The Relevance of Communicative Competence Theories to Foreign Language Teaching

by

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Declaration

I, Samih Dlekan, being a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts, declare that I have not been a candidate for another degree and that none of the material used in this thesis has been submitted for another award. I also declare that this thesis is the work of the author except where otherwise acknowledged.

[Signature]
Dedication

For my mother, whose eyes are glittering
like two distant stars
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Abstract

The Relevance of Communicative Competence Theories to Foreign Language Teaching
by Samih Dlekan

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the rise of communicative competence theories and their impact on the practice of foreign language pedagogy. In this thesis we also investigate the relation of language learning to culture learning, and argue that if communicative competence is to be taken into account, then the target culture should be introduced to the foreign language classroom.

This thesis falls into three parts: theoretical considerations, pedagogical applications, and critique of communicative teaching. In Part One we first (Chapter One) review linguistic theory and language teaching in the pre-communicative era starting from traditional grammar to the emergence of communicative competence theories. Second, in Chapter Two, we examine the communicative competence theory in its original form as developed by Hymes, and the motivations behind the introduction of this theory. We also consider subsequent elaborations and interpretations of this theory by linguists and applied linguists, and discuss some significant terms related to communicative competence.

In Part Two we first (Chapter Three) discuss the influence of communicative competence theories on language teaching methodology. We examine a variety of communicative tasks and techniques explaining their significance for communicative competence development. We also consider the influence of communicative competence theories on the evolution and implementation of different syllabus types. Second, in Chapter Four, we talk about the dramatic changes in the roles of teachers and learners which came about as a result of the acceptance of communicative competence as the ultimate goal of language instruction, and focus on those aspects which we believe should be prioritized in a classroom which aims to teach communicative competence.

In Part Three, we first (Chapter Five) examine the relationship between language and culture, and argue that successful communication between native and non-native speakers requires non-native speakers to be aware of cultural presuppositions which underlie language use. We thus argue that associating language learning with culture learning is an important consideration in communicative competence development. Second, in the final chapter, we explain how cultural competence can be taught in the classroom and suggest a few procedures, techniques, and materials for promoting cultural competence. Moreover, in this chapter we discuss grammatical competence as an important component of communicative competence which has been de-emphasized by over-emphasis on language functions in communicative teaching, and suggest some criteria for the design and implementation of communicative grammar tasks.
Introduction

More than any language, English has acquired an unprecedented international status. As a language for international communication, science and technology, English has become a significant foreign or second language all over the world, and English teaching has become an indispensable part of general educational systems all over the world. On both individual and national levels, competence in English is a key to success. To use Kachru's imagery, "knowing English is like the fabled Aladdin's lamp, which permits one to open the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power." (1986:1)

In Third-World countries which are desperate to have access to modern science and technology, the need for English teaching is inevitable, and Syria is no exception. Over the last three or four decades, the need for teaching English has been growing steadily in Syria. However, although the demand for English teaching is great, language teaching methodology is still at an early stage of development. English is taught over a long period in our national educational system. Yet learners often fail to acquire the desired proficiency level, something which can be attributed to ineffective teaching methodology. This incompetence in English can hamper learners' academic progress and can counter national aspirations for successful contact with modern science, technology, and business.
Our interest in communicative competence theories and communicative approaches arises from this fact. This thesis is aimed to be a step among few other steps taken towards the introduction of an adequate teaching methodology to Syria. Moreover, our emphasis on the cultural aspect of communicative competence stems from three considerations. First we believe that insufficient attention is paid by language teaching specialists to making language learning a cultural as much as a new language experience. Second, interest in integrating culture teaching and language didactic has been growing over the last few years (e.g. Byram 1989). Byram writes:

Cultural Studies has a rightful place as part of language teaching, not as an adjunct to language learning, not just as a means of creating better communication but as an integral component with appropriate aims and methods. It certainly plays a role in language teaching in the sense that words in the foreign language refer to meanings in a particular culture creating a semantic relationship which the learner needs to comprehend (1989 3-4).

Third, we believe that in Syria, a country which has a totally different culture from Western culture, knowledge of the target culture is a significant factor in progress to proficiency.
Part I

Theoretical Considerations
Chapter One

Pre-communicative teaching

The aim of this chapter is to briefly review the significant changes in linguistic theory and language teaching methodology which have taken place in this century. The reason for this concern is to establish the background against which communicative competence theories and communicative approaches should be seen. Understanding the linguistic environment and previous teaching practices is crucial for understanding communicative competence theories.

The twentieth century has witnessed a number of radical changes in the methods of teaching foreign languages. These changes have been stimulated by changes in linguistic theory on the one hand and the persistent need for teaching languages on the other. As Johnson argues, language teaching has always been influenced by linguistic theory because teachers looked to the linguist for guidance on how to teach languages (1982:10-11). However, language teaching does not automatically respond to changes in linguistic theory. Because of the immediate need for more teaching of languages, teachers very often cannot wait for the linguist to prescribe language pedagogy. Moreover, because of the need for more international communication and cross-cultural understanding in this century, the demand on effective teaching methodology has been greater than ever.
1.1 Traditional grammar and the grammar-translation method

At the beginning of this century traditional grammarians' views on the nature of language were dominant. These grammarians believed that language consisted of a set of grammatical rules and, therefore, mastering a language was the mastery of these rules. They also believed that modern languages are 'degenerate' and 'impure', and the perfect form was to be found in the language of classical writers. As a result, they neglected speech and focussed on the written form of language as manifested in the works of great authors.

According to traditional grammarians, as Bell (1981) mentions, grammar was divided into two categories: universal grammar and particular grammar. Universal grammar is the principles which are common to all languages, while particular grammar is the rules and principles which are specific to a given language and which are established in the practice of great writers. The models for universal grammar were Latin and Greek, and any lack of correspondence between these models and actual practice in modern languages was considered a violation of rules (p 82).

Roulet (1972) mentions the major characteristics of traditional grammar in terms of the grammatical content and data presentation. Concerning the content we refer to the following...
1. Traditional grammar describes the written language of previous centuries and takes no account of present-day use.

2. It generally prioritizes morphology and neglects syntax.

3. Traditional grammar sets out rules for forming main and dependent clauses but does not set out rules for joining clauses in more complex sentences.

4. Very often the teaching of lexis and phonology is inadequate.

Roulet lists several characteristics concerning the presentation of grammatical data from which we mention:

1. Traditional grammar provides definitions, explanations and rules which are quite often false, misleading and of little value. For example, the subject is usually defined as the doer of the action, the object as what is being acted upon, etc.

2. Traditional grammar presents the data in a way which follows the models of Latin and Greek, such as declining nouns in the nominative, accusative, vocative, dative etc. This system is not appropriate for the description of modern languages.

3. Traditional grammar emphasizes the avoidance of errors.

4. Traditional grammar presents rules in a way which is not ordered, and this does not give the teacher any information on how to progress in the course.

5. Traditional grammar adopts an analytic presentation which allows students to grasp the structure of sentence patterns but does not help them construct new sentences (pp 5-14).
These ideas about language and language learning were manifested in language pedagogy in what is known as the grammar-translation method which dominated language teaching until the nineteen forties. This method is very old and was associated with the teaching of Latin and Greek. Earlier this century, this method was used to enable students to read and appreciate foreign literature and translate from and into the target language. The advocates of this method believe that language learning is a mental exercise even if learners never used the target language (Larsen-Freeman 1986 and Richards and Rodgers 1986). The major principles of this method are

1. The goal of language learning is for learners to be able to read foreign literature and develop intellectual abilities. Evaluation of successful learning is based on the ability to translate from and into the target language. Therefore, literary language was considered superior to spoken language. The ability to use language for actual communication is not the purpose of teaching.

2. Emphasis is placed on reading and writing and little, if any, attention is given to speaking and listening.

3. Awareness of the similarities and differences between the native language and the target language, that is contrastive analysis, is believed to facilitate learning.

4. Learners are expected to achieve a high level of accuracy.
Therefore, grammatical errors are not tolerated

5 Grammar is taught deductively, that is by isolating grammatical items and providing explicit explanation of them.

6 The medium of instruction is the learners' mother tongue

(Larsen-Freeman 1986 9-10, and Richards and Rodgers 1986 3-4)

The major defect of this method, as Rivers (1968) points out, is that little account is taken of pronunciation, intonation and communication skills. This method exaggerated the need for knowing rules and exceptions and does not train students in using language for expressing meaning, even in writing. Students are encouraged to manipulate structures and irregular forms using language which is often artificial, rare, and old-fashioned. The student has to work hard on memorizing vocabulary, translation and written exercises. His or her role in the class is mainly a passive one, "he absorbs and then reconstitutes what he has absorbed to satisfy his teacher." (p 19) We shall see later that the shortcomings of this method have been avoided by communicative teaching as a result of the rise of communicative competence theories which emphasized the ability to convey meaning rather than to manipulate structures which made no reference to their social context.

2.3 The direct method

This method emerged as an alternative for the grammar-translation method, which led to an overemphasis on written forms of language when the purpose was teaching modern spoken languages. As its
name indicates this method relates the meaning directly to the
target language without going through the process of translation.
Theorists of this method, as Rivers notes, believed that "students
learn to understand a language by listening to a great deal of it
and then they learn to speak it by speaking it in the same way
children learn their first language." (Ibid 18) The characteristics
of this method are

1. Thinking in the target language should be encouraged
2. Exclusive use of the target language as a medium of
   instruction
3. More emphasis is placed on oral skills although writing and
   reading are not de-emphasized
4. Grammar is taught inductively, that is grammatical rules
   should not be isolated and explained but acquired unconsciously by
   the learners
5. Some opportunity is given to the students to practice language
   in real situations
6. Phonological and grammatical accuracy is emphasized, but
   self-correction is encouraged

Although this method enjoyed some popularity in Europe, there
were those who were dissatisfied with it. The weakness of this
method, as Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) point out, is
that the materials were not based on authentic speech and
the teacher did not consider meeting the learners' needs outside
the classroom (pp 5-6) Students were usually presented with
sentences such as

The cat is under the table, but the dog is
behind the door

The colour of John's shirt is darker than the
colour of Mary's skirt

This method has other defects Rivers argues that its main defect
was that it encouraged students to express themselves before they
were ready, and this resulted in students developing "a glib but
inaccurate fluency, clothing native language structures in foreign
vocabulary " She also argues that it was wrong to believe that the
conditions of first language acquisition can be simulated in the
classroom with adolescent students (ibid 20) But it is worth
mentioning that some of the principles of this method such as
teaching grammar inductively and attention to oral skills, have
been adopted by communicative approaches.

1.3 Structural linguistics and the audio-lingual method
Dissatisfaction with the views of traditional grammar brought
about a change in linguistic theory which was realized in the rise
of structural linguistics To avoid the drawbacks of traditional
grammar, structural linguists, as Roulet points out, aimed at (1)
describing the modern language of a community, (2) narrowing down
the scope of language study by focussing on language structure, and assigning a peripheral role to meaning, and (3) carrying out language description systematically and objectively deriving the grammar of language from "a corpus of recorded data in a quasi mechanical way" (1972 21)

It seems that in attempt to avoid the main drawbacks of traditional grammar, structural linguistics, as Roulet points out, sought to establish solid grounds for modern language teaching, by both its content and form. Roulet describes the content and the form of structural linguistics. In terms of content Roulet argues that

1 Structural linguistics describes a living language in a particular community at a fixed point of time using recorded data.
2 It describes the spoken language which the student needs as a medium of communication.
3 It provides phonological analysis of the sound system of language which could be used as bases for teaching pronunciation in a systematic way.

Concerning the form of structural linguistics Roulet points out that
1 Structural linguistics provides precise definitions which are based solely on formal criteria. Unlike traditional grammarians, structural linguists believed that it was not necessary to have access to meaning in order to define parts of speech as this example illustrates:

The slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

Although this sentence is nonsensical, speakers of English can easily identify nouns, verbs, etc. from the positions they occupy in the sentence. Therefore, words are considered to belong to the same class if they regularly occupy the same positions in sentences.

2 Structural linguists criticized the analytical approach of traditional grammar and were concerned with sentence-building. Their argument was that learners need to know the patterns of the language and which words belong to which pattern. "What is put forward then is a framework of sentences slots" as in this example:

Suzanne bought a new dress on Saturday.
which learners can modify and manipulate by making substitutions and transformations using words that can replace elements in one slot or another (ibid 21-4)

Furthermore, the structuralist view on language learning derived from Behaviourist psychology and the ideas of Pavlov and Skinner. Behaviourist psychology believed that learning was a matter of habit-formation through a stimulus-response-reinforcement process. Therefore, language learning was seen as a matter of overcoming the old habits of the mother tongue and building up the new habits of the target language. These habits can be formed by providing continuous drilling. However, the ideas of structural linguistics found their application in what came to be known as the audio-lingual method.

This method emerged in the United States during World War II and was stimulated by three major factors. First, during the period of war there was an immediate need for people who spoke foreign languages. Therefore, it was first used to teach military personnel.

Second, the Behaviourist school of psychology and the ideas of Skinner gained popularity as a way of explaining the teaching/learning process. Third, the ideas of structural linguistics and linguists such as Bloomfield and Fries began to be
used in language teaching and gave rise to what has been called the audio-lingual method (Brumfit and Finocchiaro 1983 6-7) The audio-lingual method has the following principal characteristics

1. Language learning is habit-formation. Positive reinforcement helps develop correct habits.
2. The teacher presents spoken cues and picture cues which act as stimuli to which students give verbal and non-verbal responses.
3. Students should learn to answer automatically without stopping to think.
4. The teacher controls the students' linguistic behaviour and prevents them from forming incorrect habits. Therefore, no errors are tolerated.
5. The ultimate goal of language teaching is for students to master a number of finite structural patterns. Practice and repetition is the best way to achieve this goal.
6. Contrastive analysis will help the teacher predict the areas of difficulty and help the students overcome the old habits of their native language.
7. Foreign language learning should follow the natural order of first language acquisition, that is listening, speaking, reading and writing.
8. Foreign language teaching should aim at developing an understanding of the foreign culture and people (Larsen-Freeman 1986 41-2)
The strength of this method was that it concerned itself with modern languages and thus freed students from the artificial, useless and literary language of previous centuries. This method also associated a language with a culture and aimed at developing cultural understanding. This association, as we shall see, was not fully taken into consideration by most communicative teaching, although communicative competence theory was developed to assign an important role for sociocultural factors involved in language acquisition and in the ability to understand and produce speech acts.

However, this method has many defects. Although many people began learning through the audio-lingual method, this method did not produce fluent learners. What the learners were good at was parroting patterns without communication. Audiolingualism created a sense of fear of making an erroneous utterance. The learners are usually hesitant to utter a sentence unless they are absolutely sure of its grammatical perfection, which is psychologically harmful. This method is also psychologically harmful in the sense that the teacher controls the students' behaviour and does not allow them the chance for self-expression. This, of course, is dull and unmotivating.
Roulet points out that structural linguistics made little progress beyond traditional grammar. It exclusively concerned itself with "the system of inventories of elements (phonemes, morphemes) and provided little understanding of the process of sentence formation and interpretation." But as for linguistic descriptions, structural linguistics presented them more systematically and explicitly than traditional grammar did. As Roulet aptly puts it, "If structuralist grammars constituted a step forward from traditional grammar as far as language form was concerned, in the areas of language content they marked rather a step backward." (Original emphasis, ibid 27)

Concerning the application of structuralist ideas in language teaching, Roulet points out three major defects:

1. Emphasis on formal criteria led students and teachers to manipulate structures without any concern with meaning and use in actual situations.

2. Emphasis on language code resulted in neglecting the problems and processes of language teaching and learning. In other words, teachers were concerned with the question of "what to teach" to the neglect of "how to teach it."
Audiolingualism was based on an inadequate theory of learning, i.e., the conditioning theory associated with the Behaviourist school of psychology (Ibid 36).

However, the 1950s witnessed a strong challenge to structural linguistics and Behaviourist psychology. This challenge, as Bell points out, "reoriented linguistics towards a more mentalistic philosophy, rational scientific method and, when applied to language teaching, a cognitive psychology" (p. 99). This challenge came from transformational-generative linguistics.

1.4 Transformational-generative linguistics

The rise of transformational-generative linguistics (TG) came as a reaction to the assumptions of structural linguistics and the Behaviourist school of psychology. In what follows we present the key assumptions of TG as mentioned by Bell.

1. Language is a system which relates meanings to substance. This view, as Bell points out, is contradictory to the structuralist view that language is a system of forms. The view of language as meaning relates TG with traditional grammar.

2. Language is a mental phenomenon. This is also in contrast with the structuralist view that language is a physical phenomenon.
3 Language is innate this innateness of language is "a genetically imparted ability for language learning"

4 Language is universal this means two things. It means that all normal human children learn a mother tongue, and that all world languages, at an abstract level, share common characteristics (Ibid 102)

As we have seen earlier structural linguistics assumed that the structure of a sentence is visible, and when sentences have the same visible or observable structure they were grouped in a pattern. Underwood (1984) points out that Chomsky showed that this was not the whole story. Chomsky pointed out that "John is easy to please" have the same visible structure as "John is eager to please", but any speaker knows that these two sentences are different in the sense that the relation between John and the act of pleasing in both sentences is quite different. Chomsky accounted for the situation as two similar "surface structures" but two different "deep structures". As Chomsky explains, and Underwood mentions, this explains how one sentence can have two different meanings (p 4)

On the other hand, when two sentences with two different surface structures have the same meaning, such as "John turned the radio off" and "John turned off the radio", we can often say that
they come from the same deep structure. What made them different at the surface structure level is the application of different transformational rules (movement, addition, deletion). Such a view of language accounts for our ability to identify more than one meaning in the same sentence (ambiguous sentences) and recognize the same meaning in sentences of differing structural forms (ibid 5).

1 4 1 Linguistic competence

In TG Chomsky draws a fundamental distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. By competence Chomsky means the internalized grammar rules in the mind of the speaker-listener of his or her language, or the knowledge underlying the language user's ability to judge grammaticality of sentences. It is obvious that competence is defined solely in terms of syntax.

By performance, on the other hand, he refers to the manifestation of this knowledge in concrete situations. But in order for us to fully understand competence and performance, it is important to understand the nature of the language user and the speech community in which performance is carried out. Chomsky was not concerned with a real speaker-listener or a real speech community but, as he wrote.
Linguistic theory is primarily concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions such as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors in applying his knowledge in actual performance (1965 3)

Chomsky proceeds to argue that only under this idealization can performance be a direct reflection of competence. But in fact, as he points out, a record of natural speech shows that performance cannot reflect competence because it shows deviations from rules, distractions, changes of plan and so on and so forth. The task of the linguist, he claims, as well as the child, is to examine the data available in performance and discover the underlying rules that are mastered by the speaker and put to use in his or her performance. Chomsky described his theory as "mentalistic" because "it is concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behaviour" (ibid 4)

Furthermore, Mathews (1979) argues that generative grammar is considered a theory about the form of the speaker's linguistic competence and that the internalized rules in the mind of the speaker (his competence) are of a generative grammar (pp 11-12). Chomsky explained this clearly when he wrote

"By a generative grammar I mean simply a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assigns structural descriptions to sentences. Obviously, every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized a generative grammar that expresses his knowledge of his language" (ibid 8)
In fact Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence restricts itself to the code or the rule system of the language, and consequently fails to account for the fact that language users considerably vary their speech according to different situations and interlocutors. This theory does not take into account the environmental or sociocultural factors which shape the user's competence. Campbell and Wales (1970) argued that if we want to understand how the child acquires his or her native language, then studies of how he or she learns the grammatical system are inadequate, we have to consider the environmental factors involved in language acquisition.

4.2 Implications for language teaching
As regards language teaching, generative linguistics has had little influence. However, language teachers and applied linguists, as Bell points out, have drawn out some assumptions which had some influence on language teaching. Bell mentions the following:

1. Transformationalists believed that the activities of the body are different from the activities of the mind. Thus learning requires a philosophical rather than a physiological explanation.

2. Since language is primarily a thinking process, "language learning can best be explained as a process of 'problem solving'.
in which the learner attempts to create 'cognitive maps' for himself by means of which he makes sense of the data", the data of the language to which he or she is exposed.

3 Language learning is not a matter of habit formation, but rather a matter of creativity and analysis.

4 Attitudes to errors have changed from being considered a failure to acquire new habits and interference from the mother tongue to being regarded as hypothesis-testing on the part of the learner (Ibid 105-6).

As we have pointed out above generative linguistics had little to offer to language teaching. In fact Chomsky himself was tentative as to the significance of linguistic insights to language teaching. Chomsky wrote:

I am frankly rather sceptical about the significance for the teaching of languages of such insights and understanding as have been obtained in linguistics and Psychology. Surely the teacher of language would do well to keep informed of progress and discussion in these fields and the efforts of linguists and psychologists to approach the problems of language teaching from a principled point of view are extremely worthwhile from an intellectual as well as a social point of view. Still it is difficult to believe that either linguistics or psychology has achieved a level of theoretical understanding that might enable it to support a 'technology' of language teaching. (Quoted by Roulet 1972 42)
What Chomsky did was to show the defects in Skinner's model of learning, but he did not provide an alternative model and never claimed to have done so. His ideas paved the way for substantial developments in linguistics and applied linguistics. "Chomsky," says Roulet, "has contributed a great deal towards this shift of accent to an investigation of learning strategies as a first step towards working out a new teaching methodology and the development of psycholinguistic research." (1972:530)

However, despite the difference between generative linguistics and structural linguistics, the two theories, as Bell argues, share a common view of language in that they consider language as essentially "form and structure in a context-free closed system." This is the reason why Bell labels both theories as "formalist" (1981:99).

In the final analysis, whether in linguistic theory or language teaching, the focus of attention has always been on language structure. It is true that Chomsky criticized structural linguistics, but in his theory emphasis on structure remained. Competence is no more than rules of grammar underlying language structures. This exclusive interest in language as a formal system in both language teaching and linguistic theory, and the limitations of Chomsky's theory brought about a new concern with language as social behaviour and communication. Yalden (1987)
argues that three notable contributions have been made to characterize communication. First is the theory of language functions, second is work on discourse analysis, and third is the communicative competence theory (p 19). In language teaching, however, this new concern was manifested in the communicative approach.
Chapter Two

Communicative competence theories

The notion of communicative competence has enjoyed increasing popularity among linguists and language teaching specialists and has had a great impact on the practice of foreign language teaching. Since Hymes coined the term, it has been widely accepted by linguists, who began to explain, investigate and develop the concept further. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the theoretical premises of Hymes' communicative competence theory and examine later attempts by other linguists to develop this theory. Discussion of communicative competence theory, however, necessitates consideration of the linguistic terms which bear relevance to the term communicative competence. Therefore, examination of the notions of "fluency", "meaning potential", and "capacity" will be the second aim of this chapter.

2.1 Communicative competence theory

Hymes developed his theory of communicative competence in reaction to the limitations of the Chomskyan theory of linguistic competence and its failure to deal with problems of communication. Hymes insisted that linguistic theory should be seen as part of a more general theory which includes culture and communication. Hymes challenged Chomsky's basic assumptions about language.
believed that language use entails knowledge of which linguistic competence is only a part. The aim of linguistics, therefore, was to specify communicative competence. Explaining the need for a social approach to the study of language, Hymes wrote:

We have to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivation concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes towards, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct (1972b: 277-78).

A key component of communicative competence is the socio-cultural component or appropriacy in terms of the rules of social interaction. Appropriacy concerns turn-taking (when to speak), selection of topics (what to talk about), participants (with whom) and the degree of formality (what manner). Hymes argues that such work as Labov's in New York City provides evidence that language users vary their speech according to interlocutors even within a homogeneous speech community. This fact, Hymes points out, shows the need for a social approach to the study of language (p. 276). The essence of this approach is that "there are rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless." For example, in Arab culture, it is inappropriate to mention the prophet's name without saying "peace be upon him." This is a rule the child learns in the process of learning the first language. This simple example shows that there are social as well as grammatical rules underlying language use.
As Hymes argues, children learn how to vary their speech according to different situations, and develop an awareness of speech acts. "From a finite experience of speech acts and their interdependence with sociocultural features, they develop a general theory of the speaking appropriate to their community." (p. 279)

In the Chomskyan theory judgements are of two kinds. Grammaticality regarding competence and acceptability concerning performance. According to Hymes, however, grammatical competence is only one of several sectors of communicative competence. Hymes emphasized that if a theory of language use is to be developed and integrated with theory of communication and culture, then judgements should be of four kinds.

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible.

By formal possibility, Hymes means grammaticality. But he extends the term to include what is formally possible within a cultural system.

2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation.

The question of feasibility concerns psycholinguistic features such as memory limitation, and is related to Chomsky's term.
acceptability in performance. But here again Hymes relates this term to cultural behaviour and uses it to mean "features of the body and features of the material environment."

3 Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate
The issue here concerns the relation of language to social situations. Appropriacy refers to rules of speaking in relation to the context in which it is used and evaluated.

4 Whether (and to what degree) something is done
Hymes explains that although communicative competence is not restricted to occurrences, it should not ignore them. Language users have knowledge of the probabilities of utterances. "Something may be possible, feasible, and appropriate, and not occur." Hymes sums up by saying "the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour" (pp 281-86).

2.2 Communicative competence theory interpretations and elaborations
Canale and Swain (1980) provided a specification of three interacting components of communicative competence which Canale (1983) later subdivided into four. The view on communicative
competence held by Canale and Swain derives from their understanding of the nature of communication. Canale mentions the following characteristics of communication:

a) is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction,

b) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativeness in from and message,

c) takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language and also clues as to correct interpretation,

d) is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distraction,

e) always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise),

f) involves authentic, as opposed to coursebook-contrived language,

g) is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes

Canale draws a distinction between communicative competence and "actual communication". He argues that in Canale and Swain (1980) communicative competence was understood to be "the underlying system of knowledge and skill required for communication " However, by "actual communication" Canale means the manifestation of this knowledge and skill. He emphasizes that in Canale and
Swain communicative competence was understood to include both knowledge (what the speaker knows about language and the communicative use of language) and skill (the ability to perform in actual communication) (p 5)

Canale provides a framework of communicative competence which includes four areas of knowledge and skill

1 Grammatical competence

This refers to all aspects of language system including syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling etc. He argues that this competence "will always be an important concern for any second language programme".

2 Sociolinguistic competence

This competence addresses the appropriacy of utterances with regard to sociolinguistic contexts. Canale points out that appropriateness concerns both meaning (the choice of certain language function) and form (the choice of a certain register). For example, it would be inappropriate for an army officer in a battlefield to politely ask his soldiers to carry out a certain military action (not the proper language function). It would also be inappropriate for an adult to say "how do you do" when introduced to a child (wrong choice of register).
3 Discourse competence

This competence refers to "mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres". By genre, Canale means the type of text such as narratives, scientific reports, business letters, etc. He argues that unity of a text is achieved by means of cohesion in form and coherence in meaning. Consider the following example which illustrates Canale's point:

A: It's very warm in here.
B: I've got flu.
A: I see. Ok.

In terms of structure, these three utterances have no link among them. That is to say, they are not joined by means of any cohesive devices such as pronouns, conjunctions, sentence connectors, demonstratives, etc. Nonetheless, they form coherent discourse. The communicative value of A's utterance is a request to open a window. B understands this and explains that he cannot open the window. A's second remark shows understanding of the situation and acceptance of B's excuse.

4 Strategic competence

Strategic competence, as Canale explains, is the communication strategies a language user employs for two main reasons (A) to
compensate for communication breakdowns which result from momentary loss of a word or a grammatical form, or to compensate for a deficient competence, and (B) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g., deliberately slow and soft speech for rhetorical effects). It seems to me that the first strategies are more important, especially in the earlier stages of second language learning, because they are always needed when learners are involved in actual communication. Canale mentions paraphrase as one of these strategies. If a learner does not know the meaning of the word island, he or she might say "a piece of land surrounded by water" (pp 7-11).

Furthermore, Roberts (1986) points out that a pedagogically utilizable analysis of communicative competence was provided by Di Pietro. According to Di Pietro, Roberts argues, communicative competence can be subdivided into the following sub-competences:

1. **Formal competence**

This is what is generally referred to as linguistic competence. This competence is further divided into grammatical and idiomatic competence. The former refers to the mastery of the systematic features of language while the latter refers to the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately, or knowledge of the unsystematic features of language.
2 Sociocultural competence

This refers to knowledge of rules of social interaction in a given society. It is in this area of knowledge that contrasts between two cultures emerge.

3 Psychological competence

Roberts explains that by psychological competence Di Pietro means "the ability to project one's personality and the ability to use language to achieve personal goals." However, the way people express their feelings and ideas, and talk about their likes and dislikes, I concur with Roberts, is culturally determined in many ways.

4 Performing competence

This competence includes all the devices necessary to start, maintain and finish a dialogue. This ability involves using openers, maintenance strategies and closures. This competence presents many contrasts between cultures. Roberts argues that comments on the weather are non-starters in countries where weather hardly changes. He also mentions that in some cultures it is impolite to go straight to the point when discussing serious matters. However, I do not believe that this is a distinct component of communicative competence, it is rather a part of sociocultural competence. Moreover, performing competence provides a wider view than that provided by Canale's strategic...
Strategic competence refers only to those strategies we use to keep a conversation in progress such as paraphrase, repetition, foreshadowing, use of fillers etc. Performing competence, on the other hand, refers to knowledge of how to initiate, maintain and terminate conversations without sounding impolite or inconsiderate.

Savignon (1983) draws a classroom model of communicative competence based on Canale's framework discussed above. She acknowledges four constituents: (1) grammatical competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) discourse competence, and (4) strategic competence (p. 35). It is worth mentioning here that Savignon draws a diagram suggesting a possible relationship between the four components of communicative competence. She argues that "an increase in one component interacts with the other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence." She makes an interesting point when she argues that sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence allow the learner a certain degree of communicative competence even before he or she acquires any grammatical competence. Strategic competence, as she argues, is present at all levels of proficiency since no one knows all a language even one's own. The interpretation of this argument is that language learners come to the foreign language classroom with a certain amount of communicative competence. This measure of communicative
competence includes "universal rules of social interaction and a willingness or need to communicate through gestures, facial expressions, and other available means " (pp 45-6)

In their review of communicative competence theories, Canale and Swain (1980) subsume these theories under three major headings (1) theories of basic communication skills, (2) sociolinguistic theories of communicative competence, and (3) interactive theories of communicative competence Under the first heading they refer to Savignon and Van Ek Canale and Swain argue that these theories were developed to serve second language programmes The basis of these theories, as they argue, is an emphasis on minimum skills required by learners to put their messages across in a second language They also point out that a communication skills theory tends to de-emphasize other aspects of communicative competence such as appropriateness and grammatical accuracy of utterances (p 9)

Such a view of communicative competence, I believe, is very restrictive We do not teach language simply to enable learners to get their messages across Language learners have diverse needs demanding different levels of proficiency which includes an ability for sociolinguistic variation of language use and a high degree of formal accuracy For example, learners who study English for academic purposes need to be taught more than how to put their messages across because putting one's message across can
be done without appropriacy or grammaticality. Their ability to communicate through basic communication skills does not guarantee that their language competence can meet their academic needs.

Canale and Swain are critical of this view. They argue that "it is not clear that second language learners will develop grammatical accuracy in the course of their second language programme if emphasis is not put on this aspect from the start. It may be that certain grammatical inaccuracies will tend to fossilise" (p 11).

Under the second heading (the sociolinguistic theories) Canale and Swain refer particularly to Hymes and Halliday. These theories, as they argue, are more theoretical than communication skills theories and are concerned with the relation of language to social context. We have discussed Hymes' theory above and we will turn to Halliday later in this chapter.

Finally, under the heading of integrative theories of communicative competence Canale and Swain particularly refer to the work of Widdowson on discourse analysis. However, they refer to these theories as integrative because these pay attention to how utterances are linked to form text and how language functions at the level of discourse.
2.3 Accuracy versus fluency

Brumfit draws a fundamental distinction between accuracy and fluency. This distinction is essentially a methodological rather than a theoretical one. That is to say, it is a distinction which has value for language teachers in making decisions about the content of lessons and the distribution of time between different types of classroom activities. Brumfit insists that this is a technological distinction which is being made in order to produce better teaching (1984: 52).

Accuracy, as Brumfit defines it, is a concern with language usage rather than use, which has been strong in the history of language teaching. In order to clarify the term 'accuracy', Brumfit emphasizes the following points in relation to fluency:

1. The term does not imply that fluent language may not be accurate.

2. The distinction between accuracy and fluency is not one between what is good and bad in teaching.

3. Accuracy can refer to listening and reading as well as speaking and writing.
Language work which focuses on language is always accuracy work, while language work which results in using the language like the mother tongue is always fluency work.

Monitoring may take place during fluency work if it has the same function as it has for native speakers. However, the value of this distinction should not lead teachers to prevent students from showing a concern with both fluency and the formal accuracy of certain language items (ibid 52-3).

On the other hand, the nature of fluency, Brumfit argues, can be understood by contrasting it with accuracy. However, he relates the term fluency to the discussion of the concept in linguistics. He argues that Fillmore (1979) discussed fluency with relevance to production, distinguishing four kinds of ability. Fillmore's four kinds of ability, as quoted by Brumfit, are (1) "the ability to fill time with talk", (2) "the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned and semantically dense sentences", (3) "the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts", and (4) "the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use" (ibid 53-4).

However, Brumfit argues that apart from the first ability, these capacities are not pure linguistic capacities. For example, as he points out, the ability to be creative in language use is
related to "the ability to establish significant relationships between concepts, visual and aural patterns and systems of thought". As we can see here, and as Brumfit explicitly puts it, "Fillmore's discussion is extremely helpful because it draws attention to the interaction between language and knowledge of the world in the development of fluency" (ibid 54-5) If knowledge of the world is important for language fluency, then cultural knowledge is important as part of knowledge of the world.

Fluency, Brumfit concludes, should be regarded as natural language use. Such natural language use is what distinguishes communicative classroom activities from the traditional ones (ibid 57) Brumfit's distinction is extremely useful and can be regarded as a major parameter of a sensible approach. In Chapter six we will argue that an effective communicative approach is one which takes into consideration the polarity of accuracy and fluency.

2.4 Meaning potential

The development of the meaning potential theory is an attempt by Halliday to give a perspective on the nature of language and what we learn when we learn our first language. The approach which Halliday takes is a semantic one, that is to say he interprets the learning of language as the learning of a semantic system.
The viewpoint which he takes is a functional one, he relates the meanings to language functions, to the functions which language serves in the life of the child (Halliday 1975:8)

According to Halliday language potential is a meaning potential. Learning one's language is learning the uses and meanings of language, or developing a meaning potential. In other words, language learning is learning how to mean, and meaning potential is what can be meant. This potential is not what the speaker-hearer knows, it is what he or she can mean (Halliday 1973:24-5)

Language is social behaviour, and this view of language is an acknowledged concern of modern linguistics. Halliday argues that a significant fact about human behaviour in the social environment is that a large part of it is linguistic behaviour. From a sociolinguistic point of view, language is a range of alternatives or a set of options available to the individual in his or her social existence. In this connection, Halliday refers to Malinowski's two types of context: context of situation and context of culture, the understanding of which is important for the understanding of the notion of meaning potential.

Halliday and Hasan (1989) explain that Malinowski's term context of situation refers to what is happening or "the immediate sights and sounds surrounding the event" including
both the verbal and non-verbal environment of the text. The interpretation of this, as they argue, is that one could not understand the message if they did not know what was going on or if they did not have "some sort of audio-video record of what was actually happening at the time." However, the meaning of "the immediate sights and sounds surrounding the event" becomes clear if we know that it means the same as "some sort of audio-video record of what was actually happening at the time" (p 6).

On the other hand, Halliday and Hasan explain the meaning of Malinowski's term "context of culture" as something more than the immediate environment, it is "the total cultural background" of the participants and the activities in which they are engaged. They point out that Malinowski saw that it was necessary to give information about the context of situation and context of culture if the meaning is to be understood (p 6-7).

This is a point of special significance and should be borne in mind as we come to discuss the relation of culture teaching to foreign language teaching in Chapter Five. It will be argued that it is inadequate to teach language out of its cultural context. Moreover, drawing on Malinowski's significant distinction between context of situation and context of culture, it will be suggested that foreign language teaching should specify...
not only the context of situation but also the context of culture if communicative competence is to be developed. Now let us turn to our major concern with the notion of meaning potential.

Halliday argues that the context of culture is the setting for the total set of options while the context of situation is the setting for any particular selection of these options. Furthermore, Halliday points out that Malinowski's two types of context represent the distinction between what can be and what is, or as he puts it "the potential and the actual." The context of culture determines the potential or the set of options and possibilities available, while the choice among these possibilities is determined by the context of situation (ibid 48-9).

I understand that what Halliday means here is that the context of culture offers a wide range of semantic options or meanings (meaning potential) which the language user can choose from or express. But what determines the user's choice of any particular option within this total set of options is the demands of the situation or the context of situation. This argument is comparable to Hymes' notion of what is "formally possible" because he uses the term to refer not only to what is possible within the grammar of the language but also to what is possible within a cultural system.
Hymes (1972a) specifies a number of features which describe the context of situation. Knowledge of these features is important for the understanding of the communicative event. The following are the most important features:

1) Addressor (sender, speaker or writer, and the like)
2) Addressee (receiver, hearer or reader)
3) Channel (speech, writing, singing, body motion etc)
4) Topic (what is being talked about)
5) Setting (time and place of event)
6) Message-form (genres such as sonnets, sermons, love letters etc) (pp 22-23)

Halliday and Hasan (1989) specify three features of the context of situation. These features, as they argue, illustrate the social context of a text.

1) The field of discourse this refers to what is going on and what activities the participants are engaged in. In other words, field of discourse refers to what a text is about or the subject-matter as well as the activity and the nature of the social action taking place.
2 The tenor of discourse this refers to the participants and the nature of their relationship

3 The mode of discourse this refers to what functions the language is serving in the text including the channel (written, spoken, etc) (P 12)

If language is regarded as social behaviour, as Halliday points out, this means that it is a form of 'behaviour potential' or what the speaker can do. But 'can do' or social behaviour includes other types of behaviour than language behaviour. Therefore, if we want to relate the notion of what 'can do' to what the speaker 'can say', then we need the notion of 'can mean' as a link between the two. Thus language is a meaning potential which is the "linguistic realization of the behaviour potential, 'can mean' is 'can do' when translated into language" 'Can mean' is in turn realized in 'can say' as the language system or 'lexico-grammatical potential' (1973 51)

It may be helpful at this stage to explain the meaning of the terms semantics and text as Halliday uses them, because these two terms are closely connected with the notion of meaning potential
2.4.1 Semantics

Halliday defines semantics as "what the speaker can mean". It is the linguistic realization of patterns of behaviour or the behaviour potential. The semantic network gives an account of how social meanings are expressed in language, and at the same time forms the intermediate step between behaviour patterns and linguistic forms (ibid 72). Thus language learning is the learning of a semantic system realized as meaning potential or sets of options in meaning available to the speaker-hearer.

2.4.2 Text

Text is defined by Halliday as any instance of language use, spoken or written in the course of daily life. Halliday calls this language 'operational' distinguishing it from what he calls 'citational' language (language of grammar books and dictionaries). For Halliday text is a semantic unit, it is meaning encoded in lexical, grammatical and phonological units. Moreover, a text is a selection made within a total set of options. This selection or text represents what is said, while the total set of semantic options represents what might have been said but was not, or meaning potential. This argument strongly establishes the relation of text to meaning potential, text is "the actualization of meaning potential (1975 123-4)."
A few words need to be said here about the relation of the concept of meaning potential to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence and Hymes' notion of communicative competence. For Chomsky, competence is defined in terms of the mind, but meaning potential, as Halliday emphasizes, is defined in terms of culture. Linguistic competence is what the speaker knows, but meaning potential is what he or she can do in the sense of can mean. In the Chomskyan theory of competence what the speaker knows is distinct from what he or she does, and the 'does' calls for a theory of performance to explain it. But for Halliday, 'can do' is related to 'does' as "potential to actualize potential" (1973:523).

The notions of communicative competence and meaning potential have been developed within the framework of a social theory of language. Both notions attempt to account for the significant variation in language use. However, Halliday points out that meaning potential is not unlike Hymes' communicative competence except that Hymes defines competence as what the speaker knows, while Halliday talks about what the speaker can do (ibid. 54).

Halliday argues that we have to pay attention to what is said and to what might have been said but was not, if we view language from a social standpoint. Hence Halliday denies the dichotomy between knowing and doing. He objects to the view of language as
having a perfect form (langue, competence) which becomes imperfect or degenerate when it is manifested in speech (parole, performance)

2.5 Capacity versus competence

The term capacity has been developed by Widdowson and stands in contrast to Hymes' well-established concept of communicative competence. Widdowson argues that Hymes objections to Chomsky's notion of competence was not directed at its nature, they are directed at the limitations of this theory which did not account for other than the structural aspect of language.

What constitutes communicative competence is the speaker's ability to judge and assess the extent to which a certain expression conforms to linguistic and social rules of language behaviour. Widdowson argues that this capability is of an analytic nature which does not recognize the meaning of an expression "but the degree of normality it indicates".

Widdowson explains the difference between competence and capacity as one between an ethnographic and ethnomethodological approach to the study of linguistic behaviour. That is to say, competence is concerned with analyzing and describing linguistic behaviour and providing a model of description. Or as Widdowson
puts it competence "is not a model of member knowledge of language use, but one which provides the means for analyzing member behaviour from the outside."

On the other hand, as an ethnomethodological concept, capacity is "the ability to use knowledge of a language as a source for the creation of meaning, and is concerned not with assessment but interpretation." In other words, Widdowson points out that capacity refers to a language user's perspective rather than an analyst model of language behaviour. This is one reason why he prefers the term capacity. The second reason is that competence seems to imply conformity, whether to the language system or the social norms. Widdowson objects to this assumption that language is rule-governed behaviour and a system that we apply when we communicate.

Searle (1972) makes a subtle distinction which could be used to explain this lack of consensus on whether or not language is rule-governed behaviour. He argues that "to perform illocutionary acts is to engage in a rule-governed form of behaviour. I should argue that such things as asking questions or making statements are rule-governed in ways quite similar to those in which getting a base hit in baseball or moving a knight in chess are rule-governed forms of acts" (p 137).
Searle argues that the denial of some philosophers of the view that meaning is a matter of rules is the result of a failure to perceive the distinction between different kinds of rules. Searle draws a significant distinction between two types of rules: regulative and constitutive rules. The former regulate forms of behaviour which are prior to an independent of those rules, such as rules of etiquette which regulate previously existing personal relationships. The latter, however, "do not merely regulate but create or define new forms of behaviour." The game of football, Searle argues, can not exist apart from the rules of this game.

Searle argues that what most philosophers have in mind is the model of regulative rules. But he hypothesizes that "semantics of a language can be regarded as a series of systems of constitutive rules and that illocutionary acts are acts performed in accordance with these sets of rules" (ibid 138-9).

As regards the relation of 'capacity' to 'meaning potential,' Widdowson describes capacity as "a force for the realization of what Halliday calls the 'meaning potential' of language." It seems to me that the relation of the term 'capacity' to the notion of 'meaning potential' is stronger than that Halliday explains that the mother understands everything the child says because she knows his or her meaning potential (1975 124). And Widdowson argues that capacity accounts for our ability to understand expressions.
which break rules. The two notions account for the same thing. Furthermore, Widdowson describes capacity as "the ability to exploit the resources for meaning ", which means the same as Halliday's definition of meaning potential as what the speaker can mean (All information and quotations are in Widdowson 1983 23-7).

Finally, it seems appropriate to illustrate communicative competence theories in a table showing the term used by each researcher, what aspect of communicative competence he or she emphasizes and the general theoretical standpoint from which he or she views the notion of communicative competence. However, it is important to mention that this table should be seen in relation to the discussion provided above.
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Theories of communicative competence
Towards a pedagogical framework of communicative competence

Drawing on analyses provided by Hymes, Canale, Di Pietro and Savignon, and discussed above, I suggest a pedagogical framework of communicative competence. According to this framework, communicative competence is divided into the following three components:

1. Systematic competence
   This competence refers to mastery of the formal system or the regular features of language and covers the following areas of knowledge and skill:
   
   a) Syntax competence in syntax covers grammaticality or well-formedness of utterances
   b) Pronunciation or mastery of the sound system
   c) Intonation
   d) Spelling

2. Cultural competence
   This competence refers to the ability to use language in its cultural and social context, and the awareness (conscious or unconscious) of the social routines and conventions associated with language use in authentic communication. This competence can be further broken down into the following areas:
a) **Social competence** this refers to the potentiality for using utterances which are appropriate to a given situation. Appropriacy here derives from the right choice of register, degree of formality and measure of politeness. In other words, it relates to speech situation and the relationship among participants (for discussion of speech situation, speech acts and participants see Hymes 1974).

b) **Idiomatic competence** this concerns the ability to understand and reproduce idioms, figurative expressions and proverbs. Appropriacy is very important here since the use of an idiom in the wrong situation could cause embarrassment. Moreover, this area of knowledge provides a lot of insights into the target culture.

c) **Paralinguistic competence** this competence covers the area of paralinguistic features which we use with or instead of words or utterances to convey messages. These include gestures, facial expressions, body movements, eye contact etc.

d) **Tactical competence** this includes knowledge of communication strategies related to how to start a dialogue, how to avoid communication breakdowns and keep a conversation going, and how to finish it. These strategies include what Di Pietro called openers, maintenance strategies and closures.
3 Discourse competence

Savignon (1985) argues that Widdowson understands communicative competence as "an ability to interpret discourse" (Widdowson's words) (p 30) Discourse competence is used here in this sense and in the sense which Canale explains (see above) It is an ability to interpret and reproduce longer pieces of spoken or written text, the meaning of which is more than the meaning of its separate utterances

2.7 Summary and conclusion

To try to discuss every interpretation of the communicative competence theory is an impossible task What I have tried to do is to discuss the theory in its original form and to consider some of the later interpretations and developments of this theory I have also proposed a pedagogical framework of communicative competence based on my understanding of the theory, and on models and frameworks proposed by other researchers My intention was to provide a framework that could have relevance to foreign language classrooms and cover the different areas of knowledge and skill required by learners if they are to use language for communication

It is important to notice that the views on communicative competence discussed above do not contradict but complement each other All these researchers agree that language knowledge
includes much more than grammatical knowledge. They emphasize the sociocultural character of language use and insist that communicative competence is basically an ability to understand and perform speech acts. They also make it clear that communicative competence is of an interactive nature and that it is more than the sum of its parts. I have also considered the notions of 'fluency', 'meaning potential' and 'capacity' because of their relation to the notion of communicative competence. Capacity can be seen as natural language use and an ability to use language effectively in a variety of situations.

Meaning potential is a set of options, or a range of alternatives that are at the disposal of the speaker-hearer. These options are semantic options or options in meaning. Language learning is learning how to mean or develop a meaning potential. However, within the framework of a social theory, meaning potential is a form of behaviour potential. It is the linguistic realization of behaviour potential. Meaning potential is also realized in the syntactic, lexical and phonological structure of language.

Capacity is a continuous ability for the creation of meaning. It is an ability to create meaning using all resources available. Capacity is concerned with the interpretation rather than the assessment of expressions. Therefore it is of an interpretative rather than an analytic nature.
Finally, from the preceding discussion of communicative competence theories and related concepts, the following significant implications for foreign language teaching can be inferred:

1. Since knowledge of a language is not simply grammatical, language teaching should go beyond grammar teaching.
2. Language is use. Encouraging learners to perform in actual situations is the best way to learn.
3. Because language is a cultural phenomenon, it is inadequate to teach language void of culture.
4. Language learners should be taught how to vary their speech according to situations and interlocutors.
5. Language teaching must provide conditions under which the communicative quality of language can be revealed. This implies the teacher devising situations to stimulate learners to converse and exchange meaning.
6. Language teaching coursebooks and materials as well as the teacher should provide ample information on both the context of situation and the context of culture of the second language data.
7. The ability to perform language functions is important in foreign language proficiency.
8. Language teaching should result in an ability to understand and produce discourse.
9. The classroom should function as a 'micro-culture' of the target 'macro-culture'.

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Part II

Pedagogical Applications
Chapter Three
Communicative competence theories in language teaching

3.1 Introduction
Language teaching has been characterized recently by a shift of interest from mastering language structures to mastery of language use. The basis of this change, however, is the awareness that language is not simply a grammatical system, but rather a social and cultural phenomenon. Widdowson (1979a) argued that when we communicate we do not only compose correct sentences, but we also perform different speech acts which are "essentially of a social nature" (p. 118).

Based on the view that language is a social system, Allen and Widdowson (1979) proposed an approach to language teaching in which the communicative character of language can be focussed upon. This approach is an attempt to move from a concern with grammatical forms to a concern with language functions. This approach came to be known as the communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT).

Widdowson (1978) criticized structural language teaching and drew a significant distinction between usage and use. Usage is the manifestation of grammatical knowledge in correct sentences.
Use, on the other hand, is the realization of this knowledge as meaningful communicative behaviour. This distinction has become a basic polarity in language teaching and a criterion which distinguishes between two different approaches to language teaching, namely the structural approach, which focuses on language usage and the communicative approach, which focuses on language use. One of the most influential theoretical concepts which brought about this change in teaching methodology was, beyond any doubt, the concept of communicative competence.

My concern in this chapter, however, is firstly to show how language teaching methodology and syllabus design has been influenced by theories of communicative competence, and secondly to consider the procedures and techniques utilized by CLT to promote the learners' communicative competence.

3.2 Communicative competence theory in teaching methodology

The introduction of the communicative competence theory by Hymes marked a turning point in linguistics and gained popularity among applied linguists, who started to investigate the ways in which this theory might be put to practice. Howatt (1987) points out that Hymes' remark "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" became the motto of the communicative movement. He argues that Hymes' paper "became one of the basic readings for communicative language teaching, and arguably, it gave CLT its name. At all events the phrase communicative competence was universally adopted to describe the aims and objectives of all communicative language teaching" (p. 19). Johnson and Morrow (1981) also point out that CLT recognizes as
its aim the teaching of communicative competence (p 10) This argument forcefully establishes the relation of communicative competence to CLT

Communicative language teaching is a term used to refer to a number of developments in teaching methodology Brumfit and Johnson (1979) maintain that the areas of study which contributed directly or indirectly to CLT can be considered under three main headings the sociolinguistic, the philosophical and the linguistic Under the first heading they mention the works of Hymes, Gumperz and Goffman In philosophy they refer to the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) In linguistic theory they refer to European and British linguistics, especially the influence of Halliday Moreover, Brumfit and Johnson mention the relevance of work on discourse analysis to CLT (pp 24-5) In this chapter, however, CLT will be generally conceived as a teaching process the aim of which is to lead to a communicative ability or develop communicative competence in non-native speakers

3.3 The communicative content

In terms of content interest in communicative competence brought about a broader view of the content on which learners will be working This interest in the language component expanded to include, in addition to structures, functions and notions The communicative content expanded in three major directions

1 Conceptual and functional meaning

Any speech act has two levels of meaning its conceptual meaning and its illocutionary force The conceptual meaning of a speech
act refers to its literal meaning, whilst illocutionary force refers to its function. For example, if a person who is late for a meeting walks in and says "There was a terrible traffic jam", we can say that the conceptual meaning of the utterance is a description of the state of traffic, but the illocutionary force or the function is an apology for being late. Thus CLT presents the language content in a way which prioritizes the functions which speech acts have in authentic language use.

2 Sociocultural appropriateness
Concern with teaching communicative competence meant that learners need to acquire not only grammatical rules which govern the construction of sentences but also the sociocultural norms which determine the use of speech acts. Consequently, language content expanded to include demonstrations of how language is used in social situations. For example, it was not enough to teach learners how to say "how do you do?" correctly in terms of grammar, but also to teach them when to say this and to whom.

3 Discourse level
Unlike structural language teaching which was concerned with single sentences as basic units, CLT concerned itself with longer spans of authentic language which extend beyond the level of isolated sentences. Moreover, concern with discourse entailed recognition of the significance of strategies which bring utterances together to make coherent discourse (See Dubin and Olshtain 1986).
3.4 Communicative processes

In a strictly methodological sense CLT can be seen as a process whereby the exploitation of a variety of classroom activities is the means and the development of communicative competence is the end. As regards communicative activities, Littlewood (1981, 17-18) mentioned the following functions:

1. They provide whole-task practice, that is they enable the learners to practice language as a total skill and ability. A good example of this type of activity is the use of debates and discussions where the learner has the opportunity to practice language as a system of integrated skills and abilities rather than as discrete grammatical, phonological or other abilities.

2. They improve motivation because they allow the learners to take part in actual communication with others. What Littlewood means here is that such activities as pair-work, group-work, role-play and the like allow the learners to engage in communication and use language they have already learnt. In this case learners will be motivated because they feel that their learning is relevant to their needs.

3. They allow natural learning which takes place when the learner is engaged in using language to communicate. The interpretation of this is that in the process of communication learners unconsciously acquire new language because focus is on communication rather than the conscious learning of certain language features.
They create an environment which supports learning by developing relationships among students and between students and the teacher. Language learning would be facilitated if the classroom functioned as a micro-community. Communication activities such as group-work or role-play help develop confidence and familiarity among students and create a sense of belonging to a group, which has a positive psychological effect on students.

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) recognize ten different categories of communicative activities or what they call "workouts." Apart from structural activities we list the following categories:

1. Warm-ups/Relaxers: These are activities which are intended to motivate by adding an enjoyment element especially when a period of relief is needed. These include songs, games, puzzles, etc.
2. Information-Centred Tasks: These tasks allow natural language use while students are engaged in "fact-gathering" activities such as gathering information outside the classroom and interviews.
3. Theatre Games: These games are intended to simulate reality and yield natural language use. Examples are role playing of different kinds and storytelling.
4. Mediations/Interventions: These are activities in which learners use language in attempt to bridge information gaps such as interacting with each other using incomplete information.
5. Group Dynamics Activities: These are activities which provide opportunities for learners to exchange ideas, feelings, and emotions. Such activities include discussions which centre around topics of personal interest.
6 Problem-solving Tasks these tasks involve learners in using language in order to make decisions and solutions, e.g., posing a problem and asking the group to come up with a solution.

7 Skill-getting Strategies these are activities which focus on developing specific skills. To develop writing skills, for instance, learners may be presented with scrambled language and asked to compose paragraphs (pp 98-9).

3.4.1 Task-based learning

It is reasonable to argue that interest in learning tasks came as a result of the rise of the communicative approach. Over the last few years, however, learning tasks have been the focus of a great deal of attention. Before we discuss tasks and what their use in the classroom entails, it seems appropriate to start with defining the term "task." In a dictionary of applied linguistics, task is defined as:

an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e., as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an interaction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake (Richards, Platt and Weber 1985 289, also quoted in Nunan 1989 6).

As we can see from this definition, tasks are used in order to provide conditions under which the use of language for the expression of meaning is made possible. Nunan mentions a definition supplied by Breen. A task is
any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular object, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to the more complex and lengthy activities such as a group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making (Quoted in Nunan 1989:6).

As the above two definitions indicate, a large number of activity types which we have classified and exemplified in the previous section can be referred to as tasks. We should mention here that it is difficult, as Nunan notes, to provide a definition or criterion which distinguishes between tasks and other activity types. Making such distinctions "will always be partly intuitive and judgemental" (p. 11).

Nunan points out that the definitions which we have looked at define tasks in terms of communicative language use in which the learners' major preoccupation is conveying meaning rather than attention to language form. In his definition of a task, Nunan also prioritizes the same criterion. He considers task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while, their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form." Discussing what constitutes a task, Nunan recognizes six components: (1) goal, (2) input data, (3) activity, (4) teacher role, (5) learner role, and (6) setting (Ibid. 10-11).

To illustrate how a task may be analysed, we consider the task where students are required to listen to a tape-recorded short story and then re-tell the story.
Goal 1) listening comprehension  
2) Language production  

Input data  a tape-recorded short story  

Activity  1) listening  
2) note-taking  
3) story telling  

Teacher role  Monitor  

Learner role  1) listener  
2) writer  
3) narrator  

Setting  classroom/individual work  

Breen (1989) provides an analysis of learning tasks comparable to Nunan's. He identifies five interrelated components: (1) task objective, (2) task content, (3) task procedure, (4) learner contribution, and (5) task situation and teacher contribution. Breen's conception of a task is that it is a means for learning the purpose of which is to develop a communicative ability. Therefore, task evaluation is carried out in terms of its 'communicativeness.' Breen points out three important criteria against which tasks can be evaluated: (i) the extent to which it addresses learner definitions of progress, (ii) the extent to which it is developmental towards the demands of the target language and its use, and (iii) the extent to which it is open to diversity and change in learner knowledge and capability.
The first criterion implies that a task should be directly related to learners' immediate needs as they perceive them. The second criterion implies that a task will be developmental if it employs the learner's previous knowledge, skills, and abilities for communication. The third criterion acknowledges that learners' contribution to the task is unpredictable and therefore a task should support the diversity of the learning process. As Breen aptly put it, "To serve as a means for learning, our task needs to anticipate that different learners will bring different knowledge and capabilities to it. It needs to overtly call upon and engage the differences in what learners know and can do as the bases for real change, and it has to positively allow for different learners to learn different things, in different ways, at different moments even in the pursuit of some common overall objective." (Ibid. 192)

As the previous argument clearly indicates, the learner occupies a central position. Concerning the selection of task content, Breen emphasizes that appropriate content should be selected from the learners' point of view. He suggests three alternative ways of making this selection.

First, learners may be asked to look for examples in the language data which they consider familiar or unfamiliar, and then identify those aspects which they regard as more difficult. Because this selection of data will have aspects which are problematic for some learners but easy for others, it can be worked on to reveal both the known and the unknown. "The former",...
as Breen puts it, "can serve as input for later work, whilst the
latter can reveal new directions for work." The second alternative
is to ask students to bring into the classroom language data which
they are interested in. Individuals or small groups will identify
what is familiar and work on what is problematic in a way similar
to the previous procedure. The third alternative requires that
the teacher presents learners with a selection of language data
and ask them to discover and identify familiar content which will
be utilized as the starting point for working on unfamiliar
content (ibid 198-9).

This approach to the selection of task content is extremely
useful. It is sensitive to learner needs and interests. It
involves learners in a process of decision-making where they have
to be aware of their needs, learning styles and personal
interests. However, we believe that this approach will be more
successful with homogeneous groups of learners where needs and
interests do not contradict. But in the case of heterogeneous
groups, this approach could cause problems. If teachers insist
that learners select the content of learning tasks from data which
personally interest them, they will be confronted with a wide
selection of topics in which many particular topics do not meet
the demands and interests of many members in the group because the
interests of the group are diverse. In this case learners will not
be working on what is interesting for them as a group, but on
what is interesting for a particular individual or individuals in
the group, and then the major pillar of this approach, that is
language which is interesting, will collapse. However, the
teacher could solve this problem by asking groups of students who
have the same interests to choose their task content, and when this is not possible the teacher could even ask each individual to undertake a separate task.

3.4.2 Role-play

One characteristic of a communicative classroom is the frequent and meaningful use of role-play activities. They are extremely helpful in the sense that they are intended to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world, and to encourage authentic language use. Sturtridge (1981) maintains that these activities "can reduce the artificiality of the classroom, provide a reason for talking and allow the learner to talk meaningfully to other learners" (p. 126).

In real life, however, three conditions should be available in order for communication to take place: a reason for communication, a subject to talk about, and at least two participants. The significance of role-play activities becomes clear if we understand that they provide these conditions and produce meaningful communication which is the ultimate goal of all CLT.

Furthermore, an important fact about real life communication is that the participants in any speech event have the freedom to choose from a wide range of meanings or, in Halliday's terms, a meaning potential. Sturtridge argues that role-play activities "have an element of freedom of choice for the student (ibid 126). This element comes from the fact that in a role-play language
behaviour is uncontrolled and the outcome is always uncertain. The following is an example of a role-play activity from Sturtridge:

You meet your friend B at school. You are having a party on Saturday and you would like B to come. Tell B when to come. Say how glad you are that he is coming. (p 127)

3.4.3 Games and problem-solving activities

"Games and game-like activities have an obvious and important place in a theory of language learning based on the development of communicative competence." (Maley 1981:137)

Maley also makes an interesting point when he argues that it is true that games are not real in the sense that they are similar to the kind of activities the learners will be engaged in outside the classroom, but what is important is that the behaviour associated with them is real language behaviour. The difference between such activities and role-play, Maley points out, is that in game-like activities the learner is free to project his own personality rather than acting as someone else. As regards the function of these activities, Maley argues that they facilitate natural, unconscious learning (acquisition) rather than deliberate, conscious learning (ibid 137)

Concerning the distinction between games and problem-solving activities, Maley argues that it is hard to draw a sharp distinction. Games contain some sort of problem-solving element.
and problem-solving activities "do not fail to entertain in a game-like way." The only difference, according to Maley, is that in games the outcome is a winner while in problem-solving the result is a solution (ibid 138). Below is an example of a game and an example of a problem-solving activity.

You are a witness

Students are told they will be witnessing an event which they will subsequently have to remember and report on in detail. A colour slide is then projected for a very brief lapse of time (e.g. 5 seconds). Each student individually writes down what he remembers. Small groups are then formed to compare notes. Finally, the slide is shown again for comment, comparison with reports, and discussion (Ibid 138).

Split dialogues

A series of two-line dialogues is cut up into individual utterances e.g.

1 A What are you doing?
   B what's that got to do with you?
2 A How's he feeling?
   B No idea
These are distributed at random, one to each participant. The activity consists of finding the other half of your dialogue. Normally more than one solution is possible and in the round-up session interesting new combinations are revealed (ibid 142).

3.4.4 Information gap exercises

CLT aims at teaching communication. And communication implies conveying meaning and transferring information. It is important therefore to devise situations in which students can exchange meaning. Information gap exercises are one way of achieving this (Brumfit and Johnson 1979 and Johnson 1982).

Johnson (1982) argues that conveying information involves an element of doubt. It is quite absurd to convey a piece of information to people who already know it. Johnson makes an interesting point when he argues that "It is the absence of this element of doubt in much language teaching which makes it non-communicative (pp 150-51)."

It is on the basis that information gaps involve an element of doubt which characterizes genuine communication that they are commonly used in communicative teaching. Information gaps can be created in a variety of ways. Johnson mentioned that Wright (1978) achieved it by means of projecting a slide in blurred focus and then asking students to speculate about what they can see. Byrne (1978), Johnson argues, created information gaps by
providing "incomplete plans and diagrams which students have to complete by asking for information" Johnson also mentioned Geddes and sturtridge (1979), who directed students to listen to different taped materials and then communicate their contents to other students in the classroom" (ibid 151)

Johnson proceeds to argue that one way of creating an information gap is by providing some people with information which the others do not know Another way of doing this, as he argues, is to allow the students the freedom to choose what to say He maintains that the notions of choice and doubt in communication are closely connected since a listener will be in doubt as to what is to be said only because the speaker can choose from a wide range of semantic options Therefore, Johnson argues that "if we create classroom situations in which the students are free to choose what to say, the essential information gap will have been created" (ibid 152) Communication, however takes place in the learners' attempt to bridge the gap by asking for or providing information

Furthermore, it is true that communication involves exchange of information, but it should be noticed, as Brown (1981) points out, that in real life we do not always exchange information in our daily interaction with people, we quite often talk to people in order to establish a relationship or just to pass the time She draws an important distinction between transactional speech, where giving information is the aim, and interactional speech, where the maintenance of a relationship rather than exchanging information is the aim This distinction is significant for
language teaching which should place equal emphasis on both transactional as well as interactional speech. Ignorance of the social rather than the informative nature of interactional conversations could result in responding to "How are you?" as to a genuine question, or interpreting the numerous comments on the weather in English as real weather commentaries.

3.5 Communicative principles

It has been argued above that communicative activities are generally used to create an environment in which natural, authentic language use and rapid L2 acquisition are facilitated. But in order for these activities to be truly communicative, they should be based on certain communicative principles. Johnson (1982) discussed five principles underlying communicative activities.

1. The information transfer principle

This principle refers to a focus on the learner's ability to understand and convey information. Johnson provides an example in which students are asked to read two letters containing information about two people who want to join a sports club and then fill in application forms for these people deriving information from the letters. Johnson explains that this exercise provides reading comprehension practice and that a productive form could be devised by asking students to read the completed application forms and then write the original letters.
2 The information gap principle

Johnson argues that transferring information is not quite the same as conveying information. The former, as he explains, "involves a transmission of 'medium' (from letter to application form, for example) while the transmission in the latter is from person to person." He argues that this principle is useful for teaching the speaking skill because it "creates a condition of unexpectedness," that is, student 1 does not already know what student 2 will say. This element of unexpectedness, as he maintains, is not crucial in writing because of the absence of face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, he insists that there are two good reasons why the information gap principle could be used for both speaking and writing. First, because it allows genuine communication in the classroom. Second, because assessment of spoken or written work is done in terms of successful communication (See 3.4.4 for examples).

3 The jig-saw principle

The jig-saw exercise is created by devising situations whereby different students are provided with different bits of information which centre around the same subject. Students then communicate the information content to each other and complete the jig-saw. An example of this type of activity is getting students to listen to different pieces of a taped dialogue and then talk about what they heard with each other in order to complete the whole dialogue. Another example is when different students read different extracts from a newspaper article and then rearrange the segments in the correct, original order.
4 The task dependency principle
Activities based on this principle employ the technique of creating a task which cannot be done unless a previous task has been successfully carried out. For example, a student performs the task of drawing a picture utilizing his or her partner's previous task of describing that picture.

5 The correction for content principle
This principle is closely connected with the previous one. Johnson argues that students know that their work will not be assessed for grammatical accuracy by the teacher, but will be evaluated by their partners for its efficacy in the completion of the task. For example, if the picture or diagram produced by student 2 was not satisfactory, this should result in revising student 1's description of them. Johnson argues that according to this principle the students' linguistic performance should be evaluated on terms of its communicative validity. However, he makes it clear that this principle does not deny the importance of teacher correction for grammatical precision at some other stage (Johnson 1982 164-72).

To the above five principles I would add

6 The suspension of disbelief principle
It is extremely important for the undertaking of any communicative activity that the learners undergo the suspension of disbelief process. It means that learners forget that what they are doing (a role-play, for example) is only fiction and engage in the
activity as if it were real. As many applied linguists have often observed, the discrepancy between the classroom and the real world is so great that it can never be completely eradicated. However, the learners' suspension of disbelief helps minimize the disparity between the classroom and real life.

Engaging in communicative tasks and activities is like watching a dramatic performance. One cannot enjoy them unless they forget that it is all acting. However, the more convincing the actors' roles are, the more enjoyable the performance would be. Likewise, the more authentic the language that students work with, the easier their suspension of disbelief and engagement in communication would be.

3.6 Communicative competence in syllabus design

Before we consider the impact of the notion of communicative competence on EFL and ESL syllabus design, it is important to stress that we will be talking about communicative competence not only in its original form but also in the wider sense which has been developed by many researchers (see Chapter II). Hence communicative competence will be generally conceived as a complex of skills, abilities and knowledge necessary for engaging in speech events, understanding and producing discourse, and the creative negotiation of meaning.

Our major concern here is to examine the influence of the communicative competence theories on the different communicative syllabus types. However, it seems appropriate to begin with a
review of the structural syllabus, the weaknesses and shortcomings of which gave rise to the need for a pedagogically more effective syllabus type.

3.6.1 The structural syllabus

The structural syllabus (also known as formal or grammatical) is the oldest and most familiar syllabus in the history of language teaching. The origins of this syllabus, as Breen (1987a) points out, can be found in the teaching of the classical languages. The content of the formal syllabus are strongly dependent upon the linguist's description of language. This syllabus primarily focuses upon the systematic aspects of language and therefore places more emphasis on grammar, phonology and morphology. Thus it leads learners to an aspect of language competence which is characterized by grammatical accuracy (p. 85).

The basic principle on which the grammatical syllabus sequences and organizes the language content which is to be presented to learners is linguistic complexity. This principle implies that units will present less complex structures earlier and then progress towards more complex structures in subsequent units. Another principle is frequency of occurrence or usefulness of linguistic structures and lexis. This principle implies that consideration may be taken of those structure and vocabulary items which are more commonly used and therefore more useful for learners. In this case structures of high frequency will be introduced first (ibid. 86).
Breen argues that there are four major arguments supporting the structural syllabus. The first is the fact that it relies on a long tradition of linguistic analysis and language teaching, and is compatible with many teachers' views of language. The second argument is that it presents language in a systematic way which helps learners see rules and patterns and consequently reduces the learning burden. When the learners master the rules they will be able to use them generatively in other instances.

The third argument for the structural syllabus is that since language is an analyzable system, it may be easier for learners to see how the system operates if we provide them with a plan which incorporates the "analytical categories and schemas" of the language system. The fourth argument, however, is that the structural syllabus "calls upon the human capacity to be meaningful, to reflect upon, talk about, and try to work out just how a language works. In other words the formal syllabus directly addresses our wish to impose order upon the seeming chaos of an everyday activity such as using language" (ibid 86-7).

Recently, however, winds of change have swept linguistic theory and language teaching. Many people were dissatisfied with the structural syllabus and offered suggestions for a new syllabus type which is based on a wider and pedagogically more utilizable theory of language competence, viz communicative competence.
Wilkins (1979) argued that the grammatical syllabus fails to provide conditions necessary for the acquisition of communicative competence. Instead, he proposed a semantic or notional syllabus which ensures the communicative value of the language to be taught. Munby (1978) argued that Wilkins' notional approach (later called communicative) "is much more relevant to the development of communicative competence of the learner, and therefore less wasteful, than the commonplace grammatical syllabus. The communicative syllabus has potentially wider applicability." (p 25)

Munby formed a model for the specification of communicative competence and the design of a communicative syllabus. In the formation of this model, he derived insights from a broad theory of communicative competence which is basically sociocultural in nature. Munby wrote:

What is needed is a theoretical framework that stems from a sociolinguistic view of knowledge and communication, where the contextual or environmental factors which constrain competence, or are involved in the development of communicative competence or in the realization of meaning potential are predominantly sociocultural (p 21).

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) argued that the basis of the functional-notional approach is sensitivity to learners' needs and the awareness of the fact that the ability to use real appropriate language for communication should be the goal of foreign language teaching. Yalden (1983) made a significant contribution to syllabus design. She argued that the sociological components of communicative competence must be taken into account in developing the content of the syllabus. Yalden (1986) argued that
"in applied linguistics and in language teaching, an important concern during the 1970s and 1980s has been the application of the functional theories to syllabus design" (pp 31-2) Wilkins (1976) distinguished between the synthetic approach (leading to linguistic competence) and the analytic approach (leading to communicative competence) Based on the analytic approach Wilkins proposed three parameters for the specification of a semantic (communicative) syllabus

a) the semantic (what to communicate)
b) the functional (why we communicate)
c) the formal (how we communicate) (p 21-2)

The label 'communicative syllabus' will be used here to refer to a number of developments in syllabus design, namely the functional-notional, the task-based, the process and the relational syllabuses

3.6.2 The functional syllabus

The functional-notional syllabus was developed in the mid 1970s as an alternative to the structural syllabus The basic linguistic idea which influenced the development of this syllabus was Hymes' notion of communicative competence which entailed knowledge of language as both a structural system and a sociocultural system of conventions and rules developed within speech communities The functional syllabus arose from the Council of Europe and the works of Wilkins (1972, 1976) in particular Wilkins explained the rationale of the notional syllabus as
The advantages of the notional syllabus is that it takes the communicative facts of language into account from the beginning without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors. It is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence and because its evident concern with the use of language will sustain the motivation of the learners (Wilkins 1976:19).

Describing the functional syllabus Breen writes:

Derived primarily from developments in linguistic theory, the functional syllabus captures a redefinition of language knowledge. It focuses upon the learner's knowledge of Speech Acts or the processes a learner may achieve through language in particular social activities or events. It therefore gives priority to the different purposes a language can serve and how these functions are coded (or textualized) through the language (p. 88).

The aim of learners working within the functional syllabus is not only to be accurate but also to be appropriate in their performance. The order in which this syllabus selects and sequences the content, as Breen points out, is "from general sets of functions to more specific functions, and from the most common realizations of certain functions to more varied or 'refined' realization of these functions. In this way, sequencing is from the general to the particular or, more precisely, cyclic in nature." He also argues that functional syllabuses designed for specific purposes, such as occupational or academic purposes, may also follow the route of sequencing from "most needed" functions to "less needed" ones, or from the most common functions to less common ones in the particular language situation (ibid. 89). A good example of this approach is Jones (1977).

Few years later, the claims of the notional syllabus to teach communicative competence and take account of language use were seriously challenged. Widdowson (1979b) points out several
weaknesses. He doubts that an inventory of functions takes into account the facts of communication. What the proponents of the functional syllabus fail to discern is that communication does not take place through isolated, decontextualized functional or notional units. Communication, as Widdowson puts it, "takes place as discourse, whereby meanings are negotiated through interaction." What the notional syllabus offers is "a collection of idealized elements" which are isolated from their context (p. 253).

Widdowson points out that Wilkins' (1976) description of semantic and pragmatic rules is incomplete and inaccurate. These rules reveal nothing about how people apply them when communication is attempted. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that the notional syllabus can lead to communicative competence when it does not take into account one of its most important aspects. In the final analysis, instead of presenting lists of language items labelled sentences, the notional syllabus presents lists of language items labelled functions and notions. Nonetheless, Widdowson acknowledges that the shift from sentence to notion was an advance, but it is only the beginning. He insists that "If we are to adopt a communicative approach to teaching which takes as its primary purpose the development of the ability to do things with language, then it is discourse which must be at the centre of our attention." (Ibid. 254) This approach was adopted by other syllabus types, especially the relational syllabus, as we shall see.
The task-based syllabus, as Breen (1987b) explains, represents a view of communicative competence as "the undertaking and achievement of a range of tasks". It focuses on what learners need if they are to participate in communication. They "need to know how meaning is coded in written and spoken texts in ways in which the meaning can be shared with other people within the social group or culture" (p. 161). In other words, what this syllabus aims to develop in learners is a meaning potential.

Breen proceeds to argue that the task-based syllabus does not prioritize linguistic knowledge and language functions alone; it views language as an organic unit in which any instance of use requires the user to derive or select from a linguistic, sociolinguistic, and semantic repertoire (ibid. p. 161). In other words, the task-based syllabus is three-dimensional linguistic, sociolinguistic, and semantic.

The task-based syllabus, as Breen explains, plans the content in terms of two task types, namely communicative tasks and learning tasks. The former focus on the meaningful use of language in written and spoken communication, whilst the latter focus on learning the knowledge systems of language, solve any communication problems and prepare for communication (ibid. p. 161).

The following example will illustrate the difference. When the learners undertake the task of exploring the social routines and the paralinguistic features associated with closing conversations.
in the target language, or when they practice the production of particular sounds or intonational tones, then we can say they are performing a learning or metacommunicative (about the language) task. But when they undertake a task in which they are required or encouraged to converse with each other in the target language exploiting all knowledge systems, then they are carrying out a communication task, that is using language to convey messages. The former task, however, encourages and facilitates their engagement in the latter.

The aim of the teaching/learning process within a task-based syllabus is for learners to develop a sense of accuracy, appropriacy and meaningfulness. Unlike formal and functional syllabuses, Breen points out, this syllabus "does not take the four skills as the important manifestation of the language user's capabilities, but calls upon those abilities which underlie all language use and which the four skills reflect in an indirect way" (ibid 162).

Because of its abandonment of a skill-oriented approach, the task-based syllabus, I believe, has a potential risk of not taking into account the fact that some students need to develop oral skills more than they need to develop reading and writing or vice versa. These needs are important in ESP courses, where a particular group of learners need to develop a particular skill or knowledge area more than another group. For instance, learners who need English for research purposes are required to perform better in reading and writing than speaking and listening. Likewise, learners who need English for travel purposes need to
perform better in speaking and listening than in reading and writing. This is especially true in short term ESP courses, where students need immediate progress while there is not enough time to focus upon language as a total skill.

It should be noted here that I am not advocating a skill-oriented approach. Nor am I suggesting that the task-based syllabus necessarily de-emphasizes learners' needs to develop different abilities. This could happen only if a strong version were adopted. It is completely true that language is a unified system of knowledge and that language teaching should address the inherent abilities which underlie all language use. But we should not forget that we are required to manifest these abilities in conversing with people, deducing information, writing books etc, in each of which we need special training.

3.6.4 The process syllabus
This type of syllabus is quite different from the types so far considered. The aim of the syllabuses described above was to select, organize and sequence the subject-matter of the language to be presented to the learners. The aim of a process syllabus, however is different. As Breen (1987b) explains, the aim of this syllabus is not to specify and sequence the language that is to be taught; it is rather "a framework which enables teachers to do these things themselves and, therefore, create their own syllabus in the classroom in an on-going and adoptive way" (p.166). That is to say a process syllabus is not a previously designed plan in which teachers and learners are expected to work in order to proceed from A to B and achieve particular goals. It is a
resource of materials and guidelines which teachers and learners may exploit to stimulate and facilitate their engagement in the teaching/learning process.

Breen argues that the process syllabus provides two things: (1) guidelines which assist the teachers' and learners' decision-making in the classroom, and (2) a resource of communicative activities. The guidelines are presented in terms of questions that should be answered by both teachers and students before classroom work starts. These questions are related to participation, procedure, and subject-matter. Questions concerning participation relate to whether students will work in groups or pairs and whether the teacher will work with individual learners or with the whole class. Questions concerning procedure refer to when, how, and how long a certain activity will be undertaken. Finally, questions concerning subject-matter relate to the focus of the work and its teaching purposes.

On the other hand, the reserve of activities and tasks, as Breen points out, can be used in the same way as in a task-based syllabus. These tasks, as in a task-based syllabus, could be either communicative or metacommunicative (learning). Breen says: "In offering a bank of alternative activities and tasks, the process syllabus represents an extension of the task-based syllabus. The distinction, however, is that activities and tasks are not sequenced. The activities are categorized in terms of their own objectives, content, suggested procedure, and suggested ways of evaluating outcomes."
Breen explains that evaluation is an important element of the process syllabus. The teacher and the students decide on who to work with whom (participation), agree on how to carry out a certain task or activity (procedure) and identify the focus and the purpose of their work. Once this has been done evaluation will be the important stage. In this stage the teacher and the students judge their achievement and identify the difficulties. This evaluation stage leads them to reviewing earlier stages and searching for the reasons of difficulty. In other words they go back to earlier decisions taken by the group concerning participation, procedure or subject-matter and fill in any gaps.

"Therefore, the initial bank of activities and tasks within a Process syllabus will be further supplemented by those who exploit such a syllabus" (ibid 167)

The advantage of a process syllabus is that it allows teachers and learners the freedom to select and plan their own work. Because of its discontinuous structure the process syllabus leaves room for other syllabus types and materials to be incorporated into it depending on the needs and demands of the group. Moreover, with its emphasis on co-operation among learners and between learners and the teacher on equal basis, the process syllabus could reduce the learning burden and leave a positive psychological effect on the learners who feel that responsibility for difficulties and failures is shared by the group.
The process syllabus has a number of drawbacks. It is very demanding on the part of the teacher and the learner. It requires the teacher to be a syllabus and material designer as well as a teacher. It also requires students to be fully aware of their needs and to select and organize the content of their learning. From this point of view, the process syllabus adds to the learning burden the burden of having to be engaged in planning and decision-making. Because of its loose form, this syllabus may leave teachers and learners in doubt as to where they are going. However, I would judge this syllabus to be better seen as a collection of materials which can be used with some other syllabus type.

3.4.5 The relational syllabus

The relational syllabus was developed by Crombie in an attempt to investigate the most effective ways to construct a syllabus which could lead non-native speakers to a communicative competence. This new approach stems from her belief that neither a structural nor a functional-notional approach can accomplish this goal. Her criticism of these approaches is based on the view that "what we have not been offered so far is an approach to syllabus design which takes adequate account of language as coherent discourse." (Crombie 1985, cf Widdoson 1979)

Crombie argues that if language syllabuses which concentrate on spoken and written discourse rather than on isolated linguistic or semantic units are to be designed, then emphasis should be placed on the concept of discourse value. The discourse value of an
utterance, as she explains, is its "significance or communicative function within a discourse as distinct from its sentence meaning." To illustrate the difference between discourse value and sentence meaning, Crombie provides the following example:

1 A Why did he have to go into hospital?
   B He broke his leg
2 A What was the result of the car crash?
   B He broke his leg

Crombie explains that the sentence meaning of "He broke his leg" in 1 and 2 is the same, while the discourse value is different. In 1 it has the value of reason, whereas in 2 it has the value of result (ibid 2-3)

The label 'relational', however, refers to the fact that linguistic units do not have values in isolation but derive value from their sentence meaning and relationship to the context. Thus discourse value, as she points out, is a relational concept. She distinguishes between unitary discourse values (warning, invitation, agreement) and binary discourse values (reason/result, condition/consequence). She argues that binary discourse values are the starting point for the design of syllabuses which focus on discourse. Crombie further divides binary values into interactional values and general discoursal values. Interactional values relate to the type of interactional relationship between the speakers who are involved in a conversational discourse such as that of a question and answer in Crombie's example.
A Why did he do it?
B He needed the money

On the other hand, general discoursal values, as she explains, are those values which occur in any type of discourse such as result/reason (ibid 2-4) Consider the following example

Due to overwhelming audience response (reason), she decided to sing another song (result)

To explain the basis of the relational approach to syllabus design Crombie writes

I shall be arguing for an approach to language syllabus design where the relationship between units of discourse which establish those active conceptual meanings that I have referred to as binary values is given centrality for an approach which focuses on the creation and understanding of coherent discourse and which therefore moves beyond the idea of a syllabus as an inventory of discrete units only (ibid 8)

What the language learner needs to know, according to this approach, is how semantic relations (or binary units) are realized in the target language discourse. Crombie argues that from a teaching point of view focus on semantic relations is useful because they have cross-linguistic significance. She argues that semantic relations (comparison/contrast, cause-effect) appear to be present in all languages although they are realized in different ways. She also points out that semantic relations are realized in different ways in the same language (ibid 33)
The fact that the same semantic relation may be realized in a variety of ways, as Crombie notes, is extremely important for the designer in that it provides him or her with "the possibility of introducing grammatical constructions in a way that is both systematic and discourse motivated" (ibid 34). The reason/result relation can be realized in a variety of structures. Consider the following example which illustrates Crombie's point:

He was released because the judge found him innocent.
Because the judge found him innocent, he was released.
The judge found him innocent and therefore he was released.
It was because he was found innocent that he was released.
His release was the result of his being found innocent.
His being found innocent resulted in his release.
The reason why he was released is that he was found innocent.

Crombie makes it clear that a relationally-centred syllabus does not take account of only the relational considerations, that is the value of utterances in discourse, but also of grammatical, semantic and intonational considerations. "A discourse-centred approach to syllabus design which concentrates on binary relational values will inevitably be an integrated one since it must, of necessity, involve all aspects of linguistic communication" (ibid 82).
Crombie proceeds to argue that a relational syllabus is cyclic in nature because of the reintroduction of the same relation several times in order to allow for revision and elaboration and to show stylistic variation. Concerning stylistic variation, she argues that different realizations of the same semantic relation carry "important stylistic and informational implications." She explains that a significant aspect of the "communicative dynamics of the varieties of scientific report, for example, is "the variety and distribution of relational types together with the various different ways in which each relational type is realized." She provides three examples which show stylistic variation and information distribution through the same relation of concession-contraexpectation.

He's a crook but she trusts him

Although he's a crook, she trusts him

He's a crook. She trusts him, nevertheless.

The organization of the relational syllabus, as she maintains, takes into account the needs of particular groups of learners. For example, the organization of a syllabus designed for a group of learners sharing the same linguistic background could follow a certain order emerging from contrastive analysis of the two languages. Also syllabuses designed to meet the needs of learners who want the language for specific purposes may concentrate on particular relational values and suggest a certain ordering pattern of these relations.
The relational syllabus deserves special attention because of its interest in many areas of communicative ability. Through focus on discourse, the relational syllabus could succeed in giving equal attention to grammatical, lexical, intonational and other considerations. Because it is discourse based, a relational syllabus, I believe, could provide cultural insights into the target language and culture. Discourse, as we shall argue in Chapter Six, encodes cultural assumptions the understanding of which is important for the understanding of discourse. Therefore, the relational syllabus could provide room for more emphasis on the cultural aspects of language use. The relational syllabus shares with the task-based and the process syllabuses a view of communicative competence as the ability to understand and produce discourse and create meaning. However, the relational syllabus differs from the other syllabus types in that it strongly emphasizes binary discourse values.
Chapter Four

Roles of teachers and learners

When we talk about language teaching methods there are at least three major parameters by means of which we can distinguish between one method and the other. These are the theoretical or linguistic premises on which they are built, the procedures and techniques they implement, and following from this the roles they assign to teachers and learners. In chapter II we discussed in detail the communicative competence theories as the linguistic background for all communicative teaching. In chapter three we discussed the techniques and procedures implemented by CLT to teach communicative competence. The aim of this chapter is to explore the influence of communicative approaches on the roles of teachers and learners. In this chapter we discuss the changes in the teacher's traditional role and the reasons for this change, and consider the significant aspects of the teacher's role which contribute to communicative competence development. We also touch on learner strategies and their significance for the learning process as means for acquiring a communicative ability. We have chosen to discuss both teacher and learner roles at the same time because of the close relationship between them. Changes in teachers' roles necessitate changes in learner roles and vice versa.
The rise of communicative approaches has had a dramatic effect on the roles teachers adopt. The role of the teacher in a communicative classroom is quite different from his or her role in a traditional classroom. It is also more complex and demanding. In the traditional classroom, the role of the teacher was essentially to instruct, that is to convey knowledge of the language to a group of students whose major concern is to receive information. The most important aspect of the teacher's role as instructor was to ensure that the students have had ample practice of the grammatical items of the language, and to prevent the occurrence of errors.

Attention to communicative competence or the ability to produce speech acts, and the failure of traditional instruction to lead to proficiency, brought about a major change in the teacher's role. Thus in a communicative classroom instruction is but one aspect of the multi-functional role of the teacher. Even instruction, as we shall see, is perceived differently. Wright (1987) points out that teachers have two major functions. First, they create conditions under which learning can take place. Second, they convey knowledge to their students in a variety of ways. He calls the first "the management function" and the other "the instructional function." The management function, as he argues, entails the following.
1 Motivating the learners to the task of learning. This can be done in several ways such as praise and encouragement for the learner's efforts to learn. Motivation can also be achieved by giving students interesting activities and responsibility for their own learning. This emphasis on motivation is due to recognition by communicative teaching of the significance of motivation to reduce what Krashen calls "affective filter." The "affective filter" is "a mental block" which prevents learners from making the best use of the language data they receive and consequently impedes their learning. This happens when the learner is not motivated (Krashen 1985:3).

2 Controlling the learners' social behaviour and the learning activity in the class.

3 Organizing the group, that is putting the class into small groups to perform certain tasks, or arranging the group in a circle that gives a sense of community etc. Group organization gained significance in the communicative classroom because of the awareness that language is a social activity which takes place between at least two participants. Thus group organization is important in the sense that it creates one of the conditions of language use: participants willing to communicate.
The management function is crucial in the sense that it prepares learners for the instructional function and facilitates learning. The instructional function can be approached, as Wright explains, in different ways depending on the personality of the teacher, the materials available, the prescriptions of the school administrators and many other factors. However, the teacher may explain and give information directly or allow students to discover information and learn by themselves through their engagement in a variety of communicative activities.

Littlewood (1981) explains the role of the teacher in a more specific way. He argues that "the concept of the teacher as instructor is inadequate to describe his overall function. In a broad sense, he is a facilitator of learning, and may need to perform in a variety of specific roles, separately or simultaneously." He specifies the following roles:

a) A general 'overseer' of learning: the teacher should arrange the activities so that they lead to a communicative ability.

b) A classroom manager: he is responsible for grouping activities into lessons. He also decides on his role within each activity.
c) A language instructor he presents new language, directs, corrects and evaluates the learners' performance

d) An initiator of activities he will not intervene but let learning take place through the communicative activity. For example, the teacher starts a debate among students and withdraws allowing the students to carry out the activity by themselves.

e) A consultant or advisor he performs this role when an activity is in progress. He can observe students' weaknesses to help him plan a future activity.

f) A communicator the teacher may wish to act as a participant in communication in order to stimulate or present new language (p 92).

Furthermore, in the following two sections we concentrate on the ways in which the teacher influences and contributes to communicative competence development. We should mention here that when we refer to language learning, language acquisition or communicative competence development, we mean the same thing because we adopt the view that language learning is the acquisition of communicative competence.
4.2 Teacher talk

Perhaps the most important aspect of the teacher's role is his or her language use in the classroom (teacher talk). Teacher talk is important as a source of input which is necessary for language acquisition. In the majority of cases, teacher talk is the only source of input available to the learner, especially when the target language is not spoken outside the classroom. Although teacher talk is a crucial element not only in communicative teaching but in any language learning situation, we shall argue that teacher talk should meet certain criteria if it is to lead to communicative competence. In this section, we will discuss the characteristics of teacher talk and the relationship between teacher talk and communicative competence development. It is often argued that teacher talk is different from speech addressed at native speakers in a number of ways which enhance comprehension and facilitate learning.

Hakansson (1986) wrote "In the second language classroom, when no student possesses full native speaker competence in the target language, the teacher uses a language of instruction which differs in certain aspects from that used in classes consisting of native speakers" (p 83).
4.2.1 Characteristics of teacher talk

Chaudron (1988) reviewed research on second language classroom which showed that teacher talk is characterized by a number of structural modifications depending on the task that is being done and the competence of the students. The following is a summary of Chaudron's review of research findings:

1. Modifications of speech rate and phonology: speech rate is slower, voice is louder and more standard pronunciation is used. Also pauses are longer and more frequent.

2. Modification of vocabulary: the teacher tends to use a basic set of vocabulary items which include fewer idioms and more proper nouns than pronouns e.g., boy instead of lad, Mr. Smith instead of he.

3. Modifications of syntax: teachers tend to use shorter utterances avoiding the use of subordination when their speech is directed at less competent learners. Research also found that teachers adjust their speech by using less marked structures such as the use of the simple present tense and the use of more statements than questions.

4. Modifications of discourse: the important feature here is the frequent use of self-repetition.
Ellis (1985) argued that teacher talk can be treated as a register with its own specific properties. He mentioned that studies in teacher talk found (1) adjustments occur in syntax, phonology, and vocabulary, (2) ungrammatical modifications do not occur except in free discussions, and (3) interactional adjustments, such as repetition and prompting, occur.

Lynch (1988) subsumes teacher talk modifications reported by research under two major headings: modifications of input and modifications of interaction. The first type includes aspects of lexis, syntax, phonology, and idiom avoidance. The second type involves discourse features such as comprehension checks and pauses. Moreover, Lynch carried out an experiment to find evidence for a third type of modification which he claims not to have been reported in previous studies. He calls this type of adjustment "modification through information choice" or "selection of information."

Lynch video-taped 24 EFL teachers telling stories to a native speaker and three EFL learners, in turn. The learners were at elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels respectively. The aim of the study was to find differences in the ways speakers talked to the four listeners and find evidence for a third type of modification. The result of the study found evidence for the
three types of modification mentioned above. As for modification through selection of information, as Lynch reports, the study found that

1. Speakers provided more detailed descriptions of objects and characters to listeners of lower proficiency level.

2. Speakers made more logical explanations and interpretations of the characters' apparent behaviour to low-level listeners.

3. Speakers made more explanation of the socio-cultural features of linguistic behaviour, such as the use of gestures, to listeners of low proficiency.

Lynch argues that from the learners' point of view these findings show that learners are being treated as less intelligent people. To test this hypothesis, Lynch arranged an informal experiment in which a group of EAP students were asked to listen to two audio-taped versions of the stories already used in the previous experiment. The two versions were told by an EFL teacher to a native speaker and an elementary-level learner. Subjects were then asked to fill in questionnaires in order to mark their impression as to who is speaking to whom, the age and intelligence of the speaker and listener, and the friendliness and clarity of the speaker's speech.
The results of the experiment showed that first, none of the subjects realized that the speaker in both versions was the same. Second, subjects thought that the speaker was more friendly, clearer and slower in the version told to the non-native listener. Third, and most important, the majority of subjects believed that the listener was a child in the case of the non-native narrative.

Therefore, Lynch argues that there is "some evidence that the speaker was felt to be 'talking down', since her performance created the impression that she was communicating with a less mature and intelligent listener than in the first version" (p 115). Lynch maintains that when teachers modify their speech, there is a risk of appearing "to be making intellectual adjustments, and not merely adjustments of language and discourse."

This is an extremely important consideration in teacher talk modification. In a classroom where the learner is the centre of the teaching/learning process, learners' attitudes, perception and self-evaluation plays a central part if a true communicative teaching is to be fostered. Certainly, talking down to students will have a negative effect on their attitudes and self-evaluation, and may, consequently, hamper learning.
However it is important to notice that not all sorts of modification create this impression. The only type of modification which has this potential risk is the third type which Lynch reported: modification through information selection. As we have seen above, this type of modification included providing detailed description, explaining logical links such as cause/effect, and filling in cultural gaps. The first two of these, I believe, are intellectual modifications which are not needed by learners to aid their comprehension and should be avoided by teachers. But filling in cultural gaps is a modification of special significance and sensitivity. In a classroom which aims to develop communicative competence, teachers should provide awareness of the cultural assumptions which underlie language use. In Chapter Five we explain why this is important and in Chapter Six we show how this can be done in the classroom. Nevertheless, filling in cultural gaps could become a kind of intellectual modification when teachers attempt to explain those features which are not culture-specific but have universal validity, e.g., explaining the meaning of such paralinguistic features as smiling or waving one's hand.

### 4.2.2 Teacher talk as a source of comprehensible input

Teacher talk provides a necessary input for the learners' acquisition of communicative competence. Krashen (1985) claims
that humans acquire languages only by receiving input. But he insists that in order for acquisition to take place, input should be comprehensible to the receiver.

It is a common belief that living in 'the country' is the best way to learn the language. However, this is only partially true. Krashen (1987) points out that the informal environment is very helpful because it is a great source of input for the learner who can understand this input and make use of it. But the natural environment is of no real use to the adult beginner since the input he or she receives is incomprehensible. Therefore, in the case of the adult beginner, the classroom can do much better than the formal environment up to the intermediate level. But for the advanced learner, the classroom is inferior to the natural setting. Krashen says "If we fill our second language classrooms with input that is optimal for acquisition, it is quite possible that we can actually do better than the informal environment, at least up to the intermediate level" (p 58).

Furthermore, it is important to notice that even for the intermediate and advanced learners, the informal setting is not of great help for all of them. We should not forget the fact that many intermediate and advanced learners live for quite a long time in the target language community and yet fail to achieve any remarkable progress. The reason for this, however, is that they do not integrate in the community, they rather live with their
compatriots and speak their native language. Their exposure to the target language data is limited to the routine daily interactions in which they exchange no more than few words with a shopkeeper or a neighbour.

Needless to say that this argument is not against the informal environment. No teacher could provide as much input as the informal environment could. But it should be borne in mind that there are many factors which impede the learners' progress in the language. It is true that many of these may be due to individual factors, such as introversion or ideological beliefs, for which our teaching is not responsible. Nonetheless, our teaching is certainly responsible for some other significant factors.

In this respect, there are two important factors which contribute to the problem. First, language teaching does not equip learners with enough knowledge of the target culture and the social rules of communication. Therefore, learners who have studied language for several years, and who are to continue learning in the natural setting have few clues to help them solve cultural difficulties and thus fail to make full use of the linguistic richness of the natural environment. No doubt that this is the responsibility of the classroom which fails in many cases to equip the learner with knowledge of the lifestyle of the
native speakers and the cultural assumptions which underlie all language use in social activities. This is a question which will be addressed in the next chapter.

Second, until recently language teaching has not taken into consideration the importance of learner strategy training and self-directed study. The result is that learners, being so dependent on the teacher and not trained in how to approach the task of learning, cannot continue to learn properly even in the natural setting. (On learner strategies see 4.4 in this chapter.)

The important implication of this argument is that if intermediate and advanced learners are to make significant progress in language learning in the natural environment, then language teaching should provide them with proper training in crosscultural communication and in the art of learning.

This argument establishes the fact that although the informal environment is superior to the classroom, yet the classroom has a great potential. The most important feature of this potential is teacher talk which could be adjusted to different proficiency levels of learners, who otherwise would be unable to make sense of the sounds they hear if they are to learn the language in the
natural setting. The communicative classroom can prepare learners to continue learning whether in their own community or in the target language community.

However, the classroom has limitations. In addition to the fact that it cannot provide as much input as the outside world, the classroom, as Krashen maintains, cannot provide the same range of discourse. He argued that "the range of discourse that the student can be exposed to in a second language classroom is quite limited, no matter how 'natural' we make it. There is simply no way the classroom can match the variety of the outside world, although we can certainly expand beyond our current limitations."

Moreover, Krashen seems to capture the essential function of the classroom. He said "Its goal is not to substitute for the outside world, but to bring students to the point where they can begin to use the outside world for further acquisition, to where they can begin to understand the language used on the outside (p 59)." Krashen believes that this can be done by means of two things: first, by providing input and second, "by making students conversationally competent," that is by developing what we called 'tactical competence' (see 2.7).

Krashen insists that in order for input to aid acquisition it should be characterized by the following features.
1 Input should be comprehensible

Comprehensibility is the most important characteristic. But Krashen explains that comprehensible input is a necessary but not sufficient condition. However, this characteristic renders the teacher's role more important. Krashen points out that "perhaps the main function of the second language teacher is to help make input comprehensible." (ibid 64)

The teacher can make input comprehensible by several means. The most common way of achieving this is modifying his or her speech. Chaudron mentioned the work of Hatch (1983) and Keltch (1983) which showed that the teacher's slower speech allows enough time for learners to comprehend the message. He also referred to an experiment carried out by Long (1985). Long constructed two versions of a lecture, one of which was syntactically modified. He found that L2 students who heard the modified version were more successful at answering comprehension questions than their colleagues who heard the original version. Moreover, teachers can aid their students' comprehension by using visuals such as pictures and slides.

2 Input should be interesting and/or relevant

Krashen (1987) argues that input should focus on the message rather than the form. In this way input could be made interesting to learners. He points out that grammatical exercises and drills
fail to interest because they are so repetitive and functionally irrelevant. Krashen notes that this requirement is difficult to meet. But teachers could meet this requirement if they make their input relate classroom language to the students' needs in the outside world (pp 66-8).

3 Input should not be grammatically sequenced
What Krashen implies here is that input should not focus on grammatical gradation, it should rather focus on the successful negotiation of meaning. In this case, new structures will be automatically introduced. Krashen points out that grammatical sequencing assumes that all students are at the same stage of development, which is not true. He argues that natural input will be rich enough to contain new language for every learner.

4 Input must be in sufficient quantity
Krashen points out that we do not have enough data to make us certain about the input quantity we need to reach a certain proficiency level. Nevertheless, he states that little input is not enough (ibid 71). I believe Ellis supports this argument when he says that "the first structures the learner acquires are those to which he is exposed most frequently" (p 156). Data from first language acquisition seem to support this point; we all know that the first words or utterances a child acquires are those which he or she hears quite often.
4.3 The role of feedback

The provision of feedback is considered a major role of the teacher and an important aspect of classroom interaction. Feedback is also an important aspect of authentic communication and a part of the language user's communicative competence which learners need to master. Central to the notion of feedback is the notion of error correction, although feedback includes approval of the learners' language performance as well. Feedback is important from the point of view of both teachers and learners. Chaudron (1985) points out that from the teacher's point of view feedback is an important means by which he or she informs learners of the success of their language behaviour. From the learners' point of view it is a source of improvement in their target language (p. 113).

Littlewood (1981) argues that feedback draws learners' attention to the focus of the lesson. For example, he says, if the teacher insists on correcting linguistic forms, this indicates that students should pay heed to grammatical accuracy. But if the teacher repeatedly comments on how communication should be carried out and how successful it is, then this indicates that students should focus on communication of meaning.
Chaudron argues that the study of feedback was closely connected with behaviourist theory of learning. According to this theory feedback was considered as positive and negative reinforcement of behaviour which was believed to be the crucial factor in learning. Therefore feedback was used as stimulus which triggers learner behaviour (response). Traditional language teaching used positive feedback as praise or repetition of the correct sentence, and negative feedback as error correction and detailed grammatical explanation (ibid 133).

4.3.1 Feedback as error correction
Attitude towards learner errors in modern language teaching is more tolerant and sympathetic than the traditional attitude. Learner errors are currently viewed as part of the internal processes of learning and an indication that learning is taking place, rather than mere failures to conform to language system. Chaudron argues that acceptance of learner errors has led teachers to a paradoxical situation where they have to choose between interrupting communication for the sake of formal correction, or leaving errors uncorrected for the sake of communication (p 134). The solution of this problem raises the following questions which are often dealt with by researchers.

1. Should errors be corrected?
2. When should errors be corrected?
Concerning the first question there seems to be a general consensus that errors should be corrected. Chaudron referred to a number of studies which argued in favour of error correction. For example, he mentioned Hendrickson (1978), who argued in favour of error correction on the basis that errors which are not corrected can be taken as correct in the process of hypothesis testing (ibid 135). Hypothesis testing means that during their developing stages in learning, learners make assumptions as to how language operates. When learners make errors they test whether their assumptions or hypotheses are true. If, however, they do not receive corrective feedback, then their hypotheses or mistakes will be taken as correct. The hypothesis testing rationale, I believe, is a strong reason for correcting errors. Chaudron also maintained that research has established learners' preference for all sorts of error correction, a consideration which is very significant if a positive attitude to learning is to be fostered.

As for the question when to correct errors, Murphy (1986) says, "We find no evidence to show that correction has to be given in the instant following the error, so there is no value in interrupting an activity to correct mistakes when they can be
corrected afterwards" (p 146) Chaudron (ibid 136) mentions that Hendrickson restricted error correction to grammar practice leaving communicative activities free from a major concern with correction, a point which Murphy (ibid 146) also emphasizes.

Regarding the question of which errors should be corrected, Hendrickson wrote "Correcting three types of errors can be quite useful to second language learners: errors that impair communication, errors that have highly stigmatizing effects on the listener or reader, and errors that occur frequently in students' speech and writing" (Cited in Chaudron, ibid 140).

Errors which impair communication include grammar, phonology, wrong choice of lexical items, or wrong choice of register. On the other hand, what Hendrickson means by errors which have a "stigmatizing effects", I believe, are those which violate rules of social appropriacy and could cause embarrassment to producer and receiver.

Concerning the question of how to correct errors, the teacher has several options. He or she can stop or interrupt the learner immediately after the error has occurred, wait for a transitional period in the learner's transaction and then provide correction, or even prefer to give correction at some other time. As has been argued above there is no reason why errors should be corrected immediately after they have occurred. In fact immediate
correction could have discouraging effects on the learner who is repeatedly interrupted and corrected. It is advised that teachers do the correction afterwards, in which case corrective feedback will be directed not at individual learners but at the group as a whole.

But who should correct errors? The apparent answer to this question is that the teacher is the one who should correct errors. However, we can argue with Murphy that "correction does not have to come from the teacher alone, for in communicative activities it will come just as appropriately (if not more so) from fellow learners" (ibid 146). Broughton et al (1978) also emphasize that it is not necessary or advisable that all correction should come from the teacher. Students should be responsible for their own mistakes and develop an ability for self-correction (p 141). A possible way of doing this is to tap-record or video-tape learners' performance and then assign group tasks in which they are required to evaluate their performance, correct mistakes and suggest possible ways to improve their performance.

4.3.2 Feedback and learning outcomes

Chaudron points out that there is evidence on corrective feedback resulting in the learners' ability to benefit from it. He refers to a study carried out by Salica (1981), who found that teacher treatment of errors aided learners in providing correct responses. She found that learners provided correct responses to 46% of
teacher's corrective feedback Chaudron also mentions Wren (1982), who reported that her students were able to correct 83% of their errors after she provided treatment of these errors, as opposed to 41% rate of self-correction. Chaudron reports that Ramirez and Stronguist (1979) found that the teacher's correction of grammatical errors resulted in learners' improvement on comprehension and production tests (ibid 176-8).

Furthermore, it should be stressed that error correction is not, and should not be, concerned only with accuracy of grammar and pronunciation, it should be equally concerned with fluency and the appropriacy of learners' language behaviour in terms of communication strategies and social rules of language use. In a communicative classroom an important aspect of the teacher's role is to ensure that correction is provided in terms of both criteria. For example, when a student produces an utterance which violates a social rule, we can say that he or she needs corrective feedback as much as, if not more, than he or she needs it when a grammatical rule has been broken. It has often been argued that native speakers are more tolerant of foreign speakers' language mistakes than social mistakes. No doubt that the omission of the present simple "s" is not as offending to a native speaker as an impolite request or an inappropriate gesture or physical contact. Therefore, correction is valid in both grammar practice and communication activities.
Feedback is not to be equated with correction. If we examine any piece of natural discourse, we find that feedback is an essential part of communication and serves several functions. Murphy (1986) argues that in communication speakers use language to convey messages and listeners frequently indicate how successful or unsuccessful communication has been. They indicate this by means of feedback. People quite often use such utterances as "I see what you mean", "I know what you are getting at", "I'm not sure what you mean" or "I don't understand." The major purpose of this type of feedback is to maintain communication. Maintaining communication, however, requires using feedback for several purposes like clarification requests "I don't understand", denial of the truth of the message "I don't think that is the case", asking for relevant information "Don't change the subject" etc (pp 148-9).

The implication of this argument is that in classrooms where concern is with language as communication, an important aspect of the teaching/learning process would be to enable learners to handle feedback. Feedback should not be supplied by the teacher alone, students should be taught how to employ feedback in communication. Murphy wrote "If learners are to communicate successfully, then they will need to use feedback. If they do not, then I think the teacher should be guiding them to use..."
Otherwise the implication is that communication between learners in a foreign language is expected to be more successful than between native speakers who use the language" (Ibid 146)

The teacher can achieve this goal by exploiting what was called learning tasks and communication tasks in the previous chapter (see 3 6 3) In a learning task the teacher can give students examples of feedback language and how it can be used Then the teacher can get students to practice this language in actual communication by assigning to them a communication task such as a discussion or story-telling In this case the teacher can go around the classroom checking to make sure that feedback is properly supplied and, when appropriate, make comments (cf Murphy, Ibid 149-50)

4 3 3 Error correction and mistake correction

Johnson (1988) refers to a significant distinction drawn by Corder (1981) between 'errors' and 'mistakes' Johnson argues that what Corder calls an error is the result of a faulty or inappropriate knowledge, while what Corder calls a mistake is the result of inability to put knowledge into practice In other words an error is a competence failure while a mistake is a performance failure (p 90)
What we are interested in here is not the distinction itself but the implications of this distinction for language teaching. Although Corder argues that "mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning" (quoted by Johnson), Johnson maintains that if we use the word 'mistake' to refer to a failure caused by limiting Psychological or other conditions which operate in performance, then mistake correction will be extremely important in language teaching because a great percentage of students' inaccuracies are mistakes and not errors (ibid 91)

The basis of Johnson's argument, as he explains, is that when we want to assess the ability of a person, whether linguistic or non-linguistic, we have to consider the conditions under which he or she can perform this ability. He provides two examples, one non-linguistic and the other linguistic. He argues that a footballer may be a good goal scorer in normal circumstances. But the question is "can he, for example, score in the Mexico World Cup, at an altitude of six thousand feet, against a good side, knowing that spectators at home will bay for the blood of the defeated?" And by the same token, it is quite inadequate, when we come to assess students' language competence, to conclude that he or she has mastered the present perfect tense simply because he or she has used it successfully in a gap-filling exercise. What is more important is "can she use the tense correctly over a bad
intercontinental telephone line, with all attention focussed on getting the message across in the shortest possible space of time?" (ibid 91)

The implications of this argument are extremely important. Teachers should be aware of the fact that not all students' inaccuracies are the result of inadequate knowledge (errors) but the result of inability to perform (mistakes). This brings us to the question of how mistakes can be eradicated. Johnson argues that students will need at least four things if mistakes are to be eradicated.

a) The desire or need to eradicate the mistake. Some mistakes do not get eradicated simply because students know they are not important like the simple present 's'.

b) An internal representation of what the correct form looks like. In simple terms the student needs to know the correct form of the mistake.

c) A realization by the student that the performance he or she has given is faulty.

d) An opportunity to re-practise in real conditions (Ibid 91)
Concerning mistake correction two points should be emphasized. First, explanation of rules, as Johnson argues, has no value simply because the learner knows the rule. More explanation could seriously harm performance. Explanation can be useful in the case of errors and not mistakes. Second, the best way to eradicate mistakes is to get students to practice more and more in conditions which simulate the type of conditions which are likely to cause mistakes. To come back to the example cited earlier, "Part of learning how to use the present perfect on an intercontinental phone involves phoning intercontinentally and using the present perfect" (Ibid 93-5).

This argument draws our attention to the important role which communicative activities could play in eradicating mistakes. In the real world we hardly behave, linguistically or non-linguistically, in relaxing conditions, we usually perform our knowledge and skills when we are exhausted, excited, intimidated, late for office etc. These are conditions far from being ideal and exert pressure on us. Our knowledge and skill cannot be tested away from these conditions. So why do not we engage our students in activities which simulate these conditions? This is another reason why communicative activities are a central feature in a communicatively-orientated classroom. This argument, moreover, is compatible with our view of communicative competence as a complex.
of knowledge and skills to perform this knowledge in actual communication. This view avoids the complexities associated with the distinction between competence and performance.

4.4 Learner strategies

The communicative approach represented a shift from a teacher-centred classroom to a student-centred classroom. This shift implied fundamental changes in the roles of both teachers and students. As far as learners are concerned, this shift meant that learners were given more responsibility for their own learning and encouraged to adopt a wide range of learning strategies. Since the early seventies, research into learner strategies has occupied a central position in language teaching theory. But in practice it was until the last few years that learner strategies have been given a prominent position. Research acknowledges that learners employ a variety of processing strategies which influence their language learning.

Chaudron defines learning strategies as "the cognitive operations that learners apply while in classrooms or other learning situations." (Ibid 110) Oxford, Lavine and Crookall (1989) define learning strategies as "actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques used by learners to enhance learning." (p 29) They refer to Rubin (1975), who described good language learners in terms of the strategies they use. Good language learners...
1 are willing and accurate guessers,
2 have a strong, perserving drive to communicate,
3 are often uninhibited and willing to make mistakes in order to learn or communicate,
4 focus on form by looking for patterns, classifying, and analysing,
5 take advantage of all practice opportunities,
6 monitor their own speech and the speech of others, and pay attention to meaning (Ibid 30)

4 4 1 Typology of strategies
Research into learner strategies identified several strategies which have been classified in slightly different ways by researchers Oxford, Lavine and Crookall report an extremely useful classification of learning strategies developed by Oxford (1989) Oxford listed six broad strategy categories

1 Metacognitive strategies such as paying attention, searching for practice opportunities, self-evaluation and self-monitoring

2 Affective strategies such as anxiety reduction and self-encouragement
3 Social strategies such as asking questions, cooperating with others and "becoming culturally aware"

4 Memory strategies such as creating mental linkages and using images and sounds to store or recall information

5 Cognitive strategies such as reasoning, analysing, summarizing and taking notes

6 Compensation strategies such as guessing meanings, using explanations and employing paralinguistic features (ibid 30)

Rubin (1987) recognizes three major learner strategy types: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. He points out that learning strategies are further divided into cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies include (1) clarification/verification strategies which "learners use to clarify or verify their understanding of the new language", (2) guessing/inductive inferencing which utilize previously acquired knowledge to form hypotheses linguistic forms and to infer meaning, (3) practice strategies such as repetition, rehearsal, imitation, application of rules etc., (4) memorization strategies which learners use to store or recall information such as finding auditory or visual association, (5) monitoring strategies such as error correction, decision-making, identifying
problems, evaluation etc. Rubin points out that monitoring combines both cognitive (e.g., correction) and metacognitive (e.g., self-management) strategies.

On the other hand, metacognitive strategies are those which learners use "to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning." Rubin refers to Wenden, who identifies a number of planning strategies. For example, learners may recognize their needs, preferences, and learning styles and thus decide on what aspects of the language they want to prioritize and what strategies they will use.

As regards communication strategies (referred to as compensation strategies by Oxford), Rubin explains that these are strategies used by learners when there is a disparity between their communicative competence and communicative intention, and which are mainly associated with participating in conversations. Examples include using synonyms, using gestures and mime, or using paraphrase.

Finally, social strategies are those used by learners to find practice opportunities and exposure to the language. Examples include creating situations to practice with natives, fellow students or teachers, listening to television and radio, reading extra books etc. (pp 23-7)
4 4 2 Teaching implications

The value of the preceding argument is that it establishes the relationship between using learning strategies and developing communicative competence. Communicative competence cannot be developed only by following certain teaching procedures, we need to encourage and train learners to operate successful internal processes or employ appropriate learning strategies. There is a close relationship between using particular strategies and acquiring certain aspects of communicative competence. For example, using social strategies such as seeking practice opportunities, meeting natives, and "becoming culturally aware" are important for acquiring cultural competence. Communication or compensation strategies such as paraphrase, using synonyms or gestures are significant for developing strategic or what we referred to as tactical competence in Chapter Two.

Moreover, in teaching language skills, e.g., reading and listening, students should be encouraged to infer the meanings of new words and expressions from the context in which they occur instead of immediately resorting to the dictionary or asking the teacher. Therefore, attention to strategy training should occupy a prominent position in the process of teaching communicative competence.
In the light of this discussion, the role of the teacher gains a new dimension. Oxford, Lavine, and Crookall argue that learners are not always aware of how important learning strategies are in facilitating learning, and cannot necessarily develop these strategies without special training and guidance. "For this reason, it is essential that the teacher develops the learners' awareness and use of learning strategies by offering training in which the strategies are made very explicit. In this way, the teacher takes on yet another role, that of strategy trainer." (Ibid 36) Thus in communicative classrooms learning how to use strategies is as important as using strategies to learn.

Nunan (1989) reviews a list of functions which teachers perform in the communicative classroom, all of which are related to training learners to employ a variety of strategies. The following are most important.

1. Helping learners to find out which ways of learning or learning styles are best for them. For example, some learners learn lexical items through direct association, others learn through translation and some others learn through contextualization.
2 Guiding learners on how to make use of what they have already learnt through note-taking, keeping diaries and grouping information for easy reference.

3 Helping learners recall previous knowledge, for example through rhymes, context of occurrence, personal experience etc.

4 Adopting a tolerant attitude towards errors and understanding of their nature as hypothesis testing. Teachers help learners to prevent errors from hampering their participation in classroom tasks. They also encourage learners to ask for correction and help.

5 Developing in learners an ability to infer and guess meanings from context and from their knowledge of the world.

6 Encouraging learners to acquire routines, phrases, expressions and idioms which serve as means for the expression of a variety of functions.

Here again communicative activities and tasks can play a central role. When students undertake the task of creating a weather report in the target language, they will employ a number of strategies such as cooperation, planning, looking for...
language data, self-evaluation etc. The teacher could explain which strategies they should focus on, such as cooperation, and how to use these strategies.

As far as learners are concerned, research on learner strategies has resulted in a great concern with learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is an important aspect of communicative approaches and the shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred classroom. Learner autonomy can be accomplished by focusing on strategy training. Rubin (1987) argues that once trained, learners will find out the best way to approach learning. He also points out that autonomous learners who are capable of self-directing their study outside the classroom, are those who use effective strategies. Therefore, it is essential that learners learn how to take control of their learning and employ effective strategies so that they can continue learning after their formal instruction has stopped (p. 17). Moreover, this argument helps illuminate Krashen's point (see 4.2.2) that an important function of the communicative classroom is to bring the learner to the point where he or she can make the best use of the natural environment.

Nunan (1989) also points out that "one role receiving increasing attention is that of the student as independent learner." He refers to Dickinson, who provides several reasons for the use of self-instruction and developing learner
Independence  

First, self-instruction is important because some learners cannot attend regular classes. Second, self-instruction enables teachers to cope with individual differences in aptitude, learning style and learner strategies. Third, self-instruction promotes learner autonomy and allows for continuing learning. Fourth, self-instruction can have a positive effect on motivation (p 83). Thus investigating learner strategies and learner autonomy is a primary objective of communicative pedagogy.
Part III

Critique of Communicative Teaching
Chapter Five

Learning language and learning culture

We have seen in chapter two that Hymes' theory of communicative competence was developed with a theory of communication and culture in mind. This theory assigned a significant role to sociocultural rules of speaking which constitute an intrinsic part of the language user's competence. In this chapter we hypothesize, and seek evidence to support the hypothesis that learning a foreign language involves the learning of another culture. In other words, if the ultimate goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence, we shall then argue that teaching the target culture should be an indispensible part of our teaching. In this chapter it is assumed that the teaching of the target culture facilitates the learning process and subsequently produces more proficient language learners.

5.1 Definition of culture

Culture is probably one of the most difficult concepts to define. Anthropologists and researchers provided several definitions of culture. Sapir (1949) points out that culture is used in three main senses. In general terms, Sapir points out that "culture is technically used by the anthropologist and culture-historian to embody any socially inherited element in the life of man, material
and spiritual" (p 78) More simply, Lado (1957) defined culture as "ways of people" Kluckholn and Kell defined it as "all those historically created designs for living explicit and implicit, rational, irrational, and non-rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men" (Quoted in Lado 1957 111)

Similar to Lado's definition, Brown (1980) defined culture as "a way of life" But he elaborated on this definition when he said "Culture might be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period of time" (p 123)

However, culture will be conceived of in this chapter as a historically developed synthesis of ideological and philosophical beliefs, ethical values, and aesthetic standards which interact with each other to shape and regulate human behavior in a given community Culture is thus understood as being a complex of traditions, religions, arts and sciences which constitute the framework of the social existence of a particular group of people

5 2 Theory of language and culture

While perhaps not being as dramatic as the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims, the relation of language to culture is nevertheless established Among those who contributed
to a theory of language and culture, Boas, Sapir, Whorf, Malinowski stand out as having contributed significantly to cultural theory

Sapir, as Henle points out, challenged the conception of language as simply a "systematic inventory of the various items of experience" in the life of individuals. Sapir made a strong claim that language is also a "self-contained creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our conscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience."

(Quoted in Henle 1958:1) Thus Sapir closely associated language with culture by expressing the view that language does not only guide social experience but it rather moulds and shapes it.

Whorf developed Sapir's claim arguing that language constitutes a frame of reference and actually shapes the thought of its users. Whorf claimed that there are significant correlations between grammatical features and over-all cultural aspects when a language and a culture have evolved together (ibid. 1-2). Moreover, through his work with the Navaho, Hoijer emphasized the claims of Whorf as to the relation of aspects of grammar to patterns of culture (ibid. 21). However, it is not the aim of this chapter to review the work of these anthropologists but to refer to their contribution to a theory of language and culture.
5.3 Cultural encounters and communication breakdowns

What stems from the above definitions is that two cultures represent two world views. Therefore, encounters between members from different cultural backgrounds are likely to involve misunderstandings due to different perception of the same phenomenon. For example, the tragic death of someone could be understood as heavenly punishment by a person from one culture and as the result of inevitable natural causes by a person from another culture. Moreover, people from cultures where socially accepted sexual relations are practiced only in matrimony are shocked to know that many unmarried couples in Europe have children.

Widdowson (1982) argues that "Communication between members within the same tightly knit social network will not create the same tension as communication between strangers, since there will be an extensive overlap of domain. It is where domains are distinct and at some degree of distance from each other that difficulties arise." (p. 9) Thus many communication breakdowns between strangers can be attributed to dissimilarities between two cultures.

Robinson (1988) points out that the studies of Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) support the idea that differences of speech conventions contribute to misunderstandings. The researchers, he
argues, suggest that communication breakdowns between people from different ethnic groups occur due to three major differences:

1. Different assumptions regarding the situation and the appropriate behaviour associated with it

2. Different ways of arranging information or building up an argument. This difference relates to discourse strategies. For example, in Arab culture, it is usually inappropriate to go straight to the point when discussing serious matters, in other cultures, like the British, 'beating around the bush' is not common.

3. The use of a different set of linguistic conventions such as intonation (p 55)

To the above three, I would add:

4. The use of a different set of paralinguistic features such as gestures, facial expressions, signals, silence periods etc. The best example here is the commonly used example of a 'nod' in Greek meaning 'no' instead of 'yes'. Another example is that physical contact is a sign of friendliness in some cultures and over-familiarity in others.
Brumfit (1985) points out that when a child learns to communicate in his or her mother tongue, he or she at the same time learns the "culturally appropriate ways of thinking" (p 4). This means that people from different cultures have different ways of thinking and, therefore, communication problems can arise. Varonis and Gass (1985) argue that misunderstandings between native and non-native speakers are so common because they do not know each other and they do not share the same background. They may have different modes of perception, customs, notions of what is appropriate etc. Consequently, in conversations between native and non-native speakers "there are more clarification requests, repetitions, expansions and elaborations" (pp 327-8).

In order to illustrate how misunderstanding and inappropriate language behaviour could occur when communicating in a foreign language, it is worth looking at two specific speech acts: the act of apologizing and the act of complimenting. Olshtain (1983) argues that apologies are called for when someone's behaviour has violated a certain social norm. The act of apology, he argues, can be realized in five major semantic formulas:

1. An expression of apology such as "I'm sorry" or "I apologize." Olshtain argues that there are sociocultural rules which govern the use of one form rather than the other in a specific situation.
2 An explanation or an account of the situation which caused the offense like saying "There was a terrible traffic jam", to apologize for being late

3 An acknowledgement of responsibility such as "It's my fault"

4 An offer of repair such as suggesting to provide payment when actual damage occurs

5 A promise of forbearance in which the apologizer promises that the offense will not happen again (p 236)

Olshtain argues that these formulas are available in all languages but the choice of one formula rather than the other is language-specific. He points out that in language A it might be culturally appropriate to always choose one semantic formula (e.g., expressing an apology) for a specific situation while in language B another semantic formula (e.g., giving an explanation) is quite possible. It is likely therefore that a speaker of A learning B to make violations of the rules of apology. When an English speaker is late for a meeting, he or she would usually give an expression of apology that could be followed by an explanation. Unlike the English speaker, a Hebrew speaker often provides an explanation only (ibid 237)
Olshtain also argues that violations of sociocultural rules concerning the act of apology are likely to occur in three cases:

1. The learner might deviate from the accepted norm when choosing a semantic formula for a specific situation.

2. The learner might choose a combination of semantic formats which is inappropriate for a specific situation.

3. The learner might perform the speech act at a level of intensity inappropriate in relation to the particular offence (Ibid 237). For example, it might be accepted in language A to simply say "I'm sorry" for an offence which in language B could require a higher level of intensity like "I'm terribly sorry".

Moreover, what is considered an offence in one culture is not necessarily considered so in another. Not visiting one's mother in hospital, for example, is a situation which calls for intensive apology and explanation in Arab culture. In British, or the Western cultures in general, sending a bunch of flowers or expressing a simple apology is generally acceptable. This argument shows that misunderstandings are most likely to occur when two cultures come into contact.

The second example which we will examine in order to show how different cultures differ in the values they assign to speech acts...
is the act of complimenting. Holmes and Brown (1987) write that "Paying appropriate compliments and identifying them accurately is an aspect of communicative competence which may differ in a variety of ways from one culture to another" (p 523). They provided and analysed a number of examples involving people from different cultural backgrounds. Their assumption was that there is evidence that paying compliments in English is a bothersome aspect for learners from different cultures. They argue that Wolfson (1986) noted that some learners find it difficult to understand why Americans pay so many compliments. Wolfson reported that in Indonesian culture compliments are comparatively rare. Holmes and Brown also point out that Malaysian students in New Zealand commented that they found the frequency of compliments among New Zealanders very surprising. Wolfson points out that in some cases people from different cultures would not agree on "what counts as a compliment" (p 525). Consider the following example which Holmes and Brown provide:

Complimenter: what a big family you have
Recipient: Yes, but it has its advantages, too

They explain that the complimenter is from a culture where big families are considered an advantage. The recipient is a New Zealander who takes the visitor's compliment as a critical remark (ibid 527).
Holmes and Brown explain that the reason for misunderstanding in the previous example is that the recipient failed to understand the illocutionary force of the utterance, that is the function which the utterance is intended to serve. Wolfson (1986) mentions an interesting example. A foreign student complimented a British teacher that she was old and fat (p. 119). It is obvious that in the student's culture, a fat person is considered healthy and good-looking, and old age is associated with wisdom and knowledge. So the illocutionary force of the student's utterance probably was that the teacher was wise and good-looking.

Brumfit (1985) mentions that "I must have a drink" implies, at least in Britain, an alcoholic drink (p. 11). But in a non-alcohol-drinking society this speech act usually means a soft drink. To provide another example, the English leavetaking speech act "See you" could be interpreted by an Arab addressee to mean that the speaker really will see the hearer at some other time. But the speech act is not a genuine wish to see the other person and could be said by someone who would never see the hearer again.

Thus a potential source of communication failure is misunderstanding of the illocutionary value of speech acts. Another source of failure or offence, as Holmes and Brown argue, which can be attributed to inadequate cultural knowledge is the
choice of the wrong strategy to convey a speech act in a given situation (ibid 528). They provide the following example where a Malaysian student compliments his university female teacher when she enters the classroom.

Complimenter: You are wearing a very lovely dress. It fits you.
Recipient: Oh—thank you.

They explain that the student meant "suits you." However, the teacher reported that she was taken aback and commented that to receive such a compliment from a male student seemed too familiar (ibid 526).

Holmes and Brown mention a third source of inappropriate language behaviour concerning compliments. "Knowing whether a compliment is appropriate at all." In the following example they provide, a four-year-old girl on a bus loudly addresses an old woman with whom she is not familiar.

Complimenter: That's a nice hat.
Recipient: Oh—thank you.

They report that the woman was embarrassed and so was the girl's mother. The girl selected the right strategy but she was not yet aware of other situational factors such as her
relationship with the addressee and "the publicity of the situation" (ibid 528) Another example where a speech act is not possible can be provided At least in Arab culture, inviting one's parents to one's wedding celebration is quite unusual since they are most often involved in the preparation for the celebration Inviting them would be treating them like strangers

Furthermore, Holmes and Brown touch on an important aspect of the ability to pay appropriate compliments the choice of topics which may be the focus of a compliment Although compliment topics such as appearance, ability and possession could be universal, yet who compliments whom on a certain topic is often culture-specific They report that New Zealand men receive compliments on their appearance but the vast majority of them comes from women But although New Zealand and American men hardly compliment each other, the appearance of American men seems to be an inappropriate topic of compliment either from men or women (ibid 533)

The argument and the examples provided above show that miscommunication is likely to occur among members of different cultural backgrounds The reason for this, as we have seen, is that there could be considerable differences in the ways cultures encode meaning in language and how they perceive reality
In this section we attempt to show the ways in which cultures differ and the grounds or reasons for these differences. Brislin et al. (1986) provide a possible framework for understanding cultural differences. Although this framework is not intended to serve language teaching purposes, it can be extremely useful for our discussion. Brislin et al. discuss five variables which they believe to be the bases of cultural differences, viz., categorization, differentiation, the ingroup-outgroup distinction, learning styles, and attribution.

Categorization is the process whereby people divide and categorize the material and emotional world into easily recognizable units. As Brislin et al. argue, people divide foods into categories like meats, breads, fruits, etc., animals into domestic and wild, people into children, elderly, men, and women, etc. Their argument is that people from different cultural backgrounds categorize their experience in different ways and, subsequently, misunderstandings could occur due to different expectations and perceptions of the same social reality (ibid 306-7).

For example, because social roles of men and women are categorized differently in different cultures, people from
strongly male-dominated societies view the roles of women in less male-dominated societies as inappropriate because "they behave like men." This occurs because a particular woman's role in culture A, e.g., 'bus driver', is categorized as a man's role in culture B.

As for the differentiation variable, Brislin et al define differentiation as "the separations people make within a concept" (ibid 311). For example, the Arabs distinguish among horses in terms of breed, age, colour, etc., the Eskimos distinguish among different types of snow, the English distinguish fog from mist. Brislin et al argue that when a foreigner does not make the same distinction as the natives, "misunderstanding and ill feeling can result." (Ibid 311) For example, a foreigner in the South Sea Islands will be astonished to be asked to specify what he or she exactly wants if he or she wants to buy some coconut. The reason for this is that people there, as Brislin et al note, "have no one word for coconut but numerous words depending on the function or state of the particular part of the coconut indicated." (Ibid 276)

Another reason for cultural differences and a potential source of miscommunication between members of different cultural backgrounds is the perception of the ingroup-outgroup distinction. By an ingroup they refer to "those people with whom an individual feels comfortable and secure." On the other hand, an outgroup
"refers to people who are excluded as much as possible from one's everyday experience " (Ibid 314) But who is considered a member of an ingroup differs among cultures and could cause misunderstanding Brislin et al supply a pertinent example An American arrives in Greece and is received by host coworkers Surprisingly the Greek coworkers started asking the American personal questions related to salary, family, religion, and political opinions However, the Greeks treated the American as a member of the ingroup while the American's perception of the incident was invasion of privacy from members of the outgroup The result was that the American formed a negative attitude towards Greeks and did not make any further contact (ibid 315)

The fourth basis for cultural differences which Brislin et al consider is learning styles (ibid 316-8) Learning styles refer to the ways in which people learn and how they were taught how to learn Students who are exposed to new learning styles in a foreign country could be frustrated by the new learning experience and nurture negative attitudes towards the whole institution For example, Students who come from countries in which foreign language teaching is heavily teacher-centred will experience a different approach in countries where learning is learner-centred These students sometimes feel disappointed and believe the the teacher is not doing his or her job very well simply because he or she is letting them work on their own most of the time
The final variable provided by Brislin et al is attribution. Attribution is "the conclusions we make after observing behaviour whether other people (or the observers themselves) are competent, well-intentioned, effective, naive and so forth" (Ibid 319). An example of misunderstanding due to wrong attribution is that touching a person during a conversation is considered a sexual advance in some cultures and a sign of friendliness in others.

Furthermore, Richards and Sukwiwat (1985) maintain that there are five major areas of difficulty in learning conversational competence in a foreign language: (1) differences in social situations, (2) different routines associated with the same situation, (3) different functions of the same social routine, (4) using a correct routine in the wrong situation, and (5) different conditions for the performance of a routine.

Concerning the first question, Richards and Sukwiwat argue that such situations as meals, weddings, funerals are common across cultures. But there are situations which are specific to a particular culture, e.g., "at the pub" in Britain or visiting elders and family members on Chinese New Year in China (p 131). Other examples are baptism and first communion in Christian societies, Thanksgiving in the United States, or Ramadan in Islamic societies.
As for the second question, they argue that even when the situations are the same the social routines which accompany them are different. They point out that routines which accompany speech acts may differ. For example, a compliment is acknowledged with thanks in English but in Thai culture a person may not respond verbally because "this might not sound suitably humble" (Ibid 132). Although social situations such as weddings, visits or meals are universal, the conventions associated with them may differ across cultures. An Arab host or hostess repeatedly uses a variety of utterances over a meal to make sure that guests are eating well and feeling comfortable.

Regarding the question of different functions in two languages of the same routine, Richards and Sukwitwat argue that in English "Thank you" may be used to express gratitude. But in Japanese the equivalent does not sound sincere enough and thus Japanese speakers usually add "I'm sorry". They also mention that the English routines "You are welcome, Don't mention it, Not at all, It doesn't matter, and Never mind" have one routine speech act in Thai. Therefore Thais using English produce such errors as

Boss Thanks a lot That was a great help
Secretary Never mind (Ibid 132-3)

Concerning the use of a correct routine in a wrong situation, they argue that non-native speakers may overgeneralize and extend
the use of a social rule to situations where the rule does not apply. For example, "Nice to meet you" is generally accepted to say when introduced to someone, but it is not appropriate for an adult to say "Nice to meet you" when introduced to a child (ibid 133).

As for the last question, there are conditions under which a speech act can be performed. These conditions, however, vary across cultures. For example, the French and the Japanese use a routine speech act before eating, but the Japanese formula cannot be used by the provider of the meal (ibid 133). Conditions for the successful performance of speech acts can be related to certain age or sex group. In Arab culture at least, it is inappropriate for a woman to make a marriage proposal to a man; it is the man who should propose. However, this argument and the examples provided clearly illustrate the fact that if foreign language learners are to perform successfully then they need to be familiarized with sociocultural rules of language discourse, which in turn entails knowledge of the culture.

5 5 Foreign language learning in a cross-cultural perspective
It is often argued that learning a language does not only involve the learning of its sound system, structural patterns and semantic rules but also the learning of culturally accepted modes of thinking and behaviour. Kim (1988) argues that to learn a foreign language "is to learn not only the linguistic code 'per
se' but also to gain access to the accumulated records of the host cultural experience. To be proficient in the host language requires an understanding of not only its phonetic, syntactic, and semantic rules but also its **pragmatic rules**" (emphasis added) (p 89). This view was also expressed by Brislin et al (1986). They write "a language often represents a world view of a people and as such reflects important concepts and modes of thinking" (p 277)

As we always emphasize, communicative competence theories were developed within a sociocultural framework of language and communication. Hymes developed his theory of communicative competence from an ethnographic perspective with a theory of communication and culture in mind. Halliday's theory of meaning potential was developed with reference to semiotics and pragmatics. And Widdowson's term 'capacity' expressed an ethnomethodological approach to the study of language (See Chapter II).

However, the relation of language to culture can be better understood if we perceive the relation of social behaviour to culture. Human social behaviour is regulated and evaluated in terms of the prescriptions of particular cultures concerning what is appropriate and inappropriate. Language behaviour, as Halliday notes, is mostly social behaviour. Therefore, language behaviour is subject to the same rules which govern social
behaviour. Thus learning to communicate successfully or developing communicative competence involves learning how to behave in a culturally appropriate manner. Halliday expresses the relation of language behaviour to social behaviour in terms of "saying" and "doing". Saying something is a form of doing something.

Communicative language teaching aims to teach learners how to communicate effectively in the target language. It is important, therefore, that learners have subtle knowledge of communication rules. Kim defines communication rules as "a coherent system of expected patterns of behaviour that serves to organize interaction among individuals." These rules govern all levels of behaviour, whether verbal or non-verbal. Communication rules are cultural rules because "Culture provides the 'rules of the game' that enable individuals to make sense of events, activities, actions, and behaviors." (Ibid 92)

Communication is the most important aspect of individuals' social being. It is through communication that we learn how to adapt to our environment and undergo and participate in the process of socialization. Kim emphasizes the importance of communication as a means of socialization. He argues that "through communication we learn to relate to our environment. Through continuous interaction with the various aspects of the environment, individuals undergo a progression of
stages, integrating numerous culturally accepted concepts, attitudes, and actions into themselves" (Ibid 45) Thus communication is culture-bound, and if language is primarily communication and communication is mostly carried out through language, then language is bound by the same rules which govern communication and serves the same functions that communication serves. Consequently, learning a foreign language requires a degree of acculturation, i.e., becoming adapted to the world views, modes of thinking, behavioural patterns, customs and assumptions of the target culture. The keys of successful communication in a foreign language are those which open the doors of the cultural edifice.

Hendon (1980) says "If we teach a foreign language without introducing at the same time the culture in which that language operates, we are merely conveying words to which the student attaches the wrong meaning" (Quoted in Winfield and Barnes-Felfeli 1982 373) However, this concern with associating a language with a culture is not a recent concern. Politzer (1959) wrote:

As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture (in the social scientist's sense of the word) not because we want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning" (Quoted in Brooks 1986 123)
Moreover, we should mention here that the argument for associating language learning with culture learning poses two controversial questions: do all learners of other languages need to undergo the process of acculturation? And, in the case of English, which linguistic and cultural norm is the model for language learning? Before we attempt to answer these questions, we should refer to the distinction between a foreign and a second language. A foreign language is a language which is neither the mother tongue nor the official language or one of the official languages of a speech community, e.g., English in the Middle East, China, Japan, Europe etc. On the other hand, a second language is not the mother tongue but the official or one of the official languages of a country, e.g., English in India, Pakistan, Nigeria etc., Irish in Ireland or French in Algeria. Furthermore, we will use the term "other languages" to refer to both foreign and second languages.

To touch on the first question, we can say that it is not reasonable to argue that all learners of other languages need to learn another culture. In a number of his works (e.g., 1983, 1986) Kachru shows that non-native varieties of English have been "de-Anglicized" and "de-Americanized" reflecting a new sociocultural reality. Kachru (1986) writes "English is thus a medium that in its various manifestations, East and West, results in cultural adaptations. In South Asia, it connotes the Indian,
Lankan, or Pakistani ways of life and pattern of education and administration. The nativized formal characteristics acquire a new pragmatic context, a new defining context, culturally very remote from that of Britain or America" (p 92). Therefore, learners of English in India, Pakistan or Kenya do not require the acculturation process in order to have command of English, unless they are aspiring to a native model or seeking integration with native speakers. But how many speakers of nativized varieties have learnt English in order to interact with native speakers?

Kachru points out that members of the Indian English speech community use English mainly in the sociocultural context of India, where interaction is basically among Indians who use English as lingua franca. He explains that only a minimal fraction of Indian English users have any interaction with native speakers. In a survey which he carried out, Kachru showed that 65.64 percent of the graduate faculty of English in the universities and colleges which he surveyed had only occasional interaction with native speakers, and 11.79 percent had no interaction. Only 5.12 claim to have regular interaction with native speakers (ibid 110). In a context like this, it is absurd to argue that Indian learners of English need to learn a second culture or undergo the acculturation process. In the Indian context, and in the context of many other no-native varieties,
acculturation denotes a different sense. Acculturation here is the nativization process, as Kachru points out, which English has undergone in a new linguistic and sociocultural ecology. It refers to the language being "localized" and not to the learner becoming adapted to another culture.

Another aspect of language and culture learning is the question of learner resistance. During the colonial period, English was associated with colonialism in the British colonies. Reactions to the English language and culture were important for preserving a cultural identity. For this reason, and several others, a deviation from a native model, as Kachru maintains, was inevitable. He argues that in some cases "the recognition of a localized norm is used as a defense mechanism to reduce the 'Colonial' and 'Western' connotations associated with English." In Nigeria, Bamgbose points out, and Kachru mentions, that Nigerians who speak like native speakers are considered snobbish. In Ghana, an educated Ghannian is supposed to use the nativized educated variety of English. Kachru also notes that in South Asia there is a reaction to standards such as RP and GA (Received Pronunciation and General American English respectively) (ibid:97-8).

This argument apparently contradicts our call for teaching the target culture with the target language. But this is only a seeming contradiction. What is important here is the distinction between a second and a foreign language. In countries where
English is used as a second language, learning a second culture, as we have seen, is out of question for the simple reason that the model for language learning is not a British, American, Irish or any other outside model. It is a nativized model by and large. But in many parts of the world English is taught as a foreign language. In these contexts, learning a foreign culture is a prerequisite of learning a foreign language unless we want to isolate language from its sociocultural ecology. Therefore, we can say that foreign language learning requires a degree of acculturation for reasons we have explained throughout this chapter. Acculturation, however, does not mean losing one's cultural identity, it implies open-mindedness towards a different culture and understanding of the fact that different people think, behave, and do things in ways different from ours and the ways in which we think, behave and do things are not universally accepted.

We now turn to the second question which norm is the model for language learning? We have to state first that by a norm we refer to a linguistic as well as a cultural norm simultaneously, that is to a language variety and its cultural context. English is a multi-cultural language. Which is the cultural model that we have to introduce to students learning English? Obviously, this question was partly answered in the preceding discussion. Where English is a second language, the model is not a native model. As
we have seen in the attitudes of speakers of English as a second language, and as Kachru notes, "an unrealistic adherence to an ex-normative standard is clearly not attitudinally desirable." (Ibid 97)

But which is the model in the case of English as a foreign language? To provide a simple answer, we can say that what determines the choice of a cultural model is the choice of a linguistic model. For example, if the aim is to teach standard British English, then British culture is the model. And if the aim is to teach Irish English, then the model is Irish culture and so on and so forth. But what are the factors which determine the selection of a particular variety of English? Undoubtedly, personal factors play a part. In Syria for example, teachers who were trained in the United States tend to teach American English, and teachers who were educated in Britain would like to teach British English. However, pedagogical considerations play, or should play, a significant part in the choice of a model. When feasible, the choice should be based on a careful analysis of learner needs. If a group of learners are to move to Ireland, for example, to further their education, then the Irish language and culture model should be presented. We should mention here that if the choice of a model is based on learner needs, then a model could be a non-native model. For instance, if students are
learning English to interact with Indians using English, then Indian English and culture should be the model. In other words, specific learner needs should be taken into account and appropriate cultural models should be presented.

In some cases the situation is less clear. This occurs when learner needs analysis does not inform the teacher of which model to use. In the Middle East, for example, Syria, the teacher should choose a native model, a non-native model being out of question, except in very rare situations, because of the limited scientific and educational cooperation between Syria and Third World English-speaking nations. In other words, a non-native model is not needed because interaction mainly occurs with native speakers. In this case, the teacher is free to choose whichever Western model depending on personal considerations. But he or she should pay attention to introducing the language and culture model with emphasis on those common sociocultural routines and beliefs which underlie the use of English in all Western English-speaking countries. Moreover, at more advanced levels of proficiency, the teacher could introduce more than one model because the ability to understand more than one variety of a language is an important aspect of communicative competence which our classrooms claim to teach.

5.6 Empirical evidence

In this section, we review some studies which showed that language
learning can be facilitated by learners' knowledge of underlying cultural presuppositions. Winfield and Barnes-Felfeli (1982) investigate the effects of familiarity with the cultural context on ESL reading. They argue that recent research supports the position that writing can be facilitated if the student is familiar with the cultural context of the subject-matter. They also point out that evidence from cognitive psychology shows that fluency may be impeded when individuals work at unfamiliar topics (pp. 373-4). However, the position of the writers is contrary to our position. Their view is that "in choosing topics for writing exercises attention should be placed upon selecting themes drawn from known contexts or themes that can be directly related to personal experience" (Ibid 377). This implies that writing topics should not be drawn from the context of the target culture because students may not be familiar with them, the thing that impedes their performance.

But what concerns us here is the finding that familiarity with the cultural context of writing topics was an important determinant of fluency in writing. Thus if we familiarize our students with the cultural context of their writing topics, then their writing will be facilitated.

Furthermore, there is argument for the assumption that the greater the difference between two cultures is the more difficult language learning will be. It could be argued that it is easier
for an English person to learn German than it is for a Turk or an Arab. Likewise, it is easier for a Turk to learn Arabic than it is for a German or an English person. Osterlo (1986) argues that "Between societies of greatly differing socioeconomic structures, however, intercultural differences play a significant role when members of one culture learn the language of the other." He points out that a German, for example, does not require to learn a new social strategy if he or she wants to learn how to welcome a friend in French. But for a Senegalese the case is different because welcoming a friend in the Senegalese social experience could easily extend over a period of a quarter of an hour's time (p 77).

Svanes (1987) makes the same argument. He says "It is reasonable to assume that the more one has in common with the target language group, the easier it will be to learn the language." He also argues that "If the TL belongs to the same type of language as the mother tongue, this will facilitate language learning. And if one is familiar with the culture of the host country, the easier it will be to communicate, and this again will promote language learning." (p 343)

It is interesting to notice that closeness of languages is most often associated with closeness of cultures. For instance, The
Arabs and the Turks have similar languages and cultures. Also Western Europeans have similar languages and cultures. Thus learners from either group of languages learning the language of the other group will be travelling a linguistic and cultural distance.

Svanes (1987) conducted a study involving 167 foreign students from 27 countries learning Norwegian in Norway. The aim of the study was to find out if differences in language proficiency among groups of students from different countries can be accounted for by motivational factors or by cultural difference. The students were divided into four groups based on their familiarity with Western culture and language. Thus the first group included 25 Europeans who all spoke two or more European languages and belonged to "a common European cultural tradition." The second group included 35 American students who have English as their first language and culturally have much in common with the Europeans.

The third group involved 13 African students who come from countries which were French or British colonies. Those students are exposed to Western culture through their education in their countries because English or French is the official or second language. This group also included 23 students from the Middle East (Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey and Iran).
In group four were Asian students from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. These students are less exposed to Western culture than the other groups.

The students' motivation for studying Norwegian was assessed by means of a questionnaire and the study used examination grades to measure the students' proficiency levels in all language skills. Concerning motivation, as Svanes reports, the study found that the European and American students were more integratively motivated than the two other groups who were more instrumentally motivated. Concerning proficiency the results of the study showed that European and American students scored the highest grades, Middle Eastern/African students scored third highest and Asian students scored the lowest grades.

Svanes argues that there seem to be a positive correlation between integrative motivation and grades, and a negative correlation between instrumental motivation and grades. However, to check the truth of this, Svanes examined the relation of grades to the two types of motivation within each group. The result was that "No significant positive correlations between grades and the two motivational variables were found" (p 352). On the contrary, a negative correlation between grades and integrative motivation was found in the American group. Svanes showed that only 26% of the difference in grades can be accounted for by integrative motivation. Integrative and
instrumental motivation together accounted for 9% of the variance in grades. But the two motivational variables and the cultural distance variable accounted for 23%. Thus "difference in grades between the different groups cannot be explained by motivational factors. So if type of motivation is not an important factor in proficiency, what is the crucial factor? Obviously, as this study showed, the cultural variable is the most important. Svanes writes "This may point to the conclusion that although motivation is an important factor in the acquisition of a second language, type of motivation is of less importance in groups of adult university students, who are all well motivated. In this context 'cultural distance' has been found to be the predictor of second language proficiency" (Ibid 355-7).

Another support for the assumption that familiarity with the cultural content facilitates learning and promotes communicative competence comes from Floyd and Carrell (1987), who investigated the effects of knowledge of the cultural background of a text on the learners' reading comprehension. Floyd and Carrell also reported the results of similar studies. They mention that Gatbonton and Tucker (1971) demonstrated that "due to cultural misunderstandings, EFL students drew incorrect assumptions when reading unfamiliar texts, however, when provided by pertinent cultural information their performance increased significantly."
They also mention a study by Johnson (1981) which showed that "the cultural origin of a text has a greater effect on ESL reading comprehension than does linguistic complexity" (p. 89). As for Floyd's and Carrell's study we will concern ourselves with the conclusions only because limited space does not permit a description of the detailed procedures of the study. The basic findings and conclusions of the study can be listed as follows:

1. Background Knowledge relevant to reading comprehension can be taught in the classroom, and this increases comprehension.

2. Knowledge of the cultural background of a text has greater effect on reading comprehension than syntactic complexity.

3. Cultural content is very significant in the reading classroom and should be explicitly taught.

4. The ESL reading teacher should be a teacher of the culturally relevant content.

5. ESL students need to be exposed to activities which could aid their acquisition of culturally appropriate information outside the classroom.

6. Having appropriate background knowledge of a text is as
important for scientific texts as for culture-specific texts (ibid 103-5)

Moreover, although the results of this study were restricted to reading comprehension, there is no reason why the results cannot be valid for other language skills.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated the relation of language to culture as far as language use is concerned. We have seen that language and culture are inseparable because language use reflects a way of life, a mode of thinking, philosophical and moral presuppositions etc. We have found evidence for the hypothesis that language learning can be facilitated by familiarity with the target culture. Hence our ultimate conclusion is that foreign language learning should take place within the context of the target culture. If we aim to create in learners an ability for language use or promote their communicative competence, then introducing the culture to the classroom should be a major concern of communicative language teaching. But how can culture be taught? A few suggestions will be put forward in the final chapter.
Chapter Six

Teaching grammatical and cultural competence

The theme of this chapter is twofold: first, we shall discuss the position of grammar in communicative teaching and suggest some criteria for the design and implementation of grammar tasks. Second, we consider possible ways of teaching cultural competence. We should stress, however, that the question of grammar should not be seen as irrelevant to a concern with communicative competence. Throughout the chapters our view has been that communicative competence is a total ability and knowledge. Therefore, all areas of knowledge and skill are important for the ability to use language for successful communication. Furthermore, in theories of communicative competence and meaning potential, grammar is recognized as an important factor. According to Hymes, "what is formally possible" or linguistic competence is a sector of communicative competence. And for Halliday, "lexico-grammatical competence" is the realization of meaning potential (see Chapter two).

6.1 Systematic competence and the dilemma of grammar teaching

The rise of communicative approaches was accompanied by a shift of attention from grammar to language functions. The failure of grammatically-orientated teaching to lead to a communicative ability has resulted in a great deal of scepticism about the
validity of grammar teaching. Dickins and Woods (1988) point out that "the rise of the notional/functional/communicative curriculum has sometimes been accompanied by a devaluation of grammar as one of the organizing principles in commercially available language-learning materials" (p 623).

This devaluation of grammar was expressed in claims that we should not devote much time (if any) to the teaching of grammar and that grammar should not be taught for its own sake because learners' explicit knowledge of grammar will not automatically be used by them in natural communication (c.f. Garrett 1986:133). However, the question of grammar recently has been the subject of much controversy among language teaching practitioners. Dealing with aspects of this controversy is not our aim and is beyond the scope of this section. The limitations of space require us to narrow down the field of inquiry to specific issues: non-traditional views of grammar, why we need grammar instruction, and classroom implications.

There are several reasons for our interest in grammar here. First, grammatical competence, as we have mentioned earlier, is an essential component of overall communicative competence. Second, because of over-emphasis on language functions and getting messages across, as Garrett (1986) argues, "students who have been encouraged not to worry about grammar may develop a kind of irremediably inaccurate fluency" (p 133). Third, some problems
faced by many overseas students in tertiary education, as Dickins and Woods (1988) note, "arose from their need to communicate at a rather sophisticated level in English when their linguistic competence was at a very low level" (p 623)

Canale and Swain (1980) point out that communicative competence theories grouped under the heading of "basic communication skills" (see 2.2) emphasized getting one's message across over grammatical accuracy. One reason for this was the assumption that, as in the case of first language development, second language errors will disappear at a later stage. Canale and Swain argue that there is "no strong theoretical reason for emphasizing getting one's message across over grammatical accuracy at the early stages of language learning" (p 14). On the contrary they provide three good reasons for not doing so. First, not all second language learners' grammatical errors, such as interference errors, are the same as those made by first language acquirers. First language acquirers' inaccuracies will be eradicated at a later stage of development, but not all second language learners' errors are likely to follow the same route. If we do not attend to grammatical accuracy, we run the risk of allowing many errors to fossilize. (We will touch on the problem of fossilization later in this chapter)
Second, there is no evidence to suggest that adolescent and adult second language learners are willing to be exclusively interested in getting their messages across. Canale and Swain refer to Savignon (1972), who found that college students in classes which emphasize getting meaning across showed a decline in integrative motivation compared with students from classes where putting one's message across was not emphasized on the behalf of their developing a sense of grammatical correctness.

Third, they argue that "it is not clear that second language learners will develop grammatical accuracy in the course of their second language programme if emphasis is not put on this aspect from the start. It may be that certain grammatical inaccuracies will tend to 'fossilize'" (ibid 11).

There is certainly a pedagogical risk in a communicative approach which over-emphasizes communicative functions, getting one's meaning across, or fluency. Brumfit (1984) recommends a communicative approach based on the fundamental polarity of accuracy and fluency. (For the discussion of the terms accuracy and fluency see 2.3) He argues that concern with fluency should not prevent teachers from showing a concern with accuracy.
Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that lack of attention to grammatical accuracy is potentially risky. Marton (1988) mentions Omaggio, who described a number of empirical studies concerning the assessment of proficiency of students of the CIA Language School. Reporting Omaggio's conclusion, Marton writes:

First of all, fossilized lexical and grammatical items acquired in the beginning stages of language study are generally not remediable, and that learners using a highly inaccurate, pidginized version of the target language usually become 'terminal cases' and achieve a very low proficiency level, never attaining the linguistic skills needed to meet minimum job requirements (p 52).

The "push towards communication" characteristic of most communicative approaches has many critics who are strongly in favour of communicative approaches. Marton refers to Eskey (1983), who argued that knowledge of a language is not simply the ability to get things done in the language. Eskey writes:

Knowing English, for example, ought to mean more than being good at finding ways to get things done in the language. If I point to my mouth and shout "Whiskey! Whiskey!" urgently enough, I succeed in the function of ordering a drink, but this hardly qualifies as a successful demonstration of what we normally mean by having learnt to speak English (Quoted in Marton 1988 53).

Moreover, Marton considers the problem of fluent, but inaccurate language production, which is a likely consequence of what he calls "the communicative teaching strategy", from a social perspective. The attitude of native speakers towards this kind of language was summarized by Omaggio. She concluded that...
grammatical items were found to be most hindering to communication among all error types, and that native speakers differ in their acceptance of certain errors. Marton argues that social roles of foreign speakers are an important factor in native speakers' tolerance of errors. For example, a tourist is not expected to acquire the same degree of accuracy as a scholar or a politician. Scholars or diplomats' lexical and grammatical erroneousness could seriously irritate addressees and influence their opinion of them.

"It can be concluded that allowing our learners to use a highly inaccurate version of the target language, full of fossilized errors, may not only arrest their linguistic development at some fairly low level of proficiency, but it may also stigmatize them socially in certain types of encounter with native speakers."

(Ibid 53)

The value of the above argument is to establish the importance of grammar in communicative teaching and to call for a balanced approach which attends to both accuracy and fluency, and consequently, avoid the pedagogical risks associated with over-emphasis on communication and language functions. However, it is important to stress that by grammar we mean communicative grammar.

Dickins and Woods (1988) use the term grammar in a non-traditional sense. According to them, grammar does not only make possible the grouping of words into certain patterns, but
also allows us the choice of which combinations to use. They provide the example of choosing between saying "To be, or not to be that is the question" and "The question is whether to be or not to be". They argue that the first structure chosen by Hamlet is an elegant expression of meaning which may not be suitable to convey the same meaning or message in some other situation. So grammatical choices are made "with the purpose of enhancing the message to be conveyed, so that its interpretation by the receiver will be not only accurate with regard to meaning but also made with an awareness of the attitude of the speaker" (p. 627-8). In this sense grammar is extended beyond the level of single utterances to discourse level. Thus grammar rules, as they argue, explain not only the use of forms in semantic terms only, but also in pragmatic terms (ibid 629). Consider the following example:

A. We had a good time in Damascus

B. It was a good time that we had in Damascus

In the two examples, grammatical choice between A and B carries pragmatic considerations. While in A the speaker conveys a rather neutral attitude, in B the speaker enhances the effectiveness of the message and expresses a positive attitude towards the time spent in Damascus and probably a feeling of nostalgia. In this sense grammar is more than accuracy. It is a vehicle which carries attitudinal tones and pragmatic considerations, and allows the dynamics of stylistic choice.
Dickins and Woods also argue that grammar is the means by which we express past, present and future time through the use of tenses. Through grammar we also order information to show the listener what the theme is or where the focus of information is. They provide the following example:

The queen bee lays eggs in the honeycomb during the Summer.

During the Summer, the queen bee lays eggs in the honeycomb.

The grammatical choice in the first sentence tells what the queen bee does during the Summer, while the second sentence tells what happens during the Summer (ibid 631). To summarize what they mean by grammar, Dickins and Woods write:

We can say that grammar is the resource available to indicate a number of elements crucial to the appropriate and accurate interpretation of utterances: (a) the relationship between the participants in an interaction, (b) the topic being discussed, (c) the time of the event, (d) the mood of the utterance(s), and (e) the attitude taken by the speaker. Furthermore, within grammar, there is constant interaction that brings all these functions together to allow a full interpretation of the message (ibid 632-3).

It should be mentioned here that this view of grammar is comparable to the view advanced by Rutherford (1987) and his discussion of grammatical consciousness-raising. It is also comparable to the view held by Crombie (1981) in her discussion of the relational syllabus and how grammar can be incorporated to the syllabus (see 3 6 5).
With regard to the incorporation of grammar to the language teaching programme, Dickins and Woods put forward several criteria for the design and implementation of communicative grammar tasks. First of all, they draw a distinction between the content and the construct of grammar tasks. By "content" they refer to the grammatical content itself or "what is being presented to the learner". By the construct of grammar tasks, on the other hand, they refer to the process in which the grammatical content is to be presented (ibid 633).

From a traditional standpoint, grammar and communication, as they point out, has always been two separate issues rather than two complementary elements of language use. The pedagogical consequence of this view was that learners were presented with exercises and encouraged to manipulate structures without any consideration of how they function in the context in which they occur. Thus, grammar is emphasized and communication is neglected. However, in contrast to the traditional view, current practices emphasize communication and "In many cases, the functions of grammar in the effective communication of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and so on are ignored" (Ibid 633). To illustrate this point, they provide the following example from Draskau.
Arrange in order of politeness (1 = most, 10 = least polite)

You could open the window
You can open the window
please open the window
Why is the window closed?
I must ask you to open the window
Open the window
It's very hot in here
Can you open the window?
Could you open the window?
Open the window, please

Suggest other ways of making the request
How do your suggestions fit into the scale above?
Discuss your results with the other group
What do you notice about the word 'please'?

Dickins and Woods explain that this example presents learners with a variety of ways to convey the act of requesting in varying degrees of politeness. But these requests are "presented as discrete phrases" and the problem is that learners do not know "why certain grammatical choices are made in favour of others in the expression of a given communicative function." (ibid 634)

Dickins and Woods suggest that grammar tasks should illustrate both content and construct. The weakness of the above example is that it presents the content without any consideration of the construct, that is the way in which the grammatical content may be appropriately presented to learners (ibid 635)

A key issue in their view of grammar is that it is not an end in itself but rather a means for successful communication. Therefore, a communicative grammar task should develop in learners
"(a) an awareness of grammatical choice and (b) the capacity to make the appropriate choices according to given contextual constraints. In other words, a communicative grammar-learning environment should facilitate the comprehension of how grammar works in the conveying and interpretation of meaning."

( Ibid 636) To demonstrate how this can be achieved, they provide this example:

In groups, examine the following text and see where you think it can be improved by using the passive. Give reasons for the changes you make.

If it is true that one can tell an area from its notice-board, then one can easily find out if one would like to live there. Of course, one has to interpret the messages carefully, and also consider them as a whole. This is necessary in order to avoid the situation where a minor piece of exotica takes you in, although it isn't representative of the notices as a whole. Equally one should not totally ignore the unusual notice, since this may herald a new trend in the area. While it is true that one swallow doesn't make a Summer, one should remember that a change has to start somewhere. Often, this affects older districts which people have neglected and allowed to run down. Suddenly, because there are often quite cheap areas to live in, some young people move into them and this starts the change in the district.

**CHANGES TO BE MADE**

**REASONS**

Dickins and Woods explain that the merit of such a task is that, unlike grammar exercises in which students are asked to transform single active sentences into the passive, it presents students with a whole task where they are invited to think and account for whatever grammatical choices they make. This type of task provides the learner "with a more adequate linguistic environment that more overtly integrates linguistic form with
Because of this, they insist that learners should be familiarized with "contexts and situations in which the application of grammatical rules in use may be demonstrated" (ibid 636-9)

Finally, what we have tried to do in this section is first, to give reason for our interest in grammar, second, to present a communicative view of grammar, and third to consider some criteria on which communicative grammar tasks can be designed and utilized in the classroom. However, it should be noted that I am not suggesting a return to grammar-centred approaches. But we should not forget that the failure of traditional methods to lead to proficiency was not because grammar is has no relevance to language learners. Grammar can be useful and taught for the benefit of students, but only if we have a clear idea of what grammar is and the appropriate methods of teaching it.

6.2 Teaching cultural competence

Although the need for introducing culture to the foreign language classroom has been emphasized and justified by many researchers, and although communicative competence theories were developed in order to assign a significant role for the cultural factors involved in language acquisition, this need was not always met in most communicative teaching. Byram (1986) notes that despite the significance of textbooks in language teaching, "Attention to cultural studies dimension is often missing" (p 331) He
refers to Anderson and Risager (1981), who demand that textbooks should give "a true experience of the society they claim to represent." They argue, and Byram mentions, that "textbooks often give the impression of ideological neutrality in both cultural and linguistic terms, but in fact any selection of content or language variety carries ideological overtones" (Ibid 331)

6 2 1 Coursebooks with a cultural focus

It should be mentioned, however, that a few attempts have been made to devise textbooks which exemplify an interest in the cultural dimension of language learning. Byram points out that Hurman's (1977) textbook *As Others See Us* presents learners with a series of materials which is intended to increase their cultural understanding (Ibid 333-4). But two of the important and recent textbooks which have been written with a focus on culture and the development of cultural competence in mind are *The Culture Puzzle* by Levine et al (1987) and Irving's *Communicating in Contexts* (1986).

Irving points out that *Communicating in Contexts* is based on the view that "good communication skills depend on becoming familiar with the cultural context to which language naturally belongs." Irving believes that many communication failures are the result of inadequate cultural knowledge rather than inadequate linguistic competence. Therefore, this book aims to "bridge the
gap between linguistic and cultural competence that often exists for students who have already spent some time (in some cases, years) studying the English language by focus on its linguistic features instead of cultural features.

Irving begins each chapter with a few discussion questions and a number of reading passages. The rest of the chapter consists of two sections, Focus on Communication and Focus on Culture. In the first section, the student is asked to paraphrase the passages and then do some exercises on vocabulary and the use of idioms. These exercises are then followed by a cartoon which illustrates a cultural point or provides more vocabulary exercises and discussion questions. The other section is intended for students to practice intercultural communication by interviewing Americans or non-native speakers of English on the topics of the passages which introduce the focus of the chapter. The chapters of the book focus on values, social institutions, family relations and other aspects of American culture. Among the topics which the book covers are learning another language and another culture, developing cross-cultural awareness and individualism in the United States. (See Appendix for examples)

The Culture Puzzle fosters a view which integrates language learning and culture learning. Therefore, the book aims to provide cultural understanding of aspects of American culture which influence communication strategies and language use in the
American context. As the authors claim, *The Culture Puzzle* is a coursebook "which integrates language learning and culture learning. It emphasizes cross-cultural knowledge and skill. The themes and content of the text provide an awareness of cross-cultural communication." The writers acknowledge that communication among members of different cultures is likely to create misunderstanding due to differences in the ways people behave and think. The book thus provides students with opportunities to study examples of cultural differences in communication. As the authors point out the book "helps students identify ways to avoid misinterpretations in their own interaction with Americans and with people from other cultures" (p. xiii).

The book is divided into units, each unit containing several chapters. Each chapter contains eight sections: (1) Chapter Introduction, (2) Cross-Cultural Interactions, (3) Questions and Discussion, (4) Interaction Summaries, (5) Focus on U.S. Culture, (6) Exercise and Skill Practice, (7) Phrases and Expressions and (8) U.S. and Cross-Cultural notes (See Appendix for an example).

The interest of the authors in teaching communication skills and raising cultural awareness is clearly reflected in the selection of topics addressing people, interacting in a group, choosing conversation topics, understanding cultural differences, etc.
Furthermore, such books can be employed, together with other materials, to raise learners' cultural awareness and to teach them how to handle communication strategies in English. Although these two books can be used with all English learners as a part of their language course, they can be particularly useful for students who are to move to America for academic, occupational or other purposes.

6.2.2 Possible procedures for teaching cultural competence

It should be mentioned that although coursebooks like those referred to above are effective means for teaching cultural competence, teachers should not use them to the exclusion of other means. Cultural competence can be taught by employing a variety of techniques and using a bank of other materials. Brooks (1986) describes a familiar device used frequently by teachers. Teachers devote some time at the start of a lesson to introduce a topic which has not been previously introduced. In this case teachers draw attention to similarities and dissimilarities among behavioural patterns associated with a particular situation (p. 123). But when teachers are not familiar with the students' cultural background, they can only focus on the characteristic routines of the speech event and allow students to identify similarities and contrasts. Brook listed a number of topics that may be considered in the classroom. As examples we quote the following
Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells How do friends meet, converse friendly, take their leave What are the perennial topics of small talks? How are strangers introduced?

Patterns of politeness What are the commonest formulas of politeness and when should they be used?

Festivals What days of the calendar year are officially designated as national festivals? What are the central themes of these occasions and what is the manner of their celebration?

Games What are the most popular games that are played outdoors, indoors, by the young, by adults?

Appointments How are appointments for business and pleasure made? What are the usual meeting places? How important is punctuality?

Soft drinks and alcohol What type of nonalcoholic beverages are usually consumed by young people and adults? What is the attitude toward the use of beer, wine, and spirits? What alcoholic drinks are in frequent use at home and in public?
Careers What careers have strong appeal for the young? How important is parental example and advice in the choice of a career (ibid 126-8)

Brook explains that such information can be acquired by students through teacher's presentation. Although this is possible and useful, a better way of teaching such information, we believe, is to assign learning tasks to groups of students in which they are required to find out the appropriate cultural behaviour related to such topics. To aid the implementation of the task, the teacher may guide students to sources of information such as particular books in the library, television, friends and relatives who have been to the target language community, etc. The value of such a procedure is that it gives learners responsibility for their own learning, and is compatible with the view of a learner-centred classroom.

Another possible procedure for teaching the previously mentioned and similar topics is to present learners with authentic pieces of spoken or written discourse which centres around particular communicative events. It should be stressed, however, that when teachers present students with such pieces of discourse, it is important that they explain the situation in which they occur, and the general cultural assumption underlying the communicative event. In more technical terms, teachers should
make sure that students have understood the "context of situation" and the "context of culture" of the communicative event around which the text centres (On the two types of context see 2.4). For example, if students are to be given a written text entitled "At a Dublin Pub", the teacher should specify the "context of situation" by explaining, for instance, that a group of young men and women arrange to meet at the pub on a Saturday night, order their drinks and have a good time. The teacher should also specify the "context of culture" by providing information about the social role of the pub as a meeting place in Ireland, the importance of a Saturday night, the attitude of Irish people towards alcohol and women, and any other relevant information. In this case the perfect interpretation of discourse will be rendered possible.

This kind of presentation is extremely useful in the sense that students will perceive that cultural knowledge is relevant and aids their comprehension of instances of language use, and that language use is contextualized, that is placed in its cultural context. However, such a method of presentation, we believe, is absent from most communicative teaching. When presented with a text, albeit authentic, the student has only the immediate situational factors (context of situation) at his or her disposal. It is the other side of the equation (context of culture) which is often missing.
In addition to coursebooks, teachers have a variety of sources of cultural information available to them. Newspapers are a rich and continuously up-to-date vehicle for teaching cultural understanding as well as many other aspects of language use. In this section, we shall concentrate on a number of newspaper features and the purposes for which they may be used in the classroom.

The front page. Front pages can be used in the classroom to make students aware of which topics or visuals would attract readers and to which age or sex group they appeal (cf. Blachford 1986: 131).

The horoscope. Blachford argues that the horoscope reveals how much people believe in the supernatural and to what extent they relate daily events to supernatural prophecies (ibid 131). In addition to its value as a source of information about particular patterns of belief, the horoscope can be amusing for students and may trigger a discussion between believers and disbelievers in the supernatural, and thus create a reason for communication.

Sports pages. From sports pages, learners find out about the games played in the target community, the most popular games, and the attitude of the public towards sport.
Readers' letters  Letters seeking professional advice on a variety of problems are a source of information about the sort of problem people pose, their attitude towards marriage, sexuality, family relations and so on.

Probably the most important facet of the newspaper is that it offers a wide range of discourse and register. Blachford notes that "Within any newspaper is a variety of styles. There is the very formal editorial, the argument of the news analysis, the slang or the sarcasm in a letter to the editor, the elliptical phrasing of some columnists, the truncated style of the headline, the dialect of the comic strip" (Ibid. 133). Although the same newspaper presents a variety of styles, teachers could compare and contrast quality and popular newspapers to show even a wider range of styles, discourse and register. Therefore, newspapers can be used to sensitize learners to variation in language use and to develop an ability to vary their speech and writing according to the demands of the situation, an ability which is at the core of communicative competence.

Furthermore, using newspapers in the classroom allows a number of activities and tasks to emanate. Apart from discussions about various issues in the newspaper, students can be assigned tasks which require practicing a number of language skills at the same time. For example, asking groups of students to write news
headlines, create sports commentaries, make advertisements etc

In this case, acquiring cultural understanding and practicing language use are dealt with as one issue, in learning about the culture learners are simultaneously practising language, and in their use of the language they are gaining cultural understanding.

Blachford emphasizes this point when he writes:

In terms of language skills, there is plenty to talk about or recognize in the different registers of English and the appropriate use of each. Activities which emanate from a newspaper class can center around a cultural theme, but give practice in the language. The discussion of cultural differences practices speaking, the discussion itself involves comprehension, understanding the topic under discussion involves reading (Ibid 133)

Reading newspapers is an extremely difficult task even for advanced learners. Linguistic complexity is one reason, but the crucial factor is that newspapers are highly culture-related. A learner has little chance of understanding a newspaper report on Irish football or cricket if he or she is unfamiliar with these games no matter how competent in English he or she might be. Therefore, in dealing with newspapers, as Blachford says, learners need "to be guided and taught." When tackled in the classroom newspapers can be effective means for teaching language in a cultural perspective, that is teaching communicative competence.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) emphasize the role of cultural knowledge in the ability to understand and produce speech acts, and its implications for language teaching and learning. They
recognize three factors which underlie the use of any speech act, viz, language functions, language varieties and the "shared sociocultural allusions" or "presuppositions" (p 22) It is important, therefore, that communicators have knowledge of each other's cultural experiences in order for successful communication to take place As has been suggested by many researchers (e g Widdowson 1982) Finocchiaro and Brumfit also suggest that "Parts of messages in oral or written communication are misunderstood or given false values due to the fact that socio-cultural experiences have not been shared by listener and speaker, or writer and reader " (Ibid 26)

Finocchiaro and Brumfit suggest a variety of techniques which can be adopted to teach aspects of the target culture In what follows we mention those which we believe are the most important First, they insist that the language classroom should reflect the target culture through the use of a number of materials the display of newspaper extracts showing advertisements, proverbs, comic strips, pictures etc , the use of books and magazines with the learner's proficiency level in mind, the use of records of contemporary music and songs

Second, they recognize the great value of individual and group projects Among the topics which learners can work on are maps of all kinds, menus, a class newspaper, a book fair, the study of some cultural customs etc However, we should stress that projects
would be more useful if students work on other subjects than those proposed by Finocchiaro and Brumfit. Although important, most of these topics are related to superficial aspects of the target culture which have little bearing on the learners' ability to communicate successfully. We believe that more appropriate project work topics are such as those listed by Brook and mentioned in the preceding section. These include forms of politeness, gestures, leavetaking etc.

Third, Finocchiaro and Brumfit suggest that literary masterpieces (simplified if necessary) should be studied in the classroom because literature reflects cultural patterns of behaviour, beliefs, values, customs etc., and provides exposure to authentic use of registers and dialects. It can also provide excellent topics for classroom discussion.

Fourth, they mention the technique whereby members of the community who have been to the country are invited to come to class and talk about their experience and observations in the country and, if possible, illustrate with photographs and other means. Students will write invitation and thanks letters to visitors in which they practice communication and learn about invitation forms, compliments and forms of politeness and address (ibid 130-2). This technique is both interesting and useful especially for students who are to move to the target language community.
Furthermore, the introduction of a wide range of discourse to the classroom is one of the most effective means for teaching cultural competence because, as Fine points out, "second language discourse is crucially related to the culture and situation of the second language" (p 2). By discourse, I mean any instance of authentic, contextualized spoken or written language. Discourse is important for teaching cultural competence in at least two ways. First, it is a rich source of information about attitudes, beliefs, manners, way of life etc. of native speakers. Second, and more importantly, discourse demonstrates a wide range of strategies which are specific to the language in question.

We should mention that learners must be familiarized with the discourse strategies of the target language because, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, variation in the use of discourse strategies across cultures is the cause of numerous communication breakdowns. Fine explores the value of discourse for the second language classroom even further. He argues that through exposure to discourse learners will develop a meaning potential. "As a second language learner becomes more familiar with the culture and the discourse patterns of the new language, he or she learns what the possible meanings are for the culture." (Ibid 4)
However, acquiring a meaning potential in the target language is not to be seen as separate from acquiring a cultural competence or communicative competence in general since both derive from the content of the culture to which they are related (see Chapter two).

Finally, cultural competence can be promoted in a variety of ways. We have discussed some techniques, procedures and materials which can be used to accomplish this goal. They are by no means exhaustive. The sophisticated, imaginative teacher will always discover new ways depending on the demands and interests of students.
Conclusions

In this thesis we have explained that the different versions of the communicative competence theory were developed within a socio-cultural framework, and the notions of meaning potential, fluency and capacity are closely associated with communicative competence and were also developed from the same general standpoint that the ability to use language successfully is governed by cultural presuppositions of a particular culture. Therefore, throughout the thesis we have adopted the view that communicative competence implies the ability to verbally behave in a culturally appropriate manner. We have pointed out that although communicative competence was accepted as the aim of foreign language teaching in communicative approaches, little attention has been paid to the teaching of the target culture in most communicative teaching. Hence our major conclusion is that raising cultural awareness should be, and can be as we have explained, an integral part of foreign language education.

We have also argued that over-emphasis on language functions and dissatisfaction with traditional grammar has led to an underestimation of the role of grammar. Our second conclusion is that grammar need not be traditional grammar, we can talk about communicative grammar and teach it for the benefit of students. In this case grammar is another important aspect of communicative competence which communicative teaching should attend to.
To turn to our major conclusion, it seems reasonable to argue that understanding a culture other than one's own is important not only for the ability to use the language of that culture, but it is also significant for the creation of a better world. In a world which is confronted with existential problems which need international cooperation, in a world which is torn apart by national, racial and cultural bias, it is not absurd to argue that more cultural understanding is called for.
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Appendix

In this Appendix we include some extracts from the first chapter in *Communicating in Contexts* and the seventh chapter in *The Culture Puzzle*. Our aim is demonstrate that coursebooks can serve as effective means for teaching English with a cultural focus if coursebook writers adopt a view which integrates language learning and culture learning, and acknowledge the significance of cultural competence as a major component of overall communicative competence. However because of limited space we could not include a whole chapter of each book, and thus we have chosen to quote some extracts which are typical of the books. First we include extracts from *Communicating in Contexts* followed by our comment on the structure of the book and the pedagogical function of the sections. Second we incorporate extracts from *The Culture Puzzle*, also followed by some notes.
Discussion Questions

1. Where are these characters from?
2. What visual clues did you depend on to identify their origin?
3. What country are they in? How do you know?
4. Describe how these two men differ in their perceptions of what the word “housing” means.
5. Why don’t they agree on the meaning of the word?
6. Describe what the word “housing” usually brings to mind in your culture.
7. This cartoon points out some potential problems in communicating with someone in a second language and a second culture. What are those potential problems?
8. Discuss your own experiences and problems in trying to communicate in a new language and a new culture.

The Link Between Communication and Culture

It has been said that without a culture we cannot see, but with a culture we are forever blind. In other words, each of us is born into a culture that teaches us a number of shared meanings and expectations. We usually learn our own cul-
tution's ways of doing, speaking, and thinking so well that it becomes difficult to think, feel, speak, and act as people in other cultures do.

For example, a baby born in India into an orthodox Hindu tradition will learn that cows are sacred. The child becomes a vegetarian like the rest of his family and the thought of cows as a source of food never occurs to him even though his Muslim neighbor eats beef. If he were to come to the United States as an adult and observe the gusto with which some Americans enjoy a good beefsteak, he might have difficulty understanding and accepting this behavior. He might think that Americans had no respect for religion or that they showed poor taste. However, the practice of eating beef in the United States, a predominantly Judeo-Christian culture, has little or nothing to do with religion, nor from the American point of view does it mean Americans don't know what
tastes good. It is just that Indians and Americans have been raised in different cultures with varying ideas about what to eat and what not to eat, what is sacred and what is not sacred. In the same way, the carnivorous American who visits India, craving a good steak and noticing a lot of Indians who appear to be skinny, might find it absurd that these people, who from the American's perspective, look like they need more nourishment and protein, don't break down and enjoy a good, juicy hamburger or steak. Both the Indian and the American have a word for 'cow' in their respective vocabularies, but just as the word 'housing' means different things to different people, so does the word 'cow' mean different things to people of different cultures.

As the basic building blocks of communication, words communicate meaning, but as we have seen, the meanings of words are very much influenced by culture. Meaning is in the person, not in the word, and each person is the product of a particular culture that passes on shared and appropriate meanings. Thus, if we want to learn to communicate well in a foreign language, we must understand the culture that gives that language meaning. In other words, culture and communication are inseparably linked. You can't have one without the other. Culture gives meaning and provides the context for communication, and the ability to communicate allows us to act out our cultural values and to share our language and our culture.

But our own native language and culture are so much a part of us that we take them for granted. When we travel to another country, it's as if we carry, along with our passports, our own culturally designed lenses through which we view the new environment. Using our own culture as the standard by which to judge other cultures is called ethnocentrism, and although unintentional, our ethnocentric ways of thinking and acting often get in the way of our understanding other languages and cultures. The ability and willingness to change lenses when we look at a different culture is both the cure and the prevention for such cultural blindness. Studying a new language provides the opportunity to practice changing lenses when we also learn the context of the culture to which it belongs.

When linguists study a new language they often compare it to their own and consequently they gain a better understanding of not only the new language, but of their own language as well. Students who study a foreign language will also learn more about their own native tongue by comparing and contrasting the two languages. You can follow the same comparative method in learning more about culture—your own, as well as others' Remember that each culture has developed a set of patterns that are right and appropriate for that culture. If people do things differently in another culture, they are not wrong—they are just different! Always thinking that 'culturally different' means culturally wrong will only promote intercultural misunderstanding.

Learning about American culture along with the American language does not necessitate your becoming 'Americanized' and acting just like an American, but it does mean making an effort to understand American people and
Learning Another Language and Another Culture

In other words, it helps you to see like an American without your having to be like an American.

You Can Talk, but What Do You Communicate?

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY, IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT.

Reynolds/Letteron Company creative by R. Kwong

How often have you heard someone say, in an attempt to clarify, "Yes, that is what I said, but that's not what I meant"? Just because we talk does not mean that we actually communicate what we intend. Communication can be defined as any behavior that is given meaning, whether the behavior is verbal or non-verbal, intended or unintended, consciously or unconsciously performed. So, it is impossible not to communicate, even though one does not always communicate in words.
Summary of Key Ideas

After each summary, paraphrase the idea—that is, restate it in your own words.

Example: We are all, to some extent, culture-bound.
Paraphrase: Everyone is, to one degree or another, influenced by the culture he or she was raised in.

1. Meaning is in the person, not in the word.
Paraphrase:

2. We tend to take our own language and culture for granted.
Paraphrase:

3 People everywhere tend to be ethnocentric
Paraphrase

4. Much of what we communicate is nonverbal
Paraphrase

5. Communicating interculturally can often lead to misunderstanding due to cultural differences that people are often not even aware of
Paraphrase

6. Although the term carries a negative connotation, culture shock can be beneficial in the long run, as it leads to cultural awareness and helps us to better understand ourselves as well as others
Paraphrase

7. Culture and communication are inseparable
Paraphrase

Idioms in Context

Now men I want a thorough combing of the area.

Idiom: to comb the area — to search the area carefully so as not to miss anything.

Example: The police searched the area with a fine-tooth comb.

Meaning: Make up your own sentence that uses the idiom "to comb the area".

Each idiom is repeated below as it was found in the text, it is followed by a second example of usage in context. Based on the examples, make an "educated guess" as to the meaning of the idiom.

1. to take something for granted
   
   Text: Our own language and culture are so much a part of us that we take them for granted.

   Example: I am accustomed to getting cash every Friday from the cash machine at my bank. I never wonder whether or not there will be money in the machine—I just take it for granted.

   Meaning: Now write your own examples using the idiom in context:
   a. ________________________________
   b. ________________________________

2a. to take someone for granted

   Compare "to take something for granted" and "to take someone for granted." "To take something for granted" does not necessarily carry a negative connotation, but to "take someone for granted" does, because it implies that the person taken for granted is not appreciated.

   Example: Joan complained that after twenty-five years of marriage, her husband no longer brought her flowers on their anniversary and never told her he loved her; she accused her husband of taking her for granted.

   Example: Henry's boss refused to give him a raise or to give him additional time off, even though he had been working very hard. Henry felt that his boss just took him for granted, so one day when he knew his boss would need him, he called in sick and took the day off.

   Meaning: Now write your own sentences:
   a. ________________________________
   b. ________________________________
Do movie stars in your country marry and divorce more often than other people?

FOCUS ON CULTURE

Practicing Intercultural Communication

Ask an American, yourself, and a person from a third culture the following questions about the link between language and culture. Compare the answers from these three different sources and then compare them with the answers of others in your group. Although you may see some patterns emerge, don’t jump
to hasty conclusions and make sweeping generalizations about culture based on this small sample. Any particular person is not necessarily representative of his or her culture as a whole. Once your group has enough samples from any one culture, you might ask a person from that culture if he or she thinks those answers are representative of that culture.

**Interview Questions**

1. What makes your native language special or unique?
2. What features of your native language make it easier or more difficult for you to learn another language?
3. Can you think of any individual characteristics you have that help you or hinder you in another culture?
4. Can you think of any cultural characteristics you have that help or hinder you in another culture?
5. Can you think of an example of a gesture common in your culture that is not used in other cultures or means something quite different?
6. What do you think Peter Adler meant when he said the greatest shock in culture shock may not be in the encounter with another culture, but with the confrontation of one's own culture? Do you agree with him? Why?
7. Try to explain what the following words mean to the majority of people in your culture:

   - house
   - work
   - competition
   - boss
   - family
   - leisure
   - cooperation
   - friend

**Cross-Cultural Analysis**

**JAPAN** Consider the following incident between an American businessman and a Japanese visitor to the United States, analyzing each person's actions and attitudes from a cross-cultural perspective. Discuss the incident and the questions that follow.

Mrs. Kobayashi, a Japanese woman temporarily staying in the United States, and Mr. Keller, an American businessman, were involved in a "fender-bender" at a busy intersection. Mr. Keller had been daydreaming about his upcoming vacation and had neglected to turn on his blinker before turning left at the intersection. Mrs. Kobayashi was very surprised when Mr. Keller turned left with no warning and hit her left front fender, bending it out of shape. Fortunately they were both driving slowly, and neither person was injured. But they were both a little shaken.

As they were both getting out of their cars to inspect the damage, a policeman, who had heard but not seen the fender-bender, approached the scene of the accident. He overheard the Japanese woman saying to
the man who was at fault. Oh I'm so sorry.' The police officer gave Mrs. Kobayashi a ticket for a moving traffic violation. She paid $30 and Mr. Keller got away without any blame.

Discussion Questions

1. Who was really to blame for the accident?
2. Why did the policeman give Mrs. Kobayashi and not Mr. Keller a ticket?
3. Why did Mrs. Kobayashi say 'I'm sorry' to Mr. Keller? What did she mean?
4. The words 'I'm sorry' don't always mean the same thing—it depends on the context. Discuss with your group different meanings 'I'm sorry' could have and explain the situation for each of the different meanings.
5. Explain how Mrs. Kobayashi and the policeman were both influenced by their cultural values. How might this wrongdoing have been avoided?
6. Does this incident bring to mind any stereotypes about men, women, and policemen? Explain.
7. Why do you think Mrs. Kobayashi paid the ticket?
8. What do you think Mrs. Kobayashi should have done?
   What do you think Mr. Keller should have done?
   What do you think the policeman should have done?
9. Discuss how your own cultural values influenced your ideas of 'right' and 'wrong' in this situation.

Survival Skills in a New Culture

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These pages are extracts from the chapter entitled "Learning Another Language and Another Culture" in *Communicating in Contexts*. The chapter begins with a cartoon and a number of discussion questions. The cartoon serves as a stimulus to trigger a response among the students in order to answer the questions which centre around the cartoon. The questions help to initiate a discussion among students, and thus provide the opportunity to practice the oral skill while their attention is focused on a cultural point. Attention to culture learning is evident from the very beginning. The cartoon contrasts people's perceptions of "housing". This contrast sensitizes students to the fact that the same words do not have the same connotations across cultures. As we have argued in Chapter five, people from different cultures assign different meanings to the same word or speech act.

This part of the chapter is then followed by a reading passage on the relation of language to culture. The passage explains that the way people think and behave is culture-bound, and provides examples. The author urges students to be open-minded towards other cultures, because learning another culture does not imply that learners should become "Americanized", for example, but that they should make an effort to understand how Americans think and behave. As far as language skills are concerned, this passage is intended to provide practice in the reading skill.
Following the reading passage there are two important sections in the chapter Focus on Communication and Focus on Culture. In the first section, students are presented with a number of key sentences which occur in the passage. They are then asked to paraphrase the ideas using their own words. The aim of this section is to get students to practice writing skills and to reinforce the cultural points which the chapter aims to convey.

An important feature of this section is "Idioms in Context." Students are given a number of idioms which can be found in the text, with examples illustrating their use. Students are required to infer the meaning of the idioms from the context and then show their understanding by writing examples using the idioms. There are two important points about idioms here. First, the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately is a sign of fluency. In Chapter two, we considered "idiomatic competence" as part of "cultural competence," which is in turn part of communicative competence (see 2.7). Second, students are encouraged to infer the meaning of idioms from the context and thus employ a significant learner strategy. The use of learner strategies is important for communicative competence development (see 4.4).
Moreover, the second section is intended to practice intercultural communication. Students are assigned a group task in which they are required to ask themselves, an American and a person from a third culture a number of questions related to aspects of language and culture. This section also includes an incident which shows a cultural misunderstanding. Students are asked to analyse and discuss the incident. The function of this section is to create conditions for genuine language use where students interact with native speakers and other people and find out about differences between cultures.
Introduction You probably find yourself in situations where there are conversations or discussions among three or more people. These include class discussions, meetings at work, and social conversations. It is often difficult for non-native speakers of English to participate in group discussions and conversations when the others are native speakers of English. This chapter will apply skills presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to interaction in group contexts.

CULTURE LEARNING QUESTIONS

1. Which do you feel is more difficult, communication between two people or communication in a group?
2. Which is more difficult when you are speaking your own language? Which is more difficult when you are speaking English? Give examples from your own experience.

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION 7A: Ineffective Communication

Situation Bill is leading a staff meeting in a company in the U.S. There are eight people who are all American, except Anna, who is from Hungary. She is a supervisor in the manufacturing department. Today, Bill is talking about two things at the meeting. The first is a new health insurance plan for the employees. The second is vacation schedules. The meeting has been going on for twenty minutes. Bill has just finished explaining the insurance plan.

Bill: "Okay, so that's the insurance plan. Any questions?"

Anna: "Yes, I"

Marge (Marge interrupts Anna) "Bill, where do I sign up for this insurance?"

Anna (Anna thinks to herself, "What did Marge ask? I couldn't hear the question."

Anna does not speak.)
Bill See John in the Personnel office." (Then Bill looks at Anna.)

Anna ‘Personnel office?’

Bill “You don’t know where the Personnel office is?”

Anna (Anna thinks to herself, “No, that’s not my question. I want to know what Margie asked you.” Anna is not sure what to say, so she says nothing.)

Bill ‘Margie, after the meeting will you show Anna where the Personnel office is?”

Margie ‘Okay.”

Bill “Any other questions?”

Anna (Anna thinks to herself, “Yes, I have a question about the insurance, and I still don’t know what Margie’s question was. What did they mean about the Personnel office? How can I interrupt?” Anna looks confused, but says nothing.)

Bill (No one asks a question, so he continues speaking quickly.) “Okay, let’s move on then. Have you all turned in your vacation schedules for this year?”

Anna (Anna thinks to herself, “What does he mean, ‘turned in’? I’m not going to ask since everyone else probably understands.”)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Comprehension
Write T (true) or F (false) in the space provided

1. ______ Margie needs to see John in the Personnel office to sign up for insurance
2. ______ Anna wants to know where the Personnel office is
3. ______ Anna asks Margie to show her where the Personnel office is
4. ______ Anna does not ask the question that she wanted to ask before Margie interrupted

Analysis Can You Explain?

1. Bill looks at Anna after he answers Margie’s question. Why do you think he does this?
2. Anna thinks to herself, “No, that’s not my question.” Why doesn’t she say this, aloud, to Bill?
3. Bill asks Margie to show Anna where the Personnel office is, even though this was not Anna’s question. Why do you think Bill did this?

Talk About Your Own Language and Culture

1. Is the style of communication in the meeting in Cross-Cultural Interaction a typical of one that might take place in your language and culture? If it is not, what are the differences?
2. Do you think that people who lead meetings in your culture would take the time to speak slowly and explain difficult words to non-native speakers of your language? Explain your answer
FOCUS ON U S CULTURE
Cultural Notes, Exercises, and Skill Practice

HOW MUCH DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT U S CULTURE?

Write T (true) or F (false) in the space provided

1  _______ If two people are speaking and a third would like to speak, he or she should never interrupt the two speakers
2  _______ In a group conversation or discussion, it is rude to talk again about a topic people already talked about earlier
3  _______ Americans will usually give non-native speakers of English extra thinking time and extra time to translate from their own language to English
4  _______ Americans generally think that it is good to speak up in meetings rather than be silent
5  _______ Americans are expected to bring up new ideas and suggestions in most meetings

SECTION 1  GETTING INTO THE CONVERSATION

Margie  "Bill, where do I sign up for this insurance?"
Bill    "See John in the Personnel office"
Anna   "Excuse me, Bill What was Margie's question?"
Using the skills of holding your turn and interrupting can be very important in a group interaction especially if you are the only non-native speaker of English. When two or more native speakers are talking together, it can be hard to get into or join the conversation. Sometimes it is necessary to interrupt quickly before the topic of conversation changes. You may have to do this even before you have decided exactly what to say. You may sometimes need to interrupt and hold your turn for a few seconds before you speak.

**Phrases and Expressions for Getting into a Group Conversation**

When you want to get into, or break into, a group conversation, you have to wait for a pause and then interrupt quickly. You could use the interruption phrases presented earlier:

- "Excuse me, I have something to add here."
- "Uhm, I have a question about that."
- "Could I ask a question?"
- "Could I interrupt for a quick second?"
- "Just a quick interruption."

You could interrupt, hold your turn, and then say what you want to say:

- "Um."
- "So, this is what we need to do."
- "Do you mean, uh?"
- "Uh, I'd like to know."
- "Can you tell me?"
- "I can add something here."
- "Ah, you know."
- "Well, you know."
When you hold your turn, it is as if you are putting up a stop light. You are telling others that you want to say something and you don’t want anyone else to speak until after you speak.

**Skill Practice: Getting into the Group Conversation**

Use the phrases above to interrupt quickly and hold your turn. Then ask for focused repetition or explanation when you don’t understand something. When you want to add something, get into the conversation.

**Topics for a Group Discussion**

- Your instructor discusses students’ goals and his own goals for the class.
- You and the other students list the problems of speaking a second language and discuss solutions to those problems.
- Compare a typical school or work day in your native country with that of other students.
- Your choice of topics.
Chapter 7 / Interacting in a Group

Cross-Cultural Exercise  Getting into the Conversation

With two other people who speak your language, demonstrate for the class how you would break into a conversation in your language

- See if the class can identify any 'interruption sounds' you use. (In English, "Uh" and "Uhm" are interruption sounds)
- Translate into English the phrases and expressions that you used to break into the conversation

CROSS CULTURAL NOTE

An Ethiopian man who worked in a hotel restaurant talked about a frustrating experience. "When the kitchen staff have a meeting, I never ask any questions or say anything. Sometimes I want to, but by the time I decide how to say what I want to say, it's too late. They're already talking about something else."

Phrases and Expressions for Going Back to Earlier Topics

If you miss the chance to say what you want to say, you can often go back to it later in the conversation. Repeat the following after your teacher:

"Going back to what we were talking about earlier"

"Could we go back to [state the topic] that we were discussing earlier?"

"I had a question earlier about [state the topic]"

"I wanted to add something to what we were saying earlier"

Skill Practice  Going Back to Topics

Choose a topic to discuss with several other people. If you lose the chance to say something, go back to the topic later in the discussion. Use the phrases listed above. Have your teacher listen to you and tell you if you are using the phrases correctly.

Topics

- Experiences in a second culture
- Customs in your country
- Learning a second language
- Your choice of topics
These extracts form part of Chapter 7 (Interacting in a Group), which is part of Unit II (Interacting in English) in The Culture Puzzle. This coursebook shows an interest in teaching cross-cultural communication skills, and this chapter is a good example of this interest. The chapter recognizes that non-native speakers of English have difficulties in participating in group discussions when the participants are native speakers of English. The chapter begins with two questions about communication problems in the students' mother tongue and in English. Students are urged to think of communication problems and supply examples from their own experience. The answers and examples provided could help the teacher identify areas of difficulty concerning group interaction and perhaps devote more classroom time and work to these problems. The value of a procedure as such is that it actively involves students in the learning process by allowing them the chance to talk about their needs and difficulties, a procedure which is emphasized by communicative approaches. The questions are followed by a conversation which demonstrates a non-native speaker's difficulty in making successful participation in a conversation.

"Focus on U S Culture" is an important section which elicits students' previous knowledge of conversational routines in American English. In this section students are required to answer true-false question concerning rules of group conversations and
discussions. Moreover, an important feature of this chapter is the section entitled "Getting into the Conversation". In this section the authors explain to students the importance of using the skill of holding one's turn and interrupting in group discussions, and then provide them with some useful phrases and expressions which could be used to interrupt to take part in a conversation. This is followed by "Skill Practice" where students are asked to practise these phrases and expressions in suggested group discussion topics.

Finally, although the two textbooks attend to other aspects of communicative competence such as vocabulary, attention to other aspects such as pronunciation and intonation is missing. But to do them justice we could say that no single coursebook can equally attend to all aspects of communicative competence. It is the teacher's job to select other coursebooks and a variety of materials to ensure that not only cultural competence, but overall communicative competence is well attended to. These two textbooks are effective means for teaching language from a cultural perspective. But however good they might be, the teacher will have to look for other sources and rely on a variety of procedures (see Chapter six) for teaching cultural competence.