that the educational investigation faces (Cohen and Manion, 1989). The reasons for this will be discussed in the next section.

1.5.1 Ethnographic Perspectives

Ethnography is treated as an alternative research tradition to psychometrics. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, ethnography is 'the scientific description of different races and cultures (2005, p.520). Fetterman (1998) defines ethnography as the art and science of describing a group or culture. The ethnographers record the routine daily lives of people and are noted for their ability to keep an open mind about the group or culture under study. They are interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene from the insider's perspective. They are basically storytellers and scientists. Fieldwork is the heart of the ethnographic research design. There are no firm external rules and guidelines for it. The researcher in the field learns from opportunities, pursues and gets insights through his/ her experiences and investigation. It expanded its sphere of application from ethnic groups of people. The roots of ethnographic research can be traced back to anthropology from where it spread into social sciences, education and classroom research (Van, 1988, p.41). According to Nunan (1992) it is a non-manipulative study of the cultural characteristic of a group

in real-world than laboratory settings, utilizing ethnographic techniques and providing a sociocultural interpretation of the research data.

There are many ways of doing ethnographic research. Stewart (1988) however identifies four characteristics which are common to most studies of this type:

1. Participant Observation
2. Holism
3. Context sensitivity
4. Sociocultural description (Stewart, 1988, p. 6-7).

The first characteristic is participant observation. In some form of participative roles, the researcher gets involved in the study in natural and everyday setting of the subjects concerned. Participant observation is in the form of immersion in the culture to be investigated. The researcher lives in a research field along with the subjects and observes their lifestyles, attitudes, habits and patterns of behaviour. It is called the study of the culture of a particular community. The longer he or she stays in a group of people he or she can learn more about the subtle elements of the culture. Participant observation sets the stage for more refined techniques – including projective techniques and questionnaires- and becomes more refined itself as the fieldworker understands more and more about the culture. For example, in situations of social calamity and natural disasters, like riots or Tsunami or floods (in Mumbai and elsewhere), the descriptions from a victim cum researcher would be treated as participant observation and a description written or narrated as a report of a visitor or a journalist who visited the affected areas and interviewed the people of the areas would be categorized under non-participant observation. In the second language classroom research, the researcher helps the teacher in teaching and other classroom activities like checking the students' behaviour, guiding them in solving tasks, correcting the exercises etc.

The second characteristic is the holistic mandate. Stewart (1988, p.6) elaborates that there are two senses in this regard. In the first one, the ethnographer synthesizes disparate observations to create a holistic construct of 'culture' or 'society' which is an integrated whole and that individuals can only be understood within the context of that whole. The second sense is that the range of attention is 'comprehensive'. The data is wide-ranging. Comprehensiveness is limited in practice and fashions. The trend in ethnographic writings is far away from comprehensiveness and heads toward narrower focus.

The third characteristic is contextualized explanation. The ethnographer is able to see linkages among various strands in holistic-comprehensive data due to his immersion within a particular setting.

The fourth characteristic is the detailed description and analysis of social relation and culture. Stewart (1988) tries to add one more characteristic related to theory; that is the use of anthropological / sociological theory. However, he finalises his argument saying that: "Theory matters, then but ethnography is not as focused on theory or on concepts, as is grounded theory" (p.8).

Theory matters a lot and it is very prominent and influential in applied social research fields like education, health science and management studies for its well documented, detailed methodological procedures and implications. But description is not as central in grounded theory as it is in ethnography. Analysis and interpretation are important in the grounded theory. Unlike ethnographic research one need not spend a lot of time in observation because theoretical sampling allows for more efficient, short-time observation and interviewing. Grounded theory represses the specificity of each situation. However, grounded theory and ethnography share a common ground in that both use comparable processes of generating understanding with repeated comparisons of data and theory. Ethnography is 'grounded' as researchers give priority to their observations on the context rather than forming a hypothesis before construing the data in the light of existing theories. Methodological

procedures are well documented in detail and participant observation is central to ethnography, though peripheral to naturalistic inquiry (Stewart, 1988, pp. 9-10).

1.5.2 The Principles of Ethnographic Research

Nunan (1992) points out that the principles of ethnographic research differ in important ways from those of psychometric and result in very different procedures. Questions and hypotheses often emerge during the course of the investigation for ethnographic method. Psychometric is an hypothesis in search of data where as ethnography is data in search of an hypothesis Nunan further illustrates the characteristic of the ethnographic study as follows:

1. Contextual: The research is carried out in the context in which the subjects normally live and work.
2. Unobtrusive: The researcher avoids manipulating the phenomena under investigation.
3. Longitudinal: The research is relatively long-term.
4. Collaborative: The research involves the participation of stakeholders other than the researcher.
5. Organic : There is interaction between questions / hypotheses and data collection. / interpretation. (Nunan 1992, p.56).

The research, a long-term one is conducted in a context without any interruption or intrusion or control by the researcher and with the involvement of several participants including the researcher, the teacher, and the learners. Several key principles of ethnographic research are identified by Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988). They are adoptions of a grounded approach to data, the use of ‘thick’ explanation and going beyond description to analysis, interpretation, and explanation- not just description (Quoted in Nunan 1992, p.57). The principle of thick explanation means to take account of all of the factors influencing the phenomena under investigation.

Ethnographers use triangulation which is one of the most commonly used and best known ways of checking validity. The aim of triangulation is to gather multiple perspectives on the situation being studied. Silverman (1993) defines triangulation as “Comparing different kinds of data (e.g. quantitative and qualitative) and different methods (e.g. observations and interviews) and see whether they corroborate one another”(p.156). Triangulation involves gathering accounts of a teaching situation from three quite different points of views; namely those of the teacher, the pupils, and a participant observer

1.5.3 Different Kinds of Ethnography

Maanen (1995) has this to say about ethnography: Broadly conceived, ethnography is a storytelling institution. It is one that carries a good deal of cultural legitimacy because its stories are commissioned and approved by the leading scientific and educational organizations of the day (p.3).

He further comments that ethnography refers to the study of the culture(s) that a given group of people more or less share. When ethnographers move from field study to written exercise they adopt a genre called “ethnographic realism” (Maanen 1995, p.97). As alternatives to ethnographic realism, there are also other genres of ethnography like descriptive ethnography, confessional ethnography, dramatic ethnography, critical ethnography, medical ethnography, school ethnography, occupational ethnography, organizational ethnography, family ethnography, and many more. However, the main objective of the ethnographic study is intended to tell a story about its makers and takers rather than its subjects. This study adopts the methodology of critical ethnography as it focuses on the progress of the students in the learning process in a second language situation.

1.5.4 Application of Ethnography in Second Language Classrooms

Though educational ethnography is popular, very little ethnographic work has been conducted in second language classrooms. Second language teaching has lately begun to apply some of the insights and experience of ethnographic research mainly because of the new demands

for more information about the context of language learning and the nature of interlingual interaction. One of the earliest exploratory studies in second language classrooms interaction was conducted by Allwright (1980, quoted in Van, 1989). He used a recorded and transcribed second language lesson to describe patterns of participation, in the process of developing useful insights into the turn taking system. He didn't want to distinguish a priori between teacher and student roles but rather to allow patterns of control and initiative to emerge from the data. Sinclair and Brazil (1982) and MeHoul (1978) assume characteristic teacher and student roles as givens and thus illustrate an etic-before-emic approach. Allwright demonstrates the fruitfulness of justifying inferences in terms of their 'Plausibility'. Erickson (1985) recommended this approach of 'Plausibility' which is also visible in Kumaravadivelu (1988) whose study of 'learning opportunities' is based on a micro ethnographic analysis of video-taped classroom data (Van, 1989, p.48).

In addition to micro-ethnographic analysis of transcribed data, diary studies in second language setting was made by Schumann and Schumann(1977), Bailey (1983) and Schmitt and Froto(1986). These studies are useful for the description of individual cognitive and affective factors accompanying the learning process. Selinker and Douglas (1985) attempted to find out the meaning of the notion of context. He examined the tutoring sessions in relation to topics and students background knowledge (Van, 1989, p.49).

In recent times, along with a new set of ethnographers, Canagarajah (1993) made a critical ethnographical study on a Sri Lankan classroom and questioned the appropriateness of the text books prepared by the West and used by the students in the East (especially in Sri Lanka). He conducted an ethnographical study with 22 first year students in the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna from November 1990 to July 1991 with questionnaires which covered the students' social and linguistic background and face-to face oral interviews at the end of the programme. He was the researcher cum teacher; participant observer. He taught six hours a week. The mandatory EGP course (English for General

Purposes) was structured around a core text namely American Kernal Lessons (AKL): Intermediate (O'Neil, Kingbury, Yeadon, & Cornelius, 1978). Canagarajah (1993) analyses the students' cultural distance of the textbook from the discourses of the students which were dramatized by the glosses, comments, drawings and paintings written by them in the book. He argues that these were written down during class time, that the students indirectly resisted the cultural imposition through the American textbook which was full of situations and pictures reflecting western lifestyle. In fact, he says they challenge the textual language, values, and ideology. Canagarajah (1993) concludes:

The foregoing study has been conducted in the same spirit and for the same objectives. It attempts to disentangle the conflicting strands in the classroom culture of marginalized students, to expose the accommodative impulses and encourage the potential for resistance, in order to fashion a pedagogy that is ideologically liberating as well as educationally meaningful for such students (p.625).

1.5.5 Use of Ethnographic Methods

The role of evaluation in a learner/ learning centred curriculum can be explored through a longitudinal programme of ethnographic monitoring. The curriculum itself can also profit from ethnographic research. As it is different from normative- psychometric research tradition, it actively encourages the participation of teachers and learners. It currently paves the way for much discussion about action research, the empowerment of teachers', teachers' helping themselves to research and related sentiments. Many researchers emphasize the need for case studies (Yin, 1984) which involve longer-term collection of data and much detail description. They allow for a finer-grained examination of context than is possible in the process-product research (Van, 1989, p.49). Practically, it can solve immediate problems such as those inherent in the employment of foreign language teaching students in tertiary education. Several curriculum theorists advocate using ethnography as part of a task-based curriculum. That is to design tasks which encourage learners

to use the methods of ethnography to discover significant aspects of target language use (Van, 1989).

1.5.6 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

The language achievement through drama techniques which reflect the socio cultural aspects of the students cannot be measured within a short period with statistical analysis. Moreover, the human development in skills is difficult to be measured perfectly by experimental methods. The best method of data collection in the qualitative methods is participant observation that entails the sustained immersion of the researcher. The researcher studies a group with a view of generating a rounded in-depth account of the group. With growing disillusionment of the results of the scientific approach/ quantitative research social science researches advocate an approach which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. The appropriateness of a natural model to the social sciences was questioned by researchers in the sixties because the application of a scientific approach in the form of surveys and experiments is unable to take into account the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences. (Bryman, 1988). The choice is made due to the appropriateness of the qualitative methodology in answering a particular research question. With the 'emic' principle (participation observation) and the holistic principle (with reference to the social system) in mind research tools like interviews, questionnaires, field notes, documentary materials, video and radio recordings will be used to make it an ethnographic one.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The present study employs the ethnographic approach to find out the problems related to the acquisition of communicative skills of the students from a secondary school who are "in transit"- from a regional medium to English medium education. It also attempts to ethnographically organize and observe a theatre workshop introduced in the second language teaching and explore the possibilities of theatre activities for

developing communicative competencies. The focus of this study is on the communicative skills that can be developed through theatre workshop. The study examines whether students get more opportunities to develop communicative skills and free from affective factors like fear, inhibition and shyness. The study is limited to the workshop and does not cover the classroom interaction, teacher talk and students' interaction outside. However the findings of the study might be generalized to develop the communicative abilities of a group of students coming from a similar setting of the same cultural and social and linguistic background. An attempt was made to concentrate more on communicative skills like written and spoken English but pedagogic and professional written skills and academic spoken skills were not concentrated upon within the short period of three months.

1.7. Organisation of the study

In this chapter, Chapter 1, the scope and nature of the study and the methodological framework were presented. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, the use of theatre for language education and a few views against the use of theatre for education will be discussed. It will be followed by a survey on ELT methods and an elaboration of how this enhancing model of using theatre is possible. It is developed with an analysis of using L1 in the teaching of L2 and the social psychological nature of language acquisition. This discussion will define how a theatre methodology with an in-built mechanism is possible to enhance language development of the second language learners. Chapter three deals with the research design of the preliminary study done with two groups of students from a school and a university in Sri Lanka. In Chapter four, the main study of the research is described. The research was conducted with a group of class six students from a Sri Lankan school. The data analysis was done in the fifth chapter and the findings and the implications of the study are presented in the sixth and the final chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 2

Background to the ESL

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, an account of my personal involvement with theatre and my initial attempts at using activities related to theatre in my teaching career were presented. This was followed by the account of the history of English language teaching in Sri Lanka which forms the frame of reference for this study and a brief statement of the objectives and the methodology to be followed.

In this chapter, a detailed review of work on theatre in language education and an analysis on different teaching methods are made. It is followed by a discussion on how theatre methodology is made a possible additional methodology in the language teaching in the light of theories related to social psychology, language acquisition and dialogic methods.

2.2 Theatre in Education

Theatre is a form of communication, a vehicle for the expression of different views and an artistic instrument for entertainment. It involves audience and participants in the traditional and modern sense. In traditional theatres, spectators were able to join the songs, dances and interactions and in modern theatres too, spectators are expected to participate. From theatre productions modern day dramas developed. Drama is an advanced form of theatre with language used in literary sense. In common usage, people use phrases like ‘theatre of war’, ‘theatrical effect’ and ‘dramatic turn’, which signify that both of these terms are interchangeable. However, there is a slight difference in terms, ‘theatre’, a place or building where dramas take place and dramas which are commonly understood as the performance on the stage or theatre. To accommodate another view with the term ‘play’, there is a common statement often used by newsmen ‘The play is on the boards’. But when we view it as moving action on the stage people

call it 'a drama' or 'a theatrical performance'. Therefore, in this thesis both the terms are interchangeable. At this juncture, let us have a look at the meanings of these two terms.

The term 'drama' derives from the Greek word 'dramenon' meaning 'deed', or 'action', or 'to do' and 'Theatre' from the Greek word 'theatron' literally means 'a seeing place' or 'a place of viewing' and includes all the aspects related to drama and its production. It also refers to the total artistic experience of drama either from the view point of the presenter or that of the audience and a movement or a style of presentation in the evolution of the theatre. It involves participants in the actual experience of doing something for seeing.

Theatre is perceived as an ever growing and heart-appealing phenomenon in the South-Asian context. There are so many traditions in the theatrical world, which are very much appealing to the students in South Asia. In Sri Lanka too, students are interested in the theatrical traditions. The term 'theatre' and 'drama' will be used interchangeably though there seem to be some differences between the two. The script is treated as drama and the realization of the script is made through theatre.

Drama is the developed form of theatre with more emphasis on language. In the modern world, theatre has been used for a variety of activities such as educational purposes, therapeutic purposes, social services, political visions, developmental projects, environmental safety activities etc by various forces. In the modern times, there are different theatres developed by different people like Epic Theatre by Bertolt Brecht, Poor Theatre by Jerzy Grotowski, Environmental Theatre proposed by Richard Schechner, Theatre of Cruelty by Antonine Artaud, Invisible and Forum Theatres by Augusto Boal and the Community Theatre by Alexander Drummond, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Eugene van Erven and others. Like wise, in education also there are theatre movements to promote education through theatre and drama.

2.3 Theatre in Language Education

The present study deals with the use of theatre in language teaching. However, the terms, drama and theatre are perceived as interchangeable, and drama as a potential technique in language education is examined for the first time. Since the use of drama (literary scripts/plays) is commonly found in English language teaching a discussion on the place of drama scripts (literature) is made before the use of theatre in language education is discussed. The contention is that more than the use of scripts, the use of theatre as a vehicle would take students to a higher level of engagement and involvement and would subsequently make students spontaneously express themselves as characters and communicate in the situations created in a theatre workshop. Thus, language growth is likely to be more enabled through the use of a theatre workshop and result in considerable output.

2.3.1 The Use of Literature in ELT

As written English is primarily promoted in the teaching of English in the Sri Lankan situation, literary pieces have been used for processing and interpreting a new language for communication through activities. It is expected that students can easily be given training in interpretative abilities through literature. The learner is involved in forming hypothesis and drawing inferences. As literature is very rich in multiple levels of meaning it can serve to accelerate the students' acquisition of language. Literature is used to tap a wide range of emotional functions in the classroom. It can help stimulate the imagination of our students, develop their critical abilities and increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993, p.19). Literary texts like drama scripts are full of authentic materials, and have real situations described and lively characters portrayed (Hill, 1986). Unlike small dialogues, simulations and role-plays, dramas provide a genuine communication exposure to students. Rather than using a dialogue which is not a real communication, a simulation which shows the reality of a function in a simulated and structured environment (Jones, 1982, p.5) and a role play which is not very much contextualized, dramas are very useful in providing meaningful engagement for he

students (Elam, 1980/2002, p. 162). However, a theatre production would provide more learning and involvement than the reading of a play for its theme, plot and characters.

As human activities are centred on language in the form of speech and writing and around an individual in the form of thought and interpretation, the best way of teaching /learning language can be made through contexts which are full of activities. This situation is very much available in a drama which will motivate students to learn all the four language skills namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). Children become active and interactive users. The importance of play in developing the creativity of the students in a language learning situation has been emphasized by many scholars (Sheratt & Peter, 2002. p.2).

Wessels (1991) elaborates that drama is a group experience and depends upon the creative interaction between the participants, both at the real level (planning, discussing, organizing, and reviewing) and at the symbolic level (temporarily interacting within the make-believe). Verbal language may be used within the group and outside the drama and also symbolically to represent a situation or what a particular character says within the drama. Non-verbal communication may also be appropriate, using movement, symbols and visual imagery.

There are different views about the use of drama and theatre in language teaching. Some argue that drama is a pure art form, directly aligned with creative expression, but perceive theatre as performance. They oppose the notion of drama being used as a ‘vehicle’ for teaching other subjects. They see this approach as dilution of the art form and erosion of its status. At the other extreme, there are people who treat drama as a process of self exploration and development. Clipson- Boyles (1998) perceives these two extremes as puristic. He draws a middle line and invites teachers to make use of theatre to bring about a good quality of primary education. The educational value of drama both as an arts subject and as a teaching method is now widely accepted (Clipson-Boyles, 1998, p.3).

When it comes to the form of drama, the space for theatricality is automatically incorporated. Learning in drama is best acquired through engagement in unrepeated improvisations. Drama provides space for students' sharing ideas and mutually interacting for communication. The aim here is not to make or produce professional actors but to make use of drama for learning. At the primary level theatre skills should be recognised and then drama as an expressive art can take children a long way in their path of education. Improvisation definitely helps children to develop their understanding of characters and develop their imaginative power and ultimately enables them to create scripts. The teacher need not teach them how to act. If students are put in a situation they have a tendency to bring their own knowledge of the world to create the characters. The aim of acting is to create a sense of belief in the audience. It is how an artistic illusion is built up. The main emphasis is placed on skills development with children (Clipson-Boyles, 1998, p.39).

Drama encourages self-expression and makes people more sensitive to others. It promotes an awareness of the self and encourages co-operation and collaboration. Drama is essentially a social art form. It is concerned with how individuals relate to the world they live in, how individuals interact with each other and with society in a wider sense. Drama uses non-verbal language, symbols, body language, space and rituals (Woolland, 1993, p.8, 40 & 102). Drama has been used in language learning activities, in providing psycho therapy and in dealing with speech therapy. Drama encourages the operation of certain psychological factors in the participant which facilitate communication: heightened self-esteem, motivation and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy; and lowered sensitivity to rejection. Dramatic activities help L2 learners improve communicative competence (Stern, 1980, p.77-88).

Having analysed how drama has been helpful in English language teaching it is necessary to move from the concept of drama to theatre, as dramas are realized primarily through theatre productions. Further, using plays for language communication is not so helpful with students who have a low command of the language. Moreover, students' affective

factors can be lowered only through engaging them with theatre activities. Hence, the concern in this thesis moves towards the concept of theatre for its lively spirit of producing dramas with a single note of enactment, improvisation, and extemporisation.

2.4 Rationale for the Use of Theatre in Language Education

Drama is one of the genres of literature and it has a special feature of using theatre to see its full articulation and vigour. However, reading a play and acting it out would have its limited encounters and interactions. Therefore, in this thesis, theatre is seen as a system of making movements with the actor's body in a space using language or gestures. Thus, in a theatre workshop, any kind of theatre can be created with small incidents, objects, stories, poems and pictures which will create situations and characters. It would subsequently lead to the planning of a plot with characters speaking their language and eventually drafting out scripts. In the Sri Lankan context, exploiting the use of theatre is beneficial to engage students in a variety of interactions. If the students are asked to generate scripts out of the situations discussed in a theatre workshop this would develop students' communicative, creative and interpretative abilities. Students will enjoy and expand their awareness of language and communication skills in English by learning about characters and other situations and actually using the language.

According to O'Toole (1976), Theatre in Education (hereafter TIE) can help explain a subject area, help students with special needs and be exciting and full of fun. The very excitement that they are going to watch a play or take part in it itself would provide enough motivation and students will start making meaning imaginatively and creatively. There is an element of fantasy in many fairy tales. This taste for fantasies will be diverted to fiction while they grow up as adults. This will also provide them an understanding of other characters' feelings, minds and behaviour. When they watch a play they usually speculate about its end. In participating, thus, they also have a say in the conclusion. Thus, their participatory nature plays a key role in promoting their imagination and creative abilities (O'Toole, 1976, p.49- 51).

McCafferly et al., (2006) emphasizes that the educational system should promote co-operative learning. Psychologists are interested in students' character of socialization and being empathetic toward others. Theatre will provide an opportunity for everybody to work together and learn. While learning they also become socialized unconsciously and they, too take part in others' business. Thus TIE can help the development of social perspectives to examine attitudes and create conscious awareness of relationships of people to each other, to society and social institutions, moral and ethics.

Education is for problem solving. TIE can also aid the development of problem solving behaviour. A problem can be presented in performance. Students can participate and find solutions. It has a very satisfying outcome. They would have moral and emotional understanding. Teaching subject skills would be possible through theatre in Education. It may also be used as a medium to solve irresolvable philosophical problems which trouble everybody. (O'Toole, 1976, p. 56 -86).

Clipsen-Boyles (1978) outlines that theatre education can be varied from five minute- interviews to a planned performance on the stage. It can be integrated with other subjects to teach skills in other subjects. Different areas that includes teaching language skills are:

- to teach oracy, language is to be used in role-plays.

d for theatre studies analysis of a screen play can be used. (Clipsen-Boyles, 1978, p. 5).

Along with language development, theatre also develops the personality of a student and in theatre, students become spectators and participants.

2.4.1 Participation of the Spectators/Students

In TIE, participation of the spectators/students in contributing ideas to the other participants is very important. It may sometimes change the conditions of the theatrical experience to enhance it, add a supplementary dimension, or alter the children's perception of it.

There are a few general areas of development: cognition, affective, imagination and social factors through which TIE concepts can be visualized. Students would realize the topics. Educationists are often worried about the personal development of students apart from their cognitive and intellectual development. TIE provides space for students to promote their emotional maturity automatically through theatre. Students would experience a world of others' life patterns, and share their ideas with companions. Subsequently, they develop an empathy with characters or alienate themselves from the characters. TIE provides the opportunity. The theatrical symbols too will have a powerful effect on the spectator. Students explore and reveal their emotions. They are given a chance to have a kind of tentative self-projection: experience the thrill of heroism, the excitement of vicarious fear and the problems of leadership.

Boal (1974/79) developed a different view of the role of spectators in terms of their action. Spectators are the passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon. According to the Aristotelian concept of action, as Boal interprets that the spectator delegates power to the character that has the right to think and act for him. As per Brechtian theory, the spectator delegates the power to the character and reserves the right to think for himself. And this leads to an awakening of critical consciousness occurring in the spectator. But in the poetics of the oppressed, Boal says, the focus is on the action itself:

The spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonist role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change- in short, trains himself for real action (Boal, 1974/79, p.122).

Thus, in a theatre workshop for language learning, students can be active and talk about their own problems and provide solutions while attempting to communicate through their characters.

Having discussed the way the theatre can be used in language education, the next section will discuss the popular English language teaching methods propagated by various scholars, theoreticians and practitioners and how they have accommodated theatre and theatre-like activities.

2.5 Classification of ELT Methods

The term ‘Method’(in language teaching) is defined as: a way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures. An attempt is made to classify the English language teaching methods into three categories on the basis of how the use of theatre is accommodated in language teaching. They are, methods using pseudo theatre activities and methods using theatre-like activities and methods using the theatre in its full-fledged form or in its true sense. This will be discussed in detail below after a brief discussion on how various scholars looked at the language teaching methods.

The language teaching methods of the 20th Century are categorized differently by scholars. There are traditional methods, alternative methods and communicative language teaching methods used in the teaching of language (Richards and Rodgers, 1986/2001). Another kind of classification is methods and methodological innovations (Larsen-Freeman, 1986/2000, p.xii). A still different kind of classification, namely, Language-centred methods, Learner-centred methods, and Learning-centred methods is also available for teachers to choose one or many according to their teaching plan (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

In this thesis, in line with its theme, methods are classified on the basis of the use of pseudo theatre activities, theatre-like activities and full-fledged theatre.

2.5.1 Pseudo Theatre, Theatre-like Activities and Full-fledged Theatre.

Theatre involves active participation of the participants. They

imitate first as characters, playing roles as expected and gradually actors become characters with necessary actions, facial expressions, gestures and movements. The characters are created, scenes are enacted and the situations in which the parts played are well established. There will be creation, involvement and transformation and expression will become natural and real.

But, in some theatre creations, there are merely mechanical types of theatre activities as they involve students using conversations and engage them with drills etc. There is very little space for the use of theatre in reading drama scripts or dialogues and writing plays and drama criticisms. Mere listening and narrating or speaking the same dialogues as parrots will not facilitate a natural flow of expression and creation of a conflict. However, in a full-fledged theatre it will happen. There are characters created naturally, characterization moulded, conflicts spun around plots, natural interactions with necessary language and silence, space well established and used and the audiences instinctly attracted and fascinated.

In a pseudo theatre activity there may be readings of scripts, drilling of sentences and dialogues and poor imitation of characters. There may be conversation drills after the teacher's initiation. Very few chances are available for the students to use the target language in situations. Choral repetition, drills, controlled oral-based reading and writing tasks including pair practice and group work may be practised. Listening to what teachers say and repeating mechanically the sentence patterns make learners mostly passive. These make students use the language as imitators. The interaction is not spontaneous. Students memorise the dialogues and no meaning making effort was made on the part of students. The performance is very little. A pair of students may perform the dialogues mechanically without any spontaneous expression made and meaningful communication attempted.

Actors may use theatre-like actions, facial expressions and gestures to demonstrate some message but they may not perform actions and movements in full swing to create meaningful situations. Theatre-like

activities such as imitating, acting out some characters, playing roles of characters, participating in a dialogue, showing emotions and facial expressions and using gestures can be used in a teaching situation without the real theatre effect. That is, there will not be any emotional commitment and interaction. No conflicts, plots and characterization will be developed. Thus, there would not be any involvement on the students' part. Therefore, there is very little chance for the creative use of language through methods where only pseudo theatre activities are possible.

2.5.2 Methods Using Pseudo Theatre Activities

The Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and the Audio-lingual Method are categorized under methods using pseudo theatre activities because of their non-involvement of theatre activities directly. However, they have some mechanical theatre activities using conversations and drills. The theory of language presupposed by these methods is that it is basically a system of rules. Linguistic competence is given importance and errors are corrected in order to make students understand the correct rules of grammar of the target language. These methods are not learner-centred but language-centred.

The Grammar–Translation Method, one of the traditional methods, popularly known as the Classical Method that was in practice with high esteem till the middle part of the last century was used to teach Greek and Latin. The goal of this method was to make students read and understand the literature of a foreign language in order to develop a mental discipline and intellectual development (Richards & Rodgers, 1986/2001). Being teacher-centred (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), it was a way of studying a language through detailed analysis of its grammar rules and getting trained in translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. It called for the ability of memorizing the rules and facts of the grammar of the language and translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. The goal of the method

was to learn the language in order to learn its literature and to get the knowledge from the language. Among the four skills reading and writing were considered the most important ones. The ability to communicate in the target language was not a goal in this method, instead it focused on intellectual development. At the same time, accuracy was emphasized and grammar was taught deductively. The native tongue was used as the medium of instruction.

There is very little space for the use of theatre in the Grammar-Translation method because reading (of drama scripts, if at all) and writing (drama criticisms, if with reference to theatre) are likely to be given much importance whereas listening and speaking are not concentrated on. Therefore, there would not be any use of theatre or theatre activities in this method. Of course, a pseudo theatre activity might have been used in reading out the scripts through this method.

In the Direct method, language was taught directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids without translating any text or instruction in the mother tongue. Vocabulary was taught through demonstration and objects. Oral communication skills were built up in a graded progression. Accuracy of grammar and correct pronunciation were emphasized. The teacher has a dominating role in this method. Students have little room for participation and they are almost passive. Grammar is taught inductively. Though much exposure to target language is made there are very few chances for the students to use the target language in situations except for the conversation drills after the teacher's initiation. The use of theatrical activities is not found in this method except for some conversation drills. Hence, one can place the Direct Method also under the methods that can only use pseudo theatre activities.

The Oral approach and Situational Language Teaching developed in the 1920s with the involvement of systematic principles of selection, gradation and presentation was the accepted British approach to English language teaching in the 1950s. Language teaching began with speech

in the target language. New language points were taught situationally. Oral practice of controlled sentence patterns in situations was given prominence. With this type of British “Structuralism”, language was viewed as purposeful activity related to goals and situations in the real world. It adopted an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. With graded items of grammar and a selection of vocabulary introduction, reading and writing were introduced. No explanation in the mother tongue was ever advocated. The learner was expected to deduce the meaning from the context provided. Errors were corrected. Hence lessons were always teacher-directed. The four basic language skills were approached through structures. New sentence patterns were presented in a situational approach with a drill-based manner of practice. ‘Situation’ meant the use of concrete objects, pictures, and realia. Together with objects, actions and gestures were used to demonstrate the meaning of new language items. Choral repetition, drills, controlled oral-based reading and writing tasks including pair practice and group work were practised. Listening to what the teachers said and repeating the sentence patterns mechanically was the norm and learners were mostly passive and teachers being skilled manipulators conducted the entire scene with commands and other cues and corrections. Thus, it can be easily surmised that the Oral approach and Situational Language Teaching is also a method using pseudo-theatre activities without meaningful interaction and creative development.

The Audio-lingual Method became popular in the second language teaching field in the fifties, with the introduction of a strong theoretical base in linguistics and psychology. The principles of Structural Linguistics and Behavioural Psychology provided the theoretical base for this method. It advocated aural training first in pronunciation exercises followed by speaking, reading and writing. Language was taught through speech with structural patterns. Everyday use of language was emphasized. As both the native and the target languages had separate linguistic systems, it was assumed the mother tongue interference would cause difficulties in achieving target language proficiency. Acquisition

of structural patterns over vocabulary was emphasized. Memorization of rules was not advocated. The grammar rules were induced from examples. It was assumed that through imitation and repetition of sentences, acquisition would take place in the same manner as first language acquisition. Since the principle of habit formation was adapted to teach the second language the teacher was like a music composer conducting, guiding, and controlling the students' behaviour in the target language. While overcoming the habits of the L1 the goal of this method was to make students use the second language communicatively as imitators. The interaction was teacher-directed. As students memorised the dialogues there was no meaning making effort made on the part of the students. The Audio-lingual Method would make a pair of students perform dialogues mechanically without any spontaneous expression or meaningful communication attempted. Thus, this too, can be seen as a method where pseudo-theatre type activity is possible.

2.5.3 Methods using Theatre-like Activities

Communicative Language Teaching, the Silent way, Total Physical Response, Community Language Learning Approach and Desuggestopedia are the methods that can be categorised under the ones perceived as using theatre-like activities. Being learner-centred, these methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) promote communication. Except for communicative language teaching, the others follow the behaviourist theory and structural approach to teach language. Communicative language teaching adopts the theory of using language as communication.

Communicative Language Teaching (hereafter CLT) emerged in the late seventies to provide more space to the functional and communicative aspects of language teaching and continues to be used by language teachers; its base principals are adaptations and modifications of Chomsky's cognitive theory (1957) and Hymes' Communicative competence (1972). It is based on the theory of language as communication. Communicative, rather than linguistic competence, is given prominence. Grammar and vocabulary are learnt primarily

from functional and situational contexts. Language errors are ignored at the beginning. With the inevitable use of mother tongue at appropriate places authentic language in real situations in the target language is used for communication. Games and activities, role-plays and conversations with negotiation of meaning in real contexts are accommodated. Stories are enacted, with more communicative interaction taking place. The teacher acts as a facilitator and students are responsible managers of their learning. Unlike the other methods discussed above the communicative method is more student-centred because of more students' involvement in the activities (Richards & Rodgers, 1996/2001, p.158). Pair work, group work and whole group activities are a part of classroom procedures. Language functions take prominent role and cultural patterns, life styles, non-verbal behaviour receive greater attention. Brumfit (1984) claims that group work enables learners to produce fluency and accommodates it as part of a communicative methodology (Brumfit, 1984, p.78). He reasons out the use of small group which simulates natural conversational settings more closely than any other mode of classroom organization. Pair work and group work are included combining most effectively all aspects of communication, learning, and human interaction. As far as CLT is concerned, it has adopted more of theatre-like activities such as role-plays, dialogues, games etc. Making the classroom an artificial environment of a social context this method leaves room for bringing real life situations into theatrical enactments.

Littlewood (1981) clarifies how the method moves from pre-communicative activities to communicative activities with the following continuum:

Control

Performing memorized dialogues

Contextualised drills

Cued dialogues

Role-playing

Creativity

Improvisation

(p.50)

This continuum accommodates improvisation but it would not provide the same effect as a full-fledged theatre would do (see section 2.6). Communicative Language Teaching therefore, is one of the methods that uses theatre-like activities like games, role-plays and enactment of short conversations and stories with group and pair work.

Devised by Caleb Gattegno, the Silent way proposes that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learner should be motivated to produce as much as language as possible. Being a learner-centred approach, (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) adopting Chomsky's cognitive theory, it provides the learner a chance to discover and produce language with available resources. Rather than making the learner repeat what the teacher says, it allows and facilitates the learner to understand the situation with his/ her perception and meaning without translating from the target language to mother tongue. Students practise the sentences within the context by taking turns. This paves the way for meaningful learning with much attention to listening. Silence is a tool. Teachers' expression is at minimum and students' responsibility towards their learning is at maximum. Teacher sets up situations and observes students' behaviour. Richards and Rodgers summarise how the method makes use of theatrical aspects:

The teacher uses gestures, charts, and manipulatives in order to elicit and shape student responses and so must be both facile and creative as a pantomimist and puppeteer. In sum the Silent Way teacher, like the complete dramatist, writes the script, chooses the props, sets the mood, models the action, designates the players, and is critic for the performance (Richards and Rodgers, 1996/2001, p. 107).

With a syllabus composed of linguistic structures and arranged in a non-linear fashion but constantly recycled, the silent way integrates all

the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, errors are treated as important and necessary for learning. The culture of the target language is inseparable and made explicit through language. As far as the use of the first language is concerned, the existing knowledge of the L1 can be tapped to teach sounds, pronunciation, etc. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching. Teaching pronunciation is the first step in the process. The general objective is to enable oral and aural facility. Near native fluency in the target language is the expectation. Teaching grammar and vocabulary is considered as the prime aspect of language teaching. The Silent Way provides more space to students although in an artificial classroom setting. These aspects point to the Silent way as a method using theatre-like activities.

Total Physical Response (hereafter TPR) is a language teaching method used to teach language through physical motor activity and speech. Comparing the first language acquisition process of a child, James Asher, a professor of psychology claims that second language teaching can be done through commands and performances. The teacher is the director of all student behaviour. The students are expected to imitate the teacher's non-verbal and verbal commands before they themselves learn to speak. Comprehension skills are expected first. This method reduces learner stress and creates a positive mood for learning. Owing much to the Behaviourists' Stimulus Response theory and the Structuralists' grammar based views of language, it promotes vocabulary learning. But the teaching of vocabulary and grammatical structures are not in the linear order but according to the situations used in the classrooms. TPR aims to produce learners with communicative abilities. Learners' mother tongue is allowed at the beginning to reduce stress and then it is rarely used. Body movements help to understand the meaning of the situation. Role-plays based on every day situations, games and skits are utilized after a certain period when students are proficient with the sentence level comprehension. The learners' role is regarded as listeners and performers and they have no control over the content. The teacher who decides on the content has a direct and active

role to play. He/She prepares materials and uses realia available in the classroom. Mostly teacher's voice, actions and gestures are useful in the beginning. Thus, one could observe that TPR is also one of the methods using theatre-like activities.

The Community Language Learning Approach was developed by Charles A. Curran who was influenced by Carl Roger's humanistic psychology. His humanistic techniques are to involve students' feelings and emotions along with linguistic knowledge and behaviourist skills. Students are allowed to talk freely and discussion is developed from those interactions. In order to eradicate fear from the students' minds, teachers are expected to become language counsellors. It is assumed that if a teacher is sensitive to students' fear he/she can help them overcome their negative feelings and turn this fear into positive energy to help them continue their learning. As students' fear is reduced, their self-confidence is developed. As a learner-centred approach without a fixed syllabus, this method mainly emphasises speaking. With the use of L1 to explain necessary points, pantomime is used to give meaning to situations. A sense of community is developed; cooperation among students is encouraged by allowing learners to work in groups. This leads to a building up of trust and understanding among participants. Materials are developed in the classroom by recording the discussions that take place during group work. The syllabus is generated in the classroom itself. Culture is an integral part of language learning and the teacher are expected to be culturally sensitive. Speech is given much importance with reading and writing following suit along with the teacher's prepared materials based on students' topics discussed in groups which emphasize teaching grammar, pronunciation patterns and vocabulary. Students' errors are corrected by the teacher's repetition of words and sentences in a non-threatening manner. As the involvement of theatre-like activities like pantomime and socially relevant contexts are found in this method, it can be treated as a method using theatre-like activities.

Desuggestopedia (formerly Suggestopedia) developed by Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian Psychiatrist- educator, is concerned with the full use of students' mental powers in relation to language learning. The psychological barrier of learning is to be removed; fear of the inability of performance should be eradicated from the minds of the learners. This method makes use of many theatre activities. For example, the teacher uses pantomime to help the students understand and act out various occupations. Short dialogues are used in groups for practice. Songs and music are used. Translation from the target language to mother tongue is made for clear explanation. Vocabulary in the dialogue is explained with the help of L1. The teacher reads and the learners listen. He /she advises the students to read the dialogue at home. In the next class the teacher acts out the characters and suggests the students to follow suit. Making use of role-play techniques, the entire dialogue is dramatized. Games, songs, music and posters become integral parts of this method. All these suggest that learning is easy and pleasant. According to this method, it is suggested that when there is a unity between conscious and subconscious levels of the mind, learning gets enhanced. A desuggestopedia course is bright and cheerful. More students' interaction can be observed after teacher's initiation. A great deal of attention is given to students' feelings. The culture of the target language with every day life situations is given prominence. This method is quite challenging to the teacher especially preparing himself towards a learner-centred and cheerful manner. After the teacher's primary activation, the students can engage in various activities in a creative fashion. The teacher, being the trusted authority, takes a leading role with self confidence, acting ability and a strong commitment to the method. However it might disturb the students' free movement and learning. Suggestion is at the heart of Suggestopedia. The teacher's primary role is to create situations and present linguistic material. The learners are almost in a passive state at the beginning accepting the concept of infantilization. They are expected to detach themselves from the past experience and confine to the new trend of getting suggestions from the teacher and follow suit to regain the self-confidence, spontaneity and receptivity of the childhood. This method

which contains more of theatre-like activities like dramatization and enacting dialogue becomes a method using theatre-like activities with much vigour.

2.5.4 Towards a Method Using Full-fledged Theatre Form

Having analysed various methods, it is found that no method is using theatre in its full-fledged form. This neither amounts to any production of plays for entertainment and aesthetic pleasure with more props and screens nor does it require utilizing all the theatrical elements applied in theatre productions in the English classrooms. But by making use of the basic elements of theatre and drama such as conflict, dialogue, plot, characters, theme, acting and action, music and melody, spectacle and props - realia (which are possible and available in the classroom) teachers can explore the possibilities of teaching a second language in a meaningful, creative atmosphere without stress and inhibition. There are affective factors like motivation for learning, attitude toward the foreign language and anxiety towards the learning environment which can contribute positively or negatively for second language learning and social factors like alien environment, the gap between home culture and classroom culture and non-relevance of curriculum. It is in the teachers' hands to make things positive and this is the gap which I have found and have set out to explore in my thesis.

It is assumed that a methodology with full motivation for learning in a stress-free atmosphere with meaning-making contexts and activities for spontaneous expression accommodating social factors is yet to be explored. Incorporating 'theatre' in its real sense into our ongoing classroom practices will equip us with a powerful and efficient teaching method which reduces tension and anxiety and allows room for self identity and self expression in a familiar cultural background. Students would get new experience and motivation. Attitudes towards language will be made positive. They would learn effectively through direct and purposeful interactive language activity. They would get alternative and creative means of expressing their ideas and presenting the outcomes of their learning. It would extend their creative awareness.

Many methods have been examined in the previous sections and it has been argued that five of them can be exploited with modifications for full-fledged theatre activities. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explicate the manner in which all these methods can be modified for this purpose. However, communicative language teaching (CLT), the most popular method, is followed in many places in Sri Lanka and other parts of the world. As such, its successes and failures in the Sri Lankan context, and the possibilities of using CLT to enable full-fledged theatre workshop will now be discussed.

2.6 CLT and Full-fledged Theatre in Sri Lanka

Communicative language teaching has been in vogue in Sri Lanka for twenty odd years and in the English language teaching world for much more than that. However, in the Sri Lankan context it has not been able to fulfill the communicative needs of the second language learner in a motivating and meaningful manner. It is felt that the use of full-fledged theatre in this context can fill the gap, but to do this, the problem with the realisations of CLT in Sri Lanka needs to be discussed.

2.6.1 Orgins of CLT

With the advent of Chomsky's Transformative Generative Grammar, there was a paradigm shift in the language acquisition/ learning Theories (Stern 1983; Howart 1984; Richards & Rogers 2003; Munby 1978; Yalden 1987). Chomsky (1957) rejected the Behaviourist Theory of Language which treated language learning as a matter of habit formation based on Skinner's theory of verbal behaviour and introduced the theory of innate ability of producing infinite number of sentences with an inborn capacity of language learning called competence. He makes a crucial distinction between competence and performance. By competence he means the knowledge of language rules that enables a learner to understand and produce all the well-formed sentences of his first language. The actual use of the language is treated as linguistic performance.

Hymes (1972) criticized Chomsky's categories of competence and performance because Chomsky excluded the competence for using language in real time contexts and failed to account for sociocultural aspects. Hymes' theory of communicative competence stresses communicative competence of a learner in a speech community. He further points out that when a person acquires communicative competence he acquires both the knowledge and ability for language use (Hymes, 1972, p.281).

2.6.2 Emergence of CLT

In the seventies, the Council of Europe had to find possible ways of teaching European languages to adults for communicative needs. It was one of the many factors for the emergence of CLT. Wilkins who was involved in this task introduced the term 'Communicative Approach' (Johnson, 1982). The course was supposed to consist of tasks which will fulfil communicative needs of adult learners within a European context. The dissatisfaction over the situational language teaching also contributed to the development of CLT during the early seventies in Britain. It was noted that the students were unable to express their ideas and feelings etc. using language though they were able to master the grammatical rules of the target language through situational language teaching.

Stern (1983) records that Widdowson's (1978) approach of language teaching based on the analysis of communicative acts contribute to the development of CLT. He defined a set of contrasting concepts with distinctions such as language as a formal system and language use as communication and advocated that language teaching should make a shift from teaching a second language as a formal system to second language as communication.

The developing nations which achieved independence in the late sixties and early seventies were in need of officials trained in English for specific purposes. This paved the way for the emergence of the CLT. The students from these developing nations studying in Britain

needed certain practical skills in speech rather than grammar (Howatt, 1984). Therefore text book writers provided materials with pair work activities, games, role plays and simulations which brought learners into closer contact with real English.

2.6.3 Communicative Competence as the Aim of English Language Teaching

The aim of language teaching in the communicative approach is to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and with this competence, students are expected to fulfill seven different language functions. They are:

1. The instrumental function: using language to get things;
2. The regulatory function: using language to control the behaviour of others;
3. The interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;
4. The personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;
5. The heuristic function: using language to learn to discover;
6. The imaginative function: using language to create a world of imagination;
7. The representational function: using language to communicate information.

(Halliday, 1975, p.11-17)

These functions were developed and categorised by Canale and Swain (1980) into a theoretical framework of communicative competence comprising four areas of knowledge and skills namely grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

In the communicative approach students are expected to relate language to the social meanings that it carries and to use it as a vehicle for social interaction (Littlewood, 1981, p.12). Language learners have to therefore, increase their sense of performing in a meaningful social context, rather than simply responding to a prompt. Moreover, there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless (Munby, 1981). Therefore, the notion of communicative competence must be enlarged to include contextual appropriacy. Thus, language teaching theories shifted their base from the notion of language as a system of rules to be learnt to that of language as communication (Johnson, 1982).

2.6.4 ELT in Sri Lanka

In the Sri Lankan situation, students hardly find a real social context to practice language speech. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that a theatre workshop would provide an atmosphere to use the language meaningfully. Littlewood (1981) suggests functional communication activities with the purpose of using language to share information and using language to process information, identifying pictures, discovering identical parts, sequences, locations missing information, missing features, secrets and so on under sharing and processing information. Littlewood lists the following. For example, reconstructing story sequences and pooling information to solve a problem are recommended. His social interaction activities treat classroom as a social context. He suggests conversation or discussion sessions, dialogues, role-plays on school experiences, and simulations. His idea of control to creativity leads from performing memorized dialogues, contextualized drills, cued dialogues, role-playing to improvisation. However, memorising and reproducing dialogues, drills, cued dialogues, and role-playing keep students in an artificial and monotonous situation. Although Littlewood points out the creativity aspect, the imaginative power in an “impoverished” second language context is limited. This is because cued dialogues in a semi- communicative context may not be helpful to lead learners to a spontaneous interaction. (Littlewood, 1981, p.86)

In his social interaction activities he accommodates large-scale simulation activities and improvisation. But in the Sri Lankan context, it is felt that simulation will develop into an artificial activity because there is no fun for the learner. He will be dragged into a monotonous learning situation. Instead, using improvisation in the classroom implies that a stimulus situation can be interpreted and exploited by the learners. Imitating an everyday scene, adopting a particular personality, improvisation based on a photograph to perform impromptu etc. are likely to be much more beneficial to the learner. As such the attempt made will be to develop a workshop using the concept of a full-fledged theatre, within a CLT orientation, to increase imagination and motivate the learners. The shift is from simulation to improvisation and beyond, to improvisation for dramatic effect, for a particular purpose.

Improvisation is simply one end of the 'control-creativity' continuum on which the whole discussion of role-playing has been based. It is the form of role-playing in which learners can be more creative, because they are most able to act out personal interpretations of the situations and their roles in it. Indeed, they have more freedom than in situations outside the classroom, where they have to obey stronger external constraints on what they say and do. In this respect, improvisation is not a way of preparing learners to cope with specific communicative needs. Rather, it is a way of encouraging general confidence and fluency in foreign language use by allowing the learners to explore and exploit their communicative repertoire in any ways they wish. It also encourages them to express their own imagination and individually through the foreign language. This in turn helps them to relate to the new language to their own personality and to increase their sense of emotional security in handling the foreign medium (Littlewood 1981, p. 62).

Improvisation and dramatisation are an integral part of task-based teaching which is an offshoot of CLT, but has also been adopted and adapted by other practitioners. The full-fledged theatre activities visualised in this thesis are largely based on tasks that students have

to carry out and perform. As such, the merits and demerits, if any, of task-based teaching will now be examined.

2.6.5 Task-based Teaching

Ellis (2003) records: “Task-based language teaching constitutes a strong version of CLT” (p.30). Citing Stern’s (1992) classification of communicative activities (field experiences, classroom management activities, inviting guest speakers, talking on topics related to students’ life) and communicative exercises, i.e tasks, Ellis argues that a strong version of CLT can be realized in a variety of ways, but not by tasks. However, he is of the view that tasks can function as a useful device for planning a communicative curriculum. Furthermore, he criticises the traditional distinction between syllabus and methodology where syllabus is communicative (notions and functions) but the methodology may be non communicative. Long defines the tasks used in language teaching as follows:

“a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward... in other words, by ‘task’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, or in between. Tasks are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not Applied Linguistics (1985, p.85).”

Candlin expresses it as:

one of a set of differentiated sequenceable, problem solving activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective explorations and pursuance of foreseen and emergent goals, within a social milieu (1987, p.10).

Breen (1987) defines task with greater clarity:

a range of work plans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language leaning from the simple and brief exercises type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group-problem solving or simulations and decision- making (1987, p. 23).

Prabhu (1987) argues for the learners' involvement in the tasks which lead to the development of second language competence. He recommends real life tasks like making use of railway time-tables, bus tickets etc to be used in classroom activities. His belief in not providing practice activities, which focus on individual linguistic forms as a preliminary to engagement in communicative tasks, is largely compatible with our concept of not introducing grammar in developing communication.

Nunan (1989) distinguishes a top-down approach which utilizes knowledge of the large picture and bottom-up approach which focuses on the various components of language in designing tasks. According to him, it is apt to make use of interactive models in order to involve learners in communicative tasks. Brown and Yule (1983) differentiate between interactional and transactional tasks.

In this thesis, the task is defined as an amalgamation of these many definitions with the addition that in a theatre task the learners are made to believe that they are in a planned real world. This leads them to live in a make-believe situation while practising real communication. In a theatre-based tasks therefore, students' emotional involvement is targeted in order to make them learn unconsciously without any affective filters. The task difficulty and the task complexity is comfortably modified and adapted so that the student can face an alien language with less difficulty and no apprehension. The actual tasks used in this study are presented in chapters three and four. In Chapter 3 (section 3.6.3) the pilot study tasks are presented and in chapter four (section 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) the tasks used in the main study have been listed.

With the analysis made on the type of tasks to be developed in a theatre workshop methodology, the present discussion turns to the argument for the right method which has been in the air of English language teaching field

Having discussed how popular methods accommodated theatre and theatre-related activities, the study outlines how the proposed method of using full-fledged theatre as an additional resource would lead to

language expression in a theatre workshop. Before doing this, the study will present how some experiments were made by various scholars and researchers with regard to theatre in language education. It is assumed that by using theatre as an additional resource in language education language learning can be enhanced. But to do this the methodology needs to go beyond 'experimenting with theatre' in language classrooms.

2.7 Experimental Theatres in Language Education

Incorporating theatre into our ongoing classroom practice will equip us with a powerful and efficient teaching approach. Students will get new experience and motivation. They will learn effectively through direct and purposeful interactive language activity. They get alternative and creative means of expressing their ideas and presenting the outcomes of their learning. It will extend their creative awareness. In literature, there are many kinds of studies experimented and practised with the use of theatre and drama. There are theatres like Story Theatre, Reading Theatre, and the Magic 'If' Theatre and studies like an EFL Course using Drama, the Play writing and Play reading Course, and 'Play' in the language teaching programme.

Before getting into analysing the impact of the social and affective factors, I will look into the studies that have used theatre activities for language teaching and analyse whether those studies used a full-fledged theatre and can grow into a complete language teaching methodology. In the literature, there are many kinds of theatres experimented and practised in language teaching. But they have not made use of the form, 'The theatre' in its real sense to bring about language communication (both written and spoken) in its true spirit. For this discussion an attempt is made to analyse what 'the theatre' is, what 'the drama' is, what 'theatre in education' is and 'what theatre in language education' is. All this is done with an analysis of three studies that experimented with theatre and drama in language teaching, 'Story Theatre', 'Readers Theatre', "The 'Magic if' Theatre" and two theoretical studies 'An EFL Course based on Drama' and 'A Play Writing Course'.

2.7.1 Different Kinds of Theatres in Language Education

Hines (2005) developed a story theatre. Story theatre can be used with students of all ages and all levels of English proficiency. Students take a text- a piece of fiction, a fable, or a folk tale and act it out. No written text is used. Only the narration takes place and students will speak the dialogue. Sound effects, props, and blackboard pictures can be used for providing background. Here students will do the telling and not the teacher. Teacher's role is to select a tale that is suitable to the groups. It evokes imagination and is intrinsically motivating. It in fact engages students' curiosity. Telling the story in groups will be seen as narrating a story in a traditional sense. There will be a meaningful rendering of action unlike the mechanical choral recitation. Assigning different roles to difficult students and rendering it meaningfully in the whole context is expected. Students will make intelligent guesses about the meaningful strange words. After students go into reading circles they can enact whole story. Story Theatre gives students a chance to use their language actively and sensibly to convey meaning. Unlike role-playing activities, stories provide more interesting content and can be improvised. Story theatre works with the whole text of a story encouraging students to concentrate on the whole message of the text. When the teacher reads the story students can learn the pronunciation, stress and intonation. Tasks like listening to a recording or listening to others and allowing them to imagine and create different ends keep them motivated and interested in the Story Theatre. Same characters can be played by different individuals in different groups. Teachers have to concentrate on the language proficiency level of the story and the students and the length of the story/play. Consequently, story theatre diminishes students' anxiety level (Hines, 2005, pp.25-26).

Martinez, Roser and Strecker (1999) maintain that Readers Theatre is an interpretive reading activity in which readers use their voices to bring characters to life. Unlike conventional theatre, Readers Theatre requires no sets, costumes, props, or memorized lines. Rather, the performer's goal is to read a script aloud effectively, enabling the audience to visualize

the action (p. 326). The study by Martinez et al was made with pre- and post- assessments of students' oral readings of unrehearsed stories from the same or similar series used in the repertory groups.

The action research study using 'Readers Theatre' (RT) done by Liu (2000) with 14 ESL students in an intermediate L2 writing class in a US university for 10 weeks was designed to improve writing skills. Liu used two short stories and two personal narratives in three phases. In the first phase students were asked to pick favourite quotes from their readings, choose sentences from their reading responses and to create conclusions. All these were acted out in an improvised setting. In phase 2, students were asked to exchange their responses and read aloud a few quotes written by others. In the final phase they were requested to compose an imaginative ending to the story in the form of a dialogue which was acted out with the teacher's participation. Positive results were achieved with RT's ability to engage learners in constructing their own language growth reflecting meaning in the fullest sense of personal and cultural relevance. In addition, it developed students' individual language abilities and supported self-initiated activity. Peer collaboration and enlivened classroom atmosphere with more interactions were the by-products.

Via Richard (1987 in Rivers) speaks of 'The Magic of If' theatre and says that drama techniques are strategies to achieve either drama or theatre or both. They cover a wide range of activities that are useful in the language classroom. He compares the status of the actor on stage and learner in communication. Both are tense in front of an audience. If the tension is removed both will perform better. Therefore, the teachers' job is to provide his/her students with their learning environment and keep them interested and involved. The author based on Stanislavski's chart "the magic if" suggests to expand it to 'If I were in this situation and if I said these lines, how would I say them' (Rivers, p.110-114).

2.7.2 Studies Based on Using Theatre

This study will continue to discuss some studies which used theatre

for language teaching. Wessels (1991) gives an account of an EFL course for upper intermediate and advance students. The course that is entirely based on drama techniques includes classes on pronunciation, spoken communication skills, theatre workshop activities, literature and production of plays. With a range of group dynamic activities, both verbal and non-verbal, such as warm-up and relaxation activities, name games, pair games and group games and learning through a range of theatre workshops with movement, mime, improvisation, scene work and drama voice-production students are prepared to think about the type of play and the kind of character they like to do. Then they discuss in pairs and then in groups, then as a whole class. Discussion on plots and characters is done through brainstorming. Story lines and the roles of characters are developed with a consensus. While improvising the play is done scene-by-scene and the script is transcribed by another set of students. Blocking of the scenes and repeated actions will help them learn the language. Finally, once the full script is completed the teacher can edit the scene checking grammar and vocabulary. This provides a chance for a written component for the course. Students are asked to maintain a character diary. They can write about what happens to individual characters as the play develops. Students themselves can direct in order to reduce the dominant role of the teacher. At this stage pronunciation, stress, intonation rhythm can be checked along with the revision of the script. Finally, for the performance, photo and video recording can be organized (Wessels, 1991, p.234).

Elgar (2002) recommends the use of play writing and subsequent play reading in English language teaching for language development. Playwriting provides a natural context for integration of all the four skills. He used this method of playwriting as a method of language learning activity with tertiary-level students and suggests a methodology for the composition of plays that followed by dramatized reading (p.24). Thus the activities of writing of plays and reading of them helped to improve the learning of the language.

Heath (1993) introduces two theories of multiple voices and cognitive apprenticeship which could be enabled by the medium 'Play' to be used in the language teaching programme. According to Bakhtin (1981), people speak through many voices, i.e. they listen to others many times and store the language and make it their own when they use it. Therefore they talk through the world of themselves and many others when they listen to. If the teachers are ready to exploit this aspect and make students speak like their favourite people, like the football or cricket player or T.V. announcer there will be successful learning. In the second concept of apprenticeship, young tutors who are engaged in tutoring are asked to report on the way their students do their learning. This reflection helps the older ones to decompose what is involved in learning a language. Youngsters become something other than their usual student selves within the cross-age tutoring frame. They must play new roles as teachers, mentors, evaluators and planners: they are accountable in new and different ways to themselves, to their young colleagues and to the adults with whom they must communicate about their achievements of their tutor (Heath, 1993, p.188). The play enables both multiple voices and cognitive apprenticeship. It is the unit of interaction of learning that changes students. The play that involves full performance including verbal display arrests the attention of cognition that enables the number of communicative skills (Heath, 1993, p.189). Thus language learning is promoted through play.

Various studies using drama and theatre for teaching language discussed above support the view that teaching through drama and theatre is beneficial. Teaching pronunciation, reading skills, writing skills, communication skills and other various language aspects are possible through theatre and drama but these have remained short programmes.

2.7.3 A Critique on the Studies

All the five studies discussed above are based on the communicative approach. However, there is no theoretical concept articulated with regard to the nature of language and the nature of language learning. The authors

have also not mentioned about the role of L1 in the language teaching, the influence of sociocultural factors and classroom social dynamics. In addition to this, a full-fledged theatre is not utilized in these studies for promoting language learning with personality development. Story theatre (Hines, 2005) deals with using only the story genre for producing a theatre activity; 'Readers theatre' (Martinez, Roser & Srecker, 1999) and (Liu, 2000) confines their studies with interpretation of the scripts and dramatized reading; the Magic 'if' theatre (Via Richard, 1987) concentrates on using theatre activities for removing tension for language development; Wessels' (1991) 'Drama course' makes use of relaxation exercises, improvisation and writing out scripts mechanically for a course without incorporating students' interest and the 'Play writing and play reading course' of Elgar (2002) for language development does not utilize the performance part vigorously to provide the essence of the theatre. The Theatre form is full of vigour and activities, accommodating all the literary and cultured elements. Imitating, acting, creating, criticizing, interpreting and expressing views and ideas through the use of language, making use of space for discussions, debates and establishing points of view, incorporating social, political, cultural and economic aspirations of the participants into the themes and plots, accommodating all the possible moral, psychological, social and spiritual reflections through characterisation and sketching out characters and fixing them in a proper context and using music and spectacle for mood creation and visual effect respectively can all be possible in the use of theatre. Besides, students' affective and social factors, cultural patterns, norms and social conventions, previous knowledge of local culture and drama and theatre forms, and the use of first language/ mother tongue could find a space in the use of theatre in English classrooms. To discuss the influence of the social factors a brief analysis of other theatres in vogue where these factors have been taken into account, should be made.

2.8 Different Theatres in Vogue

The proposed classroom theatre workshop would accommodate the concepts of the following theatres as they are very much useful and

meaningful. The alienation effect by Brecht's epic theatre, Grotowski's Poor theatre concept of using available props and Richard Schechner's idea of eliminating the distinction between the audience's space and the actor's space, Augusto Boal's Forum theatre concept are discussed. They are all very much apt to create a new classroom theatre which speak about students' problems in front of students' audience with available props or realia in the classroom. Therefore, an examination of how these theatres came into existence in the history of theatre and how they function with the new ideologies to suit their needs is made in the following section.

2.8.1 Epic Theatre by Bertolt Brecht

Developed in the 1920s by Bertolt Brecht in Germany, Epic theatre reflected contemporary social realities and moral problems and appealed to the audience's ability to reflect and think objectively about the play. Basing his theory on Marxism, he made the actor use 'alienating or distancing' effect to achieve the above reality. The audience could reflect on its argument and draw conclusions. His intention was to block the audience's emotional responses and to hinder their tendency to empathise with the characters trapped up in the action. Influenced by Chinese theatre he trains the actors to emphasise stylized external actions disregarding inner and emotional feelings in order to provide the required alienating effect on the audience and make them think objectively.

2.8.2 Poor Theatre by Jerzy Grotowski

Jerzy Grotowski's pronouncements on a poor theatre were made public in the late 60s. Sharing many views with Antoine Artaud viewing the performer as a holy actor and the theatre as a secular religion Grotowski argued for a production to go beyond entertainment or illustration. He expects the theatre to have intense confrontation with the audience which should be limited in number only around sixty. He advocated the actors to seek spontaneity with a rigid discipline achieved through the most rigorous of physical training. As his focus was the

unadorned actor he opted for a poor theatre rejecting as unnecessary all the props, settings, scenery and costumes which contribute to form the so-called rich theatre

2.8.3 Environmental Theatre by Richard Schechner

Environmental Theatre, inherited from Jerzy Grotowski, was developed by Richard Schechner. It was a new branch of the New Theatre movement of the 1960s. Its aim was to heighten audience awareness of theatre by eliminating the distinction between the audience's space and the actor's space. Schechner and his group formed their theatre to suit each of their play and audience framework was also designed differently for each production. The sets were usually based on multi-level platforms, balconies, ramps and scaffolds surrounding a stage that encroached on the audience territory. It provides a wider range of space for the actors and a greater facility of interaction between the audience and performer.

The audience was invited to participate in the action of the play unlike the traditional play. It was a multi-focus theatre with more than one scene to be staged at the same time. It also includes the use of psycho-physical conditioning exercises for actors, the collating of texts, and the shaping of theatre space.

2.8.4 Community Theatre

According to Van Erven (2001) Community Theatre is an important device for communities to collectively share stories to participate in political dialogue, and break down the increasing exclusion of marginalised group of citizens. It is practised all over the world by growing numbers of people. He defines that a community is that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction called 'society'. People acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of home. Community theatre is a worldwide phenomenon that manifests itself in many different guises yielding a broad range of performance

styles. This theatre is united in the sense that it is based on personal or local stories rather than pre-written scripts developed collectively through improvisation with the help of local professional artistes or amateur artistes.

2.8.5 'Theatres' and Enhancing of Learner Language

Four kinds of theatre have been examined and it is apparent that there is a great deal of participant audience and community involvement in these; as such it is felt that elements from these can be incorporated into a theatre workshop intended for the language classroom. However, it must be remembered that students who are participants in a theatre workshop, unlike those who act in plays, are not doing so of their own volition. Also the aim of the full-fledged theatre workshop tasks is to lower affective factors, motivate students and enhance their language skills. As such it is necessary to place the possibility of such a workshop within the social dynamics of the classroom and also take affective factors into account. It is also important to examine notions about the nature of contextual and language support that will have to be provided to enable such learning to happen. They will be discussed in the following section of the chapter.

2.9 Language Enabling Classroom Dynamics and Learning Communities

A theatre workshop is primarily concerned with language enabling cannot begin at zero level. Thus, it must identify the proximal task zone for development to take place. It also needs to keep in mind the social dynamics of the classroom and identify ways in which the learning community can co-construct language, make meaning, take part in a shared dialogue and grow linguistically as a result of this experience. With these aims in mind, it is necessary to examine the notions of scaffolding, dialogue, culture sensitivity and the notion of learning communities.

2.9.1 Scaffolding in Theatre Tasks

According to educational psychology learning is a process in tune with the cognitive maturation of an individual (Piaget, 1959). Bruner (1986) sees language learning as one dimension of learning and his theory of Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) is the network of social relations that enables cognitive maturation. The social relations who help humans to learn and who guide them through this learning are elders, peers and teachers.

Since language is a facet of cognitive maturation this can also be developed in a theatre workshop where tasks can be initially negotiated between the students and the teacher cum facilitator and worked out in groups with the help of the teacher and more abled peers. The playing of different characters according to the selected plot and theme is likely to provide the necessary motivation and interest which will encourage learners to discuss and develop a play. All this will entail the use of language. Furthermore, the knowledge of L1 culture, literature (poems, plays and stories) and theatre aspects and techniques will act as a scaffold for the play production. Through conversation and dialogue student can have a meaningful discussion and engage in a dynamic and active participation. Such interaction has to be meaningful.

2.9.2 A Methodology for Providing Space for Oppressed Voices

Through conversation and dialogues students can participate in a meaningful discussion and become active and dynamic in their participation. Such participation is dialogic in nature. In it, the speaker encounters the consciousness of another speaker in a dialogue which is full of conflicts, confrontations, agreements and disagreements. This dialogue which must lead to consensus is neither an argument nor a negotiation. But a consciousness of the self and the other. Agreement is reached only through interaction. As Bakhtin states:

To be, means to be for another and through the other oneself. A person has no sovereign internal territory, he is wholly and always as

the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another (Bakhtin, 1981, p.287).

In the theatre workshop visualised for Sri Lankan students, this Bakhtinian concept of providing space to the other is dovetailed with the Freireian concept of 'Dialogue' where silenced voices of the classroom are given an opportunity to be heard. It is felt that a theatre workshop can function as a place for oppressed voices to be heard. Friere's problem posing pedagogy can be employed to reinterpret the classroom pedagogy as equal to all. Rather than adopting a banking concept of education a negotiated liberating pedagogy will result, which in turn will lead to more communication and more opportunities to later use the language so acquired in society for genuine meaning making. It needs to be remembered that "Dialogue is the encounter between me, mediated by the world, in order to name the world! (Freire, 1972, p.76)". "Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education" (Freire, 1972, p.81).

2.9.3 Culture-sensitive Features of a Theatre Workshop

All classroom tasks in general and theatre workshop tasks in particular need to be extremely culture-sensitive. Thus an adaptation of CLT tasks into theatre- tasks must take this idea also into account. Holliday (1994) argues for the existing communicative approach to be enhanced with culture-sensitive features to achieve the appropriate methodology for a particular group of students. To identify the culture-sensitive features and understand the classroom culture he recommends engaging in ethnographic action research. He develops the notion that there is a deep element to what happens between people in the classroom, consisting of psycho-social, informal and micro-political factors influenced by the wider social environment. According to him, appropriate methodologies can be devised by attending to these features (p.160). Thus, the teacher should be able to understand the classroom culture in order to motivate the students and tap their natural resources for communicative competence. As will be shown later in this thesis,

(see Chapter section 3.7.3), and Chapter section 4.5.1) the researcher was forced to modify tasks and take learners cultural background into account. These initial situations used to generate dialogues (At the railway station, At the post office etc.) were not effective; instead sensitive but current topics like bomb-blast, displacement, murder provided a richer context for language enhancing.

2.9.4 Student Output and Theatre Tasks

According to Krashen (1982) language acquisition occurs through input; from listening and reading, not through output from speaking and writing. He accepts that output does have an indirect role to play in encouraging acquisition. Classroom is treated as a major source of comprehensible input. For an adult, classroom can do a better service than an informal environment because he may not be adept at skills in listening and reading. The teachers' instruction and teacher talk in grammar will help him to promote from the present level of proficiency 'i' to 'i+1' the next level.

However, Swain (1995) argues that output is as important as input. She frames three functions of output in second language learning. The first is that output promotes noticing and leads to a conscious raising state. Secondly, output serves language learning process through hypothesis testing. That is a learner hypothesis about the L2 and works through erroneous output. He is able to test the output hypothesising the word order, gets feedback and reformulates it. Thirdly output serves as a metalinguistic function. It allows the learner to control and internalize the much needed knowledge.

By merely listening and reading one may not acquire a second language (Swain, 1995). He/she should be allowed to interact with others at least in the classroom. So that they can test their language whether it is communicated and oversee their metalanguage functions and abilities. For a second language learner who does not have much exposure outside the classroom teachers' instruction can be a major source of comprehensible input.

But, in a Sri Lankan situation students are able to pick up some language outside the classroom from elders' speech, TV programmes and cartoons, school and public programmes etc. In this sense students can understand the real language and makes use of them in situation where there is a need for it. They can produce their language whatever is learnt if they get a chance. Of course the chances are rare in a foreign language situation. The classroom can create such opportunities in a real sense through theatre workshops.

2.9.5 Social Dynamics of the Classroom in a Theatre Workshop

A student's learning is affected by social factors in general. Their intra-individual, interpersonal and socio historical factors have a say. According to Pollard (In Johnson, 1994), family, peers and teachers play important roles in the learning of a second language by a student. To avoid the gap between the home and the classroom environment teachers can make use of grouping strategies for creating opportunities for their cultural interactions admitting the use of home languages and linking language and content across situations. This kind of language socialization and expanding cultural meaning through content-based discussion can be achieved through various participation structures like pair work, cooperative learning, large group instructional activities, taking a field trip, watching a science demonstration. These projects can be accompanied with writing tasks followed up with discussions. They can work at their own pace in collaboration with peers. These trends can be developed to create dramas for language learning and planning out dialogue journal (Johnson, 1994).

The use of theatre tasks and a theatre workshop, it is felt, would provide this space to accommodate social and affective factors as the theatre accommodates cultural patterns and human emotions. This will facilitate emotional involvement in learning. The gap between the home environment and the classroom will also be minimised with their emotional involvement with the lessons/ tasks which are based on theatre activities. The contexts created by the teachers with stories,

plays, poems and pictures are culturally and socially meaningful and not alienated.

In addition to the awareness of social dynamics, sociometry concerned with students' preferences in choosing pairs and partners in pair work and group work. Choosing partners depends on their attitudes toward others, in terms of the degrees of attraction, indifference or repulsion among them. It also needs to be kept in mind in the planning of a theatre workshop grouping students according to their wishes will also contribute to better output.

2.9.6 Socialization in a Classroom Theatre Workshop

In a theatre workshop for language teaching, the knowledge grouping of strategies is important, as it would assist teachers to deal with affective and sociocultural factors. Students can be asked to privately state the other group members whom they like or dislike or alternatively their choices and rejections of persons for some specific activity can be noted. This method will be helpful in identifying the social relationships the students would like to have in language activities. Without an understanding of the emotional climate and social dynamics of the classroom an appropriate methodology for language teaching cannot be put together.

Grouping can also be done according to different criteria like ability, age, gender, social skills, friendship, language and special interests. The number of students in a group depends on the purpose of the learning. Pairs for interviews, telephonic conversations: trios for adding for an observer and a referee in a debate: fours are useful for children working independently from teachers and when it is necessary to bring two pairs into a group of four after working together or initial planning or to swap partners for the reporting back purposes; five /six are good for working in drama with improvisations or simulations; eight/ten for more structured activities and whole class with teachers involvement for improvisations and simulations (Clipson-Boyles, 1998, p. 27).

A language teaching theatre workshop naturally provides a lot of opportunities to students for interaction and meaningful learning. Careful attention is essential in this context for supporting and promoting second language learning, literacy, and academic development in children. Three principles for planning interaction and ways of organizing activities are recommended. They are:

1. Create opportunities to interact in a variety of participation structures; build from children's cultural and individual orientations toward classroom interaction; and create richness in oral and written performance by encouraging children to link language and content across situations. (Johnson, 1994, p.185).

The other benefits of varied participation structures according to Johnson (1994) are that it helps to encourage:

- (1) different kinds of cognitive involvement on the students' part
- (2) the use of students' home languages and cultural knowledge as cognitive resources
- (3) the accommodation of cultural and individual differences and orientations;
- (4) the freedom to develop in unexpected ways; (5) and finally fun. (p.186).

It needs to be remembered that children are socialized through language in culturally preferred ways. Such socialization does not happen without the co-construction of reality and always happens, in educational contexts, within a learning community.

2.9.7 Learning communities for co-construction in a theatre workshop

A classroom is the most complex situation where teachers face a number of interactions and have to make decisions to resolve problems that arise. They have little time to interact with each student and they plan classroom learning activities for groups. They have to manage

many events at a time, as classroom activities are multi-dimensional. Both teachers and learners bring multiple concerns, interests and life experiences to the classrooms. They get involved in balancing acts. The classroom demands high-level skills from teachers in interpreting situations and orchestrating learning.

As opposed to the view of the administrators and policy makers that the classroom is a simple cause-and-effect situation - a teacher-centred view, teachers are aware that the interaction between teachers and learners and the relations in a classroom are crucial for the quality of classroom life and learning. Unless the power relations are recognised there will be little learning. Only mere exam-oriented studies happen. The school system then becomes intractable. Instead the environment must encourage students to become more responsible to other students who are also in the learning process, interact with group members and create a social climate with which they could easily become a feasible learning community (Watkins, 2005, p. 9).

The argument made is that theatre tasks or a theatre workshop would provide such opportunities to organize classrooms as learning communities. It can change the classroom from a place of instruction and construction to co-construction. 'Instruction' is the most dominant concept of learning namely, That is learning or being told- what the teacher has told. The second view, 'Construction' focuses attention on the process of the learner in making sense of their experiences related to the past experiences and taking learning forward into their future. The role of the teacher is changed from that of a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator who constructs knowledge. The learners' role is to engage in their own sense of making conversation to make learning effective. This view focuses on the individual learner's own process in learning. A third view is termed as co-construction (Watkins, 2005, p.16). This is the building of knowledge through doing things with others. This recognises the fact that all human behaviour has a social dimension and that knowledge is constructed socially rather than individually.

In this process of creation and negotiation of shared meaning the role of language and conversation is emphasized. In this meaning making process the concept of culture will be active and therefore more attention should be paid in building learning communities. The emotional climate of the classroom can also be kept in mind in a theatre workshop.

2.9.8 Emotional Climate and Social Dynamics

At this juncture, one can argue about the emotional climate and social dynamics of the classroom in order to learn about students. The nature of students, their individual feelings, affective factors, inhibition, personality, have to be kept in mind. Students' attitude toward the language that they are learning and their motivation to learn the language are of much importance.

Treating language as a whole with its nature, its history, its relationship to culture, the acquisition of it, the immediate uses of it and the students' progress due to their language achievement lifts second language learning from a mere pedagogic activity to one with a social psychological orientation (Gardner, 1985, p.01). Gardner also emphasizes that the context in which language learning taking place has a major role to play. Besides, the attitudes of the learner towards the second language and its culture are one of the important variables which play an important role in motivating the children. Studies show that attitude toward the second language and attitude toward the community correlate with proficiency in the language. They are independent of intelligence and language aptitude but related to factors in the environment and other characteristics (Gardner, 1985, p.60).

Maintaining a position that second language acquisition takes place in a particular cultural context he says that his model, Socio-educational model

proposes that the beliefs in the community concerning the importance and meaningfulness of learning the language, the nature of skill development expected and the particular role of various individual differences in the language learning process will influence second

language acquisition (Gardner, 1985, p.146).

Gardner's (1985) model considers that the four different individual differences are intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. Attitude and personality have their effect through one of the above variables. A central concept of this model is motivation. It has social dimensions reflecting individual's reactions to outgroup in general and the other language community in particular.

Motivation refers to the effort; want (desire) and affect associated with learning a second language and is seen as important in determining how actively the individual wants to acquire language material (Gardner, 1985, p.147).

The model proposes that attitudes developed in the home environment influence the child's second language learning motivation. Continuous exposure to language affects this feature. Initial cognitive and affective variables influence an individual's behaviour in the second language learning environment and the interplay of these variables. (Gardner, 1985, pp.149-150). Gardner (1985) discusses two different types of attitudes, attitude toward learning the language and attitude toward the other language community. He proposes that the acquisition of a second language is a true social psychological phenomenon. It is concerned with the development of communication skills between an individual member and members of another cultural community. The feeling of self identity, cognitive skills related to language abilities and reactions toward other cultural groups are involved in second language learning. Among different classification of attitudes, educational and social attitudes have relevance to the present study. Attitudes towards the teacher, the course, learning the language etc. are instances of social attitudes. Attitudes focused on the cultural implication of second language acquisition on the cultural implications are involved with social attitudes. These attitudes lead to motivation and motivation is the major factor influencing second language learning.

Brown (1987) talks about two facets of the affective domain of second language acquisition. The intrinsic side of affectivity is personality factors and the extrinsic one is the socio cultural variables. A teacher has to engage with two cultures of the L1 and L2. Teaching methods and second language acquisition theories cannot only be based on cognitive aspects but also on human behaviour and social cultural aspects. For the problems of second language learning culture conflict is cited as one of the reasons and motivation is recommended for successful foreign language learning. Brown defines the affective domain as the emotional side of human behaviour. As language is behaviour, as a phase of human activity it cannot be separated from the structure of nonverbal human activity. Brown emphasizes that understanding how human beings feel and respond and believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect of a theory of second language acquisition. Self esteem, inhibition, risk taking, anxiety, empathy, extroversion are some of the important personality factors which could affect the acquisition of a second language.

Brown (1987) points out that second language learning is often second culture learning and to understand what culture learning is, one needs to understand the nature of acculturation, culture shock and social distance (p.128). Culture shock is associated with anger, frustration, loneliness and even physical sickness. Second language teachers have to help learners to get out of this depression and to become powerful personalities in learning. Social distance is an abstract concept is denoted by dissimilarity between target language culture and the learner's culture. It is the teacher's task to mediate the differences of cultures through an awareness programme. In a theatre workshop methodology, students can be at ease with the indigenised teaching method to teach an alien language with a different culture. The distance can be minimized through contents related to our culture and our social issues. Thus, the environment will be familiarized through a theatre workshop which is closer to the student's heart.

In this context, the use of L1 in the teaching of L2 also needs to be discussed for it would be encouraging and beneficial and will enable second language learning. Making use of L1 will definitely reduce the tension that students would face when learning a second language. This will allow for the blending of local culture with target language culture as well. Before examining the role of L1 in a theatre workshop it is necessary to place this discussion against the backdrop of multilingual societies like Sri Lanka and India.

2.10 Language Learning in a Multilingual Context

Second language teaching occurs in a multi lingual context in countries like India and Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, there are three different languages namely Sinhala, Tamil and English that are spoken by the people. In cities like Colombo, Kandy and Vavuniya all three languages are spoken with different levels of proficiency. English is maintained as a link language among the educated Sri Lankans. In Vavuniya where the study was made, students are exposed to all the three languages due to the presence of all the three communities and mostly Tamils have to communicate with the security forces who are mostly from the Sinhala community. Therefore, the importance of Sinhala is realised by the minority Tamil community and students are learning the Sinhala language along with English which is taught as a second language.

In the globalised village era, English occupies an important place for Sri Lankan learners. Students who study English as subject along with the mother tongue education from the kindergarten to G.C.E Advanced Level are expected to be proficient in the language. To study science and commerce subjects through the English medium they need a basic knowledge of English. Enabling them to achieve the basic proficiency level, it is proposed to teach them English with the use of mother tongue. It is because their L1 will always be a part of their language profile and will never go away to be replaced by English.

2.10.1 The use of L1 in L2 Teaching

The present study aims to make use of L1 whenever necessary to

ease the tension and misunderstanding of the subject. Ramanujam (2003) gives three reasons for the use of L1 in the L2 classroom.

Firstly, it is a learner preferred activity.....

Secondly, permitting learners to use their mother tongue is a humanistic approach:.....

Thirdly, strategies involving the use of mother tongue are efficient in terms of time spent explaining... (p.31).

Atkinson (1987) put forward his views for the judicious use of the mother tongue. He says that the most significant reasons for the use of L1 is that translation techniques form a part of the preferred learning strategies of most learners in most places. He also supports the view that the students should be allowed to express their responses in the L1 as it is more humanistic in nature. He further, elaborates the contexts in which it could be utilized. For example in checking comprehension, in giving instructions, in getting co-operation among learners, in seeking responses about the methodology of the classroom proceedings, in providing useful reinforcement of structural, conceptual, and sociolinguistic differences in native and target languages, in checking for senses of the teaching lesson and in testing the use of L1 is of much value.

2.10.2 Studies in the Use of L1 in the L2 Classroom

Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) made a study with twenty-four university ESL students forming pairs: 6 with a shared L1 and six with different L1s. The students were of similar ages, educational backgrounds, and ESL proficiency levels. The data of the 6 pairs with the shared L1 is reported. Instructions were given to make use of the L1 in the completion of tasks and students were interviewed. The pair talk was recorded and transcribed. They found four functions for the use of L1, namely

1. Task management: discussion about how the task should be completed or how the written text should be structured.

2. Task clarification: discussion about the meaning of the task prompt and instructions.
3. Vocabulary and meaning: discussion about lexical choice and definitions of words.
4. Grammar: deliberations about grammatical points. (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003, p.763)

As a result, they conclude that

teachers should not prohibit the use of some L1 altogether in group and pair work but should acknowledge that the use of the L1 may be a normal psychological process that allows learners to initiate and sustain verbal interaction (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003, p.769).

Schweers (2003) conducted a research on the use of mother tongue in English classes for the Spanish –speakers at the University of Puerto Rico during the first semester of the 1997/1998 academic year. He recorded a 35-minute sample from three classes conducted by his colleagues at the beginning, middle and end of the semester. He administered questionnaires to teachers and students regarding the attitudes on the use of L1 in the L2 classroom. According to the findings a high percentage (89 per cent) of the student participants felt that Spanish should be used in the English classes. They felt it should be used to check comprehension and to define new vocabulary items. The use of L1 was, however, not favoured in testing. He winds up his analysis justifying the limited and judicious use of L1 in the second or foreign language classroom.

Garret, Griffiths, James, and Scholfield (1994) made a report on the study which investigated whether the use of mother tongue in the preparatory stage of writing in English L2 in primary school has a positive effect on writing performance, whether such benefits are associated with improved self-perceptions and attitudes, towards themselves, their language and community. The study was conducted for twelve weeks with pupils aged 10-11 years in centres with a common syllabus of

writing tasks. One group of pupils in each centre did their pre-writing preparation, as usual in English, and the other group in their mother tongue. Questionnaires on attitudes were distributed and semi-structured interviews with pupils in small groups and recordings of pre-writing classroom discussions were also made. As far as the conclusions are concerned the researcher wishes to have further studies conducted but is of the view that mother tongue pre-writing activity had a more beneficial effect on attitudes.

2.10.3 The Role of the Use of L1 in the Language Teaching Methods

L1 plays a vital role in the Grammar Translation Method. It is used to provide the summary of the text and explain the meanings of difficult words. “The first language is maintained as a reference system in the acquisition of the second language” (Stern, 1983, p. 455). In the Direct Method L1 has no role to play. In the Audio-lingual method the target language skills are developed without reference to mother tongue but it is not so severely restricted as found in the Direct Method (Stern, 1983). Atkinson (1987) integrates the CLT with the selective use of L1.

It is impossible to talk of a ‘right balance’. Or a perfect model for using L1 – it’s not simple; L1 can be a valuable resource if it is used at appropriate times and in appropriate ways (p.2).

In this context, the linguistic interdependence model needs to be examined.

2.10.4 Cummins’ Linguistic Interdependence’s Theory

Cummins’ ‘linguistic interdependence’s theory says that there is a common underlying proficiency (CUP) among bilinguals as opposed to the theory of Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP). The literacy skills and knowledge of L1 under the CUP model will help the learner to learn the second language and not interfere with the learning process. This theory supports the view that both the languages develop cognitively supporting each other. Cummins’ (1986) concepts of BICS and CALP stress this further. The two components according

to Cummins found in second language proficiency are BICS- Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. Interpersonal communicative skills such as accent, oral fluency and socio-linguistic competence are covered under Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and the aspects of language proficiency related to the development of literacy skills define Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. A bilingual learner takes more time to master academic language than conversational fluency in the second language.

The argument that is made with regard to the present study is that knowledge of L1 can assist the learning of the second language particularly in a more than communicative, scaffolded, culture-sensitive learning environment where a theatre workshop is visualised. The learners will be able to pick up the L2 and converse with their peer group in a comfortable tension-free atmosphere, when needed the L1 can be freely used to enable such learning to happen.

2.11 Language Growth in a Theatre Workshop

Full-fledged-theatre tasks in the context of a theatre workshop can be used in the context of a second language classroom in Sri Lanka, to enable language learning to happen. But the main focus of this study is not only to see whether it is feasible but to enhance learner's language. This implies that the learner's language needs to be documented and later evaluated. For such an evaluation to happen it is also necessary to identify the markers of improvement. These markers cannot be primarily with reference to the language system, for, from the beginning, the thesis has argued for growth in communicative fluency and context-sensitive appropriacy rather than accuracy. While a large number of studies have been carried out with respect to learner language in the area of second language acquisition, error analysis and bi-lingualism, native, non-native variations, order of acquisition etc., there is very little research that has been done which documents growth in the learner. What is available is in the area of writing in the context of portfolio assessment (Song &

August, 2002; Lynch & Shaw, 2005). As such, the analysis in this thesis will use syntax and semantic categories like quantity and quality of words, phrases, clauses and sentences as marker of growth. At the same time the thesis aims to capture context-sensitive language appropriacy. To do this, since no exact framework is available, information from language philosophers who have described 'discourse' will be taken and used.

2.12 Analytic Framework Orientations

The orientation of this thesis, as stated earlier, is primarily ethnographic and exploratory. This is because, as stated in the research questions (Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) very little work has been done with the use of theatre in a second language classroom to capture growth in a systematic manner. Such growth needs to be described using linguistic categories, word, phrase, clause and sentence length but this may not be enough. It is also necessary to look at other aspects of language where growth will happen. One of these is the idea of moving from a cognitively undemanding, context embedded situation to being able to perform and then script or talk about cognitively demanding contexts which may or may not be context reduced (Cummins & Swains, 1986).

Another category that could be of importance for a student of English, or any other second or foreign language for that matter is the move from planned, premeditated discourse to unplanned text or vice versa (Ochs', 1979). The argument posited in this thesis that sometimes students may script and then act out roles as is usually done in simulation role play activities but that more often than not. They will begin with a 'text' that is created as the activity happens, and later put it into a planned discourse mode (Ochs', 1979). At this stage, revision and fine tuning of language may also happen.

Most of the activities in the theatre workshop are likely to be centred around language functions where the smallest unit of human verbal communication is neither a sentence nor an utterance but the performance of a speech act (Austin, 1962). In the realization of these various speech acts, where students are either performing, doing or saying something,

they will automatically have to follow a certain maxim of conversation (Grice, 1975). Again, it is argued that growth may be captured in the awareness shown by a student in following, in some cases, flouting of maxims. In sharp contrast to these appropriate knowledge of what to say, when, why, when, and to whom (Hymes, 1972) and how to make it short or long is a marker of language growth.

A theatre workshop demands that students not only able to use language effectively but also be aware of the forms and rituals that are an essential part of theatre. This knowledge is something that could be taken for granted in the Sri Lankan context.

2.13 Students' Exposure to Theatre Traditions and Social Issues in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the theatrical traditions are very strong and the common man is very much involved in its production. The ritual theatres of Sri Lanka are among the oldest extant performances with an unbroken history. As practised today, ritual theatres are generally night-long performances addressed to the numerous deities and demons of the folk religion (Gunawardana, 1976). Among the Tamils there is a long tradition of folk plays since the Sangam period from 3A.D (Sivathamby, 1986). Having the knowledge of various types of theatrical traditions will enable students to make use of theatre efficiently. The students are familiar with the various theatrical traditions in Sri Lanka. They have been exposed to these traditions through school and social programmes and television programmes (Maunaguru, 2004). They have chances to watch many historical (both romantic and melodramatic) and folk plays, realistic, stylized (absurd, symbolic and surrealistic) and street plays and children theatres in Tamil, their mother tongue (Shriganeshan, 1997). Therefore, it has been argued that they can be easily moulded into the theatre atmosphere to generate scripts. Being familiar with the theatrical traditions students are naturally tempted to get into discussions with their fellow students and design a context in which characters interact and contradict for their various needs and expectations. As they live in a

society which has experienced various struggles for its existence, students are well aware of the burning social issues like ethnic war, women's struggle for freedom, child abuse, child labour, workers' cry for equal rights, caste discrimination, social inequality and other natural disasters like Tsunami, flood. (Sithamparanathan, 1994). Naturally, students are tempted to reflect this tendency due to the situation in which they live.

2.14 Content of Classroom theatre

As far as the contents of the plays are concerned children are normally attracted by fantasies. They have a high dramatic content, for they express conflicts in symbolic terms and are acted out in safe, consequence-free environments. They are modified by the demands of sharing fantasies in story telling or communal play; then they feed back into the child's understanding of the real world (O'Toole, 1976, p.117). By contrast, socially relevant themes are important aspects of the subject matter of Theatre In Education (TIE). Adults can tackle this kind of situation but children may not be able to. In order to use socially relevant themes that are children- sensitive, ideas from the Grips Theatre movement have been incorporated (Grips Theatre, 2008). This is because this movement allows children to be engaged with their own problems. Grips Theatre movement started by Herr Volker Ludwig in Germany, is concerned with everyday problems of children in the adult world. No fairy tales or parables are used but rather problems of sexism, racism, environmental pollution, educational difficulties, youth employment, drug-taking and the problems of the physically-handicapped were taken as themes of the plays. This theatre helps children to develop a sense of worth, get their bearings, stand on their feet, see the world changing, understand criticism, take pleasure in creative thinking, work out fresh alternatives and stimulate their social imagination (Prandeep, 2002, pp. 80-83).

2.15 Towards a Classroom Theatre Workshop with Cultural Identity

The traditional classroom in Sri Lanka where English is taught to students is a lethargic and boring place. It does not provide opportunities to the students to get into the mood to use a second language to

communicate effectively and more importantly, creatively. The classroom creates a division between teachers and students. Teachers are treated as transmitters of knowledge and learners as passive receivers. There are no interactions between teachers and students and no motivation for interactions among students. Students are forced to maintain silence in the classrooms and the teachers adopt the banking system (Freire, 1972). There is no elasticity for students; only a rigid atmosphere. Students are threatened to behave properly. The modes of teaching and learning are not conducive to free learning and one of the incidental aims of this workshop is to change this traditional set up.

In order to do this, it is argued that there should be a situation where students can move freely and talk freely with more interactions. For this to be made possible, the students need to be taken out of the classroom and put in a spacious place where they can make free movements and communicate without any hindrances and restrictions. Thus, cramped atmosphere and routine restrictions get eradicated. Then, there needs to be freedom of expression for self identity. Students' personal feelings with regard to their educational set up needs to be recognized. Some negotiation in relation to the topics to be discussed in the classroom has to be made. Topics should generate interest in the lessons. Teachers should not force them to learn. The existing prescribed text books culturally alienate the students as most of the lessons are designed with the Sinhala Buddhist culture (see Edrisinghe, Fernando, Kdikara, & Satharasinghe, 2003). Minority Tamil cultural aspects are given less space. This hinders their learning enthusiasm. Therefore, it is necessary to provide the content that is very much meaningful and down to earth and students' immediate problems must be incorporated for self-recognition. However, there is one more stumbling block on our way to handle the theatre medium in the classroom. That is the cultural taboo towards the use of theatre.

2.16 Cultural bias towards the use of theatre

There is a general feeling that theatre activities would prevent students from learning, that they are a waste of time which distract students

from their day to day learning. Even in the Sri Lankan society there is some cultural bias against the use of theatre as it is treated as a taboo in certain caste groups. There is a view that dance, music and theatre and drama would mislead students and divert them from their studies. It is assumed that it would appeal to sensuous pleasures and daydreaming. Students will be distracted. There is also gender-bias against theatre with reference to co-education, for teaching boys and girls together is not favoured. Another misconception is that traditional folk theatres are mostly practised by the lower strata of the community. And nowadays, when various theatre forms are handled by the militants people have a general feeling that this would land them into troubles. However, inspite of these arguments, it is felt that theatre can and should be used to enhance learner language.

2.17 Advantages of a Theatre Workshop for enhancing Language Growth

The methods in vogue in the Sri Lankan traditional classrooms have little concern regarding students' affective factors and awareness of classroom social dynamics. There was a shift from the structural view of language to a communicative one but it still does not consider learners as social human beings. Similarly, their cultural norms and psychological nature have not been taken into account. Further, more students' affective and social factors, social conventions, previous knowledge of local cultural patterns, norms and drama and theatre forms, and the use of first language/ mother tongue could find a space in the use of theatre in English classrooms. A Theatre workshop has an in-built mechanism to deal with affective factors like motivation, attitude and anxiety along with personality and sociocultural factors. The proposed plan to use full-fledged theatre tasks would fill the gap involving students from various social backgrounds. Moreover, making the classroom an extension of the society and perceiving the classroom as a collective body will create student learning communities. This paves way for the co-construction of meaning making which will lead to language enhancement and eventually enabling of both language and the person as a whole.

Chapter 3

The Research Design on the Boards

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of this study was discussed. In this chapter, the research design adopted for the study is presented. As discussed earlier, in Chapter one, the focus of the study is to find out the possibilities of teaching English through theatre with the objective of making students proficient in oral and written communication in English. This study will focus on the actual use of theatre in English classrooms to facilitate students' communicative skills and fluency in English.

3.2 Exploratory nature of study

Some work was earlier done by me but it was not documented and I had not attempted to relate theatre with the nature of language learning or changes in language learners in a systematic manner. Attempts were made with small/large scale studies which ended in 'a try this out and this will work' request to teachers. Therefore, this study was carried out as an exploratory work to understand the use of theatre in language classrooms.

In this study, reading and listening are treated as skills less important and attention is focused on the development of speaking and writing skills. It has been observed that Sri Lankan students have a problem with fluent communication in English (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.5 and Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4 for full discussion). Keeping in mind this low capability, the research design developed for the study was conceived in two parts. The first part is a preliminary study which was conducted to explore the possibilities of using theatre for language teaching. The second part is the main study which was undertaken in the light of the insights derived from the preliminary study, and it attempts to enhance

learner language through theatre. It is also hoped that engaging with theatre would increase motivation, reduce affective filters and thereby enable more 'languaging' to happen.

3.3 The Research question: Justification

It has been generally observed that in Sri Lanka students from the mother tongue medium (Regional medium) schools find it difficult to communicate in the second language (English) when they start their secondary education in class (year) six in spite of having studied it for three years as a subject from class (year) three onwards (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4). The necessity to use the second language fluently was emphasized by the educational system in Sri Lanka as the students move to English medium in class (year) six. Although they have the capacity to read short simple sentences and reproduce the notes given in the classroom, their linguistic competencies are very poor. Their inhibitions and shyness and fear of English make things more difficult. Added to the fact, their attitude towards English also reflects a lack of motivation and a negative attitude due to the nationalist sentiments which promote education through mother tongue. Moreover, even the facilities available to learn English are very much insufficient due to the poor conditions of teaching and learning English in Sri Lankan schools. As a result of such overall apathy, students find English classroom boring and uninteresting. This general apathy is accentuated by the actual pedagogical practices followed in English classroom. The teaching methodologies adopted, Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual Method, for example, neither appeal to the students nor are they attractive.

In this context, it is proposed to examine whether the students had to be motivated in a different atmosphere and with a different type of teaching methodology to promote communication skills. It is felt that there is a need for a change in methodology, atmosphere of teaching conditions, and attitudes of students towards learning English to enable a positive development.

The main research question is whether theatre can be used as an additional resource in contexts where English is a second language to motivate students, and enhance language learning. It therefore aims to address following issues:

1. Can theatre be used to reduce/change the negative attitudes of students towards English?
2. How can theatre be used to enable language learning to happen?
3. Which are the themes which are suitable for adults/ children?
4. What is the kind of language learning that is likely to happen?

3.4 Significance of the Study

The ways in which theatre has been used by various researchers in education in general and in the language teaching field in particular has been discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1. The state of English language teaching in Sri Lanka was also presented in the previous chapters (section 1.3.2 and 2.6.4). An attempt is now made to list the various reasons for the use of theatre in the teaching of English as a second language. It has been pointed out that theatre enables students to involve themselves unconsciously in the learning process; that it helps to eliminate psychological barriers like inhibition, shyness, and fear to some extent (Stern, 1980). Theatre also encourages co-operative and collaborative learning by mutual sharing with other students. It has been argued that listening to others is inevitably included in theatre-involved classes as the activity-oriented discussions in theatre activities motivate learners to engage in communicative dialogue, ensuring fluency in the language. As theatre comprises activities like reading rehearsals, writing out the scripts and discussion on the plots, characters, acting, and direction it makes available more opportunities for the development of various skills. Research also reveals how theatre activities help language learning. For example, pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns were corrected during the rehearsals in an indirect manner as shown by Martinez (1999). The students' knowledge of grammar is

strengthened as error correction and feed back is easier to obtain (Heath, 1993). Jackson (1998) records how teamwork is encouraged in learning through the theatre movement as found in Theatre In Education (TIE) and subsequently how it paves the way for community learning. Students learn the language used in actual use. This provides an opportunity for learners to escape from bookish methods and give up learning by rote. It promotes critical thinking in the use of language as students are involved in activities and they have to think and create situations according to the situations given in an activity. There is little mechanical drilling. It is often pointed out that a natural method of learning happens when teachers opt for accommodating theatre as part of language learning.

In the Sri Lankan context, students are not so exposed to English language in actual use and it was hoped that theatre can provide such an opportunity. It was felt that English can be more meaningfully imparted with the use of theatre in classrooms. The research design for the preliminary study is therefore developed in the light of these insights from ongoing research.

3.5 Rationale of the study

Sri Lankan students are keen in communicating whatever they know with each other. Although they are from a strong Tamil background with a nationalist political background, they have realized the need for learning English in order to continue their education in English for better prospects and for upward social mobility in their present living conditions. There is a gap between the expectations of fulfilling the needs of students to be efficient communicators in English and the ineffective English classroom which is unable to provide the necessary training to students to communicate in English without inhibition. As such, it was felt that theatre could be used to bridge this gap and enable English language learning to happen.

3.6 Description of the Study

The study was conducted in two phases. The first one was the Preliminary Study and the other was the Main Study. The preliminary

study was conducted with two groups of students in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, for three weeks. One group of students was from a college/university (second year students of the Vavuniya Campus, University of Jaffna, Vavuniya) and the other was from a secondary school (A mixed group of students from the classes (years) of seven, eight and nine). The rationale behind using two groups of students was to find out whether theatre would be more feasible and amenable with the older or younger students, namely university or school going ones. Based on the findings of the preliminary study, it was decided to conduct the main study with class (year) six students from a school as it was found that the use of theatre was better received by school students. Moreover, it was also realised that an innovative study of this nature could be better tested with a younger group of students who have larger possibilities of growth in language proficiency before trying it out with an older group. Practical problems like not being able to get university level students for a full three-month period due to their examinations and projects also influenced this decision to stay with school students. Therefore, it was decided to conduct the main study with a group of students from a secondary school. The subjects were class (year) six students of Vavuniya Tamil Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. The details of this experiment are presented in chapter 4.

3.6.1 Design of the Study

Most of the Sri Lankan students' proficiency of English related to communication causes a variety of problems. First, as observed by the researcher as a result of teaching experience, students have problems with speaking and written abilities in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Sri Lanka. Secondly, owing to the state of unrest in Sri Lanka, emerging new groups of students with many social problems like cultural and socioeconomic differences and psychological difficulties also need to be educated. In order to enable language learning across diverse groups of students with varying problems, it was decided that the study would be in the form of a workshop

3.6.2 Aims and objectives

The aims of the present study are to:

- Find out possible solutions to the problems in oral and written communication that Sri Lankan students face in learning English.
- Focus on the use of theatre in English classrooms in order to make students communicate in English without inhibitions and to also make them speak fluently. (While reading and listening were treated as secondary skills the development of speaking and writing skills are highlighted).
- Explore the feasibility of using theatre for communicative fluency at both school and tertiary level.

3.6.3 Methodology

In English language classrooms, particularly after the ‘communicative’ revolution, attempts have been made, sometimes successfully and sometimes not so successfully to use dialogues, role plays, games, simulations, narration of stories etc. to develop communication skills. Very often, the non-success can be attributed to inhibition and ‘shyness’ which may have prevented students from using a ‘new’ language to communicate. At the same time, a great deal of interest and enthusiasm is shown by many learners to learn and master the language, and this is particularly true of English language learners in Sri Lanka. This enthusiasm and interest for fun and games prompted the researcher to think of other powerful means to promote communicative skills. It was felt that theatre could do a better service to motivate students to get into active communication in the guise of certain characters depicted in plays created by them and indirectly learn how to communicate in English. Therefore, it was assumed that a preliminary study could help the researcher determine the nature and selection of theatre tasks and activities for the main study that would be suitable to the target population. Since the focus was on communicative fluency through theatre workshop students were advised to complete the tasks within

a time frame and not to worry about their grammatical mistakes, inappropriate use of words, or wrong spelling with regard to writing.

3.6.4 Activities/Tasks

In this study the researcher used theatre tasks/activities to enable the learners to communicate effectively in English (The terms tasks and activities are used interchangeably in this study). Simple tasks were introduced to make them communicate in pairs and then in groups. Tasks like introducing each other, asking for a seat in a bus, asking for directions, narrating past incidents and describing things and future events were some of these initial tasks. From simple discussions on real life situations led to more imaginative and creative dialogues that had to be generated were based on pictures, stories, and plays were also picked up for brainstorming. Students were allowed to work in a mixed group in order to pave the way for helping each other. It was assumed that more abled peers can assist the younger ones and thus they can be motivated to communicate better. This helped to develop self-confidence and self-reliance.

3.7 Background Description of the Two groups

Most of the students in Sri Lanka follow regional medium instruction (Tamil/Sinhala) in schools. They learn English as a second language, one of their subjects from class three onwards. In addition, the Government has introduced Conversational English to class one and two since 2002 but this has not been implemented successfully due to the difficulties in appointing competent teachers at the primary level. As such, many of the rural students do not get any assistance with conversational English due to the shortage of teachers. When these rural students move to the schools in towns for admission to class six they experience many differences owing to the new social, cultural, educational and economical environment. In addition to the change in environment, they need to begin studying all their subjects through English from class six. A similar problem is faced by the university students who come from the rural schools. These students who come from these villages enter

the university with a minimum knowledge of English as their exposure to English is very low. Although they have been educated through the regional medium, they get enough aggregate marks to enter universities like the University of Jaffna (Vavuniya Campus) to follow degree courses like Management and Applied Sciences in English. But their English proficiency remains very low. Teachers use the Grammar-Translation method, the Direct Method, the Oral and Situational Language Teaching and also Communicative Language Teaching methods, though the students are very weak in English (From field notes, 2004/05).

3.7.1 Assumptions of the Preliminary Study

It was assumed that theatre skills would promote language development in both groups; students' fear and inhibitions would be driven out and their affective filters would be lowered once they get engaged in theatre activities. It is proposed that in both groups, students' oral and written communicative skills would be promoted through theatre workshop by making them improvise plays. It is hoped that with practice, in performing and then in writing, the same scripts performed with improvisation through group and pair work, would enable the students to develop their speaking and writing skills. Parallely, the receptive skills, namely listening and reading would also be indirectly enhanced.

3.7.2 Features of the Preliminary Study of the School Group

The study was conducted for three weeks with nine contact sessions, which is three days a week for one hour a day with a group of students from a secondary school in the Northern part of Sri Lanka (Vavuniya Rambaikulum Girls' Maha Vidyalayam, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka). There were 38 students who attended the classes regularly. It was a mixed group of classes seven, eight and nine. The reason for the mixed group was to get different levels of proficiency in order to benefit the weaker students by mixing them with slightly more advanced ones. On the first day, the seating arrangement was reorganized in a circular manner by placing the chairs in a circle. Later, the classroom was moved into a spacious hall in order to have more group work activities. It needs to

be noted that a normal Sri Lanka classroom follows the traditional rows and columns of chairs pattern.

There were exercises practiced by individuals, both in pairs and in groups. Common warm-up physical exercises like jogging and breathing were done by individuals. Hand-catching, mirror image, hand-touching, coin grabbing and mirror hands were pair exercises and falling exercises were in groups and beat out the rhythm and goats and hut game were whole class activities (see for details of games in Section 3.7.4).

After the warm-up activities and the games, the students were engaged in a play producing workshop. The students were asked to stand and talk to each other in pairs about their health while standing and facing each other. This was followed with a game called 'hand-catching'. In pairs students had to stand and try to catch their partner's hands which were moved up and down. This was followed by the introduction of some functions of communication such as asking for a seat in a bus, train or asking for a direction to a particular place, etc. A model dialogue was introduced by way of enacting the scene and explained.

Eg: A: Can I take this seat please?

B: Yes please, where are you going?

A: I am going to Colombo? What about you?

B: I am also going to Colombo.

A: Would you mind if I take your book

B: Not at all. It's a pleasure. Please read it.

A: Thank you very much.

Students were told to enact the dialogues in pairs. First they discussed their roles and planned their language and setting. After having practised the dialogue in pairs and rehearsing their roles, the students improvised the short 'act' and demonstrated an attitudinal change through their performance in English. Having performed and watched others' production and listened to the comments made by the teacher and the

other students, they finally sat in pairs and wrote down the scripts. There was a lot of discussion and cheer laughter. Different situations with varied roles were given to them in order to perform different plays through which their communication skills were sought to be developed. The situations and functions actually used are described below.

3.7.3 Situations and functions:

There were nine tasks for the preliminary study of the school groups. The tasks were selected on the basis of their present level of understanding of the English language and their nature of learning. They are as follows:

- Asking for a seat in a bus & asking for direction,
- Narrating past experiences,
- Pictures for interpretations,
- Locations like school, hospital, temple, railway station and likely conversations in these contexts,
- Emotions like fear, frustration, anger & happiness proceeding to themes,
- Objects like bag, chair, & file for developing plots,
- Poems – ‘Leisure’, ‘Stopping by the woods’ & ‘Breakfast’ for creating situations,
- A short story for improvisation – (Santhan’s (A Sri Lankan writer) ‘In their own worlds’), and
- On any open themes and plots – For example, ‘A trip experience’ for developing a full-length play.

Students were given the above situations and contexts. These activities are listed overleaf in a table (Table 3.1) along with the warm-up exercises, aims and objectives and the materials used in the workshop. The warm-up exercises provided the necessary mood for creativity and innovation. Students were able to improvise situations and create language through producing plays.

workshop plan for the school group

No.	Date	Warm-up exercises & games	Situations for improvisation	Aim & Objectives	Materials used
1	27/04	Hand catching & jogging	Functions: Asking for a seat in a Bus & Asking for direction	To prepare PP for generating a dialogue through speaking skills	A model dialogue read out
2	28/04	Breathing exercises	Narrating past experiences-	To give a chance to create small play lets	A sample situation demonstrated
3	02/05	Mirror image	Pictures	To continue to develop participatory mood	Pictures given for an idea to take off
4	03/05	Hand touching	Locations like School, Hospital, Temple, Railway station	To make PP get into the mood of creating dialogues	Any possible situation to be occurred discussed
5	05/05	Coin grabbing	Emotions like fear, frustration, anger & happiness	To induce emotions to make situations for play productions	Sample episodes with emotions developed for discussion.
6	09/05	See-saw:- Falling exercises in pairs	Objects like bag, chair, bottle & file	To provide a chance to brainstorm the situations to create short episodes	Items concerned used to develop a situation
7	11/05	Mirror hands	Poem-Leisure, Stopping by the woods & Breakfast	To imbibe the ideas from the poems and create situations	Poems mentioned used for discussion for themes
8	12/05	Beat out that Rhythm 7 Goats and a hut game	A short story for improvisation – Santhan's 'In their own worlds'	To make the story a short play	Story discussed "In their own worlds"
9	13/05	Round about-Falling exercises in groups	Any themes and plots- A trip experience	To improvise any topic to generate a script	Common themes for open creation

Table 3.1

3.7.4 Games and activities used in the workshop

- **Beat out rhythm.**

Students sitting in groups of ten in a circle one of them starts out beating out a simple regular rhythm by clapping a hand, clicking fingers or tapping a chair with a pen and others follow one after the other adding a variation.

- **Hand catching**

Students standing in pairs facing each other and one of them holds out both hands, palms facing inwards, about 25c.m. apart and tries to catch the other's hand which would be moving upwards and downwards without being caught.

- **Mirror hands**

Students standing in pairs facing each other with their hands raised to shoulder height, palms facing outward, and as closer to their partner's hands as possible without actually touching moves according to the partner's hand movements.

- **Drawing numbers in the air**

In pairs one will draw the numbers in the air from 1 to 9 and the other can guess the number and follow tracing the shape of it. Having closed the eyes one can draw the shape of the number while the other calls out the number.

- **Round about: Falling exercises in groups (Falling statues)**

Students can stand one after the other in pairs. The one in front may fall down and the other can hold him without allowing him to fall. Another variation is:

In groups of five or six standing in a circle and one standing in the middle folding his hands against the chest may fall in all directions and others in the circle have to catch him without allowing to fall down.

- **Huts and goats game**

The whole class will engage in this game. The whole group will count numbers from 1 to 3, and the ones will act as goats and the twos and threes will act as huts. First, they all form groups of three counting the numbers from one to three and twos and threes will take positions as huts by holding each other's hand like a hut and the ones will sit down in the huts as goats. Once the facilitator calls 'goats' for a change of positions they have to move from one hut to another. The facilitator can be one of the goats. Thus one participant will be made out of the game. Then huts may be called for a change of position. There will be one goat missing if the facilitator is out of the game. Then a pair of hut will be out of the game without a goat. Thus, the game can be continued.

- **Tug o' war**

The whole class will be divided into two groups. Each group will stand opposite to each other in a line. The facilitator can stand in the centre and act as a referee of a Tug o' war game. Students can imagine that there is an imaginary rope lying on the floor and may pick up and pull against each other.

- **Breathing exercises**

Students stand erect and breathe in for three counts and hold it for three counts and breathe out for another three counts. These counts can be changed as sounds like vowels, and diphthongs.

- **Coin grabbing**

Students stand in front of each other in pairs. One holds a coin in the right hand palm and the other will try to grab it.

(Adapted from Maley & Alan, 1982)

3.8 An Analysis of the Preliminary Study with the School Group

With nine contact sessions spread over three weeks with the students during the workshop, students were able to write scripts on a wide range of contexts as outlined in Table 3.1 and situations discussed in section

3.7.3 A preliminary analysis of the scripts threw up one interesting aspect. Students were able to communicate better when they worked with socially relevant themes. It was noted that when they improvised the functions like asking for direction and working at a location (like 'At the Railway Station') they produced a somewhat mechanical type of performances. Their scripts in these productions were more mechanistic but they excelled in their performances. In writing out scripts creatively and interestingly where topics and themes were open-ended and related to their own environment, they acted very well. For example, they produced a better production on the theme developed from the object 'Bottle'. The theme centred on people throwing out empty bottles in the school ground and some students advising them not to throw it for the sake of a clean environment. Even with themes on emotions, they were able to create scripts with wider scope and deeper implications. For example, in one of their productions a newcomer was ill-treated and discriminated against and the plot continued to find a solution to the problem. Although they were able to draft scripts based on the short story written by a Sri Lankan Tamil author (named A.Santhan), they dealt imaginatively with open topics like 'emotions', and 'objects'. One could conclude that 'locations' and 'functions' limited their creative ability. Linguistically and grammatically speaking, students had problems with spelling mistakes, syntactical problems, inappropriate use of words, problems in the use of tenses, articles, preposition etc, yet there was a great improvement in terms of concept development and production of English from the first week of the workshop onwards. This is discussed in the next section.

3.8.1 An Analysis of the scripts produced by the students

An analysis of some sample scripts is attempted below in order to capture progress in English language production. Students were introduced with two situations- functions of language communication for improvisation in the first contact session. There were six scripts from the first task. The scripts are numbered as A1, T1, S1; A2, T2, S2; A3, T3, S3; etc. (see Appendix 1 for complete scripts)

Examples:

➤ **Scripts based on functions of communication**

- i. Asking for seat in a bus
- ii. Asking for direction

‘Asking for seat’ was to be a production that emerged out of a process of mechanical rote learning. Though there were a few mistakes in the grammar, the language was poor with regard to communication.

Examples:

N: Where are you going?

K: I am going to Colombo.

N: Is she is your sister?

K: Yes. She is my sister

N: For what purpose your going to Colombo?

K: I want to joint my sister to the school. **(A1, T 1, S1)**

(Note: errors in spelling and grammar have been retained for purposes of authenticity)

At the same time, the second script ‘Asking for direction’ reflected some creative ability and attempted to communicate inspite of many grammatical and spelling errors.

Examples:

A: I’m coming from Colombo. I’m new for this place. Will you show, where is V/R/G/M/V is situated? I want to get an admition to my sister.

B: Yes of coruse. There is a clockwise you want o go straightly then there is a mada temple you want to pass it and go straightly after left hand side there is a lane turn the go then after turn right hand side then there is a big bilding that is a school that is V/R/G/M/V. **(A1, T1, S6)**

A quick analysis of this script, from the perspective of accuracy will

result in many “errors” that need to be pointed out. These will range from spelling, ‘admission, coruse and bilding, to odd usages, ‘new for’, ‘clock wise’, ‘go straightly after left hand side’ etc. However, what needs to be valued is that these students have ‘attempted’ to communicate in a language which is not theirs and have managed to ‘make meaning’ with it.

In the following scripts one can notice the amount of ideas included and more language produced with spelling mistakes like ‘comming’, non-English expressions like ‘last week only we came’, ‘to asking permission’ and syntactical problems like ‘I’m reading story books could you introduce?’

Task 1, Script 1

Karthika and Nithiya

K : Hello, excuse me

N : yes.

K : Any body is sitting here?

N : No body is sitting here.

K : Can I sit here?

N : Yes of course.

K : Where are you going?

N : I am going to Colombo. where are you going?

K : I am going to Colombo.

N : Is she is your sister?

K : Yes. She is my sister.

N : For what purpose your going to Colombo?

K : I want to join my sister to the school.

N : You are new to the Colombo?

- K : Yes, of course, first we live in Germany last week only we came.
Ok what is your native place?
- N : My native place is Colombo. I went to Vavuniya.
Now only
I am
Comming to Colombo
- K : can you help me. to asking permission to school.
- N : yes, sure.
- K : ok we can go.
- N : come.

(A1, T1, S1)

Task 1, Script 3

Incident held in Train

Anojaa (Gr.9) Sagithiya (Gr 8.)

- Anojaa : Excuse me. Any body is sitting here?
- Sagithiya: No, you can sit here.
- Anojaa: What are doing?
- Sagithiya: I'm reading story books could you introduce?
- Anojaa: I'm Anoja. What's your name?
- Sagithiya: I'm Sagithiya. Where are you from?
- Anojaa: I'm from Vavuniya. You
- Sagithiya: I'm from Jaffna. What's your job?
- Anojaa: I'm a doctor from General Hospital of Vavuniya
What's your job?

Sagithiya: I'm a teacher from V/R/G/M/V. where are you going?

Anojaa: I'm going to Anuradhapura.

.....

Anojaa: I reached Anuradhapura. Good bye.

Sagithiya: Good bye.

(A1, T1, S3)

➤ **Scripts from Task 2**

Narrating a past incident

On the second day the students worked on 'Narrating a past incident'. Two sample scripts written by the students are analysed. The pairs of students 1 and 12 seem to have attempted script writing well. Pair 1 limited themselves to a few expressions and interactions with more grammatical and spelling mistakes. They had problems with tense, 'went' and 'go', but exhibited an underlying coherence.

Examples:

- Where did you went ?,
- To which hospital you went,
- How many member in your aunty's home,
- where did you stay in Colombo 3 days?,
- What kind of food you ate there?

(A1, T2, S1)

Extracts: Pair 1 - Jothimaria, Keerthana

Kee: I'm so fine. last Friday where did you went?

Jo : I went to Colombo with my mother and sister.

Kee: What is the reason that you went?

Jo : Because we went to hospital for check my mother eye.

Kee: To which hospital you went?

Jo : I went to applo hospital.

Kee: You return on Friday or Saturday?

Jo : No, I return to Vavuniya Sunday.

Kee: Where did you stay in Colombo 3 days?

Jo : We stayed at our aunty's home.

(A1, T2, S1)

The pair 12 was able to communicate freely and questioned each other using various patterns with more interactions though there were a few grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Task 2, Script 12 - Shiromi & Jeen

Jeen : What did you do last week?

Shiromi : I went to Batticaloa.

Jeen : Ah! Nice, why you went there?

Shiromi : I went there to meet my uncle.

Jeen : Why any problem for him?

Shiromi : No, I went there to see Batticaloa.

Jeen : What are the places you visited there?

Shiromi : I visited tsunami affected area and my relations houses.

Jeen : How was your trip?

Shiromi : Ah! It is nice. How was your holidays?

Jeen : During the holidays I had extra classes, so that I didn't go anywhere.

- Shiromi : What did you studied in the extra classes?
- Jeen : I assorted papers and we played.
- Shiromi : Who kept the extra class?
- Jeen : Our Sivapalan sir.
- Shiromi : What are the papers you all did?
- Jeen : We did science, Health, Social and maths paper.
- Shiromi : I didn't come to the extra classes, so can you give me the question papers?
- Jeen : Yes, I can give you.

(A1, T2, S12)

Similar problems with tense and spellings can be seen in the following scripts produced. However, it needs to be kept in mind that the length of dialogue increased and that there was a clear development of conversation with relevant questions and answers. Thus, group 1 was able to build on the topic and ask seven questions making the pair partner answering. Group 12 created a 'one person questions, the other answers' dialogue like the first one but with more difficult language usage like 'What are the places you visited there?', 'I visited tsunami affected area and my relations houses', 'During the holidays I had extra classes, so that I didn't go anywhere', 'I didn't come to the extra classes, so can you give me the question papers?' etc.

An experiential interaction took place in the pair 12. It might have been due to the fact that by chance, better students were put together due to the random selection of pair partners done by the facilitator. It is noted that this aspect of group dynamics must be kept in mind in my next study. Grouping should be done with care to put students with different proficiency levels in language together for better learning atmosphere. It was a learning experience for me as a teacher.

➤ **Scripts from Task 3**

Using Pictures for Production

Students worked on the pictures given. Three groups produced plays related to Tsunami as they were given a picture of a sea beach (Appendix 12) and the other two groups produced plays on themes like 'Unity is strength' and common ideas like 'April Fool'. The following is a script based on people affected by Tsunami. Quite apart from the production of language with some grammatical and spelling errors, the concepts that the students registered and produced were illuminating. The scene one presents the people in the sea shore. In the next scene, one can see that people are affected by Tsunami and others try to help them and the reporters check the government's assistance. The emotional aspect is also not missed. The one who lost her husband and had her daughter mentally upset due to the loss of her father says:

"Oh! I loose my husband and my relations. My daughter is in a bad condition. How much even you give anything I can't forget this experience." (A1, T3, S1)

Having used the pictures, the imagination ran high and the students were able to produce better language and ideas. The spelling and grammatical errors are retained as they are. One sample is reproduced here.

Tromatic experience in Tsunami

Scene 1

[Ravi, Saranka and Ramesh are going to Charls home. When their going Chals and Jeen went to church]

Nancy : I'm coming.

Oh! come inside

Ramesh : where is Jeen

Jeen and her father went to church

(Chals and Jeen getting back to home)

Ramesh : Jeen can you come to sea shore to play?

Jeen : Of course! why not?

Ramesh : come come

Nancy : Saranga where did you get this neckles?

Saranga : I got it from Kanjana jwellers

Nancy : Oh! it is beautiful

Saranga : It is getting time up . I am going home.

Nancy : Ok! We will see you next time.

Scene 2

[tsunami affected people are in Refugee camps, Toor reports are coming and asking about Tsunami]

Shiromy : You all are affected by Tsunami. How is your experience about Tsunami?

Nancy : Oh! I loose my husband and my relations. My daughter is in a bad condition. How much even you give anything I can't forget this experience.

Jothini : Are you all satisfied with the things that the people give.

Nancy : Yes of course.

[Prathayini and Saranka are collecting Tsunami relief funds]

Saranga : We collected many things for you all. Get these things.

Keerthika: We loose our children and our things . but you all

are like our children helping us thank you very much. May god bless you.

This is the bad experience which the people faced stunami on 26th of December 2004.

(see A1, T3, S1)

➤ **Task 4. Using Locations**

On the fourth day, students were asked to work on some situations related to ‘locations’ like ‘shop’. In this piece too, it can be observed that way in which students’ moral and ethical thinking found a place in their performance along with language production. A clue was given to produce a play based on some locations. They conceived the scenes in various places like shop, school, and home and the theme was a moral one. The one who lost the bag was able to recover it. Some extracts are from Task 4, Script 1:

Scene 2 - At shop

Three people are coming and buying something and going to the cashier

Sivaluxe	:	Take 800/=
Shop keeper	:	Here your balance 200/=
Pratha	:	Here all see! Whose bag is this?
Abithra	:	We can open it and see what is inside
Sivaluxe	:	No! No! Don't open it. We can give it to the owner. [All are fighting]
Nivethika	:	Stop! Stop! Why are you fighting?
Sivaluxe	:	We found this bag on the floor. These people are telling to open it. But I am telling we can give it to the owner.
Nivethika	:	That is correct. You can give it to the owner.

Scene 3 - At home

Sivaluxe : Mummy! I found this in the shop. I don't know whose is it. I gave my address to the shop keeper.

Mummy : Ok. I will keep it in the almirah

Scene 4 - At school

Teacher : Good morning children. Today we will study about how bad is it to steal. We Must not steal anything.

Prabha : Teacher yesterday we found a bag in a shop. Sivaluxe is having it.

Teacher : Oh! My friend told that she lost her bag. Tomorrow bring that bag.

(A1, T4, S1)

➤ The common themes like 'Emotions' and 'Objects'

On the fifth and sixth days students were given topics like 'Emotions' and 'Objects' to be developed as performances with themes related to common experiences. It was observed that the students were able to imagine and interact better than the other topics with limited experiences. There were more interactive and communicative scripts out of these themes. The Task 5, Script 2 dealt with emotion 'Hatred' and the Task 6 Script 1 with the object 'Bottle'. Their attitudinal development towards social issues, environmental issues is well revealed from these scripts. The location of the Task 5 Script 2 is situated in a classroom and the plot is drawn from their experience. It centres around the ill-treatment meted out to a newcomer to the school. The Monitor of the class tries to bully and overpower the new student. There is a student who, however, sympathizes with the new student and the teacher resolves the problem by inviting the parent of the newcomer to the school. Extracts from the Task 5, Script 2:

- Students : Good morning sir.
- Sir : Good morning, sitdown. Today in your class a new admission is coming. We must welcome her. You must treat her with good manner.
- Latha : Excuse me sir,
- Sir : Yes, come in can you identify her? She is that new admission. introduce your self.
- Latha : I am latha. My father's name is Mohan. He is lecturer. My mother's name is Kiruba. She is a house wife. I have a elder brother. I came from Colombo.
- Sir : Ok, go and sit. When is my period?
- Latha : Sinthula? Can you give a pencil?
- Sinthula : You don't know how to come to school? I will not give the pencil.
- Nivethika : Here's a pencil. From what school you came?
- Latha : I came from Colombo Bambalapitiya girls school.
- Kirushanth : Don't talk with this girl. Come this side.
- Nivethika : Ok I will come.
- Kishopana : I am the monitor. If I call you must come. Get a side.
- Latha : You go. Nive don't fight with them because of me. We will talk during interval.

(At home)

- Father : Latha, why are you so sad? How is your new class?

Latha : No appa, They are not talking with me.
They are hating me. I don't like to
go to that class. We will again go to Colombo.

(next day)

At school

monitor : Why are you coming late? What for your
father. I am not afraid to your father. This
is a first and the last chance for you.

Latha was crying.

Nivethika : Why you are crying?

Latha : No, monitor was scolding me. My father's
bike was punched so that I came late.

Sir : Oh, latha, what happened to you? Why are
you crying.

Latha : No sir, they are scolding me. They hate me.

Sir : Ok no problem. Tomorrow you come and
meet me. You ask your father To come and
meet me.

Latha : Father sir asked to meet you,

(Father speak with sir and students corrected them selves).

(A1,T5, S2)

The second play, Task 6 Script 1 deals with the theme of environmental safety. The plot was developed as follows: Some girls throw empty bottles and their classmates scold them and complain that they pollute the environment. Later, the conflict is resolved by the teacher who advises them to send the empty bottles for recycling. The social responsibility of the students is well understood from this script. (See the scripts A1, T6, S1).

Canteen Scene

- Narrator : Abiramee and jeyavahine are drinking the soda and putting the bottles in the surrounding. Keerthika is seeing that.
- Keerthika : Abiramee and jeyavahine what are you all doing? You are putting the bottle in the ground know. It is a bad habit. Collect those bottles.
- Abiramy : That is our wish. This is non of your business. Mind your own business. Mond it.
- Keerthika : Wait. I will tell to teacher.

Class scene

- Keerthika : Excuse me teacher.
- Teacher : Yes come in what is the matter.
- Keerthika : Abiramee and jeyavahine drank the soda and throwing those bottles in the ground. When I was asking, they are solding me.
- Teacher : I will speak to them. Some times later
- Teacher : Abiramee and jeyavahine come this side
- Abiramee and
- jeyavahine : yes teacher.
- Teacher : You drank the soda and throw that on the ground know. If you put
- On the ground, It is dangerous for us only. We must keep our environment clean. Don't do this kind of work. This must be the first and the last ok.

Vasantharubini : Then where can we put those bottles teacher?
Teacher : We can send it for recycling.

(A1, T6, S1)

➤ **Using Poems**

On the seventh day students were given three poems, 'Leisure', 'The Rich and the Poor', and 'Breakfast' for reading and interpretation (see Appendix 12). Having gone through them and got the themes, students were advised to work on the themes and create characters and plots in order to make them into plays. Sample dialogues based on the poem, 'The Rich and the Poor' is presented below. The differences in the attitudes of the rich and the poor are explicit in the dialogue. One can note the use 'U' for 'you' is used in the script.

1st Seen Poor family

Mother : Where is my husband? He didn't come yet.
Did he find the job or not. Oh my
God. What can I cook now.

Father : Oh my god. Today also I didn't get any job.

Mother : What today you didn't get any job.
Jone..... Jone.....

Son : What mum. Why you called me

Mother : Where did you went.

Son : I went to play with my friends.

Mother : How many time I told you don't play with
those people. If you play with them. You
will get bad habits.

Daughter : Why are you sholding my brother mum. In
his age he must play now

Mother : Now you are talking too much? I am
mother or you are mother.

- Daughter : Ok mum. Today what food I am hungry.
- Mother : Yesterday bread is there take and eat that.
- Son : Dad tommorrow I must pay exam fees
50/=
- Father : We will see tomorrow.
- Daughter : Near our house one grandmother told me
one work is there by staying we must
work their. Like servant. Can I go.
- Mother : What are you talking. This is your
studying age.
- Father : It is right. know.

2nd seen Rich family

- Mother : Come Charu, do you prepare the food.
- Daug : No. madam it's going on.....
- Mother : What are you doing still now; for you no
brackfast go and cook soon.
- Daug-2 : Why are u kitting that Akka
- Mom : “U” don’t talk go and study.
- Fat : Charu, Kamalini, Angel her I brought
dress for “u”
- Mom : I will give after. This is old dress I can give
here Charu for “u”. I will deduct money for
this
- Daug-2 : father do “u” know one thing you brought
dress know she didn’t give that new dress
- Son : She didn’t give the food also.
- Fath : Angle! What you are doing she is servant

means you treat like a bugger. her after
don't behave like this

Mother : I am very sorry. Sorry don't keep these
thing in your mind. There have this
money. It is enough for your B.com
studies. Have this.

Daughter : Mumma dada. How are you

(A1, T7, S1)

➤ Using Stories

On the eighth day students were given a story by a Sri Lankan writer titled 'In their own worlds'. There were seven scripts. Two sample scripts are reproduced here. Although the same story was given for interpretation and exploitation, there are differences in their conceptualization of the theme and the creation of plots and characters. The use of lengthy sentences is noted in the script (Task 8, Script 1).

Granny: "Your uncle is such a care-free man that he has time to play with worms."

Extracts:

Task 8, Script 1

Narrater : Ravi is coming to his sister's home.

Uncle : Oh, what a worse thing I did what shall I
do? Ok

Kunchu : What are you doing uncle?

Uncle : Come and see what I have for you?

Kunchu : Oh. Granny, Granny uncle has brought a
small snake.

Uncle : No, dear it is not snake it is an earth worm.

Granny : Your uncle is such a care-free man that he

has time to play with worms.

Kunchu : Uncle it is going to fall.

Uncle : Just wait.

Kunchu : What are you doing.

Uncle : It is safe for it.

Kunchu : Uncle what does it eat

Uncle : The earth.

Kunchu : Uncle does it cry?

Uncle : It doesn't cry.

Mother : Thampi have a cup of tea and can you check your brother in-law. He went to Vavuniya.

Uncle : Ok. I am going.

.....

Uncle : Oh Akka, brother in-law had come.

Kunchu : Appa you see the worm.

Father : Oh the earth worm has got in completely.

Thank you.

(A1, T8, S1)

Task 8, Script 3

Roshani : What is this?

Ahalya : Kunchu, Here see I bought earth worm to play.

Roshani : Amma, Garand mother, uncle bought small snake.

Karththi : Thambi can you have a cup of tea.

Ahalya : Yes of course
Karththi : Thambi your brother-in-law left for Vavuniya last Monday promised to return yesterday and hasn't yet..... Can you go and search his mother home.
Ahalya : Yes of course.
Roshani : Uncle see the earth warm is going to fell.
Ahalya : get one bottle and come.
Roshani : Yes of course.
Ahalya : Sister, I am going to search brothe-in-law.
Karththi : Ok, go

.....
Ahalya : Oh you came.
Kunchu, Kunchu
Roshani : hay dad how are you, Dad here see the small earth warm, Amma Dad came.
Karththi : Oh, you came.
Roshani : Appa, uncle, Amma the earth warm has got in completely

Thankyou

(A1, T8, S3)

➤ **Plays on general themes - Children's problems**

On the last day of the study, students were given open themes on children's problems and were asked to convert them into plays. Two samples were selected for discussion. The script 1 presents a problem faced by a student whose father is addicted to alcohol. The girl goes to work in a house as a servant in order to meet the financial demands of the family without the knowledge of her father. Later her friends reveal

this fact to the father who realizes his mistake and changes his habit.

Extracts:

3rd seen

- King : Rani get ready we will go to the shopping.
Tell our sweet child also to get ready.
- Princess : get ready child we will go to shop.
- Child : ok mum. (They are going to shop)
- King : It is nice no child. Ok you buy what you want.
- RChild : (she is going out side)
- Poor Child : What work I can search where I can search
(Rich child is going meet an
accident that poor child is preventing her)
- King : Oh what happen? Oh my child.
- P .Child : where were you?
- King : We went to shop. Ok hello hello. Can I
speak with doctor Sreether.
- Doctor : Yes speaking.
- King : Can you come immediately. Please
address.....
- Doctor : don't want. I knew your address. No
problems she will be ok now.
- King : Thank you very much. Please have this
money.
- P . Child : don't want. For this money can you help me.
- King : Help. Why not you should advice my father

may be listen. Ok come lets go.

Father : Who are you ah! My daughter know. Who are they why they came here. Your class mets.

P . Child : no. they came for advicing you.

King : Yes we came to tell you some advices. Listen.

Father : Ah tell. I am listening.

King : You are not thinking about your child. She is not going to school. Her studies is Getting down. You are not caring about your child.

Father : Your are looking like studied man but you are telling lie. Every day she got up and having one bag like this and going.

King : She didn't go to school. She is going for work.

Father : work! why she is going to work did I tell her to go to work She is only going know.

King : If she is not going to work you cant drink like this with her money.

(Father is thinking)

Father : Oh I am very sorry. I must not done like this please child I am very sorry.

Here after I can't do like this.

Child : Oh thak God! Atleast now you realized your mistake.

Father : Thank you for your advices.

The script 4 deals with a problem faced by a school going student whose parents quarrel very often. This situation affects the child and

she is not interested in studies and does not do well in the examination. Her teacher, who happens to be her mother's friend, finds out the reason for her student's failure and informs her friend, the girl's mother. Then the parents take care of their child. The feeling toward the family is highlighted in this play. The last bit of piece was written like a story as they did not have time to complete the script writing.

Example : **Task 9, Script 4**

Mother : Get up Saru. Get up.

Saru : Good morning Mum.

Mother : Good morning Saru. Study the lessons.

Father : Bring a cup of tea.

Mother : Sorry, I am having work. After 15 minutes I will give you.

Father : You are not having time to put a tea.

Mother : No I am not having time if you want it very urent go and put it.

Father : You are not obeying me idiod.

Saru : Father, please I want go school.

Father : Ok After ward I will see you. Come Saru

2

Student : God bless you Teacher.

Teacher : God bless you student. Who is todays sweeping

turn.

Moniter : Saru and I

Teacher : Ok you two sweep very well. Then tomorrow you have your term exam so all of you study and come..... ok bell rank. We will meet tomorrow.....

(At home)

Father : I so hurry. Bring the food.

Mother : Wait I am coming. Here Saru you also come to eat afterwards you can study for the exam.

Saru : Yes, Mum I am going.

Father : What in this food no salt. You don't to cook.

Mother : If there is no salt put some salt and eat.

Father : What you not obeying.

Mother : If I tell any thing means you are always telling I am not obeying.

Father : Don't talk too much. Ok.

Mother : What are you telling am I taking too.

Father : Yes than what

Saru : Father please want to eat.

(Than Mother and father are fighting, than Saru going to school in sad mood)

She didn't write exam well I feel very bad and she cry so. class teacher is asking what happen Charu. Saru tell all the matter about her house because teacher is Saru mother friend. then after one week

mother and teacher meet in house. then teacher advice to Saru mother. Then Saru mother take care of Saru. (A1, T9, S4)

In the following scripts, the students continue to display their social consciousness and their language growth. In script 3, one gets injured due to the unruly behaviour of the motorist. The victim is admitted to the hospital and the culprit is arrested by the police on the complaint made by the friends. The play was given a title appropriately.

Task 9, Script 3

c. Truth will always win

Friends are playing cricket. The ball went far away.

Ramesh : Ravi, go and take the ball.

Ravi : Of course.

When he went to take the ball one drunken driver push him.

Friend : Still, Ravi didn't come. Let's go and see what happen.

Friends : Oh what happen to Ravi? Let us admit in hospital?

Doctor : Don't worry. He will be ok.

Ramesh phoned to Ravi's mother

Ravi : I must tell this to police and correct that man.

Ravi : Excuse me sir.

Inspector : Yes, come in
What's your problem?

Ravi : I phoned you yesterday? I'm Ravi. One car pushed my friend and went. Here's a car number. Can I make one entry?

Inspector : Don't worry. I will take immediate actions.

Inspector arrested him. and he advised him.

Inspector: you don't know. You must obey the road rules. If you drink alcohol. You

change your habit.

Sinthu: I am very sorry. I will go in right track. I will change my habit.

(A1, T9, S3)

In the subsequent tasks more characters, more complexities, more language are found in the scripts. The teacher's authority, parents' quarrel and their negligence towards their children's welfare and the teacher's concern over the student are the important issues portrayed in the play. How complex it is! The language flows like native speakers despite a few mistakes. This amount of production was possible due to the workshop format and the mixed group abilities. One can notice how a typical teacher speaks at length. Students' knowledge of theatre and the structure of drama is appreciable. The descriptions of scenes and the divisions of scenes with a line of instruction like 'Next day morning at Ramesh house' are some of the markers of their language development.

Extracts from Task 9, Script 5

First scene

(Class room scene)

Teacher: I had brought the marks. Ravi what are you doing? You are playful now. You are dam too much. You have got 13 marks (Teacher is beating). Here do the correction. quickly. Karthik you are another idiot. What are you doing? Are you playing. When I am teaching you never listen then how will you get marks. You are playing Fool too much. You have got 3 marks. (Teacher is beating). Do the correction quickly. Ramesh congratulation you have got 98 marks. You both see Ramesh. He is doing hardworking but you are playing. Idiots! Ramesh don't have facilities to study. But you are having all the facilities and you are not studying. Ramesh you do the next exercise. Karthik and Ravi do the correction. I will go and come.

(During Interval)

- Ravi : Sir is always appreciating Ramesh and he is always scolding us.
- Karthik : Yes, sir is always scolding us. We want to make Ramesh to get in to bad habits. We want to spoil his studies.
- Ravi : Yes this good idea. We will make him to drink Alcohol. Oh! bell rang come we will go to class.

Next day morning at Ramesh house

- Ramesh : Mother I want to pay 40 Rupees exam fees. Today is the deadline.
- Mother : Wait father is coming. I will ask from him(father comes) Ramesh want to pay exam fees 40 Rupees.
- Father : I tried to get but nobody is giving money. Please Ramesh try to understand my problem.
- Ramesh : Ok. Father

(At school)

- Teacher : All brought the exam fees
Ravi and
- Karthik : Yes we brought teacher.
- Ramesh : Teacher I didn't bring. My father is having some difficulties to pay. Tomorrow I will bring teacher.
- Teacher : Ramesh I can able to understand your problem. But if you didn't pay the money today, you can't face the exam

tomorrow. Don't worry. I will pay for you. You are studying well because of money problem it need not to affect. If you need any help you can ask from me. You want to study well.

(A1, T9, S5)

This expresses how the students are conscious about their situation and life. It is interesting to note how the students were able to think in terms of social consciousness while working in groups. They were able to work with the idea of taking care of others, having concern for environmental problems, making a plea against child labour etc. This experience also changed my perception as can be seen from the following diary note made by me:

With the analysis, I feel I have to concentrate on the group dynamics, observe how the students work out the theme with plot, sketch the characters and create the dialogues in situations- the mechanism of plotting and writing out the scripts and look for the occasions when they make use of their first language. (Diary notes, 28.05.2005).

3.9 Evaluation

The three week-study showed that the students could be motivated highly with the theatre techniques. At the beginning, they were happy as I made them sit in a circle and then asked them to stand in rows and talk to their partners. This was a departure from their routine in schools and they were willing to participate in such activities for fun. The warm-up exercises gave them a chance to the so called dull students to give up their shyness and inhibitions. As already noted, their confidence in their proficiency was low they initially withdrew from participating in the group work. Therefore, they were put in the company of some better students. Rather than individual exercises, exercises done in pairs and in groups were stimulating and motivating. The whole class games were interesting though exhausting. Gradually, students started to work on the themes and situations after they found the games and the warm-ups interesting and useful. The tempo was high as the workshop proceeded with socially relevant subjects and children's common problems. Some

of the issues discussed in the plays performed in the workshop were environmental safety, problems of people affected by Tsunami, family strife, children's psychological issues like working as a child labourer, inability to get necessary things to go to school etc. and the special problems of underprivileged students.

At the end of this three week phase, as has been shown in the examination and analysis of scripts, a lot of language learning seems to have taken place. There were quite a few changes in the nature of language used. Some of them are listed below.

- Longer stretches of sentences with structures of simple sentences expanding.
- Co-ordination.
- Extended noun phrases.
- Use of present, present continuous and past tenses.
- Use of different pronouns.
- The chunks of language produced go beyond holophrastic constructions.
- Simple conditional clauses.
- Narrative strategies like asking questions and answering with coherence, agreement, disagreement.
- Marking pauses, with appropriate initiality, extencity and concluding moves; contradictions and supporting are observed.
- Using language appropriate to the roles and subject matter around which the dialogues were constructed.
- Absence of prepositions, linkers, logical markers, proper tense forms, interrogatives, without auxiliary verbs or supporting 'do'.

3.9.1 Post- Evaluation of the study

In fact, the students were fully attentive, enthusiastic and in high

spirits as the workshop moved towards the end of the first week.

“Since they were the participants in the programme, they developed more confidence. They always had hope and faith in what they did. They interacted with the researcher cum teacher and asked for more discussion and debates so that they could improve in their communication (Diary Notes 30.05 2005).

The following were observed:

- L1 was used at the beginning but it was less used as the workshop progressed
- There was a marked improvement in their motivation and involvement.
- Students’ confidence with regard to their felt need for communication improved.
- The dull and depressed (by social and psychological traumas due to war and other powers) / oppressed (by various social forces like caste, creed, race and economical status) students’ seemed to be empowered.

The students expected the researcher to correct the scripts and have a discussion about their problems. I therefore used to have such a discussion after every session of workshop. They had mainly syntactical problems and subject-verb agreement. There are some difficulties towards tenses as well. This had a positive impact on their language because they showed much progress and improvement in the scripts that they wrote toward the end of the programme.

The aim of the programme was to promote their written and oral communication. Attention was not paid on the conflict or the climax or the character development or the structure of the plays. Theatre games were merely employed and enactments of the plays were made at an improvised level in order to motivate the students and encourage them to produce open-ended dialogues (impromptu communication). Towards the end of the workshop students were asked to write what

they performed in the form of a play script to ascertain if their writing improved in any way. Thus, a hypothesis emerged that theatre along with games and activities lead to better results.

3.10 Design of the Preliminary study with the University Group

Another parallel workshop was conducted with a group of students from the Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna in order to see the amenability of using theatre for enhancing English language growth with an adult-group. The researcher is attached to this university and one of his research problems is to find out possible and viable means to promote English language communication among the university students. They also come from a regional medium education to the university to follow courses in English. But they are unable to develop communication in English. Therefore, the researcher had to undertake this study to see the possibilities of using theatre to promote oral and written communication among the university students.

The aim of the study was to see whether the general language proficiency could be promoted through theatre for the students who pass the intermediate/General Certificate in Education (Advanced Level) {G.C.E.(A/L)} Examination in the mother tongue medium. The workshop was conducted from 26th April 2005 to 13th May 2005 (Three weeks) at the Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The target Group was the Third year students of the University twenty in number.

3.10.1 Aims & Objectives:

- To find out possible solutions to the problems in oral and written communication that students face in learning English.
- To make the students use language in contexts created in the classrooms through techniques of drama and theatre workshops.
- To see whether students are able engage in effective communication through theatre workshop by making them lower their affective filters like inhibition, shyness and fear.

3.10.2 Rationale:

It is a well-known fact that Sri Lankan students' proficiency of English related to communication is very low. Students have problems of communicating in English although they have studied English from class three onwards as one of their subjects. Therefore, the effort attempted was to make students use English in contexts created in the classrooms through techniques of drama and theatre. In this context, it should be made clear that under theatre activities, games and warm-up exercises were included as they are generally used by theatre groups to shed inhibitions, learn elasticity of movement, dialogue delivery etc. With this group of adult learners this was even more essential than with the school group. These activities are inseparably linked with theatre as they are the mood-creating techniques and games in a theatre workshop.

The activities and games used in this theatre workshop are nearly identical to the ones used in the workshop that was conducted for school children. However, there were some minor changes and modifications; as such, to capture the differences and for purposes of ready access, the plan is presented here as well, as Table 3.2. Similarly, the principle behind the using of warm up exercises and games was the same, but again, in keeping with the age and experience of the university level students, in realization, some of them were changed. These changes, however, did not affect the generic description of the warm up activities. As such, the games and warm up exercises are not reproduced here (see Section 3.7.4, p.132 for details of games and warm-up exercises).

Workshop plan for the University group

No.	Date	W a r m - u p exercises & games	Situations for im- provisation	Aim & Objectives	M a t e r i a l s used
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1	27/04	Jogging and clapping to a rhythm & Hand catching	1. Asking for a seat in a bus 2. Asking for a direction 3. What happened to you?	To prepare PP for generating a dialogue through speaking skills	A model dialogue read out &
2	28/04	Mirror image and dancing to a rhythm	Pictures for creation	To give a chance to create small play lets	Pictures given for an idea to take off
3	02/05	Hand touching	Locations like School, Hospital, Temple, Railway station	To make PP get into the mood of creating dialogues	Any possible situation to be occurred discussed
4	03/05	Coin grabbing	Emotions like fear, frustration, anger & happiness	To induce emotions to make situations for play productions	Emotions like fear, anger & happiness explained in situations
5	05/05	Sea-saw:-Falling exercises in pairs	Poem-Leisure, Stopping by the woods & Breakfast	To imbibe the ideas from the poems and create situations	Poems mentioned used for discussion for themes
7	11/05	Breathing exercises and pronunciation practice	A short story for improvisation	To make the story a short play	Story discussed- In their own worlds
8	12/05	Beating out the rhythm & Tug o'war	Objects like bag, chair, & file	To provide a chance to brainstorm the situations to create short episodes	Sample episodes demonstrated
9	13/05	Round about:-Falling exercises in groups & Huts & goats game	Common themes and plots on children's problems of students' choice	To improvise any topic to generate a script	Common themes for open creation

Table 3.2

3.11 Observations and Growth Observed

It would be a little presumptuous to draw conclusions from this study so early. However, within the three weeks of study it was observed that the students were highly involved in the theatrical techniques and games. At the beginning, they were not convinced about the way I started the class. But when I asked them to stand in a circle and talk to their partners in pairs, they got seriously involved in the interaction. Students were motivated and gradually their shyness and fear disappeared. Their self confidence increased and they worked out the themes in groups. They discussed the tasks with each other and negotiated communication in English. They worked together on emotional themes and worked out with each other in various ways of expressing.

Like the school group workshop the tasks had various similar functions of communications such as;

- asking for a seat,
- finding out directions,
- talking about past incidents,
- interpreting pictures and making into episodes. In the second phase students were engaged in various other tasks like:
- Locations - working out dialogues in places like 'banks' and 'bus stops' etc.
- Emotions - planning situations for emotions like fear, happiness etc.
- Objects - creating stories with a particular objects like chair and bag,
- Poem - interpreting poems (Leisure) and making it into a play,
- Story - drafting a play out of a short story by a Sri Lankan writer (In their own worlds) and
- Experience - making plays with their own experience ('A Trip') and

- common themes like Tsunami, unemployment, family strife, psychological issues etc.

Students generated scripts and tried them out in groups. Finally they sat and wrote out the scripts collectively and constructively. Unlike the guided conversations, like functions of communications which they found useful for communication, they were able to imagine and talk profusely with regard to open and social themes. As the researcher's diary notes shows:

The tempo was high when they worked on socially relevant themes such as environmental pollution and concern for the deprived ones etc.

(Diary Notes, 12/05/2005)

Their improvisations were dramatic and theatrical and their creative talents were appreciable.

3.11.1 Analysis of the Scripts

➤ Asking for seat

There were 11 pairs who produced eleven scripts. Since they are adults their experiences are wider and they talk in terms of reality. The reason for absence is given as the sister's visit from Canada and at the end the dialogue ends with a helping hand.

"Why not? My elder sister has come from Canada. With her family"

"Don't worry. If you come to my room I will give nites to you."

(A2, T1,

S1)

The sentence structures are made with many grammatical and spelling mistakes but, unlike the school children, they seem to have sentences in syntactically correct order. But they mix one with the other.

"I have not seen you for a week. What happen to you"

"She has a 03 children they was born in Canada"

(A2, T1, S1)

Task 1, Script 1

- A : Hello Jazeem how are you?
- B : I'am fine. And you
- A : I'am fine thank you.
- I have not seen you for a one week. What happen to you.
- B : Oh. It was very intersting matter.
- A : What is it? May I know that
- B : Why not? My elder sister has come from Canada. With her family
- A : Vow. And then
- B : She has a 03 children they was born in Canada
- A : So I think that they don't know the Srilanka is not?
- B : yes so they want to see the interesting area of Srilanka.
- A : Oh. Did you show that place to your relation.
- B : Yes. Such as upcountry side, Zoo Eastern area, and historical area of Anurathapura.
- A : ok. Good.
- B : So that I could not come to the campus.
- A : Don't worry. If you come to my room I will give nites to you.
- B : thanks for your helping mind.
- A : We will mee again
- B : bye...

Task 1,Script 10

We have meet in the omanthai Bus

- A : may I sit in this seat
- B : yes, no problem.
Where are you going?
- A : I am going to Jaffna.
Where are you coming from?
- B : I coming from Vavuniya.
You
- A : I also coming from Vavuniya.
What are you doing?
- B : I am studying in Vavuniya campus.
- A : Oh good.
What about your study?
- B : I am studying faculty of Business studies at 3rd year
in English medium.
What are you doing?
- A : I am working in education dept for 3 years.
- B : What is your work position?
How is going to your work?
- A : I am a clerk.
I expected this type of work. So, I am interesting in
my work.
- B : What about your hobbies 2 in free time?
- A : I watched the T.V and I more like the Tamil drama

& films.

B : Do you intrest in Descovory chennel or English programme?

A : Yes, I like that ,But No, time. no

➤ **Past Narration**

In the second task students were asked to narrate their past experience to their partner. Four groups talked about the accidents that they met with and the language used was very much appropriate though there were problems of spelling and grammar.

Task 2, Script 1

I'm : Where did you go in those days?

Niro : I went my home. Because I had to take rest.
Because of that went home

I'm : Why? What happened to you?

Niro : Oh! I met horrible accident at our campus junction
in last month.

I'm : oh! Sorry. I didn't know about your accident. No
one tell me. Ok. How met Accident.

Task 2, Script 2

A : Where did you go last week?

B : I had to go my house.

A : House! Why?

B : I was affected by accident.

A : Oh! Accident how it was held?

B : When I was coming from the faculty I was cross the
main road before the

Suththanda. When a Auto was moving to me. then
I don't know what was happened then I was in
General hospital

A : Oh! I don't know this matter. Now how is your wound.

B : mmm....that is normal now.

A : are you finished your medechine

B : Ya, I have finished

Task 2, Script 4

A : What happened to you? I didn't meet you last weak?

B : Last weak I met an accident.?

A : Accident , where? And when?

B : Last Friday I went to Colombo on the way I met the
accident closer the
'Navalapitiya' junction.

A : Any causality?

B : No. any casualty but most of us were effected seriously?

A : How deer? What about you?

B : Luckily I escaped with minor injuries.

A : How is now you feel any pain in your body?

Task 2, Script 7

Nilo : Where did you go last week?

Barani : I went to Colombo for my grand fathers treatment.

Nilo : What happened?

Barani : He met an accident in Jaffna.

Nilo : Why did you bring to him in Colombo?

Barani: Jaffna doctors don't have enough medicines for the surgery. So we brought him in Colombo.

➤ **Using Pictures**

Students started thinking in terms of society when they were given pictures for interpretation. The group wrote the script 2 concentrated on water problem and approached the village officer for digging up a well for the society. While working through on social themes there is flow of language even if they have language problems.

Task3, Script 2

First (Meet the GS)

V.P : Good morning sir, Our village has no well that is why Our people faces many difficulties to get the water. If they want to get the water they have to far away from here!

So will you please help us to get good water in our native place.

G.S : Ya idea is well, I think better to dig the well centre of your village.

I think you have some money problem. Tommrow I put forward regarding

this matter to the DS and collect some money. We gathered the people where We dig the well.

Second (Start to dig the well)

G.S : this is for you, we are going to dig the well. So we expect some helps from you. That is you better to bring some tools like spade.

➤ **Task 4 - Using Locations**

Task four was on using locations. For example the place 'Bank' was given and the students were able to produce a dialogue.

Task 4, Script 1

Accountant & Customer

- Acc : Good morning, may I help you?
- Cus : Yes please. Can you explain the procedure to open a savings account.
- Acc : Go to the lady in that counter. Get an application form. And bring it down here.
- And I'll help you.
- Cus : Here it is.
- Acc : Your kind name please?
- Cus : Yasothar.
- Acc : Where are you from?
- Cus : I'm from Batticaloa.
- Acc : really, I'm from Batticaloa too. Which part of the city are you from?
- Cus : I'm from town.
- Acc : That is a coincidence. I'm from town too. If you say your fathers name I can identify yourself
- Cus : Mr. Marymathan..
- Acc : Ah.... I know him very well. He's a friend of my farther.
- Cus : Nice meeting you. I'm sorry your other coustemers are waiting. We'll meet again some other time.
- Acc : You give this form in counter No-3 and your account

will be opened. See you. bye

Cus : good bye.

➤ **Using emotions**

It is quite interesting to note that the flow of language was evident when the students were involved with their personal emotions or themes related to their age. In order to express frustration the script goes as follows:

Task 5, Script 5 - Frustration E

Sufair : Hi, bahi, How are you? why you feel so sad today?

Bahi : Sorry, I don't want to follow this

Sufair : Why? What happened?

Bahi : Because it is difficult to understand everything

Sufair : Why are telling like that?

Bahi : I am a arts students and also coming from Vanni.
That is why I am beatward in English.

Sufair : You don't worry. I will help you?

Bahi : Do you know? Who is that, he is not in steady.

Bahi : I think he is in dope

Sufair : Why you feel bore today?

Pirathi : I hate this world and also Ladies?

Sufair : why, you hate whole think?

Pirathi : All are cheated me. Only I like to take lequire.

Bahi : Don't worry, that is natural in the world.

Pirathi : Hello, thusi, are you busy?

Thusi : No. I am not busy but I am Worry.

Bahi : Why. May I know that?

Thusi : why not? I am hardays these days and there are lot of members in Our family. My family is poor.

Bahi : You don't worry. We will help to you.

➤ **Using objects**

The play titled 'Bag' got interpreted and they planned to collect bags from the public in order to be issued to the people affected by the Tsunami. They were able to perform the task very well. More than the expression the attitude towards the society is remarkably a welcoming one.

Task 6, Script 2 - Bag

Seen 1

Shakthi FM/TV

Hasbulla : Today we have to go to some companies to buy bags.

Sasi : Ya, it is for Tsunami affected people no?

Hasbulla : Evening are you free?

Sasi : Ya I'll be free. We shall go.

Compani 1

Hasbulla : Excuse me! Can we come in?

Jesha : Yes, come in.

Sasi : We are coming from Shakth FM. We want some bags to issue the students who effected by Tsunami.

Jesha : Oh good! We have some variety of bags. Which model do you want?

Hasbulla : Can we see that?

Jesha : Ya sure. Please come to our show room.

- Sasi : Ok Lets go.
- Jesha : These are some models of bags. You see and select, that what do you want?
- Hasbulla : This one, This one, mm. This one, Sasi I Think it is better.
- Sasi : Ya, Ya It is better. Madam How much is it?
- Jesha : It is 110/=
- Hasbulla : Hundred and Ten? Can you reduce the price?
- Jesha : Ya, There will be discount.
- Sasi : discount? How much discount?
- Jesha : 10%. How many bags do you want?
- Hasbulla : We want 200000 bags. We shall come evening. Parcel it.
- Jesha : Ok. Thanks for coming.

Seen 3

Has and Sasi have collected bags and they go to DS office to handover it.

DS office

- Hasbulla : Excuse me madam.
- Sasika : Yes come in.
- Sasi : Madam we are coming from Shakthi FM. We have bought some bags and we have to give it to Tsunami effected pupils.
- Sasika : Aa, welcome. I appreciate you. please give it to our workers and thankyou Verymuch.
- Ok welcome.

Seen (we go back..)

➤ **Using Poems**

In the next task students were given a poem titled 'Leisure' and they developed different scripts. One of them describes how parents control their children without allowing them to have freedom and enjoy their leisure. Father is advised by the neighbour to allow the children to enjoy freedom so that they would be improving in all the aspects of life. When the students are given tasks which are related to their everyday life the lessons would be meaningful. It makes them express what they know in the language that they are made to speak.

Leisure

Task 7, Script 1 - Family (Students enjoy)

Daughter : This is good opportunity to us for watching TV.

Son : Yes, Yes, Dad not in here, I think, He'll return evening.

Daughter : So after the drama, we'll watch Sandramuki film.

Mother : Some time father may come early, so what will do you?

Son : Not possible, But we are watching TV with book, So easily we can escape.

(Suddenly father come)

Father : What are you doing?

Son : We are studing?

Father : You are studing.

Mother : yes, they are studying.

.....

(Neighbour come)

- Nalina : Nilo, Nilo I want some sugar. Do you have?
- Nilo : Yes I have, just a minute
- Nalina : What are you doing children? why your mood dull? Son &
- Daughter : When we are watching T.V dad came that time & scolded. He got angry.
- Nalina : oh..... So both of you have upset. Ok wait Mr.Mohan.....
- Father : I spent more energy & money everyday for their future life. But they couldn't understand our situation. They always cheat themselves. That's why I got angry. Because I lot of sacrifices for them.
- Nalina : O.k Mr.Mohan. I know your feeling. Always you don't control them. you must give freedom to them. Then only they can improve themselves.

In the next two tasks too, one could observe that their fluency developed due to the interactive and communicative mode adopted in the theatre workshop. It is also pertinent to say that the university group which was not so communicative at the beginning of the workshop were able to put together whatever they gathered as knowledge of English and common understanding. It is well expressed in the following scripts based on a story and their experiences. In the following script, the story underwent modification and the students used their knowledge of law too.

Task 8, Script 2 - Conversation in the home.

- Grandma : Did you get any message about son?
- Nilo : No mum, Sufair went to see him.
- Grandma : I'm afraid, everyday he does stupid works and

he visits all the areas. We don't know where he goes. You don't worry he will come himself.

Uncle : (Come with parrot) Sasi I have brought the good gift for u.

Sasi : please uncle tel me quickly. Uncle please.

Uncle : No, I won't tell. You Just guess & tell.

Sasi : is it frock?

Uncle : No.....

Sasi : No idea for this you tell.

Uncle : It is a parrot.

Nilo : Sufair Did you get any news about my brother?

Uncle : I heard the news that he is in the prison.

Nilo : Don't tel to my mother. please be Serious on it. What can we do?

Uncle : I have to arrange the lawyer

Sasi : Uncle, why you kept the parrot inside of the Net

Uncle : If not It will fly away.

Nilo : You always behave child like.

Sufair : I am serious not playing. Shall we go to meet the Lawyer.

Nilo : Yes. We move.

When Sufair & nilo reach near the gate.

Sufair : What is the sound?

Nilo : I think it is a police Jeap.

Sufair : What a surprise brother stays with police, So I think he will be released.

Sasi : O..... H..... Parrot is leaving from the net.

In the last task students worked on common themes and they all discussed and selected the theme as “ Trip experience”. There were six scripts and one is presented for its creative expression and formation. That is, the boy who was on excursion with his father was missing in the jungle and he was saved by his father. In this way, the students were able to create performances with thrill and suspense as if they had worked on real plays. The knowledge of drama and theatre must have gained from the sources like television, folk plays and dramas performed in the general programmes. With a little knowledge of English, they tried to bring out in a performance and then in a script whatever they could.

Task 9 - Common themes

Task 9, Script 1 - Trip experience

My friends : We are so glad to get holidays.

Asha : What will we do in the holidays?

Nirosh : Oh! I have good ideya.

Asha : What is your ideya.

Nirosh : Let's we go on a trip?

Siyan : Oh! Yes, that's good ideya, but where will we go?

Nirosh : To Sripadha.

I : I'am sorry, I cant join with your trip.

Nirosh : Why you have been ever go to sripadha?

I : Yes, sure.

Asha : When did you go to Sripadha?

I : I went to Sripadha in April.

Nirosh : is it? Whom did you go with?

I : with my family members.

Asha : what did you do there?

I : I saw foot print of Adam.

Asha : could you please tell about this?

I : Yes of course, I think that, Hindus belife that the foot print of Siva god. So,
they are calling Sivanoly phadumalee.

Nirosh : Then, how do other religens belife?

I : I thing that muslims belife that the foot print of prophet Adam and
cristianes also belife that the foot print of Adam. but Buddist belife that the
foot print of Buddha.

Asha : Yes, it is truth.

Nirosh : by the way, where did you stay?

I : We stayed our relation's house.

Asha : How long did you stay there?

I : I thing that three days.

Manel : Oh, what was the most unforgettable experience?

Oh yes, ha.....ha.....ha.....when I get on the
Sriphada I had
entangled among the hills. Oh my god. then.....

I : Then my father has rescued me. It is my unforgettable experience.

3.11.2 Discussion on the Observations

Throughout the workshop, the students were very attentive without being bored and at the same time they were full of enthusiasm and in high spirits as the workshop moved towards the end (Diary notes, 12.05.2005).

However some students did drop out because they expected from the class more of grammar lessons and some were not so cooperative at the beginning of the workshop due to the necessity of active participation of the workshop requirements and because of the non-traditional teaching methods adopted by the researcher. As they are adults, they found it difficult to get into the mood of acting. And, due to the influence of traditional teaching culture some felt they could have studied some grammar lessons which would be useful in the examinations. But the participants who felt that they had got a fruitful academic experience did not have the feeling of missing and losing out on learning English. In fact, they developed hope and confidence; they moved freely with the researcher cum teacher and asked questions on certain aspects to clarify matters related to characters and plots and improved their communication. They expected the researcher to correct their scripts and discuss their language problems. Therefore, as with the university group, the researcher had post-workshop sessions to analyse their problems related to grammar.

The aim of the workshop was to promote their written and oral communication. As such, not enough attention was paid to the development of plots, conflicts and characterization as the concentration was on the language development. However, it seems that they have got this knowledge on their own from various sources of the society like school plays, village folk plays, television and radio dramas etc. Warm-up exercises and games were employed in order to motivate the students to get into impromptu communication. Subsequently, they were asked to write down what they acted. Thus, it was observed that through this theatre workshop, the students' affective filters could be lowered and they would be promoted to communicate without inhibition. Moreover, the workshop has been a place for expressing their creative talents as well. The workshop could thus be viewed as one that provided a space for freedom of expression and allowed every other to talk (Freire, 1972).

3.11.3 The target group for the main study

A three-week programme, however, it was felt would not be sufficient to capture language growth. A longer duration seemed essential. It was also felt that such a programme would be more feasible with a group of younger subjects because the older group expected more grammar and was influenced by the traditionally established hegemonic educated practices and methodologies. Therefore, the longitudinal study ought to be done with the younger group first and with that experience a modified workshop would be feasible for the adult group from the university.

3.11.4 Observations and Findings of the Preliminary Study

This preliminary study provided many insights into the L2 communicating capability of the students. The students seemed to have learnt to speak and write English even, without an enriching linguistic environment at home. They showed a capacity to talk and write despite poor reading and less exposure to English language and social interaction. The significance of this will now be discussed.

3.11.5 Significance of the Preliminary Study

The preliminary study with a group of students from a Sri Lankan secondary school showed that communicative ability of students would be developed if properly motivated in an atmosphere with low affective filters. The school children were more motivated and could be easily got into the mood to work out the themes of the workshops. The university students who were older had to be convinced with more theoretical aspects of using theatre in language teaching.

When I had an informal unstructured interview with the university students they pointed out that it would be a waste of time and they preferred to learn some grammar of the language and some writing which would be more useful to pass the examination. My arguments therefore, dealt with developing spoken communicative skills first and then moving on to creative and spontaneous writing which would lead them to write better. But writing skills not related to examination

did not impress them. However, they reluctantly started to work in the workshop. Gradually they became more interested in the task of creating and improvising the plays, yet their intention basically was to acquire various techniques to pass the examinations as they had a short period to prepare for the examinations (Diary notes 27.04.2005).

Furthermore, the climate of the university academic system put pressure on the students to find out alternative techniques to achieve proficiency in English. Nevertheless the students were able to realise that they could make their own sentences and speak and write in comparatively better ways after the workshop. However carrying a longitudinal study with them for three months was a practical problem (as the students are on a long vacation after their exam when I planned to have my data collection) and I had to decide to focus on the school children. The other theoretical reason would be to study whether theatre could be used more fruitfully with younger ones attached to a school who could be easily motivated and then use that experience to plan a more effective way of approaching grown-up students at university level once the methodology is established.

3.11.6 Implications for the Main study

Having understood that theatre promotes learners to be motivated and active in their language use, it was felt that it would be better to conduct a larger study with a limited number of homogenous students from one class. The mixed ability group was not very conducive to capture the effect of the theatre activities on language growth. This was because with a mixed group, the assistance provided by more abled peers could not be discounted. Also, tasks had to be fine tuned at two/three levels. The implications of the preliminary study are as follows:

1. The knowledge of the L1 theatre culture and the transfer of the ability of L1 strategic competence are obvious from the productions of the students although the students had problems in syntactical order and spelling mistakes and the use of inappropriate use of words. Above

all, their willingness to communicate (Dornyei, 2003, p.12-14) was observed from the Preliminary study.

Task 6, Script 3. Chair

- Raja : good morning to you all today we have any problems
- Minister : Now a days in our country steeling are getting place, what we can do for this
(Raja had some problems in him body)
- Wifes : Minister call the doctor.
(Doctor came and seeing king)
- Doctor : King's body condition is not well.
- King : Doctor I want to see my wifes
- Minister : queen Raja is calling you come and see
- Wife : Raja what happen, how are you now
- King : my body condition is not well so we must select another king and keep crowing Party.
- Wife : (one wife tell) my son is next king for this country.
- another wife : No, my son only can be a King (and fighting)
- raja : Don't fight my wifes we will meet at crowing party.

(A1, T6, S3)

2. The data from the Preliminary study showed that there was a large amount of language learning and resultant use that happened and this is in line with current theoretical positions on this issue. In order to make sense of the kind of language use that happened

during the short span of three weeks, it is necessary to assume that there is a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and that with a certain level of language capability in one language, there will be a transfer of capability to the other. Thus, knowledge of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and knowledge and awareness of Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in L1, will enable it in L2 (Cummins and Swain, 1986) Similarly, it was found that engaging in meaning making activities in the language will result in a larger than normal quantity of output (Canale and Swain, 1980), for a detailed discussion of these concepts, see Chapter 2, Section 2.9.4.).

Some of the common features of communicative ability which emerged through the data of the preliminary study are:

- Students used L1 a lot at the beginning but it was gradually diminished as the programmes progressed
- Motivation and involvement was increased.
- Students' confidence with regard to communication improved.
- Weak and dull students' seemed to be empowered.
- The use of L1 cultural knowledge and theatre awareness was very encouraging.

Theatre aspects like imitating and acting of roles of real personas are natural phenomena for human beings. As Heath (1993) points out the multiple versions of voices and cognitive apprenticeship can be kindled through theatre workshops. If the students are pushed through situations to work naturally and spontaneously, expressions will naturally flow and language expressions will become natural. Since the students coming to the sixth class have some basic knowledge in English, as they have learnt it as one of the subjects in the primary school. Their attempt to use the language was noted even during the initial stage of the Preliminary study.

“Students tried to communicate making questions like ‘What’s your name? Where are you from?’ (Diary notes, 27.04.2005).

As such, in order to enable language learning to happen or enhance existing skills, the staff at the universities and the schools (especially the English medium) are to be able to make students use the language effectively and efficiently for oral and written communicative purposes. Since these students need to continue to do their studies in the English medium it is vital for them to develop these communicative skills. However, the fear, inhibition and ‘shyness’ and the psychological fear regarding the culture of the language and the belief and myth of RP (Received Pronunciation) scare the students and they do not engage with the language. The argument made in this thesis is that it is primarily through theatre workshops where full-fledged theatre is possibly developed, that language enhancing can be enabled. Theatre workshops provide a rich space where current social situations, real characters, relevant contexts, and current themes can be exploited for language enabling. Through meaning making activities, students’ abilities in the language can be tapped and developed. In order to attempt this task it was decided to design a three-month theatre workshop and to document it using ethnographic tools. No attempt was made to problematise drama in a theoretical manner. Experiments with theatre were carried out, but with the inevitable documentation to enable the analysis of the effect of the workshop in promoting the development communicative skills. This documentation is in the form of scripts, diary entries, discussions etc.

3.12 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology, an Ethnographical one

Language achievement through drama techniques which reflect the socio cultural aspects of the students cannot be measured within a short period with statistical analysis. Moreover, human development in skills is difficult to be measured perfectly by experimental methods. The best method of data collection in qualitative methods is participant observation that entails the sustained immersion of the researcher. The researcher studies a group with the view of generating an in-depth account of the

group. With growing disillusionment of the results of the scientific approach/ quantitative research social science researches advocate an approach which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. The appropriateness of a natural model to the social sciences was questioned by researchers in the sixties because the application of a scientific approach in the form of surveys and experiments is unable to take into account the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences (Bryman, 1988). The choice is made due to the appropriateness of the qualitative methodology in answering a particular research question. It was assumed that with participation observation (the 'emic' principle) and with reference to the social system in mind (the holistic principle) research tools like interviews, questionnaires, field notes, documentary materials, video and audio recordings could be deployed for data collection.

3.12.1 The Tools for the study

It was decided to collect data through interactions and interviews of students, staff and the administrators in the school, video-record the workshop behaviour of the students, teaching, class discussions, improvisations and performances. It was decided to measure students' proficiency in the language with the help of their performances during the first week of the study. It was planned to obtain profiles of their developing language proficiency continuously throughout the duration of the workshop, until the end of the three-month programme at periodic intervals. The following aspects were chosen for observation and documentation and notes of events and proceedings were meticulously recorded in a diary. It was decided that:

1. Students' interest would be captured and documented, to observe how helpful they were to others in the workshops. Even the behaviour of the silent students would be observed.
2. Various nuances of the non-verbal behaviour of the students in the workshops would be noted by the researcher in his diary notes.

3. The way theatre activities and games moved them to get involved and participate in the process would be documented. Also the participation of the silent students would be observed.
4. Each student's character and personality development in relation to language would be captured.
5. Student's incidental attempts to speak in groups would be recorded; it was felt that they might lack confidence initially but they might gain slowly towards the end. They might read scripts first and start talking later; their roles would change them from passive receivers to creative participants in the workshop.
6. The way students conceived theatre, constructed language knowledge, plan, and plot, negotiated the roles of characters, actors, writers, and directors and arrived at linear presentations of the plays would be observed through their participation in productions. Also their inclusion of songs, various props and costumes would be noted.
7. The time taken for group work, planning, plotting and productions and post- production discussions would be counted with a view to discovering the process of learning, production and meaning-making.
8. Students' language would be examined to see whether it represented any natural sequencing of linguistic items in order to discover their own learning syllabus.

3.12.2 Method & Analysis:

The kind of theatre visualized by me for the study as an 'insider' researcher and, more importantly as a classroom teacher was based on discussions, improvisations, writing of scripts and the subsequent practice and performance of the scripts. It was assumed that this would be a learning process through performance and that students would gain confidence in such a practice. Their affective filters would be lowered. There would be an increased capacity for empathy and heightened self-esteem, motivation and spontaneity leading to more interactions for creative and imaginative development among students.

Generating scripts in groups and enacting them in the workshops would be tried out to encourage students to achieve proficiency in oral and written communication. The participants in groups would work on planned situations. A set of warming-up and brainstorming sessions would be introduced in order to facilitate them in the act of spontaneous expressions in language and movement. Breathing exercises, walking and dancing movements and miming exercises along with voice training would be handled in order to put the students in the proper mood for creative and imaginative atmosphere. It would be a 3-month ethnographical study (conducted in May-July, 2006). Students would be made to discuss situations and themes in groups and plan plots in scenes and improvise them with necessary characters and dialogues. Rehearsals can be done at the group level and performances at the class level followed by discussions. Finally, scripts should be written by the students. Thus, learning can happen throughout the three-month programme. Their progress would be assessed with their proficiency in the second language through observation and analyzing the texts for quality and appropriate use of words at the end of every week.

3.13 An Outline of the Modified Research Project

- **Workshop plan for three months**

Duration: From First week of May 2006 to Last week of July (36 contact sessions)

No. of classes: Three classes in a week of one hour duration per a class

Target group: Class six students of Vavuniya Tamil Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.

Students and teachers of English would interact with each other to get some data related to students' socio economic and cultural factors. Students would be interviewed to know their educational and psychological background. Notes would be taken down throughout the study on the engagement of the students' in the workshop and their involvement and interactions with other students through group work

and pair work. Video recording of the proceedings at three different intervals was planned to get more data on the spot: how students behave in the participatory activities? Weekly plan of participatory activities are given below.

- **First week: Functions, Pictures and poems for generating scripts**

Functions of Language communication.

- warm-up exercises and games
- Improvisation of functions

Talking about yourself, asking for information, getting people to do things, talking about past events, talking about the future, offering to do something, giving opinions, making suggesting and giving advice, complaining, apologizing and forgiving, describing things (adapted from Jones, 1981).

Students would be asked to put down in writing the dialogues they have improvised.

These dialogues would be assessed for their proficiency.

2nd Week

- warm-up exercises and games
- Pictures will be given for discussion (five in number).

Students will be guided to develop a story line to produce a performance through improvisation. Later, the drafts will be written down for cross checking.

3rd Week

- Warm-up exercises and games
- Words and sentences will be given to create scenes for short performances through improvisations.

Eg. Fear, Anger, temple, hospital, an accident, mother loves me, we do our duty, etc.

Assessments would be made on their progress with regard to language proficiency.

4th Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Some poems would be given for dramatization and writing down the scripts for performances.

5th Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Performances would be made

Assessments would be made on their progress with regard to language proficiency

2nd month: Stories for Production and generating scripts

1st Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Students would be asked to narrate their experiences and improvise them for short performances.

Students would be asked to write down the scripts based on their experiences.

2nd Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Some folk stories would be given for reading and improvisation in groups.

Drafts of the scripts would be written down by the students scene by scene.

3rd Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Some short stories would be given for reading and discussion in groups.
Reading with expression and improvisations would be made.

4th Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Stories would be converted them into plays (scene by scene).

Drafts of the scripts would be written down.

Performances of the stories would be made to strengthen the language written in the scripts.

Assessments would be made on their progress with regard to language proficiency

5th Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Some short one-act plays would be used for improvisation.

Performances of the plays would be made.

Assessment would be made on their progress with regard to their production

3rd month: Generating scripts in the classroom

1st week

Warm-up exercises and games

General themes would be discussed.

- Eg. - To be punctual to the classes (A latecomer's problem)
- To be systematic and regular in the class work (The problem of a student who doesn't do the homework regularly.)
 - To be active and sportive (To be lazy to take part in games and other activities)
 - To be friendly with classmates (a quarrel and a settlement)

- To be helpful (Learning to help others in times of need.

2nd Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Improvisation of the themes discussed would be made and rough draft of the scripts will be jotted down.

3rd Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Drafts would be improved with further rehearsals and improvisations.

4th Week

Warm-up exercises and games

Finals draft would be prepared with modification and characterization.

5th Week

Warm-up exercises and games All the five scripts would be practiced for performance.

A final show with parents, teachers and other students would be organized.

Assessments would be made on their progress with regard to language proficiency warm-up and Introductory Exercises

- **Non-verbal warming-up exercises**

1. Handshakes
2. Hand catching
3. Mirror hands
4. Hand touching
5. See-saw
6. Round about

- **Non-verbal cooling down exercises**

1. Breathing
2. Feeling my space
3. Feeling your muscles
4. From seed to plant
5. Slow motion
6. Relaxing

- **Verbal exercises**

1. Handshakes 2
2. Can you do this? (Mirror images with verbal encounter)
3. Body words (with formation of letters with the body)
4. The sun and the moon
5. What's in a hand?
6. And I'm a butcher
7. Self-portraits

(Adapted from Maley and Duff 1978/1982).

3.14 Limitations of the Preliminary Study

The Preliminary study showed that affective filters were lowered and that students were able to use language to communicate effectively, to be able to take on the persona of the characters they had identified themselves with. However, this three week-programme was not enough to capture language growth in the learner. Secondly, the identification of separate features of language growth was not concentrated on. This was because no attempt had been made to arrive at the description of their initial language ability. Thirdly, although it was intuitively felt that the amount of L1 use decreased as the workshop went on, no attempt had been made to document the use of L1 during the workshop.

Last of all, another ‘assessment’ that was not made was regarding the students’ previous knowledge of theatre drawn from the local culture and environment. Also, the mechanism of how the students were able to plot and sketch characters through English was not properly captured.

3.15 Conclusion - Theatre for Empowerment of the Minority to be Educated

The Preliminary study gave an impression that the use of theatre for language improvement is a useful technique that any language teacher can adopt. As stated in Chapter one (Section 1.4.2), as far as teaching of English as a second language in Sri Lanka is concerned, students have a psychological problem with it. English has been a status symbol for the upper class, a tool for the middle class to obtain jobs and affluent life and a threat to the lower strata of the Tamil community during the colonial and the postcolonial period until the sixties. To receive elementary education in the mother tongue has been argued for as a basic human right issue (Scuttnabb Kungas & Phillipson, 1994). It is also important to use the mother tongue for administration and other social functions for ordinary people who have not had access to English. But the socio political and economic conditions and the status of the multi-ethnic, cultural and linguistic situation of Sri Lanka do not permit this to be so. As far as the Sri Lankan Tamil students’ language rights are concerned , as discussed in Chapter one, (Section 1.3.3.) they had been denied the facility of learning in their mother tongue during and after Colonial rule But English medium education had to be given up in the nineteen sixties, due to political pressure. Sinhala was introduced as the official language of the country but English has been taught as a second language along with other subjects. As a result, since mother tongue education is possible, up to the tertiary level, the motivation to learn English as the second language is low except for students who are interested in professional courses like engineering, medicine, management and accountancy. This has resulted in a general deterioration of the standards of English.

Owing to ethnic conflicts and riots, there is an acute dearth of teachers of English among the Tamil community. The nationalist attitude of the militants has also not been positive and this has created further complications in the Sri Lankan educational environment. Thus, the argument made is that it is the educationists' duty to motivate students to learn English in order to help them enhance their proficiency. Therefore, the present study concentrates on promoting language proficiency through theatre in English classrooms. The preliminary study has shown that this is successful, even with disadvantaged students. The aim of the main study is therefore, to take this experiment further, to stay with students who transfer from the regional to English medium, and attempt to enhance and capture the resultant language growth. This study will also attempt to document the kinds of themes, contexts and tasks that seem to work better to enable such learning to happen.

Chapter 4

Scene Setting for the Main Study

4.1 Introduction

The research question of the present study focuses on the use of theatre for language enabling of Sri Lankan Learners of English in a more sustained manner than in the preliminary study. The aim was to develop communication skills with the use of theatre tasks in the classroom-turned-workshop format. There were three objectives of the study. They are:

- To observe the development of skills in students.
- To chart the language growth of the students through an analysis of the scripts produced by students.
- To capture the motivation, interest and the personality development (without having any fear, inhibition and shyness) created by the theatre workshop through the students' selection of various themes and plots developed as plays.

4.2 Research Issues

The main finding that had emerged from the scripts produced by the students who participated in the preliminary study was that the dialogues and scripts in English produced by them are meaningful and relevant to their context and also reflect their social reality. Students' 'threshold level of linguistic competence' and 'comprehensible output' (Swain, 1995) was reflected in the scripts written collectively during the workshop. The methodology adopted helped to improve their communication skills. It was observed that unlike what happen in their classrooms, students' language ability enhanced through theatre activities especially their ability to use expressions of various socially relevant concepts. Theatre enables the communication process despite problems of usage caused by poor learning environment and lack of time for learning. Collective production of scripts through sustained interaction among

students in various theatre activities was found to reflect language development in students. Tasks were given in groups for developing communication; students had to build up characters in the plots given and their performances were observed while rehearsing in groups. They were also observed when they improvised their performance and they were asked to develop and write the scripts in groups as a collective product.

4.3 Features of the Main Study

The main challenge was to develop the research tools, and decide on the nature of the tasks. Taking a cue from classroom research by Van (1982) that, these types of researches are helpful to teachers engaged in promoting communicative ability of the poor learners in a non-English situation, it was decided to undertake this study. Classroom research gives insights into the complexities of the classroom situation, the complex relationship between learners in the classroom and society that influences these relationships. Therefore, the main study which is classroom based as in the preliminary study, is an attempt to observe the development of the students' communicative skills in speech as well as in writing in a bilingual context. Therefore, it was decided to recast the traditional classroom sessions into a workshop format as was tentatively attempted in the preliminary study, in order to meet the new demands of the emerging new groups of students with many social problems like cultural differences, socio economic differences and psychological difficulties. In addition to the nature of workshop sessions, as they were conducted in the preliminary study, the decision was taken to use a non-classroom atmosphere, and also to bring in 'communicative' activities, like theme-brain-storming, visualization of socially relevant themes and contexts for future scripting, extempore improvisations, and real time play scripting, that are not a normal part of classroom space and interaction.

4.4 A thick description of the Target Group

Unlike the preliminary study which had a mixed group of classes

7, 8 and 9 the subjects of the main study were a set of homogenous group of twenty four students of around 11-12 years from Class Six of Vn/ Vavuniya Tamil Madya Maha Vidyalayam, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka during the period from 5th May 2006 to 27th July 2006. All the students had their primary education in the mother tongue, Tamil. Situated in the northern border of the Northern Province in Sri Lanka, the school is predominantly a Tamil school and both male and female students are generally admitted. But many classes do not have female students since most Hindu Tamil parents want their children to have their education separately after primary education. Therefore, the class six which was selected for the study, consisted only of male students. Out of 24 students, there were two Christian students, one Muslim student and the rest of them were Hindus. There is religious harmony among the students though Sri Lanka is going through severe ethnic strife for more than two decades. There was ceasefire between the Government and the militant forces during the period of study, yet there were sporadic incidents violating the ceasefire agreement. One such incident occurred near the school the day before the inaugural session of the workshop. This caused tension among the students and half of them did not turn up on the very first day of the workshop. This incident made an impact on the students and they reflected this experience in their productions later in the workshop held during the weeks of the study. All the students were from a lower middle class background. They were able to watch television programmes and were exposed to some English through the elders in the community, newspapers, radio, and television. Some students also had a little support from their elder siblings and parents but many of them managed with just the teachers' help in the school.

While the study is not grounded in an experimental pre-post test methodology, an attempt has also been made, for this main study, to try and describe what the students 'can do' with language using internationally accepted band descriptors. In the absence of such descriptors in the Indian/Sri Lankan context, the guidelines developed

by the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (hereafter, ACTFL , 2001) have been used for this purpose.

4.4.1 Proficiency Level of Students at the Beginning of the Workshop

The students, all studying in class 6, transferring from regional (Tamil) to English medium of instruction can be seen as ‘low novices’ with reference to their English capability. This implies that they are:

Writers at the Novice-Low level are able to form letters in an alphabetic system and can copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected. (ACTFL ,2001).

The reason they are placed in this band is because, as can be seen from the ‘extracts reproduced below, they can “form letters in an alphabetic system and can copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters”. Examples are given from the students’ writings about themselves before the workshop:

“My first brother stady at V/M.M.V

“My fourth brother all so stady at V/V.T.M.M.V” – Ifath

I am sutharsan. I am study in grade six“-Sutharsan. (Appendix 5)
Another writing piece from the scripts written during the first week of the workshop is also reproduced below:

Task 01, Script 02-

Kavirajan and Kishanthan.

Kaviranjan

Hello, What is your name?

My name is kaviranjan.

What is your father's name?

My father's name is Alaguthurrai.

What is your Mother's name?

My Mother's name is Sivasothi malar.

What is your hobby?

My hobby is reading story book.

Where are you Live?

I Live in Veppankulam. (A3, T1, S3)

From the diary entries of the students taken at the beginning of the workshop are the following samples:

“Yesterday we was came early to temple. Next we was prepare a story and act”.

G.Sanjeevraj

“That is a good drama. That name is monkey donkey. My part had monkey.I felt itself.. I was very happy. I enjoy that drama. I jump to tree” – A.Nirupan.

(Appendix 4)

From the above examples, it is understood that students were able to form letters in an alphabetic system and can copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters and they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, though errors are to be expected. When they wrote about themselves, they in fact reproduced from their memories. The questions and answers appeared in their script writing, too are ready-made ones. They just reproduced with some mistakes. In their diary writings, they tried to form sentences but with mistakes. This was done after they got engaged in the workshop, yet they wrote it with many mistakes. Therefore, their proficiency level is ‘Novice Low’ according to the ACTFL Guidelines - writing.

4.4.2 The Research Questions for the Main Study

The issues emerged from the preliminary study helped us to reformulate the central research question of this study namely: how can theatre be used to develop communicative skills of the disadvantaged learner. This leads to the following questions.

- Would it be possible to examine the concept of using theatre for L2 learning?
- Can the abilities of the disadvantaged learner's L2 communication be recognized?
- Can the language growth be identified and assessed through the preparations of the tasks and the writing of scripts?
- Is it possible to provide a framework of analysis to describe the language growth of students?

4.4.3 The Research Procedure for the Main Study

The present study necessarily had to adopt an interactive mode of instruction with negotiation of themes of the tasks which had to be discussed and worked out in groups because the imposition of themes from top to bottom is not productive enough (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6.5). The following aspects were kept in mind.

- The time frame for the theatre workshop was fixed as April to July as the class six students joined the secondary schools in January and it takes them a couple of months to settle down in their new schools. Students came from different villages of the district and this itself implies that they had to get used to urban life. Vavuniya Tamil Madhya Vidyalaya, where the workshop was conducted, is a 'central' or rather in Sri Lankan terms, 'national' school. Thus, it is not only the rural students who had to adjust to town life. Students often came from war-torn areas from different parts of the country and had to force themselves into a lot of adjustments at the socio economic, political and cultural level.

- In the light of the discussion on ‘Scaffolding’ in 2.7 (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner 1986), an attempt was made to provide ‘fine tuned’ language opportunities to students through the varied theatre tasks.
- An attempt was also made to use the L1 as a ‘judicious’ resource wherever needed (Atkinson, 1987).
- Theatre-based games, exercises and tasks were to be introduced to students as they would provide the basis for having fun and create a relaxed atmosphere to develop communicative competencies among students. There emerged through discussions held with teachers and students. It was decided to lead students to form characters and the language of the characters based on any theme or story line or poem or plot discussed, negotiated and developed in discussion with the students.
- Since the approach was ‘communicatively oriented’ (Littlewood, 2004, p.326) and theatrically workable, students’ interaction would be the primary focus.
- It was decided to observe the language produced by students initially at an improvised level in group discussion. Later, the language produced by them while performing in front of the whole class was to be observed and finally the written version of the production of a script as a collective work after the performance would be used for analysis. It was hypothesised that these three stages would capture the process of language ability and also the stages of the development of their linguistic competence.
- Topics around which the tasks were to be organised, were to be decided upon only in consultation with the students. Some could be from the text books, some from newspapers, some from their reading stock, some from their TV programmes and plays they watched and some from their own experiences gained from the day to events in relation to socio political and cultural background.

4.4.5 Research Tools for the Study

The following data were planned to be collected from the students and other members of the school community including parents.

- Students' oral interaction and performance texts (Scripts) to capture language development directly.
- Students' questionnaires and informal discussions with them to define their cultural location (for family background and educational facilities)
- The researchers' field notes to capture the processes and strategies were operative in the interactions.
- Recorded versions of the performance to see whether students coped confidently with the pressure of 'performing' in front of the audience.
- Students' diaries and responses to understand what students themselves felt about the experience and to see their language growth from their writing.
- Comments by the audience to understand their reaction.

4.5 Assumptions behind Using Theatre-based Tasks

The assumptions behind using theatre-based tasks are given below.

- Students would use familiar topics for tasks generating ideas because of their knowledge of relevant subject and the vocabulary to be used in spoken interaction.
- They would interpret whatever they watched from the school programmes, TV, or read from story books or text books or listened from elders in the society and through various strategies and would produce more vocabulary and structures.
- They would show how knowledge of local theatre, culture and L1 could generate interest and motivation to get into easy activation of producing language.

- The confidence of the learner would be developed as they progressed with their completion of tasks.

4.5.1 Task Design for the Study

Theatre tasks were designed with the following criteria in mind:

- Learners' cognitive and linguistic level
- Learners' interest and experience
- Social relevance

Learners' motivation, interest and needs were taken into consideration when choosing a theatre task. Also, the needs of the students in general communication, the acceptability and familiarity of the topics were also discussed, along with the range of vocabulary demanded by the topic and the flexibility of the themes. Learners' awareness of the world outside would also be taken into consideration as it would help them create characters in real life.

4.5.2 Description of the Main Study Tasks

Twenty tasks were designed for the main study since it was a three month-programme. With the experience gained in the preliminary study where we had a general session of three weeks, tasks were graded from controlled to semi-controlled and open and common themes. These were maintained as four phases of the workshop. The researcher had planned to meet the students three hours a week as students would have other subjects to study before and after the workshop.

The first phase was based on familiar language and familiar dialogue. This was experiential. The second phase was based on visual pictures, poems and songs. Visual materials activate their imagination and poems and songs would kindle their imaginative and creative ability. The third phase was based on using stories narrated by the students and the stories given by the researcher. And the fourth phase was conducted with common themes selected from the students' own experiences. During this phase students would be motivated to improvise plays creating

characters moving on to a plot and conflict and resolve within the short duration given for production.

The ultimate aim of the tasks was to enable communication through the use of theatre. The objective of the task was to see whether students were able to communicate through characters moving in conflicts discussed in groups and succeed in communication. The students' observations of the world outside would be allowed to reflect in the productions. Translating from the L1 would also be allowed as they were familiar with all the aspects related to character, plots and other things related to theatre.

➤ **The first phase**

In the first phase, Students would be introduced to model dialogues (Functions of communications) like introducing each other, telling the way to the temple, asking for a seat and asking for direction and information, inquiring about what happened during the vacation etc. and the topics beginning with general familiar day to day conversations. Linguistically too, they were expected to speak simple sentences, making simple questions using questions words like what, who, why, when, how many and where, short answers and imperatives used in directions and orders.

➤ **The second phase**

The students were expected to interpret the given pictures and form stories and make plays which paved the way for their imaginative and creative talents in the second phase of the workshop.

➤ **The third phase**

The knowledge of the local culture and folk stories would be utilized in the third open phase. Learners' L1 knowledge would be used as a resource at the beginning to instruct the students in the workshop, explain the tasks and to make understand the cultural knowledge and use it in the production of plays.

➤ The fourth phase

During the fourth phase, on common themes, students would be asked to work on everyday issues like domestic or street problems or school / class problems. The students who were confronted with these problems can narrate the stories and the students who were familiar with the necessary vocabulary would be able to help the peers, as a group, and work out and produce the language necessary for the play. The details of the twenty tasks used in the workshop are given below in the following table.

The Titles of the Tasks and Plan of the Workshop

First phase – Functions of communication	
No.	Talking about oneself
1	Asking for a seat in a bus
2	Asking for directions
3	Asking for information
4	Narrating past incidents
5	Discussing future events & offering help, accepting & refusing
6	Describing things and incidents at different places
Second phase – Use of Pictures, emotions, a poem and a song	
7	Mind pictures for creating scenes - (Imagining a picture as told by the facilitator: You are going to the Junction and you are stopped by the police. Imagine the reasons and ...)
8	Pictures for interpretations
9	Expression of emotions such as anger, fear, happiness, sadness etc.
10	Creating scenes on the above emotions
11	Use of songs for productions
12	Use of poems for productions
Third Phase – Use of stories and plays	
13	Narrating stories

14	Improvisation of stories
15	Reading of a story- “A Bundle of Sticks”
16	Reading of a play – “Two boys and an old man”
Fourth phase – Use of common themes	
17	Discussion of common themes – classroom problems
18	Working on domestic problems
19	Street problems to be discussed
20	Discussion of open productions (students’ own)

Table 4.1

4.5.3 Period and Place of the Study

The classes (workshop sessions) were conducted from 11.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, three days in a week for three months from 5th May 2006 to 27th July 2006 with 42 contact sessions. (Some classes were conducted from 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. on certain days when there was a clash in the timetable due to other school activities).

The workshop sessions were conducted in the temple hall of the school in order to take the class out of the four walls of the traditional classroom with an idea of making the atmosphere conducive to learning and to relieve the other adjoining classes from the noise of the workshop.

4.6 Procedure for Data analysis

The procedure used for data analysis in each phase was to examine the spoken, conversational and written scripts (performance texts) produced at the end of the performances of the task given. All the scripts were collected after every writing session. Some sessions were also video recorded at three different phases of the workshop and they were transcribed. These were taken at three different intervals after the first, second and third months. Some group discussions were also recorded and group level while-rehearsing performances were also recorded and transcribed. All these were taken for discussion and analysis.

The analysis of the scripts was based on some grammatical and linguistic categories was done in order to arrive at concrete features of the language produced in terms of vocabulary, structures, functions and appropriacy. The use of sentences, phrases, words, and the appropriacy of words, 'linguaging', and 'holophrastic' utterances were taken into consideration for analysis. Errors were not corrected; it was felt that that would hinder the natural flow of communication but they were noted by the researcher. A linguistic analysis of the growth was made to capture their language development. A detailed framework of analysis is discussed in the fifth chapter of the dissertation.

Chapter 5

The Main Players on the Boards

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of the data of the main study and will try to capture how the students of the study are able to achieve the expected language proficiency during the course of the workshop.

5.2 The Main Study

As stated in Chapter 4, the main study was conducted with the target population of twenty four class six students of Vavuniya Tamil Madya Maha Vidyalayam, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. The classes were conducted from 11.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, three days in a week for three months from 5th May 2006 to 27th July 2006 with 42 contact sessions in five phases. Twenty tasks were introduced in the workshop in four phases in pairs and then in groups. The fifth and final phase was conducted as a revision of all the tasks and evaluation of the workshop. The twenty tasks were graded from controlled to semi-controlled and open and common themes. These were maintained as four phases of the workshop. The researcher had planned to meet the students three hours a week.

The first phase had functions of communications (like asking for a seat in a bus or a train or asking for a direction to a particular place) which had tasks with two participants. Therefore, pair-work was used as the mode. The other phases had tasks which involved more than two participants. As such, the other phases had three or more in a group. The following table shows how the activities were distributed across the three months of the study.

Record of Workshop Plan

No.	Week	Day	Themes	Serial No. of Tasks
Phase I Functions of Communications (Controlled productions)				
1.	1st	1 st	Talking about oneself	01
2.		2 nd	Asking for a seat in a bus	02
3.		3 rd	Asking for direction	03
4.	2nd	4 th	Asking for information	04
5.		5 th	Narrating past incidents	05
6.		6 th	Discussing future events & offering help, accepting & refusing	06
7.	3rd	7 th	Describing things and incidents at different places	07
Phase II Use of pictures, emotions, a poem and a song (Semi-controlled productions)				
8.		8 th	Mind pictures for creating scenes	08
9.		9 th	Pictures for interpretations	09
10.	4th	10 th	Expression of emotions	10
11.		11 th	Creating scenes on emotions	
12.		12 th	Drafting out scripts after revised performance	
13.	5th	13 th	Use of songs for productions	11
14.		14 th	Use of poems for productions	12
Phase III Use of stories and a play – Open productions I				
15.		15 th	Narrating stories	13
16.	6 th	16 th	Improvisation of stories	
17.		17 th	Revised performances	

18.		18 th	Writing out scripts	
19.	7 th	19 th	Discussion of the performances	
20.		20 th	Reading of a story- “A Bundle of Sticks”	14
21.		21 st	Performance and scripting writing	
22.	8 th	22 nd	Reading of a play – “Two boys and an old man”	15
23.		23 rd	Interpreting and creating scenes	
24.		24 th	Improvised performances and writing out scripts	
Phase IV – Common themes - Open productions II				
25.	9 th	25 th	Discussion of common themes	16
26.		26 th	Improvisation of classroom problems	
27.		27 th	Working on house problems	17
28.	10 th	28 th	Performances	
29.		29 th	Street problems to be discussed	18
30.		30 th	Performances and script writing	
31.	11 th	31 st	Discussion of open productions (students’ own)	19
32.		32 nd	Performances	
33.		33 rd	Revised productions	
34.	12 th	34 th	Writing out of scripts	

No.	Week	Day	Themes	Serial No. of Tasks
35.		35 th	Planning for a public performance	20
36.		36 th	Public performance held	
Phase v – Evaluation and Feed back sessions				
37.	13 th	37 th	Feedback from the school community	
38.		38 th	Evaluation by students	
39.		39 th	Feed back from students	
40.	14 th	40 th	Feedback from students (To be continued.)	
41.		41 st	Assessment – Drafting out individual scripts	
42.		42 nd	Farewell productions	

Table 5.1

5.2.1 Lesson Report on Warm-ups and Teacher's Input

The following lesson report captures in detail how the warm-up activities and games were systematically exploited along with the pre-tasks and the teacher's inputs, to guide the students to engage and involve themselves in communication leading to theatre productions. One cannot expect a one-to-one relationship between the games, pre-tasks and teacher's input, however there are links between the development of language, leading the students to get into the mood of the activities and motivating exercises, getting them to work in groups, and to get into the soul of the character, the essence of the plot and thereby produce language.

Lesson report on Warm-ups and Teacher's input

Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers' Input	Structures
Phase I Controlled Productions					
1 st 05/05/06	Standing up and sitting down, stretching out the hands and legs while in the classroom	Who I am? and What's in my hand? Guessing game- mime and play	"I'm ... and This is ..." Performing this with expression	I'm ..., I'm from..., What's your name?	Statements, personal pronouns, Simple wh-questions.
Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers' Input	Structures
3 rd 16/05/06	Marching in a squad and breathing in and out deeply and loudly.	Taking roles as police and thief and play the game.	Miming as a commander with orders.	"Go straight, Turn left, walk for five minutes.."	Instructions and imperatives
4 th 17/05/06	Mirror image with dancing to a local rhythm.	Tug o' war	Acting like a shopkeeper and a customer	Excuse me, where can I buy someitems?	Inquiring with wh- questions and answers
5 th 18/05/06	Mirror hands with dancing in pairs to a rhythm.	Hand catching.	Writing down a word associated with childhood memories and talk.	What happened last week?.... I went to... I studied....etc.	Narration & past events, Time adverbials, Wh- questions.
6 th 22/05/06	Moving in a circle and dancing with humming.	Head numbers Write numbers with the head.	Speaking on the word given.	Where will you go? Will you accept my?	Plans, invitations, requests, wh-questions, modal verbs.

7 th 23/05/06	Jogging and voice training.	Head letters (Writing with the head)	Drawing a self portrait and describe	Where is the hospital? How is the building?	Self-introduction, description, more wh- question & answers.
Phase II – Semi-controlled Productions					
8 th 24/05/06	Jogging and creating different voices.	Write numbers and letters with the head.	Drawing mind pictures	“You are going to the junction and stopped by the police. Imagine the situation”.	Open-ended conversations with respect to real life situations.
9 th 25/05/06	Moving and freezing like statues.	Falling like statues.	Different formations of group photographs of various actions.	Tr. described the pictures and questions to instil PP to imagine situations.	Use of more situations.
Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers’ Input	Structures
11 th 02/05/06	Humming and dancing to a rhythm (ABCD.....)	One PP hums and others to identify the songs.	Simple line of rhymes dramatized with songs.	Tr. sang and expressed the feelings of the song.	Personal narratives
12 th 30/05/06	Moving to poetic rhythms.	Talking in A B C language and identify meanings.	Creating situations with ABC talk.	Tr. interpreted simple poems and rhymes to express the themes.	Jack and Jill, Rain Rain go away, Baba Black ship
13 th 31/05/06	Walking and narrating a story with necessary voices.	Moving around like animals and asked others to identify the animal.	Acting like animals to express a feeling.	Tr. narrated and acted out a situation.	The crow and the Vadai, The fox and the grapes.
14 th 01/06/06	Dancing to a rhythm like animals and voicing at intervals	Becoming a Goat and forming a Hut	Forming various situations with sounds.	Tr. Introduced various animal characters using language.	Animals like lion, fox, tiger, monkey etc...
Phase III - Productions based on stories and plays					

15 th 05/06/06	Moving like animals and birds and breathing out like animals	'Hide and seek-Touch with a magic stick'	Animals fights demonstrated	"I am the King of the Jungle I will kill every body."	Extensive language structures, co-ordinating sentences.
16 th 06/06/06	Movements of folk dances followed with humming.	One PP acting like a folk character and other responding to it.	Narrating folk-tales and improvise them in pairs.	"One day a monster came to the city..." etc.	Linkers over extended discourse.
17 th 16/06/06	Continued with the folk dance steps with voicing practice.	'Goat and Hut'	Improvisation of various folk characters.	Tr. read out a story from the textbook with expression.	Dance and story telling and reading aloud.
Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers' Input	Structures
19 th 20/06/06	Group dances performed with sound effects.	Wrote the names of the objects shown for a moment.	Making use of the object selected and created different scenes.	Tr. helped with the folk tale.	Folk-tale, narration.
20 th 21/06/06	Jogging and moving with rhythms and sounds.	Made a story from jumbled sentences	Dramatising the story line.	Tr. assisted to read the story given	Dramatic structures.
21 st 22/06/06	M o v i n g around in circles to form various letters and saying the letter.	In groups, formed letters in competition.	Acting like a father, son, etc.	Tr. explained the difficult area in the story given	Breaking the story down into scenes.
22 nd 23/06/06	Marching exercises	'Goat and Hut'	Miming activities	Reading of the play given.	B r e a k i n g down the play.
23 rd 26/06/06	Jogging and dancing to the rhythm.	What am I holding?	Imitating like different characters	Helping with the creations of new plots to suit the theme of the play.	Creating different characters.

24 th 27/06/06	Dancing and voicing.	‘Observe and describe’	Imitating what seen on the road.	Improvised productions were assisted.	D r a m a t i c scenes structured.
Phase IV – Productions based on Common themes					
25 th 28/06/06	Folk dance steps used for warm up.	Imaginary football match	Social situations such as wedding, party, funeral, etc. mimed.	Tr. discussed the common themes and questioned PP for their experience.	Developing themes into plots.
26 th 29/06/06	Walking and jumping with voice training.	‘Describe and Guess’	Walking like various personalities.	Tr. helped with planning plots.	Creating characters to suit the plots.
Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers’ Input	Structures
28 th 03/07/06	Jogging and voicing.	‘Cat and rat’	Miming PPs’ characters.	Tr. supervised the writing process.	From performance to writing out scripts.
29 th 04/07/06	Dancing to different rhythms and breathing.	‘Mr. Brown said to do’.	Creating new characters.	Tr. discussed about the problems on the road.	New themes on road problems developed.
30 th 05/07/06	Walking and jumping with voice training.	‘Building forms’	Miming different actions.	Tr. helped with creating different stage forms.	Explanation of choreography.
31 st 06/07/06	Jogging and moving with rhythms and sounds.	‘What significant?’ Object description.	Miming with the object to express the significance.	Tr. assisted to continue PP.s’ discussion.	Use of stage properties.
32 nd 07/07/06	Moving around like animals with cries and voices.	‘Animals’ Show’	Creating character show of animals.	New discussions were promoted.	Moulding animal characters to suit to the plots.

33 rd 11/07/06	Marching exercises with sound effects.	‘What am I doing?’	Miming the characters with a story line.	Supervised the group work.	Making the plays to the finish.
34 th 12/07/06	Dancing and singing	Repeating the same.	Continued the same.	Organised a group of teachers to watch.	Critical comments.
35 th 13/07/06	Jogging and breathing.	More situations for creation.	Following the game to create a story line.	Students’ own comments noted on the performance.	Self assessment.
36 th 14/07/06	Walking and Jogging with voice training.	‘Goat and Hut’	Revising the earlier performances for writing out the script.	Helped with the writing part.	Writing process.
Phase V - Evaluation and Feedback session					
Day	Warm up exercises	Game	Pre-task -Theatre activity	Teachers’ Input	Structures
38 th 17/07/06	Jumping and breathing	‘Guess who I am’	Miming liked their elders and teachers.	Tr. organized for another discussion after performance.	School Principal and staff comments.
39 th 20/07/06	Walking and dancing to the rhythm.	Students’ evaluation and comments entertained.			Feed back from students.
40 th 25/07/06	Walking and jogging with voicing.	‘My ambition’	Mimed their future profession.	Noted down their views.	Students’ views and their missions.
41 st 26/07/06	Moving limbs in the air and simple breathing exercises.	Talking about what PP liked.	Acting out what they narrated.	Tr. prepared PPs. for writing out the scripts after discussion with their pairs	Writing process.

42 nd 27/07/06	Marching exercises with voice training.	Imagining and commented on what the Tr. was miming.	Miming	Tr. discussed what they wanted to do.	Future plans.
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Table 5.2

5.2.2 Workshop Phases and Modalities

There were 24 students from class six who attended the workshop regularly (except on certain occasions when there was uncertainty due to law and order problems in and around the school owing to the ongoing ethnic conflict in the country). On the first day itself the students were taken out of the classroom and the classes were conducted in a temple hall in order to avoid disturbances caused by the noise of the students and also to find out a spacious hall for the workshop. The classroom format was rearranged in a circular one as the workshop intended to provide equal opportunity to every student for participation. The circular arrangement meant that the facilitator was visible and easily accessible to every student. Some warm-up exercises and games were introduced in order to make students feel at ease and be interested in the lessons. For instance, the students were asked to talk to each other in pairs about their health while standing and facing each other. One of each pair could inquire “How are you?” and the partner could respond like “Thanks, I am fine and How are you? This might seem like a simple activity but for the students coming from traditional structural classrooms this kind of pair work was itself a novelty. This activity was followed by a game called ‘hand catching’. In this game one of the pair would move his clutched fingers of both hands palms facing each other up and down and the other would try his best to catch his partner’s hand. This was a warm-up activity used effectively in the preliminary study, and was therefore incorporated into the main study. After this, some functions of communication were introduced like asking for a seat in a bus or a train or asking for the directions to go to a particular place. A model dialogue was read out and explained. Students, in pairs, discussed their roles first. Later, the students improvised the actions in groups to be

performed as ‘playlets’ in front of the other students and the facilitator.

In the next phases, the students were expected to express their interpretations of the themes given or identified or drawn from the pictures, poems, emotions, locations, plays and stories. For example, students would find a theme from the given picture, interpret it to suit their own knowledge and background, sketch out a plot and create characters and improvise in their respective groups. Later, they would demonstrate their pieces practiced in groups in front of the entire class. Finally, they would sit in groups and write down the scripts.

Thus, one can find that there were exercises practised by individuals, in pairs and in groups. Common warm-up physical exercises like jogging and breathing were done by individuals. Hand-catching, mirror image, hand touching, coin grabbing and mirror hands were pair exercises and falling in groups and beat out that rhythm (Maley and Duff, 1982) and the goats and hut game were whole class activities (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7.4 for detail).

5.2.3 Production Phases in the Workshop

There were four phases of production in the workshop. The progression was from using functions of communication, pictures, emotions, poems and songs, stories and plays for interpretation and production to working on common and open themes for creating plays. The functions of communication in the first phase included asking for a seat in a bus and asking for directions, situations like narrating past experiences and so on.

The second phase dealt with mind pictures and pictures to be developed into a story and subsequently a play, locations like school, hospital, and temple, leading to contexts, the expression of emotions like fear, frustration, anger & happiness through language proceeding to themes and playlets and the use of objects like bag, chair, & file for developing plots, and songs and poems for creating new situations for the productions of plays.

The third phase was largely restricted to the use of stories and plays (folktales and social stories) for improvisation. This was because it was assumed that by this time, day 15 onwards, students would have got used to the idea of creating texts to make meaning and could therefore engage with 'longer texts' for processing. In the final phase (fourth phase), by contrast, common themes and plots with very little text for stimulation were used as the input to get the students to create plays and scripts. In order to provide a detailed narrative of this, a lesson report (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p.9). has been included in the Appendix 10.

The researcher cum facilitator ran the workshop with warm-up exercises and games followed up with pre-tasks which led to the main tasks. The pre-tasks were planned to develop the tasks designed for the workshop (see Prabu, 1987 & Vygotsky 1978). The twenty tasks were developed in negotiation with the students in the workshop in order to give them a sense of interest in their activities. On the first day when the workshop began, discussions were held with the students to find out their areas of interest. There were also other discussions on the subjects and the lessons of their classes in order to get information about their syllabus. From the text book, some areas were selected for the content of the workshop. For example, the poem 'The wind and the sea' from the class six English text book was taken to be used in the workshop (see the Appendix 12).

Students worked in pairs for producing dialogues and role played at the beginning and got into groups of three or four or five depending on the nature of the tasks. Students had a brainstorm session to get into discussion which led them to act out the dialogues introduced by the facilitator. Some of the while-rehearsing performances and while-improvising performances were recorded for analysis. Starting from controlled productions to semi-controlled productions students progressed through the open and common themes which are social in nature.

From imitating the dialogues given as input to creating their own language, the students got into trance-like performances (students acted their roles and parts in an unconscious manner) which motivated them to engage more of communicative activities (Diary notes, 24/05/2006).

Finally, they were asked to write down the scripts as a collective production in order to capture their improvement in language capability. Put together, there were 98 scripts that evolved twenty tasks out of the workshop. These were used for analysis to capture their progress and language growth. The nature of this growth will be discussed in the next section after a report on the sources of data collection.

5.3 Nature of Data Collection and Analysis

This section will deal with an analysis of the students' video performances and the written scripts of the plays performed during the workshop hours. Sources for data collection and the numbers in each are given below before the discussion on the framework used for the analysis of texts.

5.3.1 Sources for Data Collection:

1. Students' scripts
2. Students' diaries.
3. Students' impressions after performances on certain dates.
4. Students' video recordings of performances
5. Teachers' impressions – written responses
6. Parents' and well-wishers' responses after the final performances
7. Responses of the Principal's, Co-ordinators and a foreigner's responses after the workshop
8. The researcher's diary notes (about the students' behaviour and interactions during the workshop, the use of L1, and the problems related to grouping strategies).
9. Students' personal details (collated from the interactions with students).

5.3.2 Rationale

Since the aim of the research was to develop communicative skills, it was found that there was no one methodology that could be adopted as acceptable or applicable for the analysis. Therefore, an eclectic method was adopted for the analysis of students' performance. The researcher intervened the classroom teaching and taught the students for three months. After obtaining a base line data for their initial language capabilities it was found that they were poor in oral and written communication. Therefore, the researcher planned a theatre workshop methodology to motivate the students and to encourage them into communication on the basis of situations discussed in the groups.

It was assumed that discussion and impromptu expression 'unplanned discourse' (Ochs, 1979) may happen in their L1, Tamil, but that they would plan, script, edit and speak in English to capture the mood of a character. Thus, it was hoped, that the 'planned' and enacted discourses would be targeted in English. However, the understanding was that it was 'communicative competence' (Hymes, 1972) that was to be enabled, and that language was to function as a 'social semiotic' (Halliday, 1978). The attempt was to capture, through analysis, expressions in all texts 'made' automatically, borrowed from the society, school, home, cartoons and films and dramas. Expressions through language, social problems and social reality were also captured.

The concept Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) and the notion of scaffolding (Bruner, 1986) were used in the theatre activities and games in the form of teacher input (Chapter 2 Section 2.11.1). The students were able to get help from each other and the teacher and get their language activated in the production. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) and Swain's Output Hypothesis (1994) helped provide a framework to observe students' interactions and capture growth (Chapter 2, Section 2.11.4). The Dialogic method derived from the theories of Bakhtin (1981) and Freire (1972) provided the theoretical base for the analysis of the dialogues developed in the workshop (see Chapter 2.11.2).

5.4 Text Analyses

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, a wide range of texts were produced by the students as a part of the workshop and it is assumed that ‘growth’ needs to be captured through an examination of different aspects of language and theatrical capability. In case of language, the nature of sentences, use of vocabulary, formation of words, or rather ‘wordings’ including holophrases, gap fillers, and the appropriateness of phrases and clauses are likely to capture growth. Along with this, thematic development, aspects of drama structures and social themes are other aspects of growth examined here. In this context, it needs to be pointed out that in the literature available on language enhancing through theatre there has been a lot of work on possibilities but very little where language output has been systematically analysed and that too to capture growth in the learner. As such, no one framework or perspective, linguistics (morphology, syntax) or literary analysis (stylistics) or classroom interaction / teacher – student talk, has been adopted. The sole aim of this study is to see whether learner language can be enhanced through theatre-based activities.

Thus, my concentration was on the development of the creativity of the students and their ability to produce language which emerged during the workshop. The focus was not on the mechanical repetition of sentences taught in the classroom; it was also not on the memorizing or parroting teacher sentences but on meaningful creative communication. This creativity, however, is not something that had to be inculcated from scratch; there is no zero level of English in Sri Lanka and language capability in the mother tongue is also quite high. As such, students, with the right stimulation and motivation, were able to draw on a variety of ‘inputs’ to make meaning during the workshop.

5.4.1 Students’ Input Sources

The following chart was designed to provide an overarching view of the different sources that functioned as input for students. It was noted that the students were able to get inputs from various sources like

text book, society, elders, teachers, electronic media, newspapers, plays and other programmes held in the schools and elsewhere in English. They were able to use the language gained from these sources wherever an opportunity arose. The theatre workshop provided the required opportunity to help the students make use of whatever they had acquired by playing out a character in a meaningful situation supported by a plot developed by the students themselves. Thus, their communication became very much meaningful and effective.

Students’ Input Sources

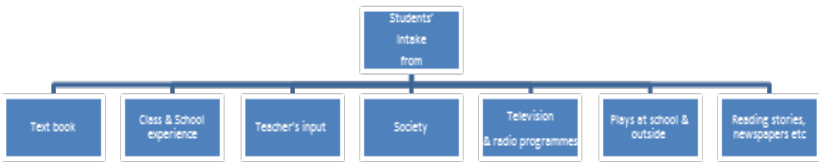


Figure 5.1

5.4.2 Students’ Output and Language Growth

Students’ language growth is assessed through the sources such as students’ scripts and diaries and responses at interactions and realized through the researcher’s notes, and the comments from the audiences including the principal, teachers, parents and the senior classmates (see Chapter 5, Section 5.8 for analysis).

Students' Output Realised through

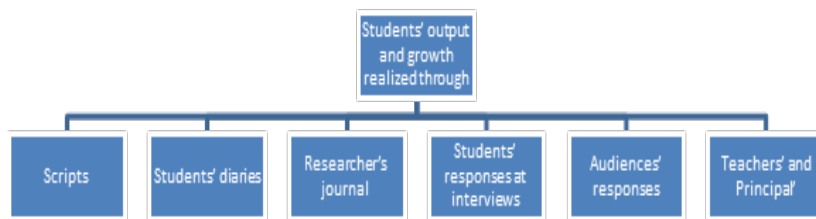


Figure 5.2

5.4.3 Analysis of the Scripts – Phase I

The first phase of the workshop lasted for seven days starting from 5th May to 23rd May 2006. Seven different tasks based on functions of communication were adapted and developed from Jones (1985). They are as follows:

- Talking about oneself
- Asking for a seat in a bus
- Asking for directions
- Asking for information
- Narrating past incidents
- Discussing future events & offering help, accepting & refusing
- Describing things and incidents at different places
- **Communicative Functions**

The first function of communication was introducing each other in situations like school, class or any other meeting place. **The teacher's inputs** were sentence patterns like:

What's your name? My name is ... Where do you live?

But, instead of the usual 'parroting' the students were able to develop different dialogues with more sentence structures and new vocabulary. For example, they produced questions like "What is your hobby?, What is your favourite food" (A3, T 1, S2).

"What is your father's name?, What is your mother's name?"

(A3, T1, S2)

"Where are you going?, Why are going that place?" (A3, T2, S2)

"How old are you?, What is your school name?" (A3, T2, S7)

"Where is my friend?" (A3, T 3, S1)

"Do you know the muththumariyamman kovil please?" (A3, T 3, S4)

"Can you show me the vavuniya Tamil Madhya Maha Vidyalayam?"

(A3, T3, S8)

"Where is my friend Anushan?" (A3, T 4, S3)

How many brothers and sisters have you? (A3, T1, S5)

What is your native place?. (A3, T3, S5.

To these questions they provided answers of different kinds with different vocabulary.

"my hobby is reading story books, collecting stamps (A3, T1, S2)

playing cricket (A3, T1, S4)

My father's name is Nadarajah, My mother's name is Kumuthinidhevi.

(A3, T1, S2).

I'm going to colombo Airport and what about you, I want see the animals and birds. (A3, T 2, S2).

I am eleven years old, My school name is tamil madhya mahavidyalayam. (A3, T2, S7).

Here here I'm coming. (A3, T 3, S1).

Yes I know. (A3, T 3, S4).

Yes, sure. I can show you the vavuniya tamil madhya maha vidyalayam. (A3, T3, S8).

Here here I am coming pavanitharan. (A3, T 4, S3).

It is noteworthy that the students were able to use **a wide range of vocabulary:**

▪ **Use of nouns**

native place (A3, T1, D4)

bread, Thosa, baby rose, sunflower and picture (A3, T1, D1)

▪ **Names of Places**

Veppankulum (A3, T1, D2)

Thonikkal (A3, T1, S3)

▪ **Verbs**

Reading (A3, T1, S2)

drawing (A3, T1, S3)

playing (A3, T1, S4)

gardening (A3, T1, S6)

▪ **Proper names**

Kaviranjan, (A3, T1, S2),

Kumudinidevi , Sivagowri & Alagathurai (A3, T1, S2)

▪ **Kinship terms**

Brother, sister. (A3, T1, S3)

In their dialogues, Students added phrases like:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| ‘thank you’ | (A3, T1, S1), |
| ‘thank you for your information’, | (A3, T1, S2) |
| ‘you are welcome’ | (A3, T1, S7) |
| ‘good bye’ | (A3, T1, S3). |

Thus, although these students had not used English to communicate with their peers and elders it was apparant that they had internalised a lot of language from rich and diverse sources of input.

In Task 2, the function was **asking for a seat**. The teacher’s input was as follows:

A: Excuse me, can I sit here?

B: Yes please/ Sorry, my friend sits here.

With the teacher’s introductory sentences students were able to produce their own dialogues with their pair partners. Since the dialogues were longer than the expected two to three line texts, they are reproduced in full.

Task 02 - Asking for a seat

Task 02 Script 01 - Anushan, Kabihthas

A: Hello,can I sit here?

K: Yes you can sit

A: where are you going?

K: I’m going to Colombo. Where are you go?

A: I also going to Colombo.

K: Why are you going?

A: I’m going to zoo Where are you going?

K: I'm going to see the beach

A: I'm from vavuniya Where are you from?

K: I also from vavuniya

A: Oh how nice

K: What is your father's name?

A: My father's name is Varathaver What is your father's name?

K: My father's name is Thavathas

A: I'm hall to comes I'm get down

K: Thank you very much. Bye

A: Bye

Task 02, Script 02 Sanjeev and Kishanth

S: Can I sit here?

K: Yes you can sit here

S: thank you

K: Where are you going?

S: I going to Colombo Airport and what about you?

K: I am going to see the Colombo Zoo.

S: Why are you going that place?

K: I want see the animals and birds

S: Why are you go to Colombo?

K: to get plane ticket?

S: Thank you for your information.

K: Welcome good bye.

Task 02, Script 03

Thushanth, Jencily

T: Can I sit here?

J: Yes you can sit.

T: Where are you going?

J: I am going to Colombo.

T: I also going to Colombo.

J: Why?

T: I see my Aunt Baby.

J: What is your Aunt baby name?

T: My Aunt baby name is Komsa.

J: this is nice name.

T: What is your anty name?

J: My Aunt name is Nirmala.

T: Your aunty is Christans?

J: Yes my Aunt is Christans.

T: What is your father's name?

J: My father's name is Sivajana Sunthram.

T: What is your father's name?

J: My father's name is DomnicJoseph.

T: Thank you Very much

J: good bye Thushanth

Task 02, Script 04

A⁴ and B⁴ G. Kishan - A4 and Ifath - B⁴

B4: Please Stop the Bus. "Hello" Can I sit here?

A4: Hello I am Kishan.

B4: Hello I am Ifath.

A4: Where are you going?

B4: I am going to Colombo.

A4: I also going to Colombo.

B4: Why are you going to the Colombo?

A4: I am going to the Colombo zoo.

B4: Why are you going to the Colombo?

A4: I am going to my Uncle wedding.

B4: Where are you from?

A4: I am in Sinnaputhukulam.

B4: OK Thank you Bye see you.

An examination of these four scripts shows that in line with real time conversations in a bus/ train a range of topics were covered ranging from native place, work done by parents, visiting places etc. It was interesting to note that even in Week one students were able to create so much meaningful language. Also, as reflected in my diary notes, students developed a learning habit of using the knowledge learnt in the previous tasks.

More enthusiasm was observed as they included introduction parts which they learnt in the previous tasks

(Diary notes by the researcher 8th May 2006).

In these scripts a range **different sentence patterns** were used. Students used **simple sentences** like

“I’m going to zoo” (A3, T1, S2)

and questions like

‘Where are you going? (A3, T1, S2)

“What’s your father’s name?” (A3, T1, S2),

used **evaluative expressions** like

“Oh, how nice” (A3, T1, S2),

additive phrases “good bye (A3, T1, S1), welcome, see you (A3, T1, S2).

Conceptually too, students created new ideas. For example, they innovatively included **new reasons for the journey** that they proposed to make. The reasons given by them as follows:

“ To get plane tickets to Colombo” (A3, T2, S2)

“ To see aunty’s baby” (A3, T2, S3)

“ To celebrate Christmas,” (A3, T2, S3)

“ To attend wedding” (A3, T2, S4)

The third function introduced to the students was ‘**Asking for directions**’. The locations for the dialogues were “At the Junction” and “At the bus stand”

The teacher’s input was as follows:

“Excuse me Can you tell me how to go to.....”

“ Go straight and turn left. Then go along the road. You will the building on your right.”

Students wrote sentences like:

“ Ok I saw Go straight along the station road you will see the clock tower turn right and go straight along the kandy road you will see the V/T/M/M/V.” (A3, T3, S1)

“Yes I can tell you a direction you must go straight. There is a clock tower walk for 250 m there will be a Vavuniya tamil madya

maha vidyalayam. Okay.”

(A3, T3, S3)

Other scripts were similar except that the ‘places’ were different. To avoid repetition they have not been reproduced.

5.4.4 Analysis of the Scripts – Phase II

The tasks used in the second phase were the following:

- Mind pictures for creating scenes
- Pictures for interpretations
- Expression of emotions
- Use of songs for productions
- Use of poems for productions

The above tasks were preceded with suitable warm-ups and games in order to orient the students towards a performance with communication (see Table 5.2). With the second phase, one can observe the change in the productions of the students. Upto this point, students just imitated and reproduced what was given as input. But these were signs of creativity by way of introducing new vocabulary and phrases. Having tuned them through mind pictures, that is, students were asked to close their eyes and imagine that while they were passing through the main road they were stopped by the police and the security forces to take diversion. The rest was based on their imaginations. Then they got into groups and wrote plays. There were productions developed from the incidents like ‘A bomb blast’, ‘An accident’, ‘A minister’s visit’ and ‘An attack on an army camp’. There were better sentence structures, language was up to the point and there were no unnecessary words or phrases. Extracts are presented below:

- **Mind pictures for creating scenes**

Task 8, Script 01

(Ka, Ki Came by Motor bike)

Ya: Stop, Stop you can’t go this way if you wait here
I will Shoot you.

Ka, Ki: Why not

Ya : The Bomp Blastet you don't no

Ka : I don't no sir

Ya : Ask the shop keeper

Sh : You can't go this was bomp blastet.

Ka : We shirch a way to our home

Task 08, Script 02

K : Oh, there is a bomplash who is it. don't move I will shoot you.

I : Oh don't Shoot me "ah..... (He is falling down)

Ranu : What happen, what is the problem.

Siva : There is a bomplash army is shooting here and there

I : help please!.....

Su : I am very well

Thank you for your help Thank you doctor

S : Oh Bye bye

Task 08, Script 03

N : Why are they running?

S : The minister will come

N : Can I go this way?

S : No No you Can't go this way you can go that way.

N : Ok Thank you.

(At hospital)

S : Hello doctor.

- A : What is the problem?
N : One boy fell on the road.
A : Ok I will write some medicines

Task 08, Script 04

Thusanth – Solider, Vithusan or jencily – Army, Kajan-People, A janthan-ShopKeeper

Soilder therw the bomblass for Army camp Army for shooting

- S.K : Oh..... Stop..... Stop
P.P : Why?
S.K : in Army camb bombless you can't go this way you go that way
P.P : thank you by the way I am Kajan Iam from Poonthoddam what is your name
S.K : My name is Ajanthan I am from Nelukkulam.
S.K.P.P : O.k.bye I meet you tomorrow

The Task 9 was developed with pictures for interpretations (see Appendix 12 for pictures). Students were able to create differently with the experience gained from the day to day happenings. They developed plots revolving around them like rehabilitation of a school, displacement due to war, riots and a road accident. In this phase students again used more new vocabulary and phrases.

- Ex :
Nouns : forener, oil lamp, Nocode officer, flag, pleasure,
Verbs : coist, develop, build, talk
Adjectives : promininant (A3, T9, SI)

Their sentences follow a sequence and the flow of the language, though

inaccurate is enjoyable.

“Today the forener was coming our school He will light oil lamp next our principal will light oil lamp.....Then our school principal coist the flag The forener will talk at here”. (A3, T9, SI)

In the following script a shooting incident is portrayed and titled it as Rioths (sic).

Task 09, Script 02

Rioths

Krishnaananth = Hello, police

Jencily = Yes, inspector Jencily Speaking Can I help you.

Krihnaananth - Yes, Here Two Persons are fithing you will come quick.

Jencily - Yes I will come Quickly

Stop! Stop! dont fightingShoot.....

Vithusan - Some body help me

Krihnaananth - Please call the Doctor

Task 09, Script 03

displacement

R : good bye..... I am going to field.

S : Ok bye...

R : have you prepared the lunch

S : Yes you can eat.

R : Oh it very test

S : What is the sound.

R : that's may be bowplash

- I : atfect.....
- K : Where is you Identitcard
- R : this is my Identificard
- I : Where is your Identificard
- S : This is my Identificard
- I : You go to the school
- R : We cant live this area this is very dangerous we go to the forest.

➤ **Expression of emotions**

In task 10, students worked on various emotions as themes. Scripts were produced based on the emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger and fear. Pieces were very articulate and they have complete form of a drama even in a short form. With some spelling and grammatical errors the play proceeds very well.

Task 10, Script 02 - Anger

(They are playing Nitharsanan want to join)

- N : Can I join with you?
- R : You cant join with us
- N : I want to join

(Kayan is pushing nitharsanan. Nitharsanan Threw the stone for Kajan)

- K,R : What happen Kajan?
- K : Why did you throw the stone?
- N : I did not throw the stone. I was throwing the stone out side
- R : Why are you telling lie?
- N : I don't tell lie

K : No, No I saw

(They are hitting Nitharshanan)

N : Don't hit me I don't do like this here after

Task 10, Script 03

Anushan, Sivapirian, Kishanthan, Ajanthan

A: Hello Sivappirian why are you sad?

S: I am failed the exam

A: This Ok ok

AJ: Good morning children

A: Good morning teacher

AJ: What happened

A: teacher sivapirian is very sad

AJ: Why are you sad

A: He failed the exam

AJ: This ok next year you will pass the exam

Task 10, Script 04

2nd Group Ramjisarma, Vithushan, Ifath, Sutharsan, Pavaneetharan

R: I am very rich man I have one lake.

V: I am also Richman I am coming from London I have fifty thousand.

I: hands up.... give your money and Jewels.

S: Police is come please escape.

P: Yes we will escape.

R: don't took our money and Jewels.

V: I have only one ring and no money

P: I want check you

S: Polish are coming go fast

I: Yes we will go.

Polishers P: What happen

V: three theifs was come and took our money.

I: Please come and write the report

➤ **Use of songs for productions**

In the task 11, a song from the class six text book was used. It is a patriotic song titled 'This land belongs to all of us'. Students produced performances depicting various differences like colour, religion, nationality and race among the public. It is also interesting to note that they even changed the song to say that 'the world belongs to all of us'. In the place of the word 'land' the word 'world' was used. As discussed already, there are improvements in their grammar and spellings due to the exercise of writing the scripts as part of the workshop.

Task 11, Script 02

Sivappiriyar (Buddhist), J.Nitharshanan (V Foreiner),

P.Kajan (Chirstian) , G.Sanjeevraj (Hindu), S.Ajanthan (Islam)

S. Our God is best in world

Si. Our God is best in world

S. No! No! our religiou in best in world

Si. No! man No! man our puttha is a very best in world

A. No! our religiun is better than in the world

K. No! No! Jesus is the very better in the gods

A. No! No! Alia is a better in the gods

K. Our religion is best in world

N. Don't fight! Don't fight why are you fighting?

S. Which religion is best in Srilanka

N. all religion is best in srilanka

We want to live in harmony

Do you this song? can we sing that song?

S. yes we can sing

N."THIS LAND BELONGS TO YOU"

"THIS LAND BELONGS TO ME"

"THIS LAND BELONGS TO ALL OF US"

"WE ALL LIVE AND KIN"

LA, LA, LA, LA

LA, LA, LA, LA

LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA, LA...."

LA, LA, LA, LA

S. Now we are friends

Si,N,K,A:- Yes we are friends

S,Si,K,A:- Thank you Very much foreigner

N. Thank you welcome.

➤ Use of poems for productions

As discussed earlier, some texts were taken from the class book. The poem 'The sea and the wind' was taken for reading in the workshop and the students were requested to look for the theme of the poem and work on the theme for producing plays. They identified the theme as 'jealous' and the four groups performed four pieces. Students were sharing their views of not to be jealous about other's talents. While they increase in

their use of vocabulary their fluency was also increasing towards the end of the phase II of the workshop.

Task 12, Script 1

Group: Anushan + Jencily+ Kirishananth+ Ajanthan

All friends : Good morning ever body we are going to a act drma

Two friends Come on motor bike

Anushan – They are come on motor bike

Ajanthan – hello Anushan, Jencily and Krishananthan how are you

Jencily: we are fine

Ajanthan: Anushan why are you sad

Anushan: you have motorbike we don't have motor bike

Ajanthan: no problem Anushan you are 1st sport Jencily you are
1st in the classroom kishananthan you are 1st in sing

Jensily: Ok who is this motor bike Ajanthan

Ajanthan: This is my uncle's motor bike He transport this motor
bike in sit

Krishnanth: Ok good bye friends

Three friends: good bye Ajanthan and krishananth

Across the fifteen scripts (five reproduced above; for the rest see Appendix 3) one can note that the language flow and the ideas expressed through the scripts ensure the students' confidence in communication and their ability to form the language from what they received. It is apparent that their inhibition and shyness were eradicated by the theatre workshop method. (see the video in the Appendix 12). More analysis will follow on the basis of their language improvement and conceptual development in the following sections.

5.4.5 Analysis of the Scripts – Phase III

In the third phase, students were asked to narrate the stories that they knew first. Later in the phase, a story ('A bundle of sticks') and a play ('Two boys and an old man') were given for them to read and later develop into different productions (see Appendix 12). The play and the story were taken back once the reading and discussions were over. This was to ensure that with some amount of basic stimulation improvisation of these plots into a story line and into dialogues can be enabled. The scripts were written in groups after the performances. The tasks procedure is given below.

- Narrating stories
- Improvisation of stories
- Reading and adaptation of a story- "A Bundle of Sticks"
- Reading and adaptation of a play – "Two boys and an old man"

An overall examination of the scripts from a theme/concept perspective shows that the students have not only adapted the main idea of the stories and the play but also found alternative solutions and new twists to them. Similarly, an examination of the 'texts', namely scripts produced in this phase shows that **new vocabulary** was brought in and **phrases** introduced and accommodated. It is also important to note that **long sentences** were now being attempted. Some examples are presented below.

◆ Use of 'new' Vocabulary

Country, forest, world fighter, chariot, snake blood (A3, T13, S1).

beautiful girl, hungry, tasty (A3, T14, S1)

sweet, quarreled, etc. (A3, T14, S2),

studying, working, (A3, T14, S2).

Hitting, heavy break harmony (A3, T14, S3).

◆ Use of compound and complex sentences.

Here kishanth don't take this sweet and don't eat.(A3, T14, S1).

I am pass the scholarship I go and study in Colombo. (A3, T14, S2)

If you live in harmony no one cant win you if you separate enemies will win you. (A3, T14, S3).

➤ **Story narration**

Individual stories, narrated, then, in groups, one of the five or six stories in each group selected, to be converted into productions and then as scripts. The four stories dealt with different mythological tales, and the themes were about war between princes and killing each other, cheating others, (the scripts are in Appendix 3). An examination of the scripts shows that although the base line of the story is familiar, students brought in their own modifications and their own emphases. Nearly all the scripts dealt with death, and revenge, murder, and with what amounts to cannibalism. While this could be perceived as gruesome and not suitable for eleven year olds, in the context of war torn Sri Lanka this seemed inevitable.

Task 13, Script 1 - A Snake and the Prince

Kishan Kingstain Princes Jencily - Snake Thushanth - other country princes Kabilthas sarvent Kishanth ministry

M : Good morning prince other counrty in long forest. The forest live
for very bad snake

P : reyally

M : Yes princes

P : Ok I will go to the forest and kill and bath on that blood then I
am world figter ha..... ha..... ha.....

Princes go to the forest on chariot

S : don't kill me If you kill me I will kill you

P : Bath to snake blood

2 Task 13 Script 2

Monkey and fox Ranu, Niru, Kishanth, Sivapiri and kajan

Nir, K. . Here our friend is come

R. I am no talk you

R. Here beautiful girl. This is your sister

Niru, K. No No this is my wife

R. You come to my house

Niru, K. yes we are come

R: I have verry hungry you take some food please

Niru, K. yes we can

R. Hey girl good for eat me

K. No come near no. no

R. yes verry testy

Niru, K. here food

R. No thanks

Niru, K. Why? Why?

R. I eat your wife

Niru, K. is knife

Kajan: take me with the fox

Siva. : what happen

Niru. : he is kill my wife

Siva: you are kill the fox

R: Don't kill, Don't kill

Niru, K: We wanto kill

will fox is die

Task 13, Script 3

King and spider

J.Nitharshana, G.Sanjeevraj, V.Anushan, S.Sutharshan, N.Ifath

S : oh! King oh! King

N : What happen to you?

S : Neighbouring country is coming to fight with you

N : I am ready for wore. Do you ready.

S : Yes I am ready

N : Take the sword and come

Sa : I am coming to fight with you

(Big wore)

(After wore)

N : Soldier please we will run

Sa : Go and catch them

A : oh! They are missing

N : Now they can't catch us oh! There is a spider climb in this wall
you can't climb

A : No! No! I can climb

N : oh! You are slipping

A : I will climb. I climb the wall

SN : You are the good teacher for me I am going to wore

A : Good luck to you

(After another wore)

N : oh! We win this country another time

Task 13, Script 4

Kishanthan, Sivappiryan, Kishanth, Krishnaanath, Kabilthas.

K.t : You go and search where is ices

Ka : Ok I will go and search for ice

K.t : Ok, you can go

Ka : here it is

K.t : I buidt the house

Si : You go ant search where is plank

Kis : Yes I will go and search plank

Si : Ok, you can go

Kis : Here it is,

Si : Ok, I built the house

Ka : I go and search where is food?

(After search the food)

Ka : Where is my house? My house is melted.

(go to bird house)

Kis : Wait a munite, I Bathe my little bird Iam finished comein

Ka : Thank you my house melted can I stay here

Kis : yes you can stay here

Kas : Where may I sleep

Kis : You sleep in kichen

Kab : Ok I go to sleep good night

Oh,,, there a some sweet oh!

Kri : mother where is my sweet I am hungry
Kis : oh! Sun the crow cheted us,
I am searching the crow, crow stop
I will give you a dinner cometo my house
Kab : Thank you
Kab : Where is the dinner
Kis : Fes go and bath,
Kab : Yes oh,... It's hot water
Oh He he at me
Kis : He death we are happy.

➤ **Improvisation of stories/plays.**

Another task dealt with the improvisation of plays/stories. In this task, the whole class was given 'A bundle of sticks', a tale (Anand, 1987/1990); in groups, asked to modify and embellish the tale/play, and then convert into a production, which was then written up after performance as a script. The alterations that the students made ranged from story/play modification to even removing or adding a character. Some of the plays were remarkable in that they were able to show 'completeness' by having a beginning, middle and an end; there were four story productions which culminated in four scripts and similarly, seven play productions which ended in seven scripts. These are reproduced in Appendix 3 (see Appendix 12 for the story and the play)

➤ **Story/play modification:**

The story, 'The bundle of sticks' dealt with a father and four sons. The sons quarrel and the father wants to teach them a lesson. So he brings a bundle of sticks and asks them to break it as a bundle. They are unable to do so. Then, the father asks one of them to untie the bundle and distribute one each. He asks everybody to break it. They are able to do it without any difficulty. Thus, he teaches a lesson, 'Unity is strength'.

There are modifications of the story in terms of plot construction... One group modified this tale by giving an episode of domestic quarrel at the beginning and the father gets angry and goes to forest. When he comes back he brings a bundle of sticks and asks everybody to break it.

Task 14, Script 1

F: Kishan..... Kishan.... come here where are you?

1st: yes father here am

F: Here kishanth don't take this sweet and don't eat

1st : Ok father

J: Oh nice smell I can eat this sweet

3rd : Oh Brother where did you take this sweet?

2nd : I take on the table, you can take and eat

3rd : Oh I will take that...

4th : Oh where did you take this sweet

3rd : I take on the table you will take

4th : Ok brother

1st : hay man who told to take this sweet

4th : hay It is my sweet who are you

1st : I am your 1st brother

J : why are you hit my brother

K : don't hit to my brother

F : don't quarrel I will go to forest If you quarrel I will go to forest

(A3, T14, S1)

While the second script inserts another different introduction to the story. One of the sons gets through the exam and the others at home are lazy and quarrel over petty things like pens. Father gets angry and

goes away to the forest. When he returns he brings a bundle of sticks and asks them to break it. And the story goes like that.

Task 14 Script 2

Sutharsan, Sirondev, Ranujan, Kajan, Ajanthan

S : I am pass the scholarship I go and study in Colombo

SI : I am also pass and go and study in Colombo

R : Oh! my dear sun good boys.

K: This two boys are not working, not studying These boys are very lazy boys.

Kaj: Oh! my pen is missing This two boys are thieves. I will hill you.

Su: No! No! I did't take you pen
way are you hilling me. I am also hill you

R: Don't fight my dear suns. I want to go forest you are go and eat.

Suns : Ok! My dear father.

R : here, you are brake this bundle of stik. Here is kajan.

(A3, T14, S2)

The third presented it in a different way. Father goes to the jungle asking the sons to study or play. Two sons want to play and the other two to study. But, after some time the sons start quarrelling. Father comes with a bundle of sticks and the play goes on.

Task 14 Script 3

Ni : I am going to forest you want to play you can play, you want to stady you can study

S.K : We will play

K.A : We will study

(After some minutes)

A : Why are you hitting me?

Si : I didn't hit you

A ; You bledy I can study well

Si : I can play

Kr : why are you hiting him?

Ki : he didn't hit him

N : What happen? why are you crying son?

A : I studied. He has hit me

Si : I didn't hit him

N : Don't fight, I brought 5 bunder sticks, Kishanthan break it

(A3, T14, S3)

The last group modified the story and incorporated another twist to the introduction. One son happens to miss his money and asks the others for it and there develops a quarrel and father comes and is angry about it. He goes away and brings a bundle of sticks and finally asks all to be good brothers. Thus, there is creation and novelty. New phrases and words marked their language growth.

Task 14 Script 4

Ramj, Sarma, Vithusan, Sanjeevraj, Nirupan, Ifath

V : I am very hungry I go and take my money. Oh It's emty

Ramji come here are you take my money

R : Foo l I did'nt take

V : No! No! You are thief

R : No!No!Idid'nt take

I : Why are you fighting here?

V : go man go.....

N : Dont fight! Dont fight father is coming

S : Why are you fighting

V : Who are you man?

S : I am a man of you?

V: Sorry father sorry father

S: No! No! I will go to forest?

V: No! No father

S. Yes sone you will eat lunch I go and come

V. yes father

S. Son! Son

R. Yes father what is this...

S. This is bundle of sticks

(A3, T14, S4)

In all these variations one can notice that they have not missed the completeness of play production. They start with an introduction and develop it further to a climax and end with a turning point. There is a change in the character development. At the end there seems to be a transformation, too.

➤ **Play modification:**

The play entitled 'Half an apple' (G & Endicott, 1935) dealt with a theme of 'Don't believe strangers'. The plot goes like this. Two friends named Jim and Tom want to get their apple shared equally. They approach an old man and he eats all of it in the process of halving it. The modifications were as follows:

♦ **A New beginning**

Students tried to give a new beginning to the play given for interpretation and production.

Task 15, Script 7

Tom - Hello, my friend Jim

Jim - Yes your friend Jim

Tom - After the long month we met

Jim - yes that is true.

Tom - Jim I have got an apple.

(A3, T15, S 5)

♦ **Introducing new things for exchange and sharing**

Students used different things like a mango, a biscuit, a cake, and a pencil etc for exchange of an apple.

Task 15 Script 05

Tom - Look Jim. I have an apple are you want

Jim - yes tom if you give half of an apple I will give have of mango.

Tom - yes here you are

(A3, T15, S 5)

Task 15 Script 06

Tom - Look Jim I have apple do you like?

Jim - Yes I like very much please give half of apple

Tom - If I give what do you give?

Jim - I give half biscuit

(A3, T15, S 6)

♦ **Different endings**

Tas15, Script 2

A. No he is bigger

yes can I Eat This Yes

K. Dont Eat Dont Eat I will kill you oldman when you Eat mayappl

(A3, T15, S 2)

Task 15, Script 4

Ram - Your apple is bigger than his apple can I eat this two apples.

Si and Siron : don't eat I will hit you

Ram : Oh go man

Si and Siron: We are cheated we are friends.

(A3, T15, S 4)

Task 15 Script 05

Old - Yes I will bit it

Jim - Now his apple is bigger

Old - yes (bitting)

J and T- Oh. ... where is my apple. catch him he is cheartet us.

Tom - he is missing now after we are friends.

(A3, T15, S 5)

Task 15 Script 06

Jim - Now it is bigger eat some this

Old - Ok I must bite too If I bite those will finish Dont quarel another time

(A3, T15, S 6)

In these seven plays too, there is completeness of a drama form with an introduction, development with a climax of losing the apple and the final realisation of being cheated by the stranger. Some group maintained the characters' names as Tom and Jim but some others retained their own names for the characters. Each group produced language according to their own situation. There are similarities in language production but they created their own language to suit their own conditions of characters. Although they read the story they did not follow the lines of the characters as found in the reading. The students simply produced 'new' language to suit the situation.

5.4.6 Analysis of the Scripts – Phase IV

The last phase was an open one as the students were allowed to work on their own themes of productions. The tasks in this phase are:

- Discussion of common themes – classroom problems
- Working on house problems
- Street problems to be discussed
- Discussion of open productions (students' own theme).

While they were told they could work on their own, initially they were guided to start with classroom problems first and then with domestic problems and followed up with street problems. Finally they were given a chance to develop any theme of their own choice (see Appendix A3, T16, S1, 2, 3). This is captured in my field notes as follows:

“As the autonomy of the students is permitted there was a flow of ideas and subsequently there were spontaneous productions.”

(Researcher's field notes, 20.06.2006).

➤ Productions on Common themes

The phase IV was oriented towards common themes leading to open productions (Table 5.1). It was the 9th week and day 25. The students were guided from functions of communications through productions

based on pictures, songs, poems, stories to reading and adaptations of a story and a play. At this juncture, it was planned to allow the students to brainstorm on their own areas and shoot out themes and create plays. However, their imagination was restricted first to problems related to school / class. It was regarded as the 16th task. It was followed by problems related to house/ domestic as the 17th task on the following days. Subsequently, problems faced by people on the street were taken up as the 18th task.

There were four scripts produced based on the school/ class theme. Although the four scripts are based on classroom problems, there are variations in the productions and the use of language. In task 16, Script 1, theme of the play is the misbehaviour of the monitor and it is reported to the Principal and the monitor apologises for being rude to others. The play is complete and there is character development, too.

Task 16 script 1

.....

J. Nitharsanan please come here?

N. I can't paly with you I am monitor in our class you are noty
boys

S. we will go to teacher after interval

J. Oh interval is end
(at class)

All. Good morning teacher

Su. Good morning

S. Nitharsanan is changing as Bad boy

N. No! No! teacher they are told lie

Su. We will go to principal
(at pricipal Office)

All. Good moring ser

A. Yes what do you want?

S and J. Nitharshan is changing as bad boy

N. Don't beleive

J. He is telling lie

A. I Saw Nitharshanan You were telling bad words

N. Sorry ser

Sorry friends

(A3, T16, S 1)

In the second script, students play in the classroom and the teacher punishes and reports it to the principal. There is nothing dramatic in the script but the students use the language witout many mistakes.

Task 16 Script 2

.....

T. why are you play in the class Room

K,I,K. No Teacher, No teacher

T. No, No I will hit you

S. Please, Please teacher not hit teacher

T. I am go to principal office

T. Come come.

T. Excuse Sir three boys are playing in the class Room.

A. why are you playing in the class Room.

(A3, T16, S 2)

Again in the third script too, the same theme is played out with a different plot but the language used by them is full of complex structures.

Task 16 Script 3

.....
V. Sir they are playing with pen cups.

T. is it true do you know a b c d

Ki.yes sir AB.....oh what is the next letter

T. you don't know a b c d I will hitt you

Kajan. do you know a b c d in order

Ka. A E K g

T. Oh you also don't know it ey I will hit you.

(A3, T16, S 3)

In the fourth script, students are punished for not doing homework and the teacher reports it to the principal. There is gradual development with a beginning a middle and an end. The language used by them is very brief and to the point.

Task 16 script 4

Pavanitharan, Nirupan, Ram ji, Ranujan, Kishanthan.

Rs. why are you cring

P. I didn 't write the home work

Rs. Why that is a important home work

P. yes I now, but I didn't memorist that.

RS. oh our class teacher is coming do quickly

P,Rs. good morning teacher

Ran. are you done the home work

Rs. yes I done the home work

Ran. Pavanitharan why are you cring

P. I didn't to the home work

Ran. Why you fool it is a important work know
come to the principal.

P. No teacher no teacher

Ran. Come.....

Ni. yes come in. what is your problem.

Ran. He did not done the home work.

(A3, T16, S 4)

➤ **House / Domestic problems**

Although the task 17 centred on a house problem it is also related to students' studies and ends with violence and medical treatment. Once the news of his son's failure of exam is received, father gets angry and accidentally and angrily he pushes his son causing the son to be injured. The son later recovers after he is admitted and undergoes surgery. The amount of social reality, psychology of parents and the medical knowledge of the students provide the base for their language.

Task 17 script 1

Nitharsanan, Sivapiriya, Kajan, Ranujan, Krishnaananth

N : I pass the exam

R : Congragulations

N : I can study in Colombo

R : What about you Krishhaananth?

Ki : I didn't pass the exam,

N : Our school principal said he can't

R : You are not my son get out (father us pushing him)

- N : oh my mother lot of bleeding for my brother
Ka : Take him to hospital
N : Ifath help me to take krishnaananth
IF : I will help you
N : Thank you
(At hospital)
Si : What happen to this boy?
N : My father pushed him He knoke the door.
Si : I will write some medicine Go and get in pharmarch.
N : Ifath you go
I : Yes I will go
Si : He want operation some time he may die
N : How much for operation?
Si : Hundred thousand ruppes
N : go and get to bank father
(After operation)
Si : good news he is all right now Don't beat him another time,
(A3, T17, S 1)

In the second play too there is an element of violence and mutual misunderstanding of situations. Father insists on his son not to play with other children. In the mean time, a ball hits the boy and father inquires about it and the other boys apologise for it.

Task 17, script 2

Sanjeevraj, Anusan, Pavaneetharan, Nirupan, Kishanthan

- K.N : Anusan ... come here we are going to play

- A : We will come here
K : Now we are play cricket
S : oh I'm very tired I'm going to sleep now Anushan Anushan
A : Yes father
S : Come here
A : Yes father I will come
S : Anushan why are you went to there?
A : I don't know father But those are call me
S : Ok If you go there I will kit you
A.P : Ok of father
K.N : We are going to play now
A.P : Niru.... Come here we are going to play now
K : Yes we will come
A.P : Now we are play foot ball
K : Yes we will come
A : oh he is kicket ball with me
S : oh son what is the problem
P : oh father He is kicket ball with him
S : ok we will go to house
K : Sorry Anushan
S : A boy if you play this place I will Kit you
K.N : Yes any time we didn't come here
S : Now you are good boy
K.N : Yes uncle Now we are good boys.

(A3, T17, S 2)

The third play moves around the mischievous behaviour of children. In contrast to this, one son is engaged with gymnastics and the others quarrel with each other. Father advises them to go to school and go to

temple so that their mind will be calm and 'clean'. There is an element of philosophy too coming from 11 year old boys. Language flows as they progress with their episode.

Task 17, Script 3

Sutharsar, Thusanth, Kavirangan, Ajanthan, Ramjisarma

Su : Hello Ramji you want to go to jim

Ra : Yes father what is the time now?

Su : Five O'clock now

Ra : Yes I want to go jim, Yes father thank you.

Su : You go quickly all the son get up and go to your school

Aj : Where is my pencil

Th : Where is my tiffin box

Ka : Where is my pen

Aj : there are there's

Th : You are a thieves you are only took my tiffin box

K : No I did not take you are a thirf.

Su : No No... don't fight my sons your first brother is very good boy. He do his work. But also a clever boy From today on word you must go to temple. That is very good habit.

Th, Aj, ka: O.k.Father

Su : Now you go to school

Ka : Father.... I did not go to school today

Su : you must go to school

Ka : o.k Father

Th,aj,ka Father our school is over.

Su : Now you go to kovil

Th, aj, Ka ok Father

Ra : I was finish the jim

Su : go and study

Th, aj, ka : Father, we are come from kovil fathe here is flower

Su : Thank you son, Now you are good sons Now your Mind is very clean.

(A3, T17, S 3)

➤ **Street problem**

There are two scripts from the two groups of the class as there were twelve students attended. The first play centres on burglary and murder. The injured is taken to the hospital and admitted for treatment. Later the thief is arrested and punished for the crime. In the second play militants are arrested for a bomb blast. The scene begins when militants throw a bomb and a common man is affected and the people help the security forces to identify the militants and finally they are arrested. The language used for the play is very much expresses the situation and the feelings of the characters. Although there are problems of grammar and spellings the communication is effective.

Task 18, Script 1

Doctor, Man, Friend, Thieves Jugte. Policeman.

M : oh! My friend How are?

Friend : I am find. You?

M : I am also find

M : Now were are you going.

F : I am going to my office

M : Ok no proldem you go

Thieves is stopped that man.

Now He is see that show.

Policeman is run and catch that thieves

He is taking hospital that stopped man.

D : oh he is a very series, I give some medicine
and bring the pharmacy.

D : This man is now all right

F : That man friend is Taking phone of the
police station and he is tell you take
that thieves and come to the coat.

Now all are in the coat.

J : (Jugta man is asked) what is the problem.

Stopped man : He is tell This thieves is stopped my
stomach and bring my many.

J : (Jugta man is tell) This thieves is 5 years on the jail.

All : (All are asked) thank you. For Jugta man
(A3, T18, S 1)

Task 18, Script 2

Sutharshan, Kaviranjan, Kabilthas, Anushan, Paraneetharan

Man (militant) (militant) (Doctor) (Police)

Kab : Are you take a bom?

Kav : yes, Are you take identity card?

Kat : No, Go nad bring our identity card quickly

Kav : Here it is

Kab : throw the bom throw the bom throw.....

Kav : I threw

Par : What is the sound? One man is fall town

Kav : help me help me

Pav : What is your problem?

Kav : I am injured

Pav : I will take you to the hospital. Doctor Doctor

Anc : What is your problem?

Pav : he is injured

Kalat : It is safety place for me

Suth : oh! Bomb lost today is holiday Joly... Joly

Kab : key man Get up Get up

Suth : (Sutharshan is sleeping) take your leg

Kab : It is not a leg it is Gun

Sut : oh oh gun gun

Kab : don't make noice

Sut : (His orying) Don't shoot don't shoot

Pav : any body did'nt come I want to search that matter now

Kab : I want to sleep

Sut : Police police there militant in my house

Par : Where is yours house

Sut : here here

Pav : hey stand up I am police

Kab : oh my god

Pav : to you have parther If you did'nt tell I will beet you

Kaj : I will tell I will tell

Pav : If he is your parther

Kab : Yes

Pa : You have prison two year

(A3, T18, S 2)

5.4.7 An analysis based on Grammatical Categories

An analysis of the written scripts based only on grammatical categories is attempted here to test and categorise explicit language growth in the learner. The categories of changes indicate the improvements of the students' language growth. The use of holophrases, phrases and clauses and the shift from simple to complex sentences, the use of a range of words and word length all capture the language growth of the students. Students' expressions moved from simple expressions formed by words and phrases to simple sentences and then from simple to compound and complex sentences, students' 'languaging' developed quite surprisingly in the short span of three months.

1. Simple sentence:

"Go straight along the station road. You will see the clock tower. Turn right. You will see the Bus stand." (A3, T2, S2)

2. Compound sentence:

"I will go to the forest and kill and bath on that blood then". (A3, T13, S)

Note: The students used the word 'bath' for bathe. The character says that he will kill and bathe in the blood. The reference might have been taken from Mahabharath.

3. Complex sentence:

"If I bite those will finish. Don't quarrel another time". (A3, T15, S6)

They began with holophrases, and even attempted new formations of language to express what they felt about a particular situation. This implies that they were able to internalize what they were able to gather from what they heard and used it effectively to communicate.

Eg: 1. Bamp Blastet(A1, T8, S1) & bomplash (A3, T8, S2) for bomb blast

2 .lilinciness (A3, T9, S4) for license

3. yallas for jealous

4. rabbish for rubbish (A3, T11, S1)

Students' use of brevity of expressions in some contexts and full-fledged expressions in certain other contexts prove that the students unknowingly follow the Gricean cooperative principle of quality, quantity, manner and relation (Grice, 1975).

➤ **From the first phase simple sentences and brevity of expressions**

It is to be noted that the ability of students to use language with brevity itself is an indication that they have captured the maxim of quantity of the language (Grice, 1975).

1. Y: Where are you go?

J: I am going to church.

Y: Which church

J: Soosayapper church n(A3, T2, S5)

2. N; Why do you go to Colombo?

S: To my aunt's wedding ceremony (A3, T3, S9)

3. Two friends: Can you tell me the way of Vavunuya Tamil madya maha vidyalaya

J: yes I can (A3, T3, S2)

4. P: where is my friend Anushan?

A: Here here I am coming pavneetharan(A3, T4, S3)

5. N:what was the happen last week

S: our area is round up by army (A3, T5, S1)

6. K: Which kovil?

T: Pillaiyar kovil (A3, T5, S4)

7. Ra: what subject last week?

Ka: Envermental Experment for copper salfe t(A3, T5, S6)

8. N: How do you feel?

S: I am allright now (A3, T7, S3)

➤ **From the second phase use of compound and complex sentences noted**

1. Ya: Stop stop you can't go this way if you wait here I will shoot you

Kaki: Why not

Ya: The bomb blast you don't know

Ka: I don't know sir ((A3, T8, S2)

2. No problem you will pass another exam. You go and rest in your bed room (A3, T10, S3)

3. V: I have only one ring and no money

.....

V: Three theifswas come and ook our money

.....

I: Please come and write the report (A3, T10, S4)

4. If you live in harmony no one cant win you If you separate enemies will win you (A3, T14, S3).

● ***Use of comparative forms were also noted:***

1. A: No! our religion is bettr than in the world. (A3, T11, S2).

2. Jim: Thank you oh, it is very smaller than for your half (A3, T15, S1).

3. Ram: your apple is bigger than his apple can I eat this two apples. (A3, T15, S4).

➤ **From the third phase use of more compound and complex sentences were noted**

1. P: ok. I will go o forest and kill and bath on that blood then I am world fighter ha... ha... ha...(A3, T13, S1)

2. F: don' qurraled I will go to froest if qurraled I will go to forest

.....

.....

if you are ouppsed own enemy is kill you (A3, T14, S1)

3. SI: I am also passed go and study in Colombo (A3, T3, S2)

4. R: why are you crying

P: I didn't write the home work

R; why that is a important home work

P: yes I now, but didn' memorise that (A3, T16, S4)

5. Old; OK I must bite too If I bite those will finish Don't quarrel another time (A3, T15, S6).

6. Jim: please please give me a half of appleif you give me a apple I give half of my apple (A3, T15, S7).

● **Continuous flow of language**

One can observe that the students started to express their ideas with a flow of language from the second phase of the workshop.

1. Po: Thank you by the way I am Kajan I am from Poonthoddam what is your name?

(A3, T8, S4)

2. Today the forener was coming our school He will light oil lamb Next our school principal will light oil lamp. The Necoder officer will light oil lamp. Then our school principal willcoist the flag.

The forener will talk at here.

(A3, T9, S1).

3. V: I am also rich man I am coming from London I have fifty thousand. (A3, T10, S4).
4. Pakistani: I like your country your country has natural beautiful. I want photo your country. (A3, T11, S1).
5. Ajanthan: no problem Anushan you are first sports Jensily you are first in the classroom Kishan you are first in sing. (A3, T12, S1).
6. R: Don't sad... you have music talent you are very rich man I am very poor man. (A3, T12, S3).
7. K: this two boys are not working, not studying. These boys are very lazy boys. (A3, T14, S2)
8. V: I am very hungry I go and take my money. Oh It's emty Ramji come here are you take my money (A3, T14, S4)
9. Jim: He brought me my pensil He give me half of his apple that apple is very bigger than myne (A3, T15, S1)
10. Ram: I am hungry I want take some food. Oh there are two boys Fighting. Boys why are you fighting (A3, T15, S4)
11. A: Good morning allof you Today Student good message will start Nitharsanan will talk at here (A3, T16, S1).
12. Prin: I want to dismiss you where is your monitor I am thank for the monitor (A3, T16, S3)

Thus, one finds that with reference to many aspects of language, including syntax, semantics and even pragmatics, as reflected in grammar, students were able to use language appropriately by the end of the workshop.

From another perspective, it is interesting to find that class 6 children, all of 11 years old, were worldly wise and dealt with domestic abuse, face violence from parents and in some cases even face authoritarian treatment and support and excuse from members of the family. These issues were reflected in the ‘themes’ chosen by students during the workshop when they were asked to expand on ‘house’ problems. Similarly, when asked to work with ‘street problems’ the variations and development were equally ‘adult’ and dealt with violence, theft, murder and court of inquiry along with police and prison scenes. The only ‘normal’ dealing seemed to be with reference to school, which dealt with day to day problems of students’ misbehaviour in the class and punishment by teachers and principals. Thus, the social consciousness of the students is extremely high, and it is obvious that they were able to accommodate the social issues which had an impact on their lives, in accordance with the ‘Grips Theatre’ perspective that says that it is natural for children to reflect on what they experience in their lives.

5.5. Social Relevance of Workshop Theme

The themes of the workshop were developed through negotiations with students. The researcher had some basic plans to start with which included introducing each other, functions of communications like asking for a seat, inquiring for information, giving directions, and using some pictures and poems, stories and plays to be used as prompts for play productions. But the plays developed by the students had very different themes from the ones planned including bomb blast, road block, displacement, development of a school, accident, violent, riots, theft/ burglary, help, army round up, social harmony etc. This was because the students faced a lot of hardships and difficulties in their real life where a war is perpetually on. The people, including the students live in a terrifying situation. They were inspired therefore, to work on social issues.

5.6 Theatrical Analysis

A theatrical analysis is also made to assess the students’ maturity in

selecting the themes of the plays and the application of the structure of drama, characterisation and theatrical conventions.

- Themes of social consciousness
- Topics selected from classroom experiences, from the society, from the text books and from the programmes the plays and cartoon programmes.
- Complete structure of Drama
- Characterisation

Theatrically too, the use of complex plots, development of character and a variety of other themes are reflected across the scripts. The previous knowledge of local culture with regard to drama and theatre gained by the students helped them to produce complete plays with necessary language expressions. Thus, these theatre productions induced them to look for words, phrases and expressions in second language, i.e. English.

Elgar (2002) says: “I did not expect the students to write outstanding literature.” Similarly Wessels (1987) notes: Teachers who use drama projects with the second language learners should not hope to achieve anything of great artistic or theatrical merit. Nevertheless, I found the results encouraging’. (p.26). However, the students engaged in the present study have been able to produce plays with the necessary artistic constructions of the play and they often adhere to the Griceian Principle of quantity, quality, manner and relevance. In the following table some sample scripts are presented to show how they were able to work according to the drama concepts generally accepted by the audience. It is assumed that this knowledge must have been gained on their own from the input given by their society, culture, people and the surroundings. In the next chart, themes, plots and characters are analysed. Sample texts were taken from the three phases and the description of themes, plots and characters are presented to show how language development happened. This includes their growth in terms of concept formation, cultural sensitivity and language acquisition

and knowledge construction of drama structure and the awareness of problems found in society. Three sample texts from the three phases were taken for analysis of the themes, plots and characters.

Maturity across Texts in three Workshop Phases

T e x t s No.	Themes	Characters	Plots	Language pro- duced (texts)
Text 1- Phase 1	A quarrel in the playground	Friends and doctors	One student throws a ball and it hits a boy. He is taken to the doctor's and treated.	S: I threw the ball it is go and kid the kishanthan's head. P:I will wrote some medicine your go and buy the medicine. (T 7, S 1)

Text 2 – Phase 2	Unrest among different races	A Sri Lanka, An Indian, A Pakistani and an English	An Englishman throws a piece of paper on the road and a Sri Lankan warns not to throw. The white address him as a Blackman and they fight. An Indian intervenes and a Pakistani comes in to support and ask them not to fight and say this world belongs to all of us and they sing together.	Srilankan - Hey man take this rubbish England - Why man? Srilankan - It's public place England - I know man your are a black man I am white man. Indian - Why are you fighting? Srilankan - He is england man I am Srilankan so we fighting. Indian - Oh.... we all men. This world belongs to all of us we want harmony (T 11, S 1)
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Texts No.	Themes	Characters	Plots	Language produced (texts)
Text – Phase 3	You will be punished if you don't do your work.	Principal, a teacher and two students	One student does not do homework and cries. The other empathies with him. The teacher comes and takes him to the Principal. He punishes him.	Rs. why are you cring P.I didn 't write the home work Rs.Why that is a important home work P. yes I now, but I didn't memorist that. (T 16, S 4)

Table 5. 3

The language development occurred gradually. Students were able to create a variety of characters and different plots for the themes discussed. They were able to use the necessary sentence structures with compound sentences.

From the first phase, students developed characters like ‘friends’ and ‘doctors’ with a theme, a quarrel in the playground. Based on the theme, the development of the plot occurred. One student throws a ball and it hits a boy. He is taken to the doctor and treated. Following is the sample text from the students’ script.

S: I threw the ball it is go and kid the kishanthan’s head.

P: I will wrote some medicine your go and buy the medicine.

(A3, T 7, S 1)

Another theme of ‘unrest among different races’ was developed from a song titled ‘This land belongs to all of us’ into a plot during the second phase. A different plot was woven with four characters namely ‘A Sri Lankan’, ‘An Indian’, ‘A Pakistani’ and ‘an English’. An Englishman throws a piece of paper on the road and a Sri Lankan warns not to throw. The white addresses him as a blackman and they fight. An Indian intervenes and a Pakistani comes in support and asks them not to fight and says that ‘this world belongs to all of us’ and they all sing together. Here, one can observe that they changed the original song given to them and sang, not ‘this land’ but ‘this world belonged to all of us’.

Srilankan - Hey man take this rabbish

England - Why man?

Srilankan - It’s public place

England - I know man your are a black man I am white man.

Indian - Why are you fighting?

Srilankan - He is england man I am Srilankan so we fighting.

Indian - Oh....we all men. This world belongs to all of us we want
harmony (A3, T 11, S 1)

From the fourth phase of the workshop another sample text was taken to show how the students were able to develop the theme discussed. The theme 'One will be punished if he/she doesn't do his or her work' was developed into a play with four characters like the principal, a teacher and two students and the following plot: 'One student does not do homework and cries. The other empathises with him. The teacher comes and takes him to the Principal. He punishes him'. The dialogue is presented below:

Rs. why are you cring

P. I didn 't write the home work

Rs. Why that is a important home work

P. yes I now, but I didn't memorist that.

(A3, T 16, S 4)

The attempt thus far in the thesis has been to capture growth across a period of three months, namely the duration of the workshop. However, other kinds of growth also happened, across one day, and across the workshop through self reflection and also across texts. These 'growths' are analysed separately as they are perceived as extremely relevant.

5.7 Students' Language Growth

Across the development of the different phases of the workshop, and sometimes even in one day, students showed remarkable growth, either in their conceptualization or in their conversion of themes into texts to be rehearsed and then into written scripts. Moreover, in this conversion of themes into productions which later became scripts, characters were more in number, and issues were genuine and down to earth. Nearly all the dialogues were context appropriate. Two other interesting features of growth were what was reflected in the nature of diary entries (not meant for evaluation, but intended to capture ongoing proceedings in

a different ‘voice’) and in the kinds of intertextuality that the students produced.

5.7.1 An Analysis of Students’ Texts at Three Levels of Production.

At all these stages in the workshop, students were asked to ‘create’ texts at three different stages, while rehearsing, while improvising and at the end, after performance, in the form of a written text. The first two stages were not written, and, since systematic recording was not possible, these ‘texts’ are not available for analysis. On three different occasions, video recordings were attempted. The ‘texts’ produced on these occasions are now taken up for analysis. This is to show how at one level, even something as simple as self-reflection could result in growth. The details of the three stages are reproduced below for easy reference.

1. First Stage - While-rehearsing performance scripts

The students were allowed to discuss and have a rehearsal in groups.

2. Second Stage - While-improvising performance scripts

At the second level, group performances were watched by other members of the class and this enabled them to ‘modify’ their own ‘texts’.

3. Third Stage - Written scripts

Finally all the groups wrote the final scripts and these written scripts were collected.

In the analysis of these scripts, the following criteria were adopted to analyse these scripts developed at three different levels of while-rehearsing performance scripts, while-improvising performance scripts and the final written scripts done as collectively.

In the examples given below, one can perceive how the texts developed with reference to language, plots, scenes and characters. These themes were developed with the pictures given by the researcher as take-offs

for brainstorming. The ‘texts’ produced and in some cases, recreated by the researcher from the video, (through transcription) by the three groups are analysed in detail.

- **Theme 1 - Displacement**

The first theme on ‘displacement’ starts with a bomb blast scene and people get moving hurriedly. In the second stage in addition to the above an extra scene of the security officers asking for identity cards has been added. In the third stage the conversation starts with a scene of day to day affairs like going to the farm and preparing the lunch and then moves into the bomb blast scene and the security officers asking for the identity cards. Finally the people were asked to settle in the school as they are displaced.

The first stage text was:

What’s the sound?

May be bomb blast.

Oh....Where is your IC?

You go to school.

o.k.

During the while-improvising stage the group was able to develop further from what they did in group. This must have happened in-between theses two stages while they were discussing after their performance at group level.

(While improvising text)

What’s the sound?

May be bomb blast.

Oh....Where is your IC?

Your name is Ramjisarma.

You go to school.

We can't live in this area.

We go to forest

As can be seen from script reproduced below, from the while-improvising stage they watched others' performance and they improved their piece a little further. There is an addition of introductory scene to the play in the final writing.

Good bye... I am going to field.

Ok. Bye.

Have you prepared the lunch?

Yes you can eat.

Oh very test (tasty)

What is the sound

That's may be bomplash

Where is your identy card.

This is my identy card

You go to the school

- (see for the full script A3, T9, S3)

Theme 2 - An Accident

- The second theme, 'An Accident' was also developed from merely an accident scene and the doctor's scene in the first stage, to the addition of a court scene in the second and in the third, the actors remained the same, but they were 'given' many more lines with complex sentences and a wider use of vocabulary.

Stage 1

1-Somebody help me, please help me (Takes him to the doctor)

2.Excuse me doctor, May I come in?

3. Sit (Dr checks) What's your problem?
2. He is my friend. He fell the road.
3. No problem I write medicine. You go to pharmacy and get it. (No.2 goes away).
2. (comes back)excuse me.
3. I put injection
1. (gets up) What happened? I am afraid.
- 2. you come tomorrow.

Stage 2

1. Oh (knocked by a motorist)
2. accident. Take to the hospital. Call the doctor.
3. What's the problem?
2. This man going wrong way
3. Go to the hospital...hurry up.
- 4.. what's problem
2. He was accident
4. Are you alright?
1. yes, I am alright.
2. Get up slowly....get up..ok.come
5. what's he problem?
2. He drive wrong way
5. Give me the license. You must be in prison. You may go.

• ***Stage 3***

Parane and Yathu came by the car. (Meets with an accident, Thusanth accident in Yathukulan car.

T: Oh my.. get help me help

P & Y: What's the problem

y. I called the doctor

P: hillo, uncle hospital a man is accident in a Kandy road. Please come.

P: that's a minner accident you don't cry.

(Court scene)

K: Yathu, Yathu, Yathu.. Thusa, Thusa, Thusa...

Judge: what's the matter/

Y; you drive in a wrong way.

T: No No

K: Give your lincinees (licences)

T & Y : here, here...

Judge: You must be in prison you can go.

(see for the full (A3, T9, S4)

• **Theme Three - Riots.**

In the development of the third theme 'riots' only the wounded man, a helper and a doctor are the characters in the first stage. In the second stage, another character- Inspector was added and in the last stage the Inspector even tries to stop the fighting scene and one of them gets wounded. Then, the friend treats him with the help of a doctor. Thus, scenes and characters were embellished and the language spoken also became more complex.

Stage 1

(Two men fight)

1. Oh my god, help me

2. Call the doctor

3. what's the problem?
2. one man is falling
3. first go to the doctor second go to the hospital
4. what's the name what's the age, go to hospital quickly
2. yes we will go, hurry up are you ok
1. yes I am ok.
2. Get up.

Stage 2

(one telephones)

1. Inspector Jensley, here two persons are fighting
2. call the doctor.
3. please come quickly please help me.
2. excuse me dr, may I come
4. What's the problem
2. he knocked by police
4. I write some medicine. You go to pharmacy
2. excuse me Dr.
4. ok I put injection
1. what happened now
4. ok you can go.

Stage 3

- k. hello polce
- J. yes Inspector Jensley speaking.
- K. yes here two persons are fighting yo will come quickly.

J. yes I will come quickly

Stop stop don't fighting....shoot

V. somebody help me K. please call the Dr

J. Hello Dr.

D. Yes Dr. Krisnaanath speaking can I help you.

DJ. Yes you will come quickly

Dr. Yes I will come there.

J. Excuse me doctor, may I come in

Dr. yes you can come

J. sir he is falling with me you will treat with him

V. Oh...Oh...

Dr. No problem I will arite some medicine You take from Pharmacy

J. ok. Doctor Excuse meDoctor you take medicine.

Dr. I put injection

V. What happened.

J: Now I am allwrite. (see full script in A3, T9, S2)

Thus, one finds that as a result of being able to just watch other groups performing and acting out their 'texts' students were able to learn from each other and were even able to modify their own language to suit the context, in an appropriate manner.

If it had been possible to video record the whole workshop, a lot more improvement of language could have been recorded and captured. Since that was not feasible, this has to serve as a sample of growth. Growth was also shown in the way in which students interpreted the 'texts' that they were asked to use as a base. Groups interpreted the texts in various ways.

5.7.2 Growth analysed through Creative Interpretation of the Given Text

Growth can also be assessed through how students interpret the texts given for production creatively and differently although they do borrow language from others and the given text. In the third phase of the workshop students were given a play titled 'An Old man and an Apple' to be read and the script was taken back by the teacher. They were asked to interpret the theme and create different plays. All seven groups developed the play further from what had been given to them and performed 'new' plays.

Since there are 7 sets of scripts, the scripts from two groups are taken up for analysis. (The other 5 sets of scripts are in Appendix 3). In the first play the old man cheats Tom and Jim who wanted their apple to be divided equally. In the end the fighters become friends.

Task 15 Script 05

Jencily-Jim, Kishant-Tom, Sutharshan- Oldman

Tom - Look Jim. I have an apple are you want

Jim - yes tom if you give half of an apple I will give have of mango.

Tom - yes here you are

Jim - here it is. Oh, your apple is bigger than my apple.

Tom - No Those are same

Jim - You are a bad boy

Tom - No you tell trise

Old - Oh..... why are fighting don't fieght.

Jim - he is give half of apple but He take big peace

Old - Oh give the peaces I want see

T and J - Here they are

Old - Yes it is bigger. can I bit it?

Jim - Yes bit

Tom - Now his apple is bigger

Old - Yes I will bit it

Jim - Now his apple is bigger

Old - yes (bitting)

J and T- Oh. ... where is my apple. catch him he is cheartet us.

Tom - he is missing now after we are friends.

In the next play, (Script 6, produced by another group) the participants changed the items for exchange; apple and biscuit. The end of the play was also slightly changed. The old man advises the boys not to fight after eating the whole apple. They borrowed the words and phrases from the text of the play given and the other groups but used with proper meaning. Thus, students intelligently learnt from their peers and creatively developed their plots, too.

Task 15 Script 06

Anushan, Nitharsanan, Sanjeevraj

Tom - Good morning Jim

Jim - Good morning Tom

Tom - Look Jim I have apple do you like?

Jim - Yes I like very much pleace give half of apple

Tom - If I give what do you give?

Jim - I give half biscuit

Tom - Ok I will give

Jim - here you are I will eat apple

Tom - Don't eat your half is bigger

Jim - No Those are same

Tom - No, No There is a old man we will ask at him

Jim - Ok

old man he gave a half apple to me

Tom - He gave half biscuit to me his half is bigger

Jim - look it old man

Old - this to bites are same

Tom - No No you eat some of this

Old - Ok

Jim - Now it is bigger eat some this

Old - Ok I must bite too If I bite those will finish Dont quarel another time

Thank You

Another marker of development and growth was the way in which students were able to learn from each other and they were able to not only interpret creatively, but take off from each other's performances and create what can only be called, for the want of a better term, as 'intertextual' growth. As such, an attempt is made to analyse this separately.

5.7.3 Intertextuality across the Scripts

The students in group one observed the previous group's performance and automatically incorporated the new ideas and words and structures in their next production showing their talent of intertextuality. Students' texts developed by watching the previous performances. They progressed from where their friends left. To that extent they were vigilant and watchful. They also wanted to do better than their peers. The group activity showed some growth and changes but in the end it aimed towards an individual growth.

On examining the scripts one finds that students observe their peers' production and include some aspects in their production. For example, in the following dialogue both have the character of doctor and the doctor is called for treatment. This can be seen in the other scripts as well. In script 2, for the first time in the group, the idea of calling for a doctor was introduced; in later scripts this was picked up and elaborated, and in some cases, some variations were also brought in. The scripts are reproduced below. (The other scripts are in Appendix 3)

Task 9, Script 2

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Ex: Krishnaananth | = | Hello, police |
| Jencily | = | Yes, inspector Jencily Speaking Can I help you. |
| Krihnaananth | - | Yes, Here Two Persons are fighting you will come quick. |
| Jencily | - | Yes I will come Quickly
Stop! Stop! dont fighting
Shoot..... |
| Vithusan | - | Some body help me |
| Krihnaananth | - | Please call the Doctor |
| Jencily | - | Hello Doctor |
| Doctor | - | Yes Dr Krihnaananthe speaking can I help you. |
| Jencily | - | Yes you will come quickly |
| D.r | - | Yes I will come There |
| Jencily | - | Excuse me Doctor may i come in |
| D.r | - | Yes you can come |
| Jencily | - | Sir he is falling with me
you will treat with him |

- Vithusan - Oh..... Oh.....
- D.r - No problem I will write some
medicine
you take from pharmacy
- Jencily - ok Doctor. Excuseme Doctor you
take medicine.
- Dr - I put Injection... what happen
- Vithusan - now am all write.
by the way I am vithusan
- J - I am Jencily
- Dr - I am Doctor Krihnaananth
- V. J - good bye Doctor.

Task 09, Script 04

Road accident

Tbushanth, Kabilthas, Yathugulan, Paraneetharan & Kishanthan.

I.

(Pa, Ya -Pavaneetharan and Yathukulan came by Car.)

(Thushanth accident in Yathugulans Car.)

Th: Oh my get help me help me

Pa & Ya: What is the problem what is the problem.

Ya: I called the doctor

Pa: hello general hospital a man is accident in a Kandy a to road please
come

That is a minner accident you dont cry

II.

Ka: Yathukulan Yothukulan Yothukulan ,Thushanth Thushanth
Thushanth.

Ki: What the mater?

Ya: You drive in a wrong way

Th: No “No”

Ka: Give your lincinees

Ki; Give

Tu: here

Ya: here

Ki: okay

The theatre workshop seems to have enhanced growth in the language of the learners in many ways; a lot of this was intended, for that was the aim of the workshop. But interestingly, growth is also captured in the diaries that the students were asked to maintain right through the workshop. Some of them did and some others could not do so due to various reasons. Therefore, the researcher asked them write on certain occasions to write their diaries at different intervals. Samples of them are taken for analysis. Students had been told that the researcher would ‘read’ the diaries, but that they would not be formally and deliberately evaluated; they were also told that they could write whatever they wanted in them. If needed, they were told that they could even write in Tamil, their L1. However, this did not happen; initially students would ask for an equivalent word in English when needed; as the workshop continued, this ‘scaffolding’ also became unnecessary. Thus, an analysis of some of these ‘casual’ diary entries is attempted to capture this ‘growth’ that happened. At the same time, this was the only ‘individual’ writing that happened. As such, though this was not the intention, in order to get a sense of the proficiency level of the students, the initial and final diary entries have been analysed using a set of proficiency level statements.

5.7.4 Growth as Captured in Students’ Diary Entries

An amazing amount of language growth can be assessed from the diary entries of students from the first week to the end of the programme. A quick examination of the diaries as a whole shows that on the whole, for example, students were able to write longer entries; a paragraph per day became a page. At the same time, those who began by writing phrases and clauses, (fragmentary sentences in some cases) began writing complete sentences. Those who began with writing simple sentences moved to using compound and complex structures. It is not possible to attempt a complete analysis of student diaries; as such, a sample of five students’ diaries has been taken up for analysis. The growth was good enough to be surprising. As recorded in my diary notes:

There were many surprises and unexpected outcomes. Their performances went beyond my expectations (from the researcher’s diary notes 12. 06. 2006).

Students’ Diary Entries

Students	First week	S e c o n d month	Towards the end
Student 1 (P.Kajan)	Study and change friend drama playing	I am very happy Today acting the drama	Principial is very very happy Our drama members are very good acting
Student 2 (name not mentioned)	Sir tall you will go to in line in the kovil	Today we acted that drama That was very interesting	After we did some exercise we selected one drama.

Student 3 (V.Anusan)	On today to the temple and we do some exercise we are practice the English drama	Today sir saw picture One group was acted	We did some exercise and we are act Jack and beanstalk...
Student 4 (Ramjisarma)	That is very interesting day we did some exercises and played many game after that we took practice of our drama.	That day was interesting Because I have acted with my friends.	Mr.benald sir and miss Thuraisami all school have come there That day was interesting and we have improved our self confidence
Student 5 (name not mentioned)	We ran. We were played. We acting drama after we wrote that drama	I went from house by the cycle.. After acing drama we wrote that drama.	We went from class in the line to kovil. We ran we dance. We took practice of new drama.

Table 5.4

As can be seen from the table, one student, (P.K) wrote in the first week with what could be described as telegraphic language. It was almost fragmentary.

Study and change friend drama playing

In the second month he was able to write full sentences, although with some mistakes:

I am very happy today acting the drama

But in the third month, he began to write correctly and coherently.

Principa is very very happy

Our drama members are very good acting

Student '2' wrote complex sentences in the third month

After we did some exercises we selected one drama

Another student, (V.A.) was able to write compound sentences in the third month

We did some exercise and we are act Jack and beanstalk...

A flow of language began to emerge when they wrote their diaries. Sentence after sentence continued to be written. Students '4' and '5', for example, were able to state:

Student 4

Mr. benald sir and miss Thuraiisami all school have come there That day was interesting and we have improved our self confidence

Student 5

We went from class in the line to kovil. We ran we dance. We took practice of new drama.

In chapter 4, Section 4.4.1 an attempt has been made to evaluate the proficiency of students on an individual basis, using the ACTFL (2001) guidelines as a base. This evaluation was based on the diary entries made by them, their descriptions of themselves and the first script written for the first task. The evaluation is reproduced here for easy accessibility.

“The students, all studying in class 6, transferring from regional (Tamil) to English medium of instruction can be seen as ‘low novices’ with reference to their English capability. This implies that they are:

Writers at the Novice-Low level are able to form letters in an alphabetic system and can copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.”

A similar evaluation is attempted here, based on the diary entries that were made towards the end of the programme. An examination of these entries shows that there is remarkable improvement. Students have moved from being mere ‘novices’ in English to ‘Intermediate Mid’. The ACTFL Guidelines for the ‘Intermediate Mid’ are presented below:

Writers at the Intermediate-Mid are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts that are based on personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other topics related to personal experiences and intermediate surroundings. Most writing is framed in present time, with inconsistent references to other frames. The writing style closely resembles the grammar and lexicon of oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level show evidence of control of syntax in non-complex sentences and in basic verb forms and they may demonstrate some ability to use grammatical and stylistic cohesive elements. This writing is best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together; there is little evidence of deliberate organisation. Writers at the Intermediate-Mid level pay only sporadic attention to the reader of their texts; they focus their energies on the production of the writing rather than on the reception the text will receive. When Intermediate-Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear. Intermediate-Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives (ACTFL Guidelines, 2001).

Students’ performance is recognised and matched with the Intermediate-Mid level proficiency as they were able to produce language according to the expectation of the guidelines. “They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts that are based on personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other topics related to personal experiences and intermediate surroundings.” Extracts from the scripts

written towards the end of the workshop are presented here as proof of such capability.

Plays on common themes

Task 16 script 1

Nifharshanan, Anushan, Sanjeevraj, Sutharshan, Jencily

A. Good morning All of you Today Student Good message will

start Nitharsanan will Talk at here

N. (He is speaking about natural disaster)

A. Prayas will end

(at class)

All. Congraculation Nitharsanan

J. Interval is Starting

S. can we play Cricket?

Su. Yes you can play

J. Nitharsanan please come here?

N. I can't paly with you I am monitor in our class you are noty
boys

S. we will go to teacher after interval

J. Oh interval is end

(at class)

All. Good morning teacher

Su. Good morning

S. Nitharsanan is changing as Bad boy

N. No! No! teacher they are told lie

Su. We will go to principal

(at principal Office)

All. Good morning sir

A. Yes what do you want?

S and J. Nitharshan is changing as bad boy

N. Don't believe

J. He is telling lie

A. I Saw Nitharshan You were telling bad words

N. Sorry sir

Sorry friends

Group 1

Pavaneetharan, Jency, Thushanth, Ajanthan and Kariranjana

J : My Three Boys are Sleeping get up get up

P : What mother

J : You are big boys you build with a house

B.C : Ok mother

1st pig : man please give some straw

I can build house.

M : Ok I give

2nd pig : man please give some wood I can build house.

N : Ok I give

3rd pig : Man please give some bricks I can build house

man : ok I give

fox : little pig little pig let to me you can't open I will blow

your house aeut up

2nd pig : oh brother fox ate my 2st brother

3rd pig : no proplem

2nd pig : oh Brother fox is comeing go out side the house

Fox : little pig little pig let one you can't open I will btowant eat
you

Next day

Fox : little pig little pig let me you can't open I will blow and ate
you

Mother : oh my sans are death I am very very sad.

- **From the diary entries written at the end of the workshop**

Three sample writing pieces from the students are presented below. They wrote about their experiences, both on the last day (when they performed the play for the general audience) and also on the feed back session the following day. As per the guidelines, one can identify the proficiency level of these students as 'Intermediate-Mid' as they are able to write simple sentences which are syntactically correct even though the grammar and lexicon resembles oral discourse. For example, "Please give some wood/bricks, I can build house" and "You were telling bad words" are typical non-complex oral sentences with a basic verb form; their writing can be best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together with little evidence of deliberate organisation. At the same time, the use of some cohesive devices, for both grammatical and stylistic effect is seen in the two experiences that have been described by two of the students, 'Nitharsanan' and 'Sanjeevraj' in their diaries. They are able to use 'because' and 'so' effectively and also able to use the personal pronoun 'they' to good effect to connect two sentences.

Yester day experience

Yesterday was a new experience in my life. Because we acted a English drama at stage Y.M.H.A. We went to that place at 9.00 clock on or two friends came that time. My sister also came there. At 10'o clock our workshop teacher sriganeshan ser, and coordinator of the workshop ragunathan ser, Sivapalan ser, Navaradhnam ser, foreigner and some respected persons. At 10.30 I was very happy because my brother and my mother came that time. So I acted very well I was worry about I didn't participate full of the programme. Because I have another program I can't forgot yesterday. Thank you.

Today experience

I got an different experience our school respected principal, learned teachers foreigner Sriganeshan ser were at temple we acted in front of them. They told we acted very well.

-Written by Nitharsanan

Yesterday

Yesterday was a new experience in my life. Because we acted a english drama at stage in Y.M.C.A. We wen to that place at 9 0' clock one or two my friends came that ime. my brother also came there at 10 o'clock one or two friends came that time so I acted very well I was worry about I did'nt participae full of the programe because I had another programe

- G.Sanjeevraj

Today went to Y.M.H.A. Hall

That Hall is very beautiful

We act as students

We act is the wedding Hall

And thiry are lots of poples.

And my father and brother came to see me I going to act and I am so Happy.

Today we went to Y.M.H.A Hall. That hall is very beautiful. Three school are come and act. Our group title is new comer. That drama was very interesting. Our group had five members. That day I am very happily to good expriance and developed the language. my friend Nitharsanan act el and anushan also after I go to my house.

Today we went to kovil and act yesterday drama That was very interesting This day foriner and principal and some teachers. I will act as a father After speech by foriner next Sir tall our comments after we ent to classroom

- D.Jencily

Thus far, an attempt has been made to capture the language growth of students based on different ‘texts’ ‘created’ by them. Although ‘triangulation’ was not deliberately attempted in this study, (as it is primarily exploratory and ethnographic) the actual production, which was the culmination of the three month workshop was viewed by a large number of people, including other classmates, college students, teachers, principals, coordinators and other members of the community. The comments made by some of these people also capture the ‘growth’ they perceived in the students. As these comments substantiate the analyses that have been attempted so far, a sample of these ‘comments’ is examined separately.

5.8 Language Enhancement Substantiated by Comments, and Responses

There were many comments made by the teachers of English, teachers of other subjects, the principal, parents, senior students and the audience in general on the play that was enacted by the students who participated in the theatre workshop. It must be remembered that a large part of the analysis in this thesis is with reference to the texts that were written out by the students after the actual performance of the tasks during the workshop. Since very little video recording was possible, there is little evidence of the actual ‘play’ that was scripted and enacted by the students, which was the culmination of the three

month Theatre Workshop. The proof available is only from secondary sources, in the form of comments made by those who watched the play. These comments capture and reflect the students' general development with regard to oral skills, language ability in general and overall growth as language users. A sample of these comments (summarised) is given below. A sample page of the comments made by different groups of people is in Appendix 9.

- **Comments by Teachers of English**

There were twenty four English teachers who watched the performances and commented on them. The comments dealt with nature of performance, aspects of theatre and the language expressions used. Some sample extracts are reproduced below:

- Performances were free and spontaneous without any hesitation. There were free movements. Students were able to express fearlessly, loudly and clearly. They acted very well.
- Students co-operated with each other with team spirit. They were able to communicate with facial expressions and gestures without fear and shyness. Their fluency was a real surprise to some.
- The themes are suitable to their age. Without much preparation of scripts they brought out the messages. It was a tremendous effort. Each realized his character and acted well effortlessly. They have the confidence to act out any role.
- Students didn't use accurate language but they were able to communicate. They had few language errors.

- **Comments by the other subject teachers**

There were other teachers who teach other subjects in English. They also made it a point to watch their students' performances and commented. They are presented below.

- All groups performed well and expressed their feelings very well. They have promising talents.

- Messages from the dramas to the society are very much informative. Some students need more practice.
- Students are able to get more advantages through this programme. Students got training in leadership and communicating skills.

- **Comments by the students from other classes**

The students from other classes were also in the audience. Their comments also support the students' performances in a positive manner.

- The performances were fantastic events by Class 6 students. They acted very well with proper facial expressions without costumes and make-up.
- It is surprising that the students from the Tamil medium were able to express themselves within a short period.
- It is a miracle that they used their own words to express their ideas. Their responsibility
- Current, topical and real problems as themes performed. It inspired and motivated speaking talents.

- **Comments by Parents**

- Students expressed naturally in simple language. It appeared that they opened the mouth and communicated without memorizing. Learning in real situations seems to be the best way to learn a second language. It encouraged the students to learn the language without hesitation.

- **Comments by Principals and Coordinators.**

- From a traditional and mechanical classroom students are put in a new atmosphere to get life and courage to communicate naturally.
- Students understood the situation and performed with clear language utterance. Students understood the situation and performed with clear language utterance.

- The facilitator succeeded in bringing out their talents. It was a fruitful attempt to make students communicate well.

5.9 Learner Enhancement through the Workshop

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to capture the various ways in which students have grown through the workshop. This has been done through the analysis of a wide range of scripts, starting from the function of communications with modification of role plays, and ending with the production of a whole play. The analysis has been based on some linguistic categories and other aspects of language. However, it is interesting to find that this growth is explicitly captured in words, in the ‘texts’ written by students and the notes made by the researcher at the beginning of the workshop. The analysis has so far been attempted linguistically, theatrically, and conceptually, but there is no ‘marker’ of growth as such, since the whole analysis has been from an ethnographic perspective. The only ‘marker’, if at all, is the little bit of categorization that has been attempted using the ACTFL guidelines as a base. As such, an extract from three entries, researcher’s diary notes, and two journal entries by the students, are presented below.

- **Entry in the researcher’s diary notes (beginning of the theatre workshop)**

At the beginning they were afraid to come forward and make an attempt to talk in English. They simply introduced themselves by telling their names and stopped. They said they had fear. They were shy to express themselves due to their inability to speak to others. They were from a Tamil medium background and started learning the subjects in the English medium from January 2006. However, they could not make their expression.

- **The researcher’s comment on students’ diaries)**

They pointed out that theatre activities prompted them to drive away the fear and the shyness they had had up to that time. They started communicate with their friends in English. They had not developed

any kind of friendship with most of the classmates until they joined the theatre workshop. Though the sessions commenced in January the classmates could not move with many of their classmates. But the theatre workshop helped them to identify each other during the group activities and they said they were able to talk in English fearlessly.

- **Summarised from the responses by the students after the performance**

‘English learning practice is going on very well’ (wrote one of the students on 20/06/2006.) Students were able to express their ideas in correct sentence structures but with some spelling mistakes and grammatical errors in tenses and prepositions.

Eg. ‘We are went, All friends are like this programme, ‘We are very enjoyed this drama’, ‘I was very enjoy’ ‘We was happy’, etc.

The students expressed that they were able to enjoy the open class workshop and develop their skills like speaking and acting very well. They had a chance to work together with their classmates and make friends during the workshop. It gave an opportunity to understand each other and co-operate with one another. More over, it paved the way for participants to help each other and taught them not to be jealous about others and create their productions constructively.

They were happy as they had a chance to have exercises, play games and act in dramas created by them. They were of the opinions that they learnt good knowledge, manners and new words. They were able to develop their imaginative talents, understand the situations clearly and improve their language.

5.10 Researcher Enhancement through the Workshop

As a result of this workshop it is not only the learners who benefited and grew through it; the researcher, who is also a teacher of English also became a learner and grew in many ways. This was not a foreseen outcome, but is perceived as extremely important and valuable; as such, the nature of this ‘growth’ to the extent to which it can be captured

is discussed below. There were many changes, modifications and adjustments that were made during the workshop; some of them were incidental and pragmatic, while others were done because the researcher felt that the change was needed to make the workshop a genuinely learner-centred one. As far as possible, (for it is not possible to really separate one kind of ‘change’ from the other) attention was paid on the ‘changes’ that were learner-oriented. Systematic self reflection is also something I learnt to do, as a result of this workshop. I also learnt, with some difficulty, to convince a recalcitrant local community to accept the notion of a theatre workshop as enabling language learning and not just ‘wasteful fun and games’.

The workshop was modified in many ways to make it learner-centred. These include changes in the venue of the class/ workshop, nature of syllabus/methodology, the way in which a rapport was developed with students, and last of all, changes in the way in which student development was evaluated.

- **Change of the venue of the workshop**

The three-month study showed that the students could highly be motivated with the theatrical techniques. At the beginning, they were happy to go out of the classroom as if they were going for a game in the play ground. In fact, the dilapidated condition of the classroom obviously does not stimulate students to get on well with their studies. They are trapped within the four walls of the classroom and the imposition of texts in the name of teaching and learning happened. Students seem to be tired. The main study, owing to non-availability of a hall in the school premises, was located in a temple hall which was free at that time and it was airy, spacious and full of sunlight. Students were summoned to the temple hall for group exercises and a simple game. They were very happy and interested to run along and dance and shout and with this ‘shift’ the workshop took off.

- **Classroom / Group dynamics**

Initially, warm up activities were planned at the individual level,

as pair work and also whole class activities. The individual exercises were not very successful, for the so called ‘dull’ students with low confidence in their own proficiency, ‘withdrew’ from the discussion and practically became ‘silenced’. Some of the pair work exercises were stimulating and motivating but care had to be taken to ensure that active and passive students were paired to enable communication to happen. Whole class games were interesting but tiresome and misleading for, again, the ‘quiet’ students remained silent. The general outcome of these observations, therefore, was to have many more small group activities and to include warm up activities which were ‘physical’ to enable the quiet and ‘dull’ students to shed their inhibitions. All this, I realised, ensured that different types of students mixed with each other during the workshop.

- **Change of syllabus for communicative skills**

The Sri Lankan traditional classroom could be described as a ‘banking’ one, with the teachers’ instruction the classroom session moves on. There is not even construction and therefore, co-construction cannot be dreamt of. In the workshop students were introduced to different tasks of the same mode arrived at through pre-tasks related to the topics discussed. The negotiation was done in groups. This made them to be at ease with the entire work format. Gradually, they started to work on the themes and the situations and even suggested modifications. The tempo was high as the workshop proceeded with functions of communication, interpretations of pictures, emotions, locations, poems and songs. Stories were narrated and then converted into plays. When I found out that students actually wanted to read/listen to many more stories, and then narrate them, I got as many as I could from the library and this worked wonders. When they were given a common story for play production each group interpreted the story differently and even the language of the performance scripts differed from group to group. This variation/modification was also reflected in the performance script that had to be read and interpreted differently. Here too, their interpretations were different and the language creatively

modified. Later in the workshop, socially relevant themes and children's common problems were discussed and plays put together, performed and then scripted. These productions also reflected the originality of their creation. There was no imitation, only creation. Students, during the enactment of the play, (which, it should be remembered is prior to the actual written-down script) searched for words and phrases to make meaning; this is captured in the 'yes, ok,' and in the fillers like 'ah.. mm' etc. that preceded the use of new words. Such 'creation' I realised would not have happened in traditional not-so-active classrooms, with a normal dogmatic syllabus. The modifications are needed.

The realisation I gained is that the knowledge the students bring to the class helps them to develop their own language proficiency. They will be able to get the vocabulary that is needed as they concentrate on meaning making and are engaged in this activity to the fullest extent possible. This knowledge includes, I realised, social consciousness and awareness of students as was shown in the themes selected by the students and the resultant scripts. The politics of classroom teaching is usually defined by the situation of the lesson, the class and the teacher's lesson plan. I learnt that this 'plan' is only a paper plan because a lot of space had to be provided for freedom for communication. Much contemplation was stimulated and instilled through brainstorming and warming up and motivating sessions. Games and pre-task sessions (modified to suit student needs and interests) helped them to get rid of inhibition, fear, shyness and other social, school, pedagogic, administrative hierarchical suppressions and pressures and tension.

Another major realisation is that a lot of the language got produced due to a lot of effort that had gone into ensuring that no texts produced by the westerners were imposed (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 1994). The syllabus of the workshop was truly negotiable. As a researcher/teacher, I entered the classroom, after a little internal struggle, with a basic framework and allowed the group to engage in a discussion with a brainstorming session, 'ball-rolling' mind mapping. This 'letting go of power' was difficult, but it was extremely beneficial.

- **Change of classroom atmosphere with freedom of expression**

All classrooms have tensions and this will result in clashes which are actually not conducive to learning. However, a major learning experience for me was that one need not be frightened of it. I had only read about this (Canagarajah, 1999) but now actually experienced the fact that the tension or clashes they bring to the class get submerged and sublimated through the process of interaction. As a result of the theatre workshop, and by the end of it, my teaching style had changed from a product oriented to a process oriented one. No tension, no boundaries, no politics of pedagogic pressures like “Do you follow”, “Understand”, “Take down the notes now”, “Do the home work at home”, “Don’t talk to others”, “Listen to me” nor any fear of anyone or any kind of evaluation and subsequent rewarding with marks. Instead of ‘talk, do not talk, take down notes,’ my classroom communication language changed from ‘talk, do not talk, take down these notes’ to the more democratic ‘let’s start our games’, ‘Shall we read this story’. Students were given full autonomy with a lot of room for participation, expression and performance. The encouragement and satisfaction that they get from their own production along with the cheers of the peers and the facilitator’s/ teacher’s ‘convivial’ evaluation was enough motivation.

- **Evaluative Changes**

In Sri Lanka, (as stated in Chapter 1 Section 1.3.5 and Chapter 2, Section, 2.6.4) although on paper the methodology is meant to be communicative, the orientation is largely structuralistic for accuracy is foregrounded; getting out of this manner of evaluation was not an easy task. During the preliminary study, all I had was red lines through all the scripts; (for a sample of a red ink marked preliminary study correction/ evaluation (see Appendix 11) during and after the main study, was able to shift the emphasis to meaning making and concentrate on the students’ creativity and communication. My evaluation shifted from being system focused and prescriptive to being ‘convivial (Durairajan, 2003). I realised that if students are pushed to work naturally and spontaneously, expressions will naturally flow and language expressions will become natural. ‘Languaging’ is attempted by the students and this is all that is important. The fine tuning can and will follow.

Chapter 6

Theatrical Spaces in Language Classrooms

6.1 Theatre in Education

Theatre, in the history of human beings, has been a medium for entertainment, education, propaganda, rebellion, criticism of society, people and the system, a reflection of human life and times, a transmitter of cultural patterns and values, and very often, acts as a mirror of all aspects of life. In modern times it has been used by artistes, theatre activists, political groups, religious organisations to fulfil their various needs but within the area of education it has been used only with some limited purposes in mind. There have been attempts to make use of theatre to produce a play prescribed for study, and teachers end their interest in theatre with that production. The argument that has been made in this thesis is that theatre for education has many more possibilities.

Traditionally, within educational spaces, theatre began as an extra-curricular activity, with surreptitious “underground” drama clubs producing plays. It then, moved to getting recognition as a co-curricular activity where an educational system recognised a theatre/ drama society. The major shift occurred when, apart from having the study of literature, art, drama and theatre, in language classes particularly, theatre, or its watered down soft version entered curricular space in the form of role play, dialogue and simulations. Today ‘theatre’ in the language classroom has come a long way from this beginning but has not reached anywhere educationally. An attempt is made in this thesis to explore the possibilities of using ‘full-fledged’ theatre in the form of a theatre workshop, with ‘theatre tasks’, to enhance language capability in English classrooms.

The inspiration for this study emerged from the researchers’ personal experience as a teacher of English in school, college and at university. The debilitating environment of language learning with traditional teaching methods, poor learning conditions only succeeded rather in demotivating students and even “killing” their language learning

capability by finding fault with their mispronunciation, fragmentary “ungrammatical” responses, spelling mistakes, non-punctuated language and even non-English expressions.

However, with the globalisation and economic growth, the need to learn English is both essential and inevitable. Thus, the need of the hour was to enhance the English language of all students in Sri Lanka. In particular, disadvantaged younger learners from the rural areas studying under deficient learning conditions through unproductive learning methods had to be motivated and their language ability (in English) should be enabled. The argument defended in this thesis is that:

- the use of theatre would promote language communication.
- affective factors would be reduced when the students’ latent capability is activated through theatre workshop.
- personality development would be assured in a language enhancement theatre workshop.

6.2 The Findings of the Study

The study posed the following research questions:

- Is it possible to lower the inhibitions of students and bring language learning capabilities to the fore with the use of theatre in the teaching of a second language, namely, English?
- Will it be possible to develop the communication skills (oral and written skills) of the students by deploying the theatre workshop methodology?
- Will the use of theatre for language teaching empower the students to raise their voices in the English classrooms and subsequently develop their personalities as successful students?

A detailed analysis of the data clearly revealed that the theatre workshop brought about a difference in students’ communication, interaction, behaviour, interest and output of language. The following were the findings of the study:

- It was found that students had not been motivated to communicate in English earlier but they have now become interested and have gained confidence in using English.
- Students, since they are always interested in games, fun, songs, stories, role play, dancing and imitating were attentive in the theatre workshop.
- They were able to incorporate the available knowledge received from the society.
- Even though the primary focus was on spoken and written communication, the need to read from a variety of texts (stories and plays) and the co-create texts meant that reading and listening skills also developed incidentally.
- Students were able to incorporate the vocabulary they had from previous knowledge that had been provided by school, home and society.
- Students performed better in groups than when they were asked to perform individually.
- Students' ability to participate in group activities developed and as a result, group dynamics were at a peak.
- Students, who were reluctant to write initially, were inspired to write more during these sessions.
- The spellings of students improved due to peer assistance and better reading habits.
- Students had pronunciation problems, initially, due to fear and inhibition but were able to begin speaking as a result of the need to speak, perform and be heard by others.

Apart from these “behavioural” changes it can be claimed that by using theatre in the language classroom as an additional resource the following changes also happened:

- Students became independent learners.
- Students lost “stage fright” and could communicate freely.
- Teaching became a two-way process.
- Group interaction increased, teacher talk reduced, and therefore, the teacher became a facilitator, or rather a “director” and not the actor with a lead role.

6.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study may be considered with reference to three concerns that emerged out of the recognition of disadvantaged learners’ L2 communication capability.

- Students coming from rural backgrounds are normally termed disadvantaged learners. Their chances for communicating in English are very low. Therefore, a classroom theatre workshop would provide excellent opportunities communication in meaningful contexts.
- Regional medium students are inhibited and intimidated and do not participate in classrooms. A theatre workshop which demands that they become other ‘persona’ will ‘go a long way’ to become articulate and this ‘communication’ and ‘articulation’ will spill over and transfer itself to wider capability.

6.4 Implications of the Study

From the findings of the study presented above, it is quite clear that through theatre workshops, students can be enabled to become fluent speakers. Moreover, by inculcating the habit of communication and interaction through the use of ‘thick’ plots and characters, students are also equipped to face the challenges that lie ahead of them. Thus, the study has far reaching implications for language teaching; although exploratory, it has implications in particular for the English language classrooms in Sri Lanka.

6.4.1 Teaching/Learning Implications

Theatre workshops, it has been suggested, can be used to motivate learners, encourage group work, provide a comfortable learning atmosphere, lay emphasis on communication and the development of fluency rather than accuracy, inculcate reading habits, bring pictures, songs, poems, plays and stories, from the local culture into the classroom, tap previous knowledge and schema, and through this process, use the mother tongue as a scaffold. Theatre workshops, used to enable English, will automatically spill over into interest in learning and motivating to learn other subjects also. Thus, though not intended, they can actually influence the whole personality of the students in a constructive manner.

6.4.2 Implications for Teacher Training

Thus, far, it has been argued that theatre workshops can enable learners to enhance their language. But such enabling cannot happen without teacher capability. At present, no such programme exists and it is only because of my involvement as a theatre artiste in alternative Tamil theatre that I was able to function as the facilitator for this study. If this experiment/exploration is to be replicated or better still, modified and used elsewhere, it will require a different kind of teacher training. The articulation of the nature of this training is beyond the scope of the study, but some possibilities are suggested.

A teacher development activity to enable language learning through theatre workshops must

- ◆ involve teachers in the theatre workshop and let them learn by doing.
- ◆ teach methods of facilitating and CLT
- ◆ make teachers aware of group / social dynamics
- ◆ assume higher teacher language proficiency (but it is assumed that this will happen through the engagement in the workshop itself).

6.5 Limitations of the study

As stated in the beginning of this thesis, this is an exploratory study that has attempted to use theatre as a means of enhancing language capability. Attempts were made to capture the language growth that happened, but a lot of it was ‘collective’ rather than individual growth. This was because the only ‘individual’ writing that could be assessed was the diary entries by different students, along with an initial picture description. As such, traditional genres of writing, namely expository, narrative, descriptive and argumentative could not be evaluated. Assessment of individual capability had to be made only on the basis of the diary entries.

Oral language capability was also evaluated, through the ‘extempore performances’ of the students. However, as with the written language, this evaluation was done on the basis of texts that had been created ‘collectively.’ As such, features like extent of talk, the degree of elaboration, the nature of code switching and the individual growth with reference to fluency and accuracy could not be focused upon.

Another limitation of the study is that the theatre workshop was conducted in only one class in one particular school. Although the preliminary study looked at two levels of students, this was not possible in the main study, for comparison would have meant loss of involvement and depth. The school chosen, it could be argued, is one that is representative of its kind, as it is a central school in the district, but it is possible that other schools will have other cultural variations.

The workshop could be conducted only with male students; thus, the non-participation of female members could be perceived as a major limitation, but cultural problems did not allow for such a mixing.

As stated earlier, a large part of the evaluation has been based on ‘collective texts.’ These texts, too, are not from the same group of students from beginning to end. Throughout the workshop, groups had to be ‘made’ and ‘remade.’ This was not foreseen, but inevitable. Very often, a non-appearance of students on a certain day was because of

curfew in that area, sudden un-announced checks and ‘round-ups’ by the police, the blocking of roads to school for security purposes and even a bomb-blast in a neighbouring village and not lack of interest. It needs to be stated that a day prior to the workshop, there was a bomb blast in the area, closer to the school. Only ten out of the expected twenty four students came that day! Thus, keeping a group constant to examine their growth was not possible.

However, in spite of these limitations, it can be claimed that a considerable language enhancement has happened; and with modifications and adaptations this exploration, it is felt, can be taken further.

6.6 The Path Forward

Theatre in the language classroom can have many beneficial effects, but before a study like the one that is carried out here has to be replicated or adapted, a great deal of work must be done to ensure that it goes beyond a mere exploration. The present study, exploratory in nature, has attempted, successfully to a certain extent, to use theatre to enhance the language capability of un-motivated, inhibited Sri Lankan students (mostly under-achievers) who could not cope but needed to study all their subjects through English. As such, it can be easily carried out in other contexts where English is taught as a second or foreign language and in fact in contexts where any language enhancing is required. However, the suggestions made here will be restricted to the field of language teaching and learning in the contexts of Indian sub-continent, particularly in countries like Sri Lanka and India.

Research on the use of theatre workshops for language enhancement needs to be carried out with students from different levels of proficiency in schools and universities and with both girls and boys from various economic backgrounds. Attention must be focused on evaluating written and oral skills, and some attempt must be made to capture individual growth. Along with ‘teacher enabling’ to make theatre workshops successful, it may be needed to conduct workshops to change the mindset

of parents, care givers and other stake holders in the community. In its present form, the study has only used theatre as an additional resource to enable language capability. If the educational system permits, it may be possible to examine the possibilities of creating an alternative syllabus which will enable and teach language solely through theatre. If this were to happen, then, we can hope that theatre will not only empower, but may also humanize learners, teachers and even language itself!