

Communicative Language Teaching and Learning: Interfacing Theory and Practice — The Case of Botswana Secondary Schools

D.Phil Linguistics

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SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Botswana has experienced unsatisfactory standards of English Foreign and/ or Second Language (EFL & ESL) proficiency particularly at the early years of her education system (Primary and Secondary Levels). The problem is partly blamed on the fact that primary and secondary levels of education in Botswana (like in many other EFL teaching atmospheres) have not always regarded a promotion of the functional use of language (Communicative Competence) as their core mandate. As a result, EFL teaching and learning was concentrated on imparting an abstract knowledge of the grammatical features of a language. Thus, the teaching of English for real-life purposes was largely delayed until tertiary – level studies.

The advent of globalization with its emphasis on knowledge as a propellant for economic competitiveness had, however placed imminent pressures on secondary and tertiary level education systems of the world to reform (restructure) their curricula in order to equip graduates with relevant skills and competencies that will assist them lead sustainable livelihoods (i.e. life-long learning). In Botswana the need to reform secondary education system was spurred mainly by the realization that not only were junior and Secondary education curricula incompatible, but also that a foreign curriculum offered at senior secondary level (Cambridge Overseas School Certificate) was dependant on aching approaches that were too theoretical (academic oriented) and derived from the needs of the world of work.

In an effort to create a clear link between the two tiers of education and also help make senior secondary education to best cater for learners' academic, professional and adult skills a new curriculum proposal, the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) was introduced

ABSTRACT

Researchers world-wide and also in Botswana have highlighted the lack of compatibility between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the beliefs and traditions of specific contexts. This research seeks to contribute to this body of research by reporting on the interface between the theory and practice of CLT in Botswana's urban junior secondary schools. One reason for the widely held perception in Botswana that there are problems with English second language proficiency can be found in the English second language secondary school classrooms. The quantitative data analysis saw some contradictory findings. On the one hand teachers appeared to approve of and knew what CLT was. On the other hand, their theoretical knowledge did not seem as sound as it should be. The teachers themselves seemed to feel that they were left out of the decision making process and their answers also suggested that they had to rely on their own initiatives to augment their teaching. In the qualitative part of the study it was demonstrated that little of the typical and most fundamental aspects of CLT were apparent in the classrooms. Limited attention is devoted to developing the learners' skills and knowledge of how language is effectively used as a vehicle for conveying meaning in different socio-cultural contexts. In contextualising the findings within CLT research, the study attributes this discrepancy to, among others, what appears to be a top-down decision taken to implement the communicative curriculum in Botswana's ELT, prior to ensuring that the CLT paradigm has been adequately conceptualized by the language teachers. The study recommends that pre-service and in-service training should be far more focused on preparing teachers for their new role as facilitators in the CLT classroom.

KEY WORDS: Communicative language teaching, Botswana, Junior Secondary Schools, English second language proficiency, task-based learning

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

1. COC – Communicative oriented curriculum
2. CT – Communicative Theory
3. TFL – Target Foreign Language
4. L L – Learner – to - learner
5. LTT – learner talking time
6. TTT – teacher talking time
7. CT – communicative tasks
8. TBLT – Task based language teaching
9. ELL – English Language Learners
10. CLT & L – Communicative Language Teaching & Learning
11. FL – Foreign language
12. SL – Second language
13. TL – Target language
14. COLT – Communicative oriented language teaching
15. T&L – Teaching and learning
16. TL2 – Target Second Language
17. SE – Secondary education
18. JSE – Junior secondary education
19. ESL – English as a second language
20. CSS – Communication & Study Skills
21. COSC – Cambridge Oversea School Certificate
22. JC – Junior Certificate
23. BGCSE – Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education
24. CLT – Communicative Language Teaching
25. ELT – Eng. Lang. Teaching²⁶
26. CC – Communicative Competence
27. ESLP - English as a Second Language Proficiency
28. ELP - English Language Proficiency
29. NCE - National Commission on Education
30. RNPE - Revised National Policy on Education
31. TSL - Target Second Language
32. LEP - Limited English Proficiency
33. SLA - Second Language Acquisition
34. CA - Communicative Approach
35. CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
36. L2 - Second Language
37. BICS - Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

38. L1 - First Language
39. L2L - Second Language Learning
40. PPP - Presentation Practice Production
41. L-L - Learner to learner
42. BANA - British, Australasian, and North American
43. GTM - Grammar Translation Method
44. ZPD - Zone of Proximal Development
45. EFL - English as a Foreign Language
46. SADC - Southern African Development Community
47. EIL - English as an International Language
48. JSSs-Junior Secondary schools
49. MRR-Multiple method research
50. I-R-F-Initiation-Response-Follow-up
51. EIL-English as an international language
52. SCT-Socio-cultural theory

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

Littlewood (2011:550 ff.) mentions research that highlights, amongst other things, the lack of compatibility between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the beliefs and traditions of specific contexts. This research seeks to contribute to the large body of research mentioned by Littlewood by reporting on the interface between the theory and practice of CLT in Botswana's urban secondary schools.

1.1. THE CONTEXT: EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

1.1.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In Botswana, the perspective of education as a national asset deserving to be accorded the highest priority cannot be overemphasized. Thobega (2014:5) is among the authorities who have strongly echoed the view held in Botswana of education as a tool for improving the quality of the lives of the citizenry: "(...) education enhances the quality of their lives and the scope of their reality and choices to progress and succeed". Owing to the overarching goal of making education to become oriented towards aiding efficient work-place productivity and social mobility, the government of Botswana had, over the years, embarked on efforts at diagnosing possible deficiencies inherent in the education system, as well as making suggestions regarding how those shortcomings could be

alleviated. Some major initiatives that government had embarked upon since the country obtained independence in 1966 are reflected in what has come to be regarded as the main blue-prints of the country's education system: The Transitional Plan (Botswana,1966); Reports of the National Commission on Education (NCE) (Botswana, 1977 & Botswana, 1993); The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) (Botswana, 1994); 'Vision 2016' document, The Long-Term Vision for Botswana (Botswana, 1997).

Among the primary prognoses these documents raised in relation to the state of the education system in the country are:

- (i) Lack of compatibility at the various levels (and tiers) of the education system
- (ii) A teaching and learning (T & L) style that is too theoretical and / or academic in nature. The RNPE (Botswana, 1994) laments the academic nature of the school curriculum in Botswana. Regarding the teaching of English as a second language (ESL), this report especially complains about the negativity of an 'examinations English' that is focused on promoting mastery of the individual elements of the language form over teaching for a 'communicative objective':

[...] language teaching and testing emphasize mastery and / or accuracy in using certain grammatical features to the detriment of developing skills in using the target second

language to reflect its social appropriateness in a variety of contexts.

Nkosana (2006:14–15) referred to classroom English language teaching in Botswana's public primary and secondary schools at the time of the country's independence till today as largely academic in nature:

The English teaching situation in primary and junior secondary schools before 1966 was geared towards the development of listening, reading and writing skills and less on speaking skills, while in senior secondary schools ... the BGCSE [Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education] which replaced the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, only assesses reading and writing, thereby continuing the academic stunt of the previous COSC English exam by failing to support teaching through ignoring the assessment of listening and speaking.

(iii) The use of foreign curricula (syllabi) that do not adequately reflect the real-life needs and / or situations of the country. Until 1998, the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) was offered at senior secondary education level. As such, it would seem that the education authorities had little or no control over making its content relevant to the needs of careers as well as further education and training. The NCE (1993), for instance, observes that there was lack of continuity between COSC and Junior Secondary Education (JSE) courses. The same

report further opines that the COSC curriculum “remained relatively unchanged for two decades” (Botswana, 1993: 180).

A perusal of government initiatives at reforming the education system, as referred to above, reveals that they were chiefly motivated by a common concern, namely to help make the national educational programme better focused towards addressing work place (occupational) needs. Many of the propositions put forward were however not implemented immediately. This resulted in a perceived failure by the national education system to efficiently aid the national agenda. An example of a major educational policy government had come up with (but which took a long time to implement) concerned effecting measures that will prioritize the development of high levels of English language communicative proficiency as a vehicle for helping to increase the country’s global economic competitiveness. The RNPE (Botswana, 1994:5) for instance, had recommended that English as a compulsory language of instruction must commence in standard two and not in standard five. To date, however, this proposal is yet to be implemented.

Because of the crucial role of English in the educational system, several language teaching curriculum documents (for example, Revised Syllabi for the Communication and Study Skills Unit at the University of Botswana, 2000; BGCSE Teaching Syllabus, 2000; Three-Year Junior

Secondary Syllabus-English, 1995), have approved, overwhelmingly, of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an 'institutional' approach that is best suited for inculcating adequate ESL communicative skills among learners at all levels of the country's educational system. Educational authorities in Botswana have, therefore, placed high premium on CLT as a corrective strategy for the limited English proficiency (LEP) of the school leavers and graduates of the country's institutions.

1.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN BOTSWANA

As was pointed out in section 1.1 above, education is regarded as one of the central propellants of social transformation. In line with this view, studies (Transferable Personal Skills in Employment: The Contribution of Higher Education, 1986; Lannon, 1993; Sunday Times Business Times, 2004; The Star: **News**, 2014), had recommended that for an education system to produce a versatile graduate its curriculum should be evenly balanced with respect to two sets of skills: specific disciplinary (vocational/academic) skills and general or transferable (i.e. non-academic/personal) skills. Despite an advocacy for a complementary relationship between the two categories of skills as an effective recipe for training a productive workforce, research (Allen & Widdowson, 1978; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Sunday World: World of Jobs, January 25, 2006) highlighted that there exists a universal disparity in the placement of skills in most school curricula in favour of academic knowledge over personal skills. Personal skills

(including problem-solving, team-work, interpersonal and communication skills, time management, presenting ideas confidently, etc.) are either precluded from the formal school curriculum or are peripheral relative to the academic component.

According to literature (Transferable Personal Skills in Employment: The Contribution of Higher Education, 1986; Cummins, 2000; O'Neill, 2000; Sunday Times: Business Times, January 25, 2004; Brown, 2007; Kirkgoz, 2010), an imbalance in the placement of skills in the curriculum has created a dearth of workplace and life (personal) skills among school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions. Notwithstanding this disparity, the value of personal skills including communicative proficiency in the English language has been heightened, especially by the emergence of the new phenomenon of 'economic globalization' with its overall vision of tailoring knowledge production to enhance individual countries' 'international economic competitiveness' (knowledge economy). With its increased accent on efficiency, globalization stimulated growing discontent with the effectiveness and quality of curricula of many education systems as vehicles for imparting 'life-long skills'. A worldwide advocacy for improved standards of employee education is evident: "The shift from an industrialized to a knowledge-based economy highlighted the need for workers with higher levels of literacy and numeracy than was previously the case" (Cummins, 2000:140).

The realisation that the school curriculum is biased towards developing academic knowledge over personal skills precipitated a call for a shift in paradigm. For the teaching of ESL, the shift in question implied that more or equal emphasis on developing knowledge of the functional and social uses of English (communicative competence — CC) was called for. For an ESL programme to develop full learner communicative proficiency (interpersonal and cognitive) it should strive to strike a balance between communicative and academic competencies.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Employers of the University of Botswana graduates, Certificate and Diploma holders were unhappy with the inability of graduates and diplomates to express themselves fluently. External Examiners too had observed that University of Botswana students were unable to use information from references, compile data, analyse it and write coherent reports (Report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Future of Communication and Study Skills at the University of Botswana) (University of Botswana, 1998:26).

The Task Force Seven Report (University of Botswana, 1995:42) had earlier also expressed concern regarding the problem of limited academic writing skills and linguistic and

stylistic dexterity in compiling professional documents by UB learners.

Various reports (Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008; Botswana, 1993; Botswana, 1994; Nkosana, 2006) have alluded to an inadequate state of ESL proficiency of school learners and graduates at all levels of Botswana's education system.

One weakness of our graduates that has been identified by employers and external examiners is their inability to express themselves clearly. It has also been said that they have difficulty in preparing and writing reports.

Reservation regarding the communicative outcomes of the Communication and Study Skills (CSS) courses offered at the UB was expressed: "the results achieved by CSS courses offered in various faculties across the University left a lot to be desired" (University of Botswana, 2000: ii).

Concerning secondary education, learners' insufficient ESL communicative proficiency was partially demonstrated by their low performance in English tests and examinations. The report of the NCE (Botswana, 1977: 99) referred to "far from satisfactory" examination results for English language. The erstwhile COSC pass rate had also demonstrated a 'long-term downward trend'. Poor English communicative proficiency by secondary school learners in Botswana was most specifically reflected in the low marks that learners attained in a survey of achievement on an international

test of reading comprehension. Form III students had an average score of only 31 percent while Form V students averaged 50 percent in the same test. The 2006 Junior Certificate (JC) English Language examinations results showed that out of 37 772 candidates, only 26.8 % (10 133) obtained grades A–C, whilst 73.2 % (27 639) received grades D–E. According to the same source, previous examinations results (2000–2005) had reflected a lack of improvement to the 26.8% pass rate. The results for the BGCSE for the corresponding period show that 39.8% candidates got grades A–C and 60.2 % obtained grades D–U. According to The Midweek Sun newspaper (Midweek Sun, 2013:3) “The 2012 Junior certificate education (JCE) results show a lower proportion of candidates attaining grade C or better (40.7%) compared to the results of 2011 (74.7%)”.

The worldwide call for effective communication skills has been stated as follows:

Organizations today increasingly require employees to interact and collaborate with their co-workers as evidenced by the proliferation of task forces, quality circles, and Work Improvements Teams (WITS). Employees and supervisors are encouraged to work together to find solutions and generate a winning team spirit. These help to facilitate change and foster new mindsets (Botswana Daily News. Friday July 29, 2005: 8).

A body of research (Marshall & Williams, 1986; Sunday Times, 2004; Brown, 2007), reflected complaints about the world-wide dearth of personal and life skills among school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions. With specific reference to ESL teaching and learning, its ineffectiveness in developing the practical communicative skills needed in the workplace is reflected in constant public, corporate and media concern that schools are failing to develop sufficient language and literacy skills to enable students to handle the language demands of the workplace (Cummins, 2000:53).

Marshall and Williams (1986:11) have also expressed the view that the curricula of many teaching and learning institutions are not tailored to address the social and career needs of their contexts of operation:

...in further and higher education themselves, the concern is not particularly with deficiencies in subject knowledge. Instead, the concern is expressed in such factors as 'poor personal motivation and little professional commitment'.

Educators and applied linguists (Cummins, 2000; Tomlinson, 2005) have identified a combination of the entrenched influence of 'high stakes' examinations and inappropriate didactic styles as the main factors that had militated against teaching ESL for communicative purposes. The problem of an unsatisfactory English communicative ability by learners came at a time when 'economic globalization' was the most dominant force worldwide

(Sunday World, 2006; Tabulawa, 2006. The emergence of globalization heightened the ever-increasing role of English as an international language by making effective communication in the language one of the key international competitive skills. Others include excellence, human/intellectual capital, roundness / versatility, interpersonal and communication skills, critical thinking, articulateness, etc. Botswana has indisputably accepted the role English plays as an international language on which she is heavily reliant for pursuing the objectives of the public sector, industry, business and education. The strong endorsement of English as the official language in Botswana necessitated the need to introduce reforms in the country's English Language Training (ELT). The CLT approach was endorsed as appropriate for helping increase the English language communicative proficiency of the learners.

1.3.1 Problem Analysis

The major factors which some scholars (including Mitchell & Lee, 2003; Tomlinson, 2005; Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008) have often cited as underlying the inadequate English language communicative proficiency of learners can broadly be referred to as pedagogic, which includes the teaching and learning culture. Stern (1987: 263), citing John Stuart Mills, as quoted by Hall (1947), illustrates the rationale often preferred for relating language learning to culture: “without knowing the language of a people, we

never really know their thoughts, their feeling and their type of character.”

In the following section the factors that are considered as contributing to a weak communicative ability among learners are discussed.

1.3.2.1 Inappropriate curriculum (English language syllabus)

Research has shown that prior to the 1970s, most ESL teaching and learning the world over was concentrated on promoting mastery of the grammatical and structural elements of the target language (TL) compared with building capacity in its use as a tool for effective communication. Botswana was not an exception to this trend. Its problem in this area owed its roots from the adoption and implementation of a foreign curriculum, the ‘O’ levels. The ‘O’ levels curriculum contributed to the limited English language proficiency among Botswana learners primarily because of its theoretical orientation. That is, it focused on the teaching and assessment of the reading and writing skills of English to the exclusion of the mainly practical skills of speaking and listening. Nkosana referred to much of the theoretically inclined language teaching in Botswana:

English was considered more as an academic subject, equipping students with the academic skills of reading and writing than a practical

subject that equips students with practical communication skills (Nkosana, 2006:14).

According to Nkosana, (2006), the BGCSE, a supposedly skill-oriented syllabus was introduced in 1999 in the place of COSC in order to help remedy the skills deficiencies of learners (i.e. through the teaching and assessment of all four skill domains). However, according to literature (Botswana, 2000; Nkosana, 2006) when implementation of the BGCSE curriculum was effected, formal assessment of listening and speaking skills was postponed owing to resources constraints, causing a further perpetuation of the skills imbalance in the curriculum, as well as a correspondingly low communicative ability among learners.

1.3.2.2 Lack of adequate exposure to English

Scholars (Brown, 2007; Candlin, 1981; Cummins, 2000; Stern, 1987; Webb, 2004) have expressed that in order for ESL teaching and learning to develop learners' communicative proficiency in all the four skill domains and also adequately prepare school leavers and graduates for an efficient performance in the three spheres of language use (i.e. academic work, social interaction and workplace productivity), its curriculum and techniques of delivery needed to be optimally engrained in social reality. Other researchers (Clarke, 1989; Cook, 2002; Edwards & Westgate, 1987; Nunan, 1987; Savignon, 1978) have

observed, however, that the above-referred recommendation notwithstanding, the bulk of ESL teaching the world over had continued to fail to draw a strong connection between itself and practices taking place in real-life settings (i.e. have remained artificial) owing partly to an over-emphasis that it had placed on the teaching of grammar to the detriment of teaching learners about the role of language as a tool for social communication. In other words, a major reason for a low ESL communicative proficiency had stemmed from the fact that learners were not being given a chance to experience ‘reciprocal interaction’ (i.e. meaningful and sustained communication) with native speakers or those with a near-native proficiency in the second language both inside and outside the classroom, so as to experience appropriate communication which the learner could have in turn evaluated, imitated and ultimately internalized as part of their repertoire of skills (Candlin, 1981).

To these scholars, a central requirement of exposure to a TL was taken to mean the desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics. Realistic classroom teaching was therefore viewed as valuable because as students learn to use the language “with increasing accuracy and appropriateness in relevant, meaningful contexts, their confidence and proficiency will grow” (Webb, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Savignon, 2005). Further, the critical role played by meaningful

exposure in promoting communicative capability is illustrated by Savignon:

The most critical factor to the learner's progress in developing communicative competence is a variety of activities in which the student can use the second language in an unrehearsed, novel situation requiring, on his part, inventiveness, resourcefulness and a bit of aplomb. These are the activities that most closely approximate the real-world of the second language learner. They let him see just how well he could get along if certain situations came up. They let him measure his progress against criteria which he knows to be more real (1978:3).

Thus, authentic interaction exposes learners to the language of the real world. The value of this exposure was described by Clarke as "uncompromising to learners and reflect real world goals" (1989:73). The exposure helps them to bridge the gap between artificial communication of the classroom and genuine language use practiced outside the class. In Botswana, to some extent, learners are reasonably exposed to English especially taking into account that English is used as a compulsory medium of instruction with effect from standard five, and government is even being lobbied to introduce compulsory instruction in English beginning at standard two (Botswana, 1994:59). However, learners' exposure to meaningful (functional) English use is limited and in some cases even non-existent.

For example, in Botswana as in many other ESL contexts, ELT was heavily dependent on ‘course book materials’, weaned of real-life (original) contexts and unlikely to promote communicative ability. Evidence of a lack of correspondence between the education system and the real world was illustrated in the sentiment that a major weakness of Botswana’s education is “the academic nature of the school curriculum and the separation of school from the world of work” (Botswana, 1993). A further obstacle to meaningful exposure to English was that some Batswana children rarely use English outside the classroom, and are thus denied the opportunity to experience ordinary (naturalistic) interactive and conversational language that has been advocated by CLT methodologists as instrumental in developing communicative fluency in a target second language (TL2).

1.3.2.3 Teaching and learning methods

Reports (Botswana, 1993 & 1994; Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008) suggest that Botswana adopted an academic-oriented syllabus and a largely ‘passive’ learning culture at Secondary Education (SE) level. The report of the NCE (Botswana, 1977:100) described the artificiality of Botswana’s teaching and learning environment in the observation that there exists an “excessive emphasis in the curriculum upon abstract learning and memorization and neglect of practical studies and of acquisition and

application of skills”. Akindele and Trennepohl characterize the learning style of Batswana’s secondary students as: (...) passive and non-responsive when they learners do not understand what is being taught, and are afraid to ask. On their arrival at the University of Botswana they come with the same attitudes, and are sometimes shocked and pleasantly surprised when they are forced to participate in class (2008:155).

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) and Clark (1987) trace the origin of didactic styles of this nature to classical humanism, especially its associated Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Despite extensive literature in its disfavour, GTM continues to exercise considerable influence on the pedagogical methods of many school teachers (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983:4; Stern, 1987:453). Its main goal was to develop intellectual knowledge (i.e. formal aspects of language) to the exclusion of practical skills (i.e. knowledge about how language operates as a tool for social communication). Little attention is also paid to the speaking of and listening to second language speech (Stern, 1987:454).

The GTM sought to promote the mastery of the structural (linguistic) properties of a language. It was premised on the view that the formal aspects of language ought to be over-learned so that the student is ultimately able to accurately produce the formal properties of the language almost unconsciously (habit formation). Thus, GTM was heavily

dependent on 'drill' and 'pattern' practice as its main teaching techniques. The assumption was that mastery of the rules of sentence construction, acquisition of adequate vocabulary and a habitual practice and memorization of grammatical systems would eventually lead to effective acquisition and consequently perfection in using the language. But evidence had shown that language acquisition through grammar-translation styles, in conjunction with other traditional teaching techniques, notably, Audio-Lingual and Audio-Visual methods, proved insufficient to develop the ability to use language to convey meaning (Clark, 1987; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983)

The introduction of a three-year basic JSE system in Botswana resulted in the enrolment of learners with different levels of competency (by extending enrolment opportunities to Primary School Leaving Examinations grade D holders). Previously, such opportunity was reserved for grades A and B holders and some exceptional grade C candidates. This development in which grade D holders were now eligible for enrolment in secondary education implied an adjustment of didactic methods to ensure effective learning by a heterogeneous group of students. The widening of the intellectual ability range of learners posed dilemmas to some students (especially grade D holders) in coping with the rigours of learning at this level. Adapting didactic methods to best address the needs of learners with different levels of competency was

particularly relevant to subjects such as English with a strong academic leaning.

In addition to addressing the needs of learners' with varying intellectual abilities, ESL learning in Botswana was also affected by learners' cultural orientation. That is, children's socialisation has been found to profoundly influence the ways in which they either successfully or unsuccessfully take part in learning. Socialisation initiates children into developing a sense of what is socially desirable or not and also instills into them the first idea about motivation. It initiates their sense of how to perceive the world. Regarding T & L, cultural background has been established as affecting "strategy choice" (Tomlinson, 2005:141). With respect to Botswana, the concept of *Botho* (respectability/uprightness in both manner and character) is an important embodiment of the nation's cultural values. The applicability of this concept to children's learning is perhaps embedded in its abhorrence of inquisitiveness (talkativeness) in children's interaction especially with elderly people or any other person they are perceived not to be adequately familiar with. This point was captured in the observation: "...all children are trained not to argue with an elderly person. They are also trained not to disclose or share information with strangers." (Molefe, *et al.* 2007:13). This cultural belief seemed to predispose Botswana children to a passive and/or 'rote' kind of learning. Regarding ESL learning specifically, the cultural element implied that Botswana children entered their early

part of schooling (primary and secondary) with an unsupportive or unsuitable attitude towards learning the target language, if we subscribe to CLT's view that active participation in communicative exercises builds high levels of proficiency in language use. Especially, such learners were destined to encounter difficulties coming to terms with communicative teaching in which the bulk of the classroom discourse involves learner-learner interaction and the reduction of the teacher's role to that of a facilitator of this process. Particularly, this cherished cultural norm seemed to encourage Batswana children to bring into the language classroom an attitude of reticence and fear of taking part in communicative activities.

1.3.2.4. Learning materials

Researchers (Clarke, 1989; Coleman, 1987; Little, 1990; O'Neill, 2000) have shown that CLT approaches strongly endorse the use of authentic teaching materials, mentioned in item 'b' above, as a tool for learning. Using the 'real thing' (materials initially meant for non-pedagogical purposes) has been found to heighten learners' interest by creating a sense of purpose in the learning process. Botswana's ESL teaching recognizes the value of using authentic materials, especially that learning materials should be drawn from broad areas of experience such as:

- Everyday activities
- Personal and social life

- The world around us
- The world of work
- The international world
- The world of science and technology

(Botswana, 2000: iii)

Worldwide, the critical role expected to be played by authentic materials in aiding successful ESL teaching and learning has been demonstrated, however, literature has shown that in spite of the wider publicity given to authentic materials as a vehicle for “enhancing the relevance and meaning of the language learning situation” (Clarke, 1989:79) in many secondary schools their use in the language learning exercise is ineffective because teaching for every day communication (the communicative goal) is considered peripheral (Clark, 1987). Cook (2002), and Allen and Widdowson (1978) have also expressed concern that many ESL courses continue to be dependent on ‘imaginary’ educational materials that alienate learners from an effective ESL learning. Further, some scholars have indicated that where authentic materials have been included as part of the language learning exercise, they are often inappropriately utilized, resulting in the perpetuation of an imbalance of emphasis in favour of language form over its meaning potential, thus creating only an aura of authenticity. (Nunan, 1987; Clarke, 1989; Brown, 2007). Some other factors that were identified as contributing to ineffective use of authentic materials include attitude of teachers and learners especially, that they often cast doubt over the intellectual value of non-pedagogical materials.

Teachers and learners have also been described as inclined towards displaying an attitude that authentic materials are economically unsustainable and especially that they are expensive to produce and store. The constraints alluded to here are reported to have resulted in authentic materials either being excluded from classroom teaching or in being merely employed to conceal the protruding dominance of language form over its use.

In Botswana, it has also been shown that not enough effort was made to relate teaching materials to the communicative requirements of learners (either academic or professional). Dissatisfaction with the abstractness of teaching is echoed:

There is a certain artificiality about the teaching of practical subjects in classrooms and workshops, removed from real-life context ... we do not see the practical subjects as being the only, nor necessarily the most effective way of achieving a practical orientation to the curriculum. To supplement the compulsory subjects, therefore, we would like to see the development of a practical orientation in the teaching of all subjects. Wherever possible throughout the curriculum, instruction should include project work and an applied approach to solving problems (Botswana, 1977:112–113).

Other sources (Mmegi Newspaper, 14 February 2007; Botswana 1993 & 1994) have blamed the ineffectual utilization of authentic materials in the ESL curriculum on

three factors viz. large classes of mixed ability students, poor teaching and learning facilities (including relevant course books) and a very heavy influence of examinations and the need to complete a demanding syllabus.

1.3.2.5. Professional background of staff

Some sources have implied that teachers in Botswana are not optimally trained to cope with the challenges of modern pedagogy. Molefe, *et al.* (2008: 9), for instance, argue that:

In many nations the entry level for teachers at both primary and secondary levels is a bachelor's degree in a subject area plus a masters in education. Botswana is still a long way from this standard.

Whilst the above referred point (idea) cannot be entirely agreed with, it nonetheless provides food for thought regarding future trends needing to be explored in order to render language teaching more relevant.

The report of the 1993 National Commission of Education had also revealed that presently, Botswana's pre-service training programmes do not suitably prepare teachers to handle learners with different levels of competency. Whilst at the moment, a master's degree in the traditional subject appears not to be an absolute requirement for a school teacher, what perhaps is true from the above-referred

statement is that teachers need a longer time to study the subject 'education' so as to gain in-depth understanding (knowledge) of foundation disciplines (theory and practice). This is particularly the case because, by its nature, the 'communicative revolution' has cast doubts on the continued effectiveness of traditional teaching methods. Cook (2002) rightly observed that CLT represents a destabilization of the old order. Especially by advocating the supremacy of oral communication over the written mode, the paradigm had implied changes in the roles of the teacher and learners with respect to classroom discourse. The supposed change was reported to have created uncertainty among teachers and learners regarding their effective participation in the new teaching and learning regime. In other words, it has created a likelihood for Batswana teachers to require some form of retraining in order to be able to teach communicatively. This situation is reminiscent of the United Kingdom (UK), for example, when the Communicative Approach (CA) to the teaching of foreign languages (especially German and French) was first introduced. Teachers initially faced difficulties in terms of classroom practices and content presentation (Coleman, 1987). With the use of the GTM, the didactic practices of such teachers were 'content driven'. The teacher 'purveyed knowledge' which was supposed to be assimilated almost passively (convergent learning). The examinations process (regarded a tool for recalling factual information) was the main vehicle for providing feedback to teaching. According to some scholars (Mitchell, 1988; Coleman, 1987), whilst

CLT focused on utilizing communicative strategies to develop both oral and written competencies, the bulk of the priority was, nonetheless, placed on the oral mode. The new priority resulted in the teachers being faced with major challenges, including mastering a thorough English First Language (EFL) fluency. Further, the teacher's skills in organizing and managing oral activities were placed into focus. CLT was introduced in Botswana's ESL T & L in 1999. Against this background, as a new entrant in the country's language teaching landscape it was expected of the paradigm to encounter some form of resistance from teachers. Most probably, it was going to be rejected by the old cohort of teachers, the majority of whom did not possess the requisite professional background to teach communicatively.

The factors identified above were found to have caused an inadequate English language communicative proficiency among Botswana secondary school learners. The insufficiency of these 'high touch' skills had prompted nations the world over to restructure their education systems with a view to sharpen the international competitive skills of learners. Botswana's response to an international movement for inculcating international competitive skills (as well as a culture of 'life-long learning') among learners was represented by the introduction of the BGCSE in 1999 for forms four and five (in the place of COSC). The Botswana JSE curriculum was also introduced in 2010 for forms 1–3.

Botswana sought to take advantage of the new curriculum packages identified above to reform ESL teaching in order to make it more suitable for improving English language proficiency among learners. In line with this goal, one of the prerequisites for improving learners' communicative abilities was targeted at adopting a clear and consistent pedagogical approach ('institutional methodology') for the T & L of ESL. Accordingly, the CLT approach was officially endorsed by curriculum planners and policy makers as a preferred pedagogical style at all levels of secondary education. At junior secondary education, for example, the pre-eminence of the communicative approach was acknowledged:

The emphasis throughout this syllabus is on a communicative approach where the students learn the language by using it in meaningful interactions, communicative activities and problem-solving tasks, thereby encouraging spontaneous and natural discourse. (Botswana, 1995: i)

Similarly, the BGCSE teaching syllabus explicitly endorsed the vital role of communicative strategies in the teaching of English: "the teaching methodology is based on a COMMUNICATIVE approach" (Botswana, 2000: i).

From the above words, it was possible to deduce the overall principles of CLT as analogous to those of adult

education as have been described by Rogers (1969). Another idea that is implicit from these statements is that learners and graduates' limited communicative abilities in the TL2 stems in large measure from the fact that they often lack awareness that requirements for communicating in real-life contexts are more intricate than a mere recalling of the grammatical and structural forms of TL.

CLT thus emphasized the significance of developing learners' competency in conveying meaning (communicative competence) as opposed to putting accent on mastering grammatical, structural, lexical and pronunciation systems (linguistic competence), as the main goal of ESL teaching and learning. It focused on developing learners' communicative competence in an authentic (meaningful social and situational) context. To that end, in CLT teaching the needs and interests of students as well as assisting them to establish a relationship between the language taught in the classroom and the ways in which it is used in practical everyday communication (by members of a target speech community) are considered to be paramount. The introduction of CLT strategies was underlined by a concern that learners continue to fail to communicate effectively despite having acquired a reasonable knowledge of the formal properties of a second language primarily because they are unaware that language operates as part of a larger social matrix (Allen & Widdowson, 1978; Brown, 2007:241; Clark, 1987; Halliday, 1978; Mendelsohn, 1980; Savignon, 2005). A strong

interdependence between language and society has been described by Galloway (1993: 2):

...language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social and situational context (who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak?)

In all, CLT had maintained that second language learners' communicative proficiency in English is best developed by a teaching and learning experience that seeks to establish a balance between promoting a knowledge of the 'social grammar' of a language and a mastery of its 'formal properties'. Social grammar was interpreted as the process of creating an awareness that there exists "both specific rules for specific occasion and basic (ground) rules from which to generate performance appropriate to types of relationships and situations" (Edwards & Westgate, 1987). In other words, it highlights the importance of being able to communicate in a manner commensurate with the culture of the target language. That is, the grammatical rules of a language are best learnt in the context of communication rather than being taught as discrete units. Brown backed this claim by adding that grammatical items might better be subsumed in various communicative functional categories (Brown, 2007).

1.3.2.6 Concluding remarks

Based on the problem analysis above, it is clear that all is not as it should be with ESL teaching in Botswana. One reason for this state of affairs can be found in the ESL secondary school classrooms. If the right foundation is not laid in the crucial years at school, when pupils are first introduced to English and where attention should also be given to academic language proficiency, it will be very hard to rectify the lack of necessary skills later. It was this conviction that inspired the research and formed the rationale for choosing Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs) as the research site. Investigating the way in which CLT found its way into these classrooms seemed the obvious thing to do.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problem as discussed above, the overarching question for the research can be phrased thus: why is it that an approach that is seen worldwide as the best way of teaching ESL does not deliver the expected results in Botswana? To narrow this very broad focus, the following four more specific research questions, each with a set of sub-questions, were formulated:

1.4.1 What is the state of English Language Proficiency (ELP) in Botswana's Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs)?

1.4.1.1 How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs rate the English Language Proficiency (ELP) of their pupils?

1.4.1.2 How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs characterise the English usage of their pupils?

1.4.1.3 If teachers in Botswana's JSSs do not rate their pupils' ELP as adequate, what do they consider to be the main factors contributing to this state of affairs?

1.4.2 How is CLT received in Botswana's JSSs?

1.4.2.1 Do teachers in Botswana's JSSs understand what is meant by CLT?

1.4.2.2 How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs rate their professional preparedness to handle teaching in the CLT context?

1.4.2.3 What is the extent of Botswana's JSSs ESL teachers' knowledge of CLT

1.4.2.4 Do teachers in Botswana's JSSs take ownership of CLT?

1.4.3 To what extent does classroom practice in Botswana's JSS's reflect CLT?

1.4.3.1 To what extent do the didactic methods used by the teachers in Botswana's JSSs adhere to CLT theory?

1.4.3.2 What didactic methods would best suit CLT in Botswana's JSSs?

1.5 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study is to help improve the low ELP proficiency of Botswana's learners by investigating the possible causes of this unsatisfactory ESL communicative proficiency in the urban JSSs of Botswana.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study utilised several methods to help find answers to the research questions formulated in section 1.4 above. Using a multiple method research design was considered an effective practice. The design combined insights gained from a comprehensive literature review with empirical research which made use of quantitative research and qualitative research. In the quantitative part of the empirical research a survey, based on a questionnaire, was used. The survey was followed in by an observation of classroom teaching. This qualitative method of data collection and analysis was used to elicit data intended for closing the gap created by the initial use of a quantitative survey questionnaire. Since survey questionnaires could only elicit implicit and inconclusive findings regarding the state of ESL communicative proficiency in Botswana, the use of an additional method was essential to supplement the data elicited via the survey questionnaire. Stern (1987:262) referred to this approach to researching a subject as a “systematic empirical research”.

Overall, a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research was felt to be an effective means of guaranteeing the validity and reliability of the answers found.

In Chapter four the methodology is explained in detail.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Undertaking a study of this nature was motivated by its perceived benefits to a variety of stakeholders. The possible beneficiaries of the study included policy-makers, educational administrators, ELT practitioners, researchers and students. The main benefits that were intended to be derived from a study of this kind included, but not limited to, the following:

1.5.1 Increasing understanding of the impact of CLT theories in promoting ESL teaching and learning for ‘communicative purposes’, given the huge influence of ‘examinations English’.

1.5.2 Informing ESL educational policy makers and practitioners about the prospects and constraints that the teaching of English modelled on the Communicative Approach (CA) was likely to encounter in non-European (and North America) contexts.

1.5.3 Sensitizing ELT practitioners and policy formulators on the degree of synergy between theory and practice in the teaching and learning of ESL based on CLT theories.

1.5.4 Providing baseline data for future studies in Botswana.

1.8 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study comprised seven chapters explained below.

Chapter One: Overview

Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspectives on Communicative-Based Teaching and Learning

Chapter Three: Major Techniques for a Communicative-Based Teaching and Learning.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Chapter Five: Presentation and Analysis of Quantitative Data

Chapter Six: Presentation and Analysis of Qualitative Data

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNICATIVE-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the main terminologies, concepts and theories that are going to underpin the analyses of evidence attesting that ESL teaching and learning in Botswana has either complied or deviated from accepted principles and practices of the CA to language teaching. Explaining the meanings of concepts as well as providing an overview of the relevant perspectives on second language acquisition (SLA) and pedagogy, will help develop a more thorough understanding of the ways in which the leading issues being investigated are conceptualized by the teachers in Botswana. Further, providing a detailed and precise theoretical framework will also help the researcher formulate empirical conclusions regarding the extent to which the issues being investigated by this study (especially in chapters five and six) were applied in compliance or deviation from the recommended norms for a communicative oriented teaching and learning. Clarifying the theoretical leanings will also benefit the study when the evidence that exemplifies the feasibility or otherwise for these teachers to apply communicative theories in their real-life classroom teaching, is evaluated. That is, it will serve as a tool for gauging how well classroom language teaching in Botswana was able to transform from a mere teaching of the individual grammatical elements of the TL (i.e. linguistic competence) to developing a knowledge of the social functions of the language (i.e. 'communicative

competence'). A concise and accurate description of the relevant theoretical frame-work will, therefore, avail the study with the means by which to cross-reference the extent to which the teachers have adequately internalized and appropriately applied (or otherwise) communicative theories in their language classroom practices. The criterion of cross-referencing the teachers' perceptions against theoretical insights, together with other instruments for data interpretation and analysis will, in turn, help the study reach impartial conclusions regarding the degree to which the teachers' conception and classroom application are compatible with the principles and practices espoused in the Communicative Theory (CT).

A theoretical perspective therefore explains the concepts, principles and processes regarded as relevant to a specific study. Webb (2004:13) describes some benefits of a theoretical framework to a research process:

"(...) enables one to deal with the problems of the study area in a systematic and justifiable way, so that research findings will be valid and reliable (replicable)."

In summary, a theoretical perspective is a description of the major ideas and / or views intended to serve as the foundation of a study. It also provides the researcher with a motivation for working towards accomplishing their own findings and in turn also helps contribute towards expanding the requisite theoretical realm even further.

Regarding this study, a broad and unambiguous theoretical framework is essential because scholars (Brown, 2007; Hiep, 2007; Thompson, 1996) have shown that there are numerous (and often contradictory) interpretations of the meanings, techniques and goals of CLT. Thompson (1996:9) affirms the view that teachers the world over are uncertain or hold misconceptions about CLT, emanating from the numerous contradictory interpretations of the paradigm: “I am constantly struck by the very disparate perception they have of CLT”. In the light of this uncertainty regarding the adequacy of the teachers’ knowledge of CLT, an explicit theoretical framework would appear an essential vehicle for cross-referencing these teachers’ knowledge and application of the CA in their classrooms. Cross-referencing the teachers’ responses against theoretical insights from research is also necessary bearing in mind that most of the data elicited from the teachers in chapters five and six will be obtained either through a questionnaire comprising primarily closed-type questions, thus demanding ‘forced’ responses from the teachers, or through an interpretation of audio and visual recordings, which do not enable the teachers opportunities for open-ended discussion with those practitioners. In interpreting data generated by closed questions particularly, it is important to refer back to theoretical insights from past research findings as located in chapters two and three, in order to guard against appearing as though we are imposing some conclusions on our subjects.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Studies (Cook, 2008; Savignon, 2007; Roberts, 2004; Yule, 1996) show that during the 1930s until the late 1970s, the most popular methods for teaching EFL or ESL were the Audio-lingual (A-L) and Grammar-Translation methods (GTM). A common underlying feature of the two methods was that both represented the 'studial' or 'structural' techniques of teaching and learning the target foreign or second language (TFL/TSL). Proponents of the two methods believed strongly that skills to communicate in a foreign language are learned by studying the target language (TL) like any other content subject. Lightbown & Spada (2006: 109) elaborate on this idea:

“In structure-based instructional environments, the language is taught to a group of second or foreign language learners. The focus is on the language itself, rather than on the messages carried by the language. The teacher’s goal is to see to it that the students learn the vocabulary and grammatical rules of the target language.”

To that end, the conviction was that mastering the grammatical, structural, vocabulary and pronunciation system of the TL through short dialogues, followed by repeated practice and eventually mimicking those aspects accurately during natural situations of communication, was all that effective communication entailed. Savignon (2007:209) describes the main teaching practice for these structural-based methods: “...pattern practice and error avoidance were the rule in language teaching”. Richards & Rodgers (2001: 153) attest to the decline in the popularity of structure-

based techniques of English foreign language teaching, on both sides of the Atlantic:

“(…) just as the linguistic theory underlying Audiolingualism was rejected in the United States in the mid-1960s, British applied linguists began to call into question the theoretical assumptions underlying Situational Language Teaching.”

CLT, therefore, grew out of a rejection of the ideas by structural linguists and educators that implied that there existed a one-on-one relationship between a speech act and its linguistic realisation. According to the communicative paradigm, the learners’ skills in communicating effectively, are mostly attributed to their knowledge of the ‘social grammar’ (see Edwards and Westgate, 1987:12–18; Mendelsohn, 1980:60, for details on this concept) rather than residing entirely on tuition in the discrete grammatical elements of the TL. Galloway (1993:1) buttresses the argument that learners often fail to communicate efficiently owing to a discrepant knowledge of the social rules of language use rather than being caused primarily by an inadequate mastery of the grammatical structures:

They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures or expressions; in brief, they were at loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied.

In all, CLT emerged as a protest against the deficiency that the language learning and using process has, hitherto, been caused by the practice wherein emphasis is placed on the grammatical component of the TL as the sole means of developing the foreign or second language communicative proficiency of the learners.

The CA emphasises that ‘communicative competence’ (CC) is best developed by a syllabus that is constituted of both the structural as well as the pragmatic component of the TL. The approach therefore puts accent on both the structural and functional components of the TL. The CLT paradigm thus, sought to develop communicative competence by involving learners in the communication process. Hence, in communicative-oriented teaching, classroom language learning is seen as synonymous with interaction or a conversational discourse. In line with this perspective, the classroom language teacher is expected to play the role of a helper whose main responsibility is to set up ‘communicative activities’ focused on giving learners the chance to engage in meaningful (authentic) exchanges of information. Since CLT is primarily concerned with helping develop the knowledge and skills of the learners in deploying language to perform speech acts, many scholars (including Savignon, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Cook, 2001 & 2008) in fact regard it as an extension of the notional-functional syllabus.

2.3 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.3.1 LANGUAGE

The term ‘language’ can be described from several perspectives or approaches. A general approach to the description of language equates it to the communication of a message. In this sense, a number of entities qualify as language, including the so-called ‘animal language’ and ‘artificial languages’ (invented by man to serve a limited number of purposes). The main pitfall of describing language merely as a tool for the transmission of a message

between a communicator and its recipient is that it ignores the interactive nature of a language. This sentiment is affirmed below:

Communication is not merely an event, something that happens; it is functional, purposive and designed to bring about some effect—some change, however subtle or unobservable on the environment of hearers or speakers. Communication is a series of communicative acts or speech acts to use John Austin's (1962) terms which are used systematically to accomplish particular purposes (Brown, 2007:223).

This study conceptualises the word 'language' based on an approach that views it as a 'social activity'. To that end, language is viewed as a unique way through which man uses symbols or signs to facilitate 'reasoning'. In other words, language is regarded as a typical social phenomenon that human beings utilise to construct and share meaning. That is, 'language' here refers to "the actual language of some group of speakers and not some hypothetical language ... that speakers should use" (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish 1997: 7)

Bearing in mind the philosophy of language as a peculiarly human activity, it then can be described as:

"a system of arbitrary signs agreed to by a community of users, transmitted and received for a specific purpose, in relation to the shared world of users." (Emmitt, Komesaroff & Pollock, 2003:13).

Other scholars assert that language is:

“a system of vocal auditory communication interacting with the experience of its users employing conventional signs composed of arbitrary patterned sound units and symbols according to set rules.” (Bolinger & Sears, 1988:2)

Yet another scholar defines language as “a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks having understood meanings” (Brown, 2007: 6).

A fuller description of language not only as a vehicle for relaying ‘pragmatic information’ but also as a social phenomenon is offered by William Littlewood:

“Language is important not only as a means of communicating ideas and factual information, but also as a means of forming interpersonal relationships and signalling group membership.” (1987:14)

From the above-referred definitions, it could be deduced that language is embedded in human culture. Implied also is that language consists of numerous codes. Furthermore, that language is used by human beings for negotiating meaning. Lastly, that although language is ‘rule-governed’, it is nonetheless ‘unbounded’ in scope. Owing to the characteristic of being unbounded, there exists no inherent one-to-one relationship between a symbol and the phenomenon it is intended to describe.

Language, therefore, plays a pivotal role in man’s life. In fact, it permeates most if not all of man’s activities. Emmitt, *et al.*

(2003:3) underscore this point: “Language is central to living and learning”. According to research (Fairclough, 2001; Stern, 1987), through the use of language, man has become the ‘most dominant species on earth’.

The type of societies and civilisations flourishing nowadays are manifestations of the overarching benefits of language to mankind. Language is “a daily practice that fills every second of our lives, including the time of our dreams, speaking and writing” (Kristeva, 1989:278). Yet another testimony of the pervasive part played by language as a vehicle for forging social cohesion is entailed in the observation that although visuals are gradually penetrating areas where language had previously enjoyed undisputed dominance as the most important mode of presenting social reality, on the whole, we are still very much living in the linguistic epoch (Fairclough, 2001). Language and society therefore, complement one another. Just as society reaps several advantages from the use of language, language on the other hand derives benefits from society by virtue of being provided with a platform through which language users could be involved in some form of social activities and interaction. A symbiotic relationship between language and society is echoed by Emmitt, *et al.* (2003: 17), quoting Unsworth (1993:149):

All people put language to certain types of use and in doing so they all learn a linguistic system which has evolved in the context of such language use. But which part of language system they deploy and emphasize ... are significantly determined by the

culture—by the system of social relations in which people are positioned and the roles they recognize and adopt.

In summary, language is not solely a tool for passing on information from one person to another or linguistic entity. It also serves a host of social functions. Emmitt, *et al.* (2003:17) stress the social and interactive nature of language in the observation that it is “a tool for acting in an interested and engaged way on and in the material and social world”.

2.4 FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Several scholars (Roberts, 2004; Mendelsohn, 1980:60; Candlin, 1980:24) opined that the limited English language communicative proficiency of graduates and school leavers is mainly attributable to the discrepancy in which their EFL / ESL tuition was based on a ‘single instructional perspective’. The specific complaint raised by these scholars is that the curriculum that these graduates and school leavers had studied under was biased towards a theoretical teaching of the ‘grammar’ of the TL to the exclusion of being inducted into the social dimensions (functions) of the requisite foreign or second language. This section therefore is a precursor to the discussion in section 2.5, in which it is going to be argued that English Second Language Proficiency (ESLP) is an outcome of the knowledge of both the structural features of the language, as well as a familiarity with its social rules and context of use. To prepare

ground for the aforementioned discussion, the following primary functions of language are described briefly:

2.4.1.1 Expressing human thought

Some scholars (Akmajian, *et al.* 1997; Fairclough, 2001; Quirk, 1964) single out the expression of human thoughts as the “most fundamental function of language”. Among the metaphors that are used to symbolise the importance of this function include: “dress of thought” (Quirk, 1964), “mirror of mind” (Akmajian, *et al.* 1997:9), “...a pane of glass through which we can view our thinking” (Emmitt, *et al.* 2003:13) and ...”an autonomous tool for organizing and controlling thought” (Ellis, 2004:176). Implied in these statements is that language is used to give ‘substance’ to human thinking. Language even conditions the way man thinks. Inter alia, language plays a central role in man’s thinking in the area of problem-solving. In this regard, language enables man to reflect and talk about his experiences and problems with other people. Language reflects and even conditions the way man thinks insofar as that in certain contexts, some words are ascribed specific, rigid and strong connotations.

H.H. Stern (1987:200), quoting Worsely (1970:25), describes the benefits that the human race derives from language in its quest to dominate other species:

“For culture is only transmissible through coding, classifying and concentrating experience through some form of language. A developed language therefore, is a unique and distinctive human

trait, and human society is a higher level of organization of behaviour than merely instinctive or animal behaviour.”

In summarising: as a socio-cultural phenomenon, linguistic communication is a political tool which is strongly linked to man’s thoughts and serves man primarily to establish and sustain an unequal relationship of power within a society.

2.4.1.2 A medium of cultural transmission.

The ‘post modern globalizing world’ that the twenty-first century is popularly known as, regularly utilizes the written language as an instrument for passing on the knowledge and experience that one person has acquired to others. Regarding the wider society, language is used to transmit culture to some new (younger) members. Culture in this context refers to a people’s set of ethos or values. Some researchers describe culture as “the everyday lifestyles of people who use a language” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:131); a society’s “mode of thought and action, its beliefs and values” (Webb, 2004:29). Brown (2007:188) (referring to Larson and Smalley, 1972: 39), provides an elaborate definition of the term culture:

“a “blueprint” that guides the behaviour of people in a community and is incubated in family life. It governs our behaviour in groups, makes us sensitive to matters of status and helps us know what others expect of us and what will happen if we do not live up to their expectations. Culture helps us to know how far we can go as individuals and what our responsibility is to the group. “

A common theme runs through these definitions, namely that language is integral to the process of human socialisation. Particularly, that language plays a vital part as an instrument for transmitting culture from one generation to the next. Through the socialisation process, newly born children are initiated into becoming worthy members of their communities. Language is also a mechanism for role distribution among members. To that end, some authors (Webb, 2004; Tomlinson, 2005) have referred to language as an instrument of ‘enculturalization’.

Dittmar (1976:15) adds to the original conclusion advanced by Larson and Smalley, regarding socialisation:

“the process whereby the child acquires a particular cultural identity, and to his response to such an identity. Socialization refers to the process whereby the biological is transformed into a specific cultural being. “(...) socialization is a complex process whereby a particular moral, cognitive and affective awareness is invoked in the child and given a specific form and content.”

The family provides the child with a foundation for experiencing varied methods of using language. However, the degree to which the family is successful in using language to socialise its members is impacted upon by numerous factors. The most important of those factors include the family’s level of education, sociocultural beliefs, social stratification, etc. In the middle class for example, there is evidence of a “book culture” (Webb, 2004:30; Cummins, 2000:75), predisposing mothers to be more verbal than their working class counterparts. Stern (1987:211–212) affirms the

existence of a strong co-relation between social class and the nature and intensity with which language is used:

The middle class tends to use ... a formal or elaborate code, while the working class is inclined towards the use of a public or restricted code.

In conclusion, language and socialization play a crucial role in shaping a child's identity. Language is, for example, a tool for inducting a child into abhorring swearing or appreciating the need to comport themselves uprightly in both their interaction with other people, as well as their manner of dress. Language is also a medium through which a new member is initiated into serving his community competently and into upholding truthfulness, etc. Dikotla (2011:14) acknowledges a strong interrelatedness between language and culture: "Language and culture are intimately related and can be used and abused if not properly checked". However, in the words of some scholars (Cummins, 2000; Webb, 2004), the two are not "mutually deterministic." That is, language is part of (expresses) culture. On the other hand, culture influences the ways in which language is deployed.

2.4.1.3 Revealing interlocutors' background

Related to the role it has in shaping man's social identity, language is also an instrument for disclosing some specific traits about the interlocutors. During oral communication, especially, the interactants do not merely impart information. They might, simultaneously, disclose certain details about themselves. Webb, (2004: 23); Emmitt, *et al.* (2003:24) and Trudgill (1974:34) argue

that as a “socio-cultural metaphor”, language commands critical status as an organ for displaying some specific details about the interlocutors (including their views, attitudes, beliefs, norms, social class, values, place of origin, the kind of job they hold, etc.), in addition to its usual function of imparting information in order to establish a relationship with other people (i.e. phatic communion). In compliance with this line of thinking, these authors conclude by pointing out that some ‘clue-bearing aspects,’ of language, such as accent, may give an observer insight into an interlocutor’s ‘internal differentiation’.

2.4.1.4 The performative function

Researchers (Akmajian *et al.* 1997; Marshal & Williams, 1986; Hudson, 1980) regard the ‘performatives’ as one of the leading functions of language. The concept is used to refer to a set of actions (e.g. commissioning, vowing, etc.) **that are regarded as incapable of being** accomplished without an accompaniment of the actual utterances of specific linguistic expressions usually associated with them.

Assuming that one subscribes to the theory enunciated above, expressions like:

- . “I declare this graduation ceremony officially opened”;
- . “I name you Kgosi Seretse Khama IV of Bangwato”;

are considered inseparable from their actual acts of performance.

2.4.1.5 Analysing empirical research

At a higher intellectual level, language is used as an instrument for discussing or hypothesising about man's more abstract ideas. Thus, the accomplishment of some of man's more sophisticated thinking such as, 'the force of gravity', 'the law of diminishing marginal returns' or 'the Ohms Law', are clear representations of his deployment of language. This aspect of language use is perhaps what is often referred to as the more 'exotic' function. Another typical example of a higher-order language function is exemplified in the use to which language is put in classroom teaching.

Language is used to fulfil a host of other functions: encounter regulation, as a source for acknowledging status and power relations, 'dissipating superfluous nervous energy', and delineating social values. However, it is not possible to engage into an exhaustive discussion of these factors without risking making the topic prescriptive as well as degenerating into disinterest. Suffice to mention only that we intend to conclude this sub-section by looking at the function that language serves in the areas of teaching and learning.

2.4.1.6 Role in Teaching and Learning

The terms T & L will be explored from two main perspectives: A general/societal angle that refers to the process of imparting and acquiring a skill in any specific activity. This continuum incorporates a diversity of activities, such as riding a bicycle or skinning an animal. A second perspective of the two terms look at them from a specific (academic) stance, denoting an institutionalised activity whose focus is to create and

communicate knowledge of a subject or course. Brown (2007:7) offers a definition that encompasses both teaching and learning: “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction”. For the purpose of this study, the terms teaching and learning will be discussed from an academic angle.

Scholarly works (Ellis, 1996; Emmitt, *et al.* 2003; Tomlinson, 2005) regard the primary goal of teaching as centred on imparting information. The information in question is mainly new, but sometimes can be partially known to the learner. The overall purpose of teaching is to augment (increase or modify) the learner’s understanding of the world. The two assertions below affirm this perspective on T & L: “Learning involves the incorporating of new information into old sets of beliefs and knowledge for the purpose of maintaining a consistent world view” (Ellis, 1996:214). Emmitt *et al.* (2003:13), quoting Cambourne, (1990) add:

Learning occurs when we change or elaborate what is already known by us. It is a process of making connections, identifying patterns, organizing previously unrelated bits of knowledge, behaviours, activities, into new (for the learner) patterned wholes.

Among others, the following are deductible from these two assertions: Learning involves synthesising seemingly contradictory pieces of information; teaching involves not only the imparting of knowledge and skills, but a modification of the individual’s social

values (passing on culture) as well. Teaching and learning are also means of initiating members into and maintaining the status quo.

Cook (2001: 10) supplements the discussion on the specific goals of language teaching:

one avowed goal of language teaching is to help people to think better—brain-training and logical thinking; another is appreciation of serious literature; another the students' increased self-awareness and maturity; another the appreciation of other cultures and races; another communication with people in other countries, and so on.

From the above assertion, the primary function of teaching could be inferred to include, inter alia, the following:

- Developing an individual's cognitive (academic) skills
- Improving one's familiarity with other cultures
- Developing international communicative skills
- Developing individual / self identity.

Language plays a pivotal or midwifery role in the conveyance of a subject matter between the teacher and the learner. This claim is buttressed by the observation: "Learning is therefore about making new meanings for the learner—these meanings are generally developed and articulated through language" (Emmitt, *et al.* 2003:3). The role played by language in helping mankind to learn and discover new knowledge is what Richards and Rodgers (2001: 160) refer to as the 'heuristic' function of language. Owing to a strong symbiosis between language and human thinking, the

interpretation and construction of meaning, a poor academic performance across the school curriculum could be blamed, in no small measure, on learners' limited proficiency in the language of instruction. Cummins (2000: 92) supports this conclusion:

Learners' achievements can never be seen as solely the result of their abilities whether innate or developed. Learning reflects the nature of the interactions that learners have experienced with educators and the adequacy of the linguistics and the cultural frameworks in which these interactions have taken place.

Emmitt *et al.* (2003: 44) also echo the role of language proficiency in underpinning academic success and Phatudi (2013:11) alludes to the critical role played by an adequate proficiency in the language of tuition as an aid to the learners' performance in their studies.

These statements presuppose, among others, that educational attainment is not entirely a product of a learner's inherent intellectual (academic) aptitude and / or intelligence, but also that a learner's academic success is heavily influenced by their proficiency in the language of instruction.

The general goal of the teaching and learning of English as a second language is, therefore, identified by many scholars as the attainment of communicative fluency (Brown, 2007; Richards, 1999). Further, research (Savitri, 2009; Roberts, 2004; Cummins, 2000; David, 2000) acknowledges the status of English as a global language. In this connection, a quest for achieving 'communicative competence' is essential in order to enable graduates and school leavers the ability to communicate internationally.

2.5 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The importance of the concept 'Communicative Competence' (CC) to second language teaching is based on the theory that effective communication in the TFL / TSL is underlined by an understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of language use by the learners. To that end, an ESL T & L course typically aimed at developing communicative competence will be biased towards developing the 'communicative' or 'pragmatic' uses of the TL rather than a theoretical teaching of its 'grammar' or structure. The theory of CC, according to Kumaravadivelu (2006:115), derives from the sociolinguistic perspective of language learning and is premised on "incorporating sociocultural norms governing communication". The cardinal role played by sociocultural competence as the new focus for COC is alluded to: "the selection of methodology appropriate to the attainment of communicative competence requires an understanding of the socio-cultural differences in styles of learning" (Savignon, 2005:639). O'Neill (2000:2) emphasises the value of teaching the pragmatic functions of language as a vehicle for promoting competence in the TL (i.e. language proficiency):

... language lessons should not be about "The Present Continuous" or "The Present Perfect", but about "Giving and getting personal information", Asking for and giving directions", "Expressing opinions", etc.

Overall, the importance of teaching the pragmatic functions of language has been described as deriving from the focus it places on exploiting numerous 'Social meanings' associated with specific

grammatical elements. Teaching the pragmatic functions of language is thus regarded as a barometer for helping compensate for the learners' inadequate communicative skills that is precipitated by the hitherto popular use of structural syllabuses or one dimensional (perspective) of learning. These syllabi had placed huge emphasis on accuracy in mastering the syntactic properties of the SL/FL in a manner equivalent to that in which it is normally employed by the native speakers of the TL.

Historically, CC is a term whose first emergence in FL and SL teaching is attributed to Dell Hymes (1966). According to research (Brown, 2007; Savignon, 2005; Richards, 1999) the introduction of the concept CC was inspired by concern with the lack of depth in the definition of the term 'competence' that had been proposed by Chomsky in 1965. Particularly through his theory of 'rule-governed creativity', Chomsky overemphasised the role that an explicit linguistic syllabus was capable of playing in developing the learner's proficiency in the TFL or TSL. In the words of Savignon, Chomskyian theorists regarded the capacity of the learners to communicate as solely residing on "their ability to recite dialogues or to perform on discrete-point test of grammatical knowledge" (2005:636). But as it later turned out, the Chomskyian theory proved discrepant primarily because it did not pay adequate attention to the social and functional rules of language use.

The perspective of Hymes and other pioneers of CC such as Canale and Swain (1980) was that the development of the learners' communicative proficiency in a TFL or TSL was underpinned by interdependence between knowledge of the grammatical rules of a language and rules of language use suitable to a particular

context. CC is generally described by Larsen-Freeman as involving “knowing when and how to say what to whom” (2000:121). Cummins (2000: 61), citing Bruner (1975) also describes Cc as “the ability to make utterances that are appropriate to the context in which they are produced and to comprehend utterances in relation to the context in which they are uttered.”

Other scholars (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2008:158; Savitri, 2009:131) share the same sentiments expressed by Canale and Swain and Cummins that CC is centred on “knowledge of using the linguistic system effectively and in a manner that is appropriate to the socio-cultural context of the target language and culture”. In conformity with these pronouncements, the form of ‘CC’ that was originally conceptualised by Canale and Swain (1980) is often characterized as constituted of four main elements: cultural/sociolinguistic knowledge, strategic/interactional skills, linguistic skills and discourse knowledge. However, Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor (2008:158), citing Celce Murcia (1995), suggest the optimum version of CC through adding the fifth competency, ‘actional’ skills. They describe this final competency as focusing on demonstrating the speaker’s communicative intent by “performing and interpreting speech act sets”. Brown (2007:241) stresses the need for CLT to equitably distribute attention on all the language skill areas as a prerequisite for helping develop the communicative proficiency of the learners: “Classroom goals are focused on all components of ‘CC’ and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence”. The term ‘communicative’, thus, denotes programmes whose syllabi and instructions are organised in terms

of notions and functions (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983:13; Savignon; 2005). A summary of CLT, therefore, is that it extends the notional-functional syllabus, thereby placing emphasis on meaningful social interaction among learners as a prime requirement for developing their functional ability in the TSL (Brown, 2007; Cook, 2001 & 2008; Savignon, 2005).

In all, communicative competence and performance (or language knowledge) is described in terms of the learner's capacity to effectively relay his meaning to the recipient as well as interpret the messages of other speakers. Brown (2007:219) summarises these ideas in defining 'communicative competence' as "that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts".

In discussing the theory about a symbiotic relationship between mastery of the linguistic code and knowledge of the social and functional rules of language use, scholars such as Webb (2004) and O'Neill (2000) explain the concept 'knowledge of language' in terms of the capability of the learner or graduate in the two main domains of language use: generative and pragmatic competencies.

2.5.1 Domains of language use

2.5.1.1 Generative / organisational competence

This component of language use regards mastery of the underlying syntactic and structural aspects of a language as the bulwark for developing the 'communicative competence' of the learners. The

domain consists of two sets of sub-competencies: grammatical and textual knowledge. Researchers (Roberts, 2004; Savitri, 2009), observe that during the 1960s and early 1970s, the linguistic or grammatical syllabus was advocated (in consonance with Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods) as the sole and most effective means of learning to communicate in the target language. That is, there existed a euphoria that mastering the grammatical and syntactical structures of a TL will automatically translate into the development of communicative capabilities (or language proficiency) among FL and SL learners. This view was particularly held highly in contexts where the weak version of CLT was in vogue. Ellis (2004:28) describes the cardinal principle underlying the weak version of CLT:

“ [It] views tasks as a way of providing communicative practice for language items that have been introduced in a more traditional way. They constitute a necessary but not a sufficient basis for a language curriculum.”

Correspondingly, the weak form of CLT that was also premised on notional-functional terms is underscored by the belief that constant practice of the grammatical and lexical aspects of the TL with minimal or no tolerance of errors, will lead to efficiency in the interpretation and construction of meaning. Ellis (2004:28) backs the idea that both the weak form of CLT and the linguistic syllabus revere the role played by a mastery of the grammatical properties of the language as a vehicle for developing the language proficiency of the EFL/ESL learners: “the components of communicative competence can be identified and systematically taught”. Ellis (2004:30), citing Widdowson (1991), perhaps teases

out more explicitly some parallel features between the two: “Weak CLT, like earlier structural approaches, is content-driven, methodology being tacked on as a way of ‘mediating’ the syllabus”. Widdowson (1991:160) acknowledges this analogy:

“The structural approach is based on the belief that language learning comes about by teaching learners to know the forms of the language as a medium and the meaning they incorporate; that they will learn how to do things with this knowledge on their own.”

Previously, Wilkins (1976:8–9), alluded to the strong conviction that that structure-based methods had placed on the discrete teaching of the grammatical forms of the TFL/TSL, as an exclusive tool for developing the ESL communicative proficiency of the learners:

...what has to be learned is identified as a form and rarely as a set of meaning. Most syllabuses are in fact an inventory of grammatical forms. It is very rare for grammatical meanings to be specified. The assumption seems to be that form and meaning are in a one-to-one relationship, so that the meaning to be learned in association with a particular grammatical form would be self-evident (1976:8–9).

Roberts (2004:3) affirms overtly the huge faith that was placed on the grammatical syllabus as a means of imparting communicative skills in the TFL/TSL, prior to the advent of CLT and Mendelsohn (1980:60) also concurs with the idea that structure-based language

educators placed huge trust on an explicit knowledge of the discrete elements of the TFL /TSL forms as all that was necessary for learners to develop ELP.

However, the fallacy of teaching the linguistic code as the sole means of developing communicative competence among FL/SL learners is succinctly described by Wilkins (1976: 10–11):

Even when we have described the grammatical (and lexical) meaning of a sentence we have not accounted for the ways in which it is used as an utterance. It is this apparent paradox that has led philosophers to try to define meaning as use. The fact is that sentences are not confined in use to the functions suggested by the grammatical labels that we give to them, nor does one use of language require the selection of one grammatical form. ... Just as one linguistic form may fulfil a variety of rhetorical functions, so one rhetorical function may be fulfilled by a variety of linguistic forms.

Mendelsohn (1980: 62) also cautions against the dangers of associating a specific language form with a rigid meaning:

The basic premise is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between messages and the form which reflects the functions that message fulfils. Under different conditions, the same form may have totally different functions.

In the light of the deficiencies of structural methods as described above, Mendelsohn (1980:61), cites Hymes (1971), to underscore the necessity of complementing structural methods of EFL / ESL

teaching with functionally and socially-inclined approaches (and / or symbiosis between generative and pragmatic competencies) as a reliable means of developing ELP, among learners:

“There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”. This very neat statement means, in effect, that one has to know how, when and where in a real social context, one can use a particular linguistic form, because just to know the form is useless; or in other words, linguistic proficiency without communicative competence is useless.

To borrow words from Harmer (2003:292), the two competencies operate in “a happy symbiosis, not in some Darwinian struggle for survival”. Prior to this proclamation, Cummins (2000:82) had also vehemently recommended ‘social-centeredness’ as a major factor underpinning the development of ELP under CLT teaching: ‘it systematically relates language to meaning and to the context in which it is used’.

Despite these protestations against the shortcomings of situational methods (SM) as vehicles for developing the social and functional skills of learners in the TL, the use of such syllabi had, needless, persisted. For example, Soneye (2010:220), quoting Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999), in a discussion on the teaching of oral skills vehemently endorses the part played by linguistic-centred teaching in developing skills for real-life communication:

It is difficult to expect excellent performance from among English teachers who themselves are product of an educational system in which the formal teaching of pronunciation was an anathema.

Correspondingly, this traditional approach to developing SL communicative proficiency among learners revolves around the explicit presentation of discrete grammatical items (out of any context of use). Learners would then be expected to transfer their academic knowledge of these elements to serve as guides for assisting them to convey and interpret communicative needs (Roberts, 2004:3). This technique of directly teaching the knowledge of language forms is what Brown (2007:279), citing Long (1988:136), refers to as the ‘Neanderthal’: it is focused on grammar explanations, discussion of rules and rote practice. Savignon (2005:641) alludes to this perspective of traditional language teaching: “teacher explanation of grammar and controlled practice with insistence on learner accuracy”. This ‘moderate’ approach to form-focused instruction argues that grammar plays a central role in improving comprehensibility (intelligibility) and basic communicative (message) effectiveness. This thesis contends that due to the value attached to a mastery of linguistic forms, it would seem incumbent to teach discrete grammatical items (accuracy-grammatical knowledge), to pave way for the understanding of the learners regarding how those elements are used to convey and interpret meaning and / or communicative needs (Roberts, 2004; O’Neill, 2000; Mitchell, 1988). A statement that acknowledges that ESL educators continue holding on to traditional styles of teaching is: “in spite of the virulent attacks that reformers made, the grammar-translation

or traditional method has maintained itself remarkably well” (Stern, 1987:455). And a comment that specifically comes closer to admitting that teachers continue concentrating on teaching language forms explicitly is:

The belief on the part of some that there was no place for grammar teaching in the British communicative approach was naïve as based on erroneous vulgarizations of the approach. One would hesitate to talk about a “theoretical input” as opposed to an input composed of a particular constellation of traditional assumptions into grammar translation, for example, but the fact is that initiated by Johanna Valentin in around 1795 and offered as a new and “amusing” way of learning languages, it still persists nearly two hundred years later though no one will offer a theoretical justification for it (Roberts, 2004:30).

O’Neill (2000: 4) also supports the direct, explicit and detailed teaching of grammar on the ground that an explicit knowledge of language form is a critical insurance for efficiency in conveying and interpreting (constructing) meaning. In line with this stance, he surmises as follows with regard to teaching the forms of the TL in isolation, as part of communicative tasks:

...unfortunately, communicative goals in CLT are usually described so narrowly that it is impossible to study the necessary syntactic forms properly. For example, studying the Present Progressive from the perspective of a single type of speech act such as ‘referring to future plans and arrangements’ does not tell us nearly enough about all other pragmatic uses of the Present Progressive.

It may even be better to begin with the structure and to relate it to its most important pragmatic uses. This often makes far better sense than beginning with the speech acts alone. In any case, the same speech act cannot be performed with very different structures. There is no one-to-one match between them. If we always begin with the speech act, we lose sight of the generative system that makes all speech acts possible.

From these words, it could be deduced among others, that a good (adequate) knowledge of the structures of a TL is seen by advocates of explicit form teaching as the most critical factor in determining how well communicative tasks are going to be performed. But, as it would later become apparent, students continued failing to communicate effectively in naturalistic environments outside the classroom despite having produced precisely correct sentences during language lessons. Consequently, it became clear to language educators and researchers that a mastery of the linguistic system of a language (in isolation of its context of use) did not naturally translate into an ability to perform functions linguistically. It also became apparent to these professionals that in order to communicate genuinely in naturalistic setups outside the classroom, learners would need exposure and / or tuition in the communicative / pragmatic aspects of language use, in addition to a mastery of the linguistic component. In the words of Roberts (2004:27), a teaching for communicative effectiveness is premised on 'the cultivation of both fluency and accuracy'.

Wilkins (1976:8) alludes to the problem (challenge) posed by teaching 'grammar' in isolation of its context of use, in the hope that it is a precondition for the natural development of the EFL/ESL communicative skills of the learners:

One danger in basing a course on systematic presentation of the elements of linguistic structure is that forms will tend to be taught because they are there, rather than for the value which they will have for the learners.

Murray (2011:18) reasons similarly:

Grammar teaching alone will not improve learners' use of the language, especially if grammar is taught in isolated, meaningless and decontextualised ways. Learners' ability to understand, read and write, with confidence in their additional language depends largely on the opportunities they have to use language for a wide range of purposes.

Researchers (Ellis, 1996; Ellis, 2004; Richards, 1999; Savitri, 2009) have also argued that it is ineffectual to strive to develop the communicative abilities of the learners via traditional approaches. The complaint of many of these scholars is that the major acquisition theory of the traditional techniques, (Presentation-Practice-Production: P-P-P) seemingly advocates 'simplistic imprinting through practice'. As a 'deductive' method, its presentation techniques are premised primarily on dictating the grammatical structures or rules of the language to the learners in a linear fashion. The major shortcoming of this practice is that it fails to recognise that there is no one-to-one relationship between

teaching and learning. In other words, it fails to acknowledge that teaching does not automatically result in learning.

Teaching and learning in this context could be characterised as having not only been artificial, but also decontextualised and less suitable for developing a capacity to negotiate meaning among learners. Further, this formulaic presentation of the grammatical and structural features of the TL means that whilst learners could use language meaningfully in a specific context, they were nevertheless still unable to transfer the use of these structures to communicate real meaning under different contexts.

Pragmatic competence

This dimension of language use emerged during the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was mainly motivated by a realisation that linguistic education emphasised the teaching of grammar over the value of language as a social entity (tool for authentic communication). Through this perspective, language educators sought to reorient the then philosophical or abstract goal of teaching and learning a L2, towards learning the language for utilitarian or social objectives, compare for example Richards & Rodgers (2001: 153).

Roberts (2004:3) affirms the benefits of re-directing the goal of language teaching from the prestige of mastering its grammatical rules towards functionally and socially-oriented objectives:

“...we might argue that consciousness-raising with regard to the social role of language created a pre-disposition among British thinkers about language teaching of the mid and later 20th century

to accept that the teaching of English was to be pursued for social and communicative purposes, that English was to be regarded as a social tool for the carrying out of transactions through language, the empirical causes of which transactions, however, might be far from linguistic.”

Soneye (2010:219), citing Berns (1984:5), also alludes to the transformation from a linguistic-centred teaching to the social (message-focused) instruction as was necessitated by the introduction of CLT:

The development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which is an approach to the teaching of second language emphasizes interaction as both the means as well as, an end in language acquisition.

The imbalance in language teaching in favour of the linguistic aspects of the TL was identified as among the major factors contributing to the training of the school leaver or graduate who is inadequately prepared or equipped to use the TFL/TSL effectively to perform some interactive and personal communicative functions for which language is normally used in real-life situations outside the classroom. Some authorities (Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008; Webb, 2004) describe pragmatic competence as consisting of two sub-competencies: illocutionary (knowledge of speech acts and language functions) and sociolinguistic (knowledge of how to use language functions appropriately in a given context). The pragmatic dimension focuses on developing knowledge and skills among learners about what is culturally and

linguistically appropriate in different contexts of language use. The curriculum for a course whose goal is to develop pragmatic competency is premised on the 'communicative syllabus'. The main focus of the communicative syllabus is to develop skills in the functional and social uses of the target FL/SL (such as is involved in, for instance, making requests, giving directions, relaying complaints, congratulating, etc.) and skill-based teaching. According to communicative oriented syllabuses, the objective of developing knowledge and skills in the functional and social uses of language is pursued not through the teaching of language form, but rather through an involvement of learners in task-work and / or communicative activities. A detailed description of the background and objectives of a teaching focused on promoting a satisfactory level of communicative proficiency in EFL / ESL is provided by Richards and Rodgers (2001:163).

In line with the new COC, grammatical rules (or precision in language use) are considered a secondary factor to the interpretation and construction of meaning. O'Neill (2000:1–2) buttresses the idea:

There is something called a "communicative syllabus" which replaces and is superior to a "structural syllabus". It is often argued that a typical structuralist syllabus focuses on the grammatical structure of language rather than on the "communicative" or pragmatic uses of those language (*sic*) For example, so the argument goes, terms like "The present Continuous", tells us little or nothing about the fact that typical examples of this form, such as, "You're standing on my Way" or

“You’re driving too fast” are complaints, or that one of the most frequent uses of the “present Progressive” is not to talk about in the present but about pre-arranged actions in the future. For this reason, many CLT supporters, used to argue and still do that language lessons should not be about “The Present Continuous” or “The Present Perfect”, but about “Giving and getting personal information”, “Asking For and giving directions”, “Expressing opinions”, etc.

Richards also lends credence to this line of thinking: “students’ grammatical needs are determined on their performance of fluency tasks rather than predetermined by a grammatical syllabus” (1999:3). Savitri (2009:137), borrowing from Goner, *et al.* (1995:135), highlights the importance that this ‘inductive’ method of teaching places on presenting language form in a real language context:

In CLT Teaching of Grammar (sic) has been integrated with teaching the functions of the language. Prescriptive rules of grammar are taught in the contexts where they arise. In this way, the learner internalizes the rule rather than when the rule is taught in isolation. When the learner makes an effort to express themselves clearly they think through the rule.

The above-referred statements imply, among others, that since CLT places a greater emphasis on production and interpretation of meaning than earlier methods, to some extent it is possible to achieve this goal without displaying precision in grammatical

usage. In line with this thinking, errors of syntax and structure are seen as inevitable signs of the development of CC (Savignon, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 1999; Yule, 1996; Wilkins, 1976). Yule (1996:194), seemingly argues persuasively in support of the need for educators to tolerate linguistic errors being committed by the learners as a signal of growth in their interlanguage:

In contemporary approaches, an error is not seen as simply a failure to learn correct language (which can be remedied by extra practice of the correct form) but rather, it is viewed as the actual acquisition process in practice. An error then is not something which hinders a student's progress, but it is probably a clue to the active learning progress being made by the student as they try ways of communicating in the new language.

Brown (2007:274) advances the same sentiments:

..too much positive cognitive feedback—willingness of the teacher-hearer to let errors go uncorrected, to indicate understanding when understanding has not occurred—serves to reinforce the errors of the speaker–learner. The result is the persistence, and perhaps the eventual fossilization, of such errors.

The development of pragmatic competence becomes a major goal in an ESL teaching context where the strong version of CLT or Task-based learning (TBL) is practiced. Put in other words, TBL is the most salient exemplar of the strong version of CLT. Tasks are utilised as vehicles for giving learners opportunities to experience how language is used in normal conversations. According to Ellis

(2004:28), citing Howatt (1984:279), this form of the CA is predicated on the philosophy that “language is acquired through communication”. Widdowson (1990:160) affirms (and even elaborates) this idea in his description of the term ‘pragmatic competence’:

...the belief that language learning comes about when the teacher gets learners to use language pragmatically to mediate meanings for a purpose, to do things which resemble in some measure what they do with their own language. They will learn the knowledge of the language itself, the formal and semantic properties of the medium, as they go along, without the teacher having to draw explicit attention to it.

In adherence to the philosophy of a practically-oriented language teaching, TBL only accords a cursory attention to the grammatical and structural aspects of a language as aids to the development of the communicative proficiency of the learners in the TFL/TSL. Richards (1999:4), quoting Thornbury (1998: 112) reinforces this thinking:

“...form will largely look after itself with incidental support from the teacher. Grammar has a mediating role rather than serve as an end in itself.”

The TBL philosophy correspondingly treats effective teaching as learner-centred, requiring students to take greater responsibility for their language skills development. And this purpose is achieved

mainly through participating in interactive small-group work (i.e. learner/learner interaction). In this regard, Western individualistic learning tasks, such as pair work, group work and role-plays are the most favoured teaching and learning techniques. An essential challenge of TBL is that task-work should be as authentic as possible in order to give learners the opportunity to experience meaningful use of language as it takes place in naturalistic environments outside the classroom.

According to the CLT paradigm, therefore, an effective second language teaching and learning course is one that focuses on developing knowledge among the learners of these two dimensions of language use (generative and pragmatic) as a recipe for promoting communicative proficiency in **the** TFL/TSL, equitable to that normally displayed by the native speakers. Knowledge of the two variants of 'CC' is regarded as a pre-requisite for enabling learners to use language with higher (increased) levels of exactness and appropriateness, in relevant meaningful contexts. Further, proficiency in the two dimensions of language use is seen as a vehicle for boosting the confidence and proficiency of the learners in the target language. To that effect, an adequate (satisfactory) knowledge of the second language (or communicative proficiency) is constituted of, to borrow the words of Gass & Selinker (1994:11), "knowing information similar to that of a native speaker of a language". How then is a sufficient knowledge of the second language characterised or illustrated?

2.6 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Bachman (1995: 67), quoting Oller (1983), describes the concept 'language proficiency' as complex and multi-characteristic: "...it consists of several distinct but related constructs, in addition to a general construct of language proficiency". Other researchers (including Cummins, 2000; Webb, 2004), suggest that in addition to demonstrating capacity in the two domains of language use, described earlier, language knowledge should also be measured against the three levels of language use, as follows:

2.6.1 Conversational fluency

At this phase, learners demonstrate competence in the TL via a capacity to participate in an ordinary face-to-face conversation. Proficiency at this stage is characterised by the use of familiar, day-to-day vocabulary as well as, simple sentential or grammatical constructions. Cummins (2000:53) estimates that native speakers of a language acquire this kind of proficiency prior to entry into the school system, around the age five years. L2 learners need one to two years to gain entry into this level of proficiency, via exposure to the language either in the environment or through schooling.

2.6.2 Discrete language skills

This level of language knowledge is centred on the need to acquire the grammatical, literacy and phonological elements of the TL. The requisite skills are acquired directly from classroom instruction. Some are developed during the early stages of schooling while others fit well into the latter and continuous stages of learning. Elements developed during the earlier part of studies include knowledge of the letters of the alphabet as well as the sound represented by individual letters, development of basic vocabulary

and conversational fluency, and translating (decoding) written words into sounds. Aspects that are developed during the latter part of studies comprise, among others, rules governing punctuation, spelling and capitalisation. Grammatical conventions pertaining to, for example, pluralisation are also learnt at this stage.

2.6.3 Academic language proficiency

This category has been referred to as the most sophisticated level of language Knowledge. It puts accent on developing high level cognitive skills. Consequently, Cummins (2000: 3) alternately identifies it as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP is most commonly associated with the business (mandates) of academic institutions. Brown (2007: 219) states that CALP “manipulates or reflects upon the surface features of language outside the immediate interpersonal context. It is what learners often use in classroom exercises that focus on form.”

Cummins (2000: 67) borrowing from Chapelle (1998), defines academic language proficiency as:

“The language knowledge, together with, the associated knowledge of the world metacognitive strategies, necessary to function effectively in the discourse domain of the school.”

In line with the understanding of CALP as chiefly concerned with generating school-based language knowledge, Cummins (2000:70) further observes that this stage of proficiency is concerned with “expertise in understanding and using literacy-related aspects of language”. Furthermore, he explains that it is “found primarily in

written texts” (2000:98). The following are exemplars of a competency in academic language:

2.6.3.1 Familiarity (and skill) in deploying the less frequently used Graeco-Latin lexicon as well as complex syntax and abstract expressions. Focus is placed on helping learners develop the specialised academic register of their subject area. As Stern (1987) has shown, the English language is experiencing a state of constant change. In the words of Cummins (2000), it is a ‘moving target’. Being in a state of permanent flux, English impresses upon its learners to keep their knowledge of the language update by, among others, enriching the knowledge of its lexes and their meaning—i.e. ‘semantic agility’ to adopt the term used by Cummins (2000: 70), borrowing from Norah McWilliam (1998). Thus, strengthening the breadth and depth of a learner’s understanding of vocabulary is a major aspect of language knowledge. This in turn becomes a primary goal of teaching and learning.

2.6.3.2 Ability to interpret and construct sophisticated written and oral texts.

2.6.3.3 Capacity to read and understand linguistically difficult and conceptually demanding language in the learner’s area of specialisation.

2.6.3.4 Capability to write accurately and coherently on cognitively demanding topics, in the subject area. In addition, learners' use of language should reflect sensitivity to current societal issues and critical thinking.

Owing to its strong association with schooling, academic rather than conversational language is often ascribed a more prestigious position among societies.

Overall, the effects of a full language knowledge (interpersonal and cognitive) is centred on its role as a multiplier of the capacity of the school leaver or graduate to serve society efficiently in all the three probable spheres of language use, namely, academic, professional and social (Webb, 2004; Cummins, 2000). That is, as a result of the increasing language proficiency of the school leaver or graduate, their performance in the three areas of possible language use will be expected to be characterised by a diminishing level of errors (i.e. achievement of communicative performance). In contrast, a learner commanding unsatisfactory (limited) communicative proficiency is one who is experiencing serious (adequate) difficulty in reading, writing, speaking and understanding the English language. The problems being encountered in the four traditional skill areas distract the individual learner from a successful academic performance. That is, they hinder the learners from successfully studying in the classroom. The academic discrepancies so described ultimately deny the school leaver or graduate the opportunity to efficiently perform their professional and societal responsibilities. In other words, according to David, proficiency in English is a crucial tool kit

that assists learners to ‘access academic texts and research materials’ (2000:43).

This study has argued that a satisfactorily proficient school leaver or graduate is one who had acquired a combination of the mastery of the formal aspects of the English language and knowledge of its functional and social uses. An additional attribute of such an individual is described as their ability to utilise the acquired language knowledge to aid efficient performance ‘in all the three possible areas of language use. However, due to the important part that ‘proficiency in a language’ plays in determining the learner’s social mobility, the term has come to be associated with a diversity of meanings. In some settings, language proficiency is associated with one dimension of language use, namely, cognitive academic language proficiency. This in turn has caused language proficiency to be viewed narrowly (and erroneously) as a dialect of English known as ‘examination English’. Where this perception is prevalent, English language teaching has been characterised as “test-centred, teacher-centred, and textbook-centred” (Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2005; Cummins, 2000). Owing to this misconception, language proficiency is viewed in terms of mastering the specialised examination language (i.e. grammar and vocabulary as well as reading and writing skills on complex topics and texts). Savitri refers to this paradox:

In real life context, the present examination system is mostly memory-based and aims at getting good exam results, which need not be the outcome of knowledge. As a result, the teachers tend to concentrate on exam results rather than imparting knowledge

because the teacher is measured by the exam results. Passing the exams means more to the student's life and future (2009:135).

Tan (2005:25) expresses a comparable idea, citing the example of an ESL teacher in Singapore who, in response to a question on her main duties asserted:

... help pupils to do well in the examinations and to raise the percentage of pass in her school ... the examination system is allowed to dictate literacy practices.

The broader ideological perspective of language proficiency views it in terms of reconstructing personal identities of the learners , so as to use language (and also comport themselves) in a manner characteristic of the target language community (Reagan, 1999). This line of thinking represents language proficiency as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), which native speakers of the target language acquire before entry into the school system (Cummins, 2000: 53).

The profound role played by “language proficiency” in aiding the school leaver or graduate to perform efficiently in the three possible areas of language use, as was described above, presupposes the desirability for ESL courses to be well-taught.

2.7 FACTORS IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

We have pointed out in section 2.4.1, item f (pp12–13) of this chapter that the relationship between teaching and learning is not one of ‘automatisation’. In other words, subsequent to participating in a lesson, learners do not naturally metamorphosise

from a condition of not being conversant with a particular aspect of a language to being familiar and capable of using it. Riley (1987:75) describes the distinction between the two activities: “teaching and learning are separate activities and that they are not in a cause – effect relationship; teaching does not make learning happen”. Implied from these words is that developing full language proficiency is a result of a systematically planned teaching process. Second, an effective learning is influenced by several factors. Some main factors aiding a successful T & L process include:

2.7.1 Age

Some scholars (see Brown, 2007:2, for example), cast doubts on the conclusion that children possess a superior mental faculty to learning languages than adults. Other researchers (Yule, 1996; Gass & Selinker, 1994), however, concur and hold steadfastly to the view that children in their primary teenage stage (i.e. Critical Period Hypothesis or primary language acquisition period) are psychologically better predisposed to learn a new language than humans who have reached full puberty phase. Yule (1996:91) and Brown (2007:67) use the term ‘lateralization’ to explain a situation in which adolescents experience a weakened or less flexible brain capacity or ‘language faculty’ to be receptive to learning an additional language to their mother tongue. Yule estimates that children in their early stage of teenagehood are:

...quicker and more effective second language learners than, for example, seven year olds. ...The optimum period may be during the years 10–16 when the flexibility of the acquisition faculty has

not been completely lost, and the maturation of the cognitive skills allows a more effective 'working out' of the regular features of the L2 encountered (1996: 192).

2.7.2 Role of the L1 in L2 learning

Some researchers (Brown, 2007; Gass & Selinker, 1994) use the metaphor 'cross-linguistic influence' to describe the effects of the mother tongue on the manner in which the second language is learned. It is hypothesised that the existence of either a major difference or similarity in a structure between the learner's first and second language will induce the learner into avoiding using the structure in question. Too much similarity between the particular structures of the two languages reportedly leads learners into a state of self-doubt (disbelief) and, in the process, they will avoid using it. On the other hand, a big difference between the structures of the two languages makes the L2 appear too sophisticated for using, resulting in either its avoidance or irregular utilisation by learners. Exponents of this theory conclude, though, that a distinction between the L1 and L2 is a much stronger cause for the avoidance of a particular structure than is the case with a similarity between the two languages. This implies that a learner for whom there is a huge difference between their native language and the target language structures will encounter more difficulties learning the L2 than one for whom the differences between these two languages are minimal.

Notwithstanding the argument above, a debate is ongoing regarding the place of the mother tongue (L1) in the second language learning (L2L) process. The old school of thought espousing primarily western views takes that the use of the L1 is a hindrance to the learning of a second language. Karahman (2010:209), quoting Phillipson (1992), refers to the objection of the western block of scholars (i.e. the European view or ‘English only movement’) regarding the use of the L1: “interferes and hampers the process of second language learning”. The European view of L1 use in relation to second language learning or what Karahman (2010:110), quoting Pennycook (1994) has termed the ‘language myths of Europeans’, describes English as superior to non-European languages. According to this belief, English is classified as the accepted language of instruction. The negativity of the European stance on the use of the L1 with respect to L2 learning is also echoed by Acar & Robertson (2010: 6): “Promotes an othering of bilingual speakers of English in which these speakers are seen as less competent in critical thinking, verbalization and professional capability”. Contemporary thinking, however, casts scepticism over this view. This stand point recommends that a complementary relationship between the L1 and the TSL is a beneficial or effective way of learning the L2. This school of thinking is premised on scholarly views (for example, Karahman, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2000) emphasising that a restricted and skilful use of the learners’ mother tongue is an efficient and timely way of learning the L2.

Karahman (2010) summarises some major benefits of the ‘limited, systematic and judicious’, use of the L1 to the L2 learning process:

(L1) is entailed in the capacity to create and sustain an ‘affective environment’ for the learning of a second language. Richard & Rodgers (2001:162), citing Piepho (1981: 8), explain the concept ‘affectiveness’ in learning: “expressing values and judgements about oneself and others.” That is, occasionally code-switching to the learners’ mother tongue (for purposes of, for example, explaining difficult grammatical rules and cognate L2 vocabulary) leads the learner into developing a positive disposition towards the L2 learning process. In other words, ‘semanticization of L2 vocabulary through L1 equivalents’, to use the words of Butzkamm (1976:288) as cited by Karahman (2010:112), legitimises or induces flexibility for the L2 learning experience by decreasing the level of ‘debilitating anxiety’ from the learners. What this entails is that, an occasional quick resort to using the learners’ mother tongue or community language (albeit only briefly) activates their participation in the L2 learning process through creating a sensitivity that their cultural background is being acknowledged as one of the important ingredients for learning. Phatudi (2013:11) also echoes these sentiments:

Mother tongues enable children to express themselves fluently and with understanding. It enables a child to understand tasks and activities and listen with understanding. The child is able to reply to questions with ease, thus making it possible to have trust and faith in the subject content.

2.7.3 The environment and cultural context

Scholars like (Emmitt, *et al.* 2003; Akmajian, *et al.* 1996; Gass & Selinker, 1994) argue that the environment in which the child

operates provides him or her with the strongest stimuli for using the language. Several platforms enable the child with opportunity to learn a language, including, a natural exposure to it in their cultural setting or through receiving formal instruction in a classroom situation. The family provides the strongest stimulus (foundation) for the child to learn and use language, both during their infancy and schooling stages. Scholars (Webb, 2004; Cummins, 2000; Gass & Selinker, 1994) acknowledge the facilitative role played by the family in the child's language learning and using experiences. For example, these scholars observe that the absence of a 'book culture' amongst some families renders the school (and learning) a threatening phenomenon. Learners who do not possess adequate literacy exposure within the environment will, likewise, not perform as much as they should do. Emmitt, *et al.* (2003:40) also recognise the important part played by the family during the early stages of a child's language learning experience:

...the familial involves the influence of the family and its dynamic interaction with the Individual in terms of qualitative and quantitative, physical and psychological factors. The physical factors consist of the amount and appropriateness of stimuli provided by the family environment. Early in the individual's life, the family environment provides the majority of experiences from which the child learns different ways of communicating and using language.

The environment could facilitate the L2 learning exercise by assisting to shape the child's attitude towards the language learning process. This could happen in two main ways:

- Conservative thinking (a prevalent phenomenon among Western societies) — and one which views using the L1 in instruction as detrimental to the development of an L2 (and as commanding no economic value, as well as tending towards segregationist attitudes).
- progressivist/pluralist perspective (espouses learners' sociocultural identities, and therefore regards literacy skills in L1 as a foundation for transfer of academic and literacy skills to bolster the learning of a L2 (Webb, 2004; Cummins, 2000; Reagan, 1999).

Kahraman (2010:111), borrowing from Hitotuzi (2006), explains the critical (over-arching) role of the L1 to a child's TSL learning experience:

It is possible that the teacher can ban the use of the L1 in language classes but they are not able to stop the cognitive processes that the learner will realize during his / her language learning. That is, learners' previous language knowledge is not a programme file which can be deleted by teachers during learners (*sic*) L2 learning experience.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (2012: 24) explains the perseverance (or resilience) of the L1 as a critical factor underlying the mental processes of most L2 learners, despite attempts to suppress the

practice, especially by Western-oriented educators: “Killing the singing goose is the only way of stopping the golden voice of conscience.”

Saunders (2011:15) holds that using the mother tongue in instruction is an important ingredient for assisting learners to become “spontaneous, creative, and self-confident”.

Cummins (1980:11) highlights the advantage of complementing the learning of an L2 through using the L1:

...the aim of incorporating L1 in the school curriculum is to help ...children to survive educationally. Beneficial results of these programmes are usually attributed both to improved self-concept and more adequate stimulation of cognitive and academic development through the use of the L1 as a medium of instruction.

Kahraman, citing from Atkinson (1987), Auerbach (1993) and Cook (2001) strongly advocates the mental / cognitive benefits derived from infusing the L1 into the L2 learning process:

Limited, systematic and judicious use of the mother tongue helps students get the maximum benefit from activities which in other respects will be carried out in the target language.[It] reduce[s] anxiety, increase[s] and (*sic*) class participation and enhance[s] affective environment for learning a second / foreign language (2010:111–112).

2.7.4 Motivation

This is perhaps the most essential stimulus for T & L. According to Adair (1996:1) the word 'motivation' originates from Latin verb *movere* whose English equivalent meaning is 'to move'. Paraphrasing Adair, we can describe the term motivation as a factor within an individual that instils into them the 'energy and determination' to move forward and achieve a set goal. Within a T & L context, motivating factors are those that stimulate a learner's interest in studying. They trigger a learner's eagerness to learn (i.e. energise and activate learners to keep them interested and alert to a task). Factors for motivation can be split into two classes, 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic'. Intrinsic elements are the inner drive that propels learners to study. Brown, borrowing from Deci (1975:23) defines intrinsic motivation:

Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward ... Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination (2007:172).

Intrinsic (inert) elements make the learner to accept responsibility for doing his / her studying. In other words, they sensitise the learner to accept that learning is largely dependent on their own effort. Intrinsic motivation is facilitated by, among others, the existence of some clearly laid out learning goals (short term, long term and immediate). The objective of learning a second language might be as varied as, for example, to help facilitate a successful career (work language), social language and language needed for expediency, such as, the language needed for immediate purpose

by, for instance, a tourist. Learners' desire to study the language is, therefore, activated by the extent to which the course goals and the language skills which they develop are compatible with the linguistic tasks that their jobs would later require them to perform. The intrinsic rewards associated with language use serve as a major motivating factor to learn the English language. For example, business personnel will derive more relevance (and interest) from an English course tailored to address specific language skills which are meant to assist them to effectively discharge their responsibilities in English. These professionals will, in turn, be less motivated by a lesson on, for instance, discrete and detailed structural drill or decontextualised exercises on, for example, 'the uses of the passive form'.

Extrinsic motivation involves external factors that excite the learner to take deliberate effort to study. Brown (2007:172) describes extrinsic motivation as "fuelled by the anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self". Research (Adair, 1996; Coleman, 1987; Brown, 2007) gives some major external motivating factors within a learning environment, including utilising innovative teaching methodologies and giving immediate and positive feedback. Returning marked pieces of work within the shortest possible time, for example, is an important consideration in motivation because it gives learners an indication of how well they are performing on given tasks as well as providing a picture of the amount of effort still needed to be put on work. Related to giving timely feedback, the teacher's language, as well as offering contextual support, ought to be adjusted to the learners' level as an important factor for motivating them to effectively learn and use the TL.

2.7.5 Attitudes

Researchers (Brown, 2007; Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2005), rate the attitude of the teachers as among the most critical variables contributing to the success of a methodological innovation. They argue that depending on the factors at play, teachers would either be influenced to take ownership (embrace) the ideas advanced by a specific innovative methodology or would be persuaded to reject a reform initiative. In some situations, however, teachers would be inclined to take a 'middle-of-the-ground' position. In this scenario, teachers neither out-rightly accept nor reject an innovative methodology. For instance, owing to an innovative methodology being regarded as the most modern, some euphoria might be created around it, leading teachers to pretentiously acknowledge (pledge) their public support of it. In context, teachers simply offer support to an innovation out of a guilty conscience, since rejecting it is seen as bordering on being blasphemous or, in the words of Brown (2007): "they would be marked as a heretic". Paradoxically, such teachers would ultimately resort to somersaulting when the stage of implementing the features of the innovating methodology is reached. That is, such teachers normally display a preference to continue teaching in the 'comfortable' traditional ways. In agreeing with this position, Tomlinson (2005: 142) complains "Some teachers when experimenting with new methodologies still teach according to their own standards and beliefs".

Some of the major factors that are often cited as possible influences on the teachers' attitude towards an educational reform are:

2.7.5.1 Consultation between teachers and educational authorities.

Reform measures initiated and driven by the state's department of education are often viewed with apprehension by the teachers. Teachers might feel unsettled owing to a perception that the innovative methodology was imposed on them by the state department of Education. As a result of the feeling that the practice represents the top-down model of educational reform, teachers are inclined to become suspicious that the innovation is likely to expose them as professionally unprepared to implement it. In the event that this factor is confirmed as the real cause for the teachers' agitation, some resources ought to be invested into empowering teachers with the essential professional back-up or retraining to enable them to digest and develop a positive attitude toward the innovation in question. Tomlinson (2005: 138) supplements this point:

Teachers asked to implement innovative methodology might initially be disturbed but eventually become accustomed. Teachers need time to come to grips with new ideas and reflect on their new implications until both skill and confidence help develop a sense of ownership of those ideas.

This study has shown that an educational reform perceived by teachers as potentially imposed from above, often encounters resistance because the teachers feel disempowered since, in most cases, no preliminary training would have preceded its implementation. Kirkgoz (2010:179) cites the introduction of the communicative innovation in Turkish education to exemplify the

negativity of an inadequate training support for teachers: “lack of guidance was another factor that impacted the teachers’ classroom implementation of COC”. Secondly, teachers might resent an innovative methodology on grounds of a perceived lack of relevance. That is, teachers might feel that a reform was not accompanied by a thorough needs assessment exercise. Teachers are, therefore, inclined to conclude that the innovation does not adequately address the real needs and wants of its prospective customers (students). Lastly, teachers might be caused to frown at an innovation because they fear that it is poised to destabilise the status quo. In this context, teachers take that the reform will probably interfere with what they are comfortable doing and would wish to continue doing, irrespective of whether or not it represents the best interest of the majority of stakeholders in the education system.

Dikotla (2010:14) describes an analogous situation from South Africa in which initial resistance to the introduction of Outcome-Based-Education (OBE) was partially motivated by a desire to perpetuate the status quo. He observes that the resistance was based on “hankering and longing for the return of apartheid and colonial education system”.

2.7.5.2 Existence of a Didactic Tradition

Researchers (Girvan, 2000; Chen & Hird, 2006; Savignon, 2005; Tanaka, 2009; Tomlinson, 2005), argue that, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ T & L style. That is, individual regions or nations adapt the various methodologies originating from other parts of the world in order to create or develop a method that suits the peculiar needs

of their cultures. Nkosana (2006:39), quoting Micklethwait and Woodridge, 1996; Senge, 1990, and Fullan, 2001, emphasises the need to always take into consideration the local environment in drawing up a curriculum:

An innovation usually fails because the reformers do not treat the local context and culture as vital. They often impose ideas without taking into account the local context and are often tempted to go for quick fixes.

In Asia, for example, Girvan (2000) cites Japan, demonstrating that owing to the cherished 'collectivist' culture, learners are largely socialised to place accent on group harmony as opposed to individual performance, a primary characteristic of Western-based communicational approaches. She argues that owing to the entrenched collectivist culture, many agents of the Western learner-centred CA are viewed with reservation by Japanese learners. Girvan further illustrates that expressing personal opinion, for example, is not valued by these learners since it is perceived that the practice will result in different views (or opinions), a factor understood in the context of the Japanese 'collectivist' tradition as having the potential to promote disunity among group members. Furthermore, the participation of Japan in the Second World War against the allied powers is reported to have created a strong feeling of patriotism among the Japanese people. Girvan (2000), describes this growing nationalist feelings, *Nihonjinron (Japaneseness)* as having crystallised into an integral factor underlying the actions of many Japanese people. Thus, despite post World War II government policy focusing on

embracing *Kokusaika* (internationalisation) many Japanese people still remained sceptical of Westerners and their practices. This attitude of distrust of Westerners by Japanese people was also expressed in their responses to the re-constructionist curriculum model introduced by the end of world war II, and, among others, advocated the Western-oriented CA as a suitable teaching style for promoting effective international communication. Thus, some techniques of the CA, such as emulating the ways in which Western native speakers use English, met with resistance from Japanese as they viewed those practices as betrayal of their conscience or national identity. The strong influence of the collectivist doctrine of ‘conformity with Japanese tradition’ on the teaching of English is exemplified by Girvan (2000: 131), citing Greer: 183–184):

“...students are reticent to express personal opinions for fear that they will differ with classmates. Students also deliberately pronounced English with a Japanese accent for fear of being labelled ‘pretentious’ by other classmates.”

Tomlinson (2005) refers to Japanese ESL/EFL students who use analytic strategies aimed at precision and accuracy, search for small details, work alone and base judgements more on logic than on personal interactions.

Some reports (Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008; Molefhe, *et al.* 2007; Botswana, 1993 & 1994), cite Botswana to exemplify that to some extent adopting a didactic tradition has had some negative effects on the teaching of ESL in the African context. The main thesis of these reports is that rote learning is the predominant traditional

didactic style of teaching and learning English communicative skills in Botswana. Also that, owing to the importance attached to examination English, teaching and learning are centred on transmitting large chunks of information to learners who, in turn, passively receive it and later memorise it during examinations time. Akindele & Trennepohl (2008) characterised the predominant learning style in Botswana's secondary schools as premised on abstract learning and memorisation and neglect of practical studies and of acquisition and application of skills.

Several reports (Botswana, 1997; Molefe, *et al.* 2007; Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008) link the preference of rote or theoretically based learning style by Botswana to the country's national social characteristics. Like the case of Japan, as was cited above, Vision 2016, a document classified as among the most important blueprints for Botswana's national development, highlights the importance for the country of adopting internationalisation (while not discarding the country's tradition) as the guiding principle for charting its development path:

In the future, the people of Botswana will need to adapt to the challenges of global society while retaining the positive aspects of their cultural values that distinguish them from other nations (Botswana, 1997:1)

Botho (or *UBuntu* in South Africa) is among some of Botswana's long cherished national principles. Vision 2016 recommends that during the process of globalising the nation should continue upholding this concept as part of its integral culture or

distinguishing national social attribute. The concept *Botho* was explained in chapter one (item 1.2.2 (c) as referring to respectability or uprightness in both manner and character. Vision 2016 (Botswana, 1997:2) further describes *Botho*:

...one of the tenets of African culture—the concept of a person who has a well-rounded character, who is well-mannered, courteous and disciplined, realizes his or her full potential both as an individual and as a part of the community to which he or she belongs.

The relevance of this concept to ESL T & L is, perhaps, precipitated by the entrenched attitude in Botswana that dislikes (abhors) inquisitiveness or talkativeness in children's interaction, especially with elderly people or any other person they are perceived not to be adequately familiar with. This point is captured in the observation: "...all children are trained not to argue with an elderly person. They are also trained not to disclose or share information with strangers." (Molefe *et al.* 2007:13). This cultural belief seems to present strong evidence that Botswana children are predisposed to a passive or 'rote' kind of learning. Especially, such learners are likely to encounter difficulties coming to terms with communicative-oriented language teaching, in which the bulk of the classroom discourse involves learner-learner interaction and the role of the teacher is restricted to that of a facilitator of this process. Particularly, the cherished cultural norm of *Botho* seems to encourage Botswana children to bring into the language classroom an attitude of reticence and fear of taking part in communicative activities.

2.7.5.3 Empathy towards Learners' Expectations about Language Learning.

Scholars (Brown, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2005) have concluded that learners are positively influenced to learn a FL/SL if there is evidence that teachers recognise them as having legitimate expectations about how the TL ought to be learned. Empathising with learners entails taking deliberate steps to infuse the needs and wants of the learners into the process of language learning. Savignon (2005:644) identifies three factors ('socio-political nature of the learner's home context, socialization and individual factors') as contributing to the learners' expectations on what constitutes effective studying.

In simpler terms, empathy is described as:

"Putting yourself into someone else's shoes"; of reaching beyond the self to understand what another person is feeling. It is probably the major factor in the harmonious coexistence of individuals in society. Language is one of the primary means of empathizing and must not be overlooked (Brown, 2007: 165).

Brown, adopting Guiora *et al.* (1972b:142), further provides a higher order definition of the word 'empathy': "A process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another" (2007:165).

A major theme commonly runs through these two definitions, namely, that in order to comprehensively understand another

person, we ought to endeavour to project ourselves into that individual's psycho-social condition.

Empathy is a relevant factor in effective T & L in that it serves as precondition for enabling teachers to adjust their pedagogical methods in order to ensure that they are compatible with the socio-cultural context in which T & L are taking place (for a detailed discussion on appropriateness of teaching methods to the culture in which they operate, see item 2.4.5 below). Suffice to mention here that since cultural background affects the choice of a learning strategy, it is incumbent upon teachers to establish congruence between their teaching styles and the learners' preferred learning strategies. The learners' choice of preferred styles of learning, are influenced by political and socio-cultural conditions. The CA can be used as an example: its advocacy of T & L techniques which are heavily grounded in British, Australasian and North American (BANA) cultures (Tanaka, 2009; Hiep, 2007; Chen & Hird, 2006; Tomlinson, 2005; Ellis, 1996), seems to imply that the effective application of the approach in non-Western and North American contexts is likely to be inhibited by a series of socio-cultural bottlenecks.

In Botswana for example, if not enough empathy is exercised by, among others, adequately 'appropriating' or 'acculturating' the main strategies and practices of CLT, the approach is likely to encounter resistance because of a perceived threat to the entrenched culture of rote or theoretically inclined learning.

2.7.5.4 Cultural differences

In section 2.7.5 (b) of this study, (Existence of a didactic tradition) it was explained that T & L are culturally determined. Savignon (2005:646) refers to language teaching as “the collaborative and context-specific human activity...” Implied is that successful teaching is deliberately pillared such that it takes stock of learners’ distinct characteristics, both personal and sociocultural. In other words, by virtue of being part of the social matrix, effective language teaching ought to be compatible with the physical, economic, political and sociocultural milieu within which it operates. Through the process of socialisation, individual societies induct their children to experience teaching and use language in a pre-determined manner. Tan (2005:22), quoting McGroarty and Galvan (1985) seemingly lends credibility to this line of thinking:

Culture shapes one’s views of language and education in profound ways and these views influence one’s expectations regarding the nature of language teaching and learning.

In line with the view of learning as the product of its environment of operation, efficient language teaching is often described as underlined by an adaptation rather than a wholesale importation of theories and practices originating from outside a specific context of teaching and learning. Modifying imported theories on language teaching is an important means of making them relevant to their environments of use. To that end, the term ‘culture of learning’ was coined to emphasise that there is no one teaching and learning style that is pre-packaged to be universally applied in all contexts. Tanaka (2009:110–111), citing Cortazzi and Jin (1996),

as well as Hall and Hall (1990) explains the term ‘culture of learning’:

This culturally influenced aspect of the classroom is referred to as ‘culture of learning’ (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), which has to do with the beliefs and expectations people have as to what constitutes “good” or “appropriate” teaching in a given culture”. In fact, this hidden aspect of culture is well represented in the metaphor ‘cultural iceberg,’ which means many aspects of culture such as beliefs and values are hidden below the surface of our consciousness”.

Brown (2007:189), citing Condon (1973:17), also stresses that learning is, to a large extent, predetermined by an individual culture:

Culture establishes for each person a context for cognitive and affective behaviour, a template for personal and social existence. But, we tend to perceive reality within the context of our own culture, a reality that we have “created”, and therefore not necessarily a reality that is empirically defined. “The meaningful universe in which each human being exists is not a universal reality, but ‘a category of reality’ consisting of selectively organized features considered significant by the society in which he lives”.

Some of the instructional factors which should, supposedly, be modified in order to make them more compliant with their specific contexts of operation include teaching methodologies and

approaches, learning materials, classroom exercises, curriculum, etc.

2.7.6 Classroom activities (tasks)

Until the advent of the ‘modern’ communicative language teaching approach, the traditional methods of teaching, especially GTM and Academic style had dedicated their classroom teaching materials towards helping develop an academic knowledge of the TFL/TSL. The relevant teaching materials for these pedagogic styles were considered as those focusing on guiding the learning of a second language as, primarily, a content subject. The end-product was, in the whole, targeted at developing linguistic competence among the learners. Cook (2008:239) affirms the major goal of the traditional teaching method in developing the learners’ academic knowledge of the TFL/TSL: “it aims to create linguistic competence (sheer language knowledge) in the students’ minds, rather than something to be used directly”. Possessing an academic knowledge of the FL/SL was viewed as an important precondition in developing the learners’ proficiency in the requisite language.

Savignon (2007:208) describes the main techniques for teaching ESL through traditional methods: “translation, memorization of vocabulary lists and verb conjugation”. The text book was regarded as the primary teaching material for helping develop learners’ linguistic competence. This resource (i.e. the course book) was thus recommended as a ‘script’ to be memorised verbatim. Tomlinson (2005:143) opines that in most ESL contexts, the course book is written by ‘Western’ educators. As a resource

originating from foreign setups, a material of its kind often does not adequately cater for the language learning needs and cultures of non-European societies. Tomlinson (2005:143) thus advocates the process of adapting teaching materials originating from 'Western' nations as a way of making them more relevant to other contexts of use.

"The current thinking is that the text book should be written and evaluated with reference to the context of use and that such variables as socio-cultural background, attitude to learning, previous learning experience, and expectations of the learning process should be considered when making decisions about materials that will determine what goes on in the classroom."

Schleppegrell & Royster emphasise the importance of relating classroom language teaching activities to the learners' needs: "allows them the opportunity to make errors and engage in realistic interaction in English" (1990:6). Embedding classroom activities in the learners' identified needs is, hence, viewed as a tool for assisting classroom teaching to approximate spontaneous communication, one of the characteristic features of ordinary discourse that occurs outside the classroom. The features of every day discourse are what many researchers (Brown, 2007; Tomlinson, 2005; Roberts, 2004; Larson-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 1999; Wilkinson, 1976), have identified as lacking in many classroom language teaching situations.

In other words, traditional methods of SL teaching were only indirectly concerned with employing materials for the goal of

developing the ability to use language communicatively. Wedell (2011: 3) mentions reports by Nunan (2003) and Wedell (2011) that suggest that “there are relatively few state school classrooms anywhere in which most learners are developing a useable knowledge of English”. However, as part of the ‘communicative revolution’, (Cook, 2008: 230) teaching materials were now being required to undergo a reform process in order to reflect the new goal of language teaching, namely, placing emphasis on developing the ability to communicate meaningfully rather than promoting mastery of the individual grammatical and syntactical elements of the TSL, as had been the case in the past.

The above statements imply, among others, that the design and selection of classroom teaching materials for communicative oriented language teaching (COLT) should be done paying particular attention to ensuring that the purpose of an educational programme reflects closely the needs of the individual learners. Especially, materials for communicative teaching should project the objective of an ESL course as hinging on rejecting the pseudo nature of structurally based methods of learning. For a detailed description of the effectiveness or otherwise of linguistic-based approaches to the teaching of ESL, the reader’s attention is drawn to section 2.5.1(a) of this chapter. Suffice to only summarise here that this section argues that through teaching the TSL as a content subject, structurally-based techniques were unsuccessful in inoculating the skills and knowledge of language use comparable to the ways in which the TL is normally utilised by its native speakers, to perform mundane social activities.

In CLT contexts, therefore, the choice of learning materials is guided by their potential in effectively assisting in the direct teaching of the social functions of the TSL. That is, materials are selected based on their ability to inculcate skills and knowledge about the ways in which the TSL is normally used in real-life settings. According to CLT teaching, this objective is pursued chiefly through exposing learners to written materials and oral language production by native speakers of the TSL. ESL communicative learning materials are, ideally, characterized by Tomlinson (2005:138) as consisting of a healthy balance between local and foreign resources. The practice of establishing an equitable balance between the use of foreign and local resources is considered a desirable factor for mitigating against the potential cultural alienation that CLT (described as ‘Western-oriented’ in chapter 1 of this study) is likely to create for the learners of EFL/ESL, if not enough is done to infuse (augment) the local cultural element in the learning process.

In essence, therefore, the shift in emphasis from structurally based to a more communicative- biased language teaching approach precipitated an advocacy for educational materials to also undergo some reform to reflect the amended goal of classroom SL pedagogy. Some scholars (Ellis, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Clarke, 1989) argue that suitable classroom materials for CLT teaching are premised on the principle of ‘authenticity’. That is, successful classroom tasks are those that approximate, as much as possible, real-life situations as they are known to take place outside the classroom. Appropriate materials are also considered to be those that have, originally, not been aimed for T & L. In chapter three (i.e. section 2.3.2: pp29–32), this

study discusses the concept 'authenticity' in a detailed manner. Here it is intended to state only that a proposition to include authentic materials as part of the language learning exercise appears to stem from the belief that learners will be motivated to actively participate in lessons if classroom tasks are based on social phenomena they are familiar with or are more likely to encounter later on in their professional or adult lives.

Proponents of the CLT paradigm in effect argue that in order to arouse and sustain the interest of the learners in a classroom activity, a variety of instructional techniques needed to be employed in order to cater for the learning tastes of the individual students. The perspective of CLT educators is that learners are motivated to participate in a classroom activity if it relates to their immediate objectives for learning. For professional adult learners, this entails setting up activities that will engage them in practicing language skills similar to those they have encountered in their everyday work situations. Similarly, the interest of beginner learners could be best stimulated by activities which are not only authentic, but whose themes are also deeply embedded in the learners' areas of specialisation. Relevant classroom tasks are, therefore, underlined by activities that typically simulate the work and academic situations of the learners as well as social situations necessitated by their work or academic demands (challenges).

Cummins (2000:73), quoting Chapelle (1998), elucidates the effect that drawing a subject matter from a familiar phenomenon has on encouraging learners to play an active and meaningful role in classroom activities. He adds that for this choice or decision to be successfully made, two issues should be heeded: 'learner' and

‘contextual’ factors.

2.7.7 Learner factors

These have been identified as personal or internal to the learners themselves. In linguistic terms, such factors are referred to as ‘schemata’. Marshall (1991:4) defines schemata as memory structures that help a reader process a text.

Possessing formal schemata is beneficial to the learner in facilitating a systematic / organized processing of a text, as well as, efficient and / or adequate comprehension and recall of data.

Context is another factor which, according to Ellis (2004: 340) enables learners to construct meaning through being heavily ‘supported by situational props’. Borrowing from Swales (1990:40) and Marshall (1991) context could be reduced to three components:

- Field — denoting the type of activity the discourse is part of.
- Tenor — involving status of people taking part in the communication process and their relationships with one another
- Mode — kind of channel used to carry information from its source to a destination.

The three factors are collectively referred to as ‘register’, a blend of language at the syntactical and lexical levels that typifies a specific context of language use. ‘Genre’, in turn, is a framework for denoting register. It is an activity that is achieved primarily through the use of language itself. Some **of the** more persuasive

definitions of the term 'genre' include: "...how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them" (Swales, 1990: 40) and:

...a class of speech events considered by a particular speech community to be of the same type. Examples of genres are a job interview, a soccer commentary, and a doctor-patient consultation (Ellis, 2004: 343).

The importance of 'context of communication' is alluded to by Mendelsohn (1980: 64), as residing in its conditioning of the "different types of language suitable for different universes of discourse". Appropriately situating these factors as part of the language learning materials is regarded as an essential requirement for assisting the learner to determine the suitable occasion for using a particular variety of language.

An additional attribute of suitable communicative classroom activities is that they should provide an opportunity for learners to practice skills in the four traditional skill areas similar to those found in the three traditional areas of language use (work, academic, social). This idea implies that the chosen topic should be guided by the extent to which it is capable of providing a better basis for linguistic exploitation. Relating classroom learning activities to the learner's accumulated world knowledge is viewed as an instrument for providing classroom English language learners (ELL) with a suitable psychological stimulation to perform the activities associated with the real-life phenomenon in question.

The scholars cited above, therefore, appear to concur that a learner obtains mental stimulation for interpreting and participating in classroom activities from the closeness of the task to their experience of the world.

2.7.8 Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' is widely used in the T & L context within the United States. An equivalent terminology popularly used in the United Kingdom is 'syllabus'. Scholars such as Smith (2000) and Brown (2007) use the two words interchangeably to refer to an outline (headings) of the content to be taught (and examined) as well as the sequence in which they are to be delivered. In some instances, nevertheless, the two terms (curriculum and syllabus) are employed to denote two varying levels. The level of 'syllabus' refers to "content or subject matter of an individual subject", and the level of 'curriculum' denotes "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system" (White, 1988:4). Concerning the latter perspective, the term 'curriculum' is broad-based and refers to the description of the work of an entire educational institution, whereas 'syllabus' narrowly outlines the work of a particular department or discipline within an institution.

This study uses the words 'syllabus' and 'curriculum' interchangeably, and in the same manner suggested by Brown, to mean:

Design for carrying out a particular language program. Features include a primary concern with linguistic and subject matter objectives, sequencing materials to meet the needs of a designated group of learners in a defined context (2000:171).

In other words, the two instruments are a roadmap for providing insight into how the material is intended to be delivered. Relatedly, a syllabus can also be used as a tool for assisting to gauge how well participants in a course are progressing towards achieving its set objectives.

Scholarly works (Tomlinson, 2005; Ellis, 1996; Savignon, 2005) concur that the choice of both an appropriate curriculum and a teaching and learning methodology ought to be preceded by a thorough needs assessment to ensure their compatibility with context of operation. Tomlinson illustrates the advantage of establishing synergy between classroom processes and the learners' 'needs and wants':

...learners whose major need for learning English is to enable them to read articles and books are unlikely to respond to a methodology that focuses on oral interaction in groups (2005: 140).

Tomlinson also points out that the process of selecting a suitable school curriculum model is often accompanied by competition, especially between local and foreign stakeholders. Furthermore, such rivalry focuses on imposing the hegemony of the sociocultural background or preferences of each group over the other (2005:147). He, however, clarifies that despite a desire for

dominance over the curriculum by the different interest groups, the overall or universal school culture remains that of “conservatism and control that encourages convergence and conformity and that rewards hard work and analytic skills” (2005:147). Regarding the teaching of English as a foreign or second language, Savignon confirms the predominance of Western norms when choosing a curriculum:

The hegemony of essentially Western conventions at the level of discourse and genre is less easily represented or challenged. Pressures for a “democratization” of discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992) have in some settings resulted in genre mixing and the creation of new genres (2005:639).

2.7.8.1 Curriculum Design

A review of some of the leading scholarly works (including Tomlinson, 2005; Emmitt, *et al.* 2003) in the area of language teaching appears to suggest two main approaches to curriculum design. The two also supposedly present somewhat dichotomous arguments:

- The cultural perspective, generally premised on the thesis that no culture is superior to others. Specifically, it is argued that, since culture is one of the most important variables underpinning the ways in which an individual perceives the world, an effective school curriculum is one which is capable of equipping individual learners with a multiplicity of skills, competencies, attitudes and knowledge with a view to empowering them to function usefully

and efficiently across the cultural divide. Thus, this philosophy is alternately referred to as “cultural pluralism”. It advocates the necessity of equipping learners with ‘cross-cultural competencies’, as a pre-requisite for assisting them function competently in the globalising world.

- Academic rationalism, a perspective de-emphasising the role played by culture as a contributing factor to the efficacy of a school curriculum. It places premium on the inherent power of the subject matter in developing the learner’s cognitive abilities and humanistic values. A language teaching and learning based on this ideology propagates the use of the Notional-Functional syllabus as a tool for helping develop learners’ knowledge of the ways in which language is used for communicating in the real world (i.e. knowledge of the relationship between the generative and pragmatic functions of the language).

2.7.9 Methodology

The term ‘methodology’ is described by Brown (2000: 171) as “the study of pedagogical practices in general (including theoretical underpinnings and related research)”. Ellis (2004:29, explains the term ‘methodology’ as “a statement of how to teach”. In subsection 2.7.5 (d): pp35–36, this study has shown how the learners’ sociocultural background preconditions their preference of a style of learning. Further, scholars (Tan, 2005; Tanaka, 2009; Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2005) appear to have agreed that educators ought to be familiar with the learners’ sociocultural background in order

to choose a methodology that optimally assists in developing communicative competence among learners. These researchers strongly advance that adopting a fairly balanced menu of local resources (both physical and human) is a critical factor for the efficiency of a curriculum innovation. Many researchers (Savitri, 2009; Tan, 2005; Emmitt, *et al.* 2003) propose that the development of communicative competence is best served by a teaching methodology that places accent on involving learners in 'doing things' with the language. Thus, the metaphor 'cooperative language learning' (refer to, for example Savitri, 2009; Uso-Juan & Martinez-floor, 2008; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). These theses hold a similar understanding, mainly, that, the negotiation of meaning should be considered a more paramount objective than mastering the discrete elements of language form. The core of this argument is that negotiating meaning (through, for example, involving learners in communicative tasks as opposed to constant and prescriptive repetition of the lexical and grammatical elements of the TL, is a more efficient way of enabling learners the chance to interact in a manner resembling language uses as are known to be taking place in pastoral environments. Additionally, this perspective argues that utilizing task-work enables learners to benefit from meaningful communication. Thus, task or skill-based and experiential types of teaching are regarded as among the best suited vehicles for developing the knowledge of language functions and fluency over a mastery of its grammatical rules. Richards (1999: 3), reliant on Nunan (1989: 10), defines the 'communicative task':

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. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

The benefits of including task work as a vehicle for language learning are further illustrated by Richards (1999), as premised on helping the learner develop both the communicative skills and an 'acceptable standard of performance' in all the three areas of language use (functional competence, in the words of Savignon, 2005: 640).

2.7.10 The nature of practice in child language.

Behaviourist theorists maintain that the frequency with which a child practices a language item (especially constituted of one or two-word utterances) is a critical agent for their early language acquisition process. This theory has a strong influence on L1 acquisition and is grounded on the hypothesis that practice by repetition and association is the key to the formation of habit by operant conditioning (Brown, 2007:45). Despite being erroneously associated with a child's oral language production, practice is equally applicable to comprehension. It relates to the capacity of the child in understanding and producing language that has its influence from the regularity with which he or she encounters a particular linguistic input in their environment. Related to this factor are the two issues of 'meaningful occurrence' and 'input'.

Most of the language children hear in their environment during infancy is reported as originating from their parents. Language of this type has also been referred to as tending towards describing phenomenon and objects that are practically-oriented and also concentrating on identifying items which are commonly used in the environment. Thus, by virtue of their frequent association with mothers, household items such as kitchen utensils are suggested as likely to be among the major words constituting a child's first line of language acquisition. Ellis (2004: 177) lends strong advocacy to this perspective:

Children progress from object-regulation, where their actions are determined by the objects they encounter in their environment, to other-regulation, where they learn to exert control over an object but only with the assistance of another, usually more expert person, and finally to self-regulation, where they become capable of independent strategic functioning.

Wilkins (1976:12) buttresses the ideology on the influence of the child's first line (or natural) language acquisition process on their formal classroom language learning. He cites an analogous description in 'situational language teaching', where language is always taught in conjunction with physical attributes found in the environment: "objects and activities are used to illustrate and give meaning to grammatical and lexical forms."

2.8 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

The term 'Second Language' is often not immune to controversy or debate, depending on whether it is described from a teaching and learning perspective, a demographic point of view, or a general or specific angle. A second language is broadly defined as concerned with the learning of another language after the first language has been learned (Gass & Selinker 1994:4), or a language acquired by a person in addition to the first language (Cook, 1993:5).

This study defines ESL along the lines suggested by Ellis (1996:215) denoting the study and use of English by non-native speakers of the language, which "takes place within an English-speaking environment". English as a Foreign Language (EFL), on the other hand, is defined by Tomlinson as the use of English by "people who already use one other language and who live in a community in which English is not normally used" (2005:137). Others explain it as 'the learning of a non-native language in the environment of one's native language' (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 4). Within an ESL context, since the English language is regarded as an integral part of helping the society to pursue its needs and wants, it would appear that a strong requirement to communicate in the language exists in both the classroom and the environment. Hindsight from research (Webb, 2004; Clark, 1987) shows that the frequency with which a language is spoken is determined generally by the economic, social, cultural and political value it is associated with. To borrow from Webb (2004:12), a motivation to use the language is derived from the extent to which it is tied to the society's 'existential necessity'. In contrast, in an EFL environment a motivation to learn and use the language is constrained by a view of it as a mere appendage to the school curriculum with little or no

strong (special) status within the society. That is, it is primarily driven by the exigencies of examinations.

The definitions supplied above presuppose that in Botswana, English can be classified as both a second and foreign language. Botswana can be described as a ‘second-language learning and using environment’ if one adopts the concept ‘English within English-speaking countries’. This concept was proposed by Kachru (1992) as part of his broad theory of ‘World Englishes’— an attempt to classify the numerous dialects of English in accordance with the influence that native languages have on English in the various parts of the world where it is used (or ‘concentric circles’, to use the words of Kachru).

2.9 SPHERES OF ENGLISH LEARNING AND USE

In an effort to counter and debunk the views of conservative thinkers (so-called ‘purists’) claiming that only the ‘British English’ constituted ‘standard English’, Kachru (1992) broadly clustered the areas of English use into three ‘concentric circles’. According to Kachru, the three circles denote “the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocations of English in diverse cultural contexts” (1992: 356). He argued that the three categories of standard English are spread across the world and are necessitated by the influences of the numerous native tongues on the English language, as follows:

2.9.1 The ‘Inner-circle’ countries

This category consists of what are regarded as the main drivers of English language teaching and using — the ‘traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English’ to use the phrase by Kachru (1992: 356).

It consists of countries such as the UK and Ireland, and an Anglophone group of erstwhile British colonies of the US, Australia, New Zealand, SA, Canada and various islands of the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. In this setting, ESL is taught and used primarily by immigrants and refugees.

2.9.2 The 'Outer-circle' countries

According to Kachru this group comprises “the institutionalized non-native varieties (ESL) in the regions that have passed through extended periods of colonization” (1992:356). In other words, it is made up of countries classified as the ‘Commonwealth of Nations’ or what was historically referred to as the British Empire. The grouping consists mainly of former British colonies in Africa. Some major Asian powers, India and Pakistan are also part of this cluster. Here, despite English not being spoken as a mother tongue by the majority of their populations, the English language, nevertheless, has been designated a major role as an official language. Some English language teaching and using experts (Kachru, 1992: Soneye, 2010) echo the significantly international role played by English in these contexts, particularly that it can be used as a lingua franca for daily communication among the different ethnic groups. Further, English is the predominant medium for pursuing or conducting these countries’ national ideals, including scientific research, higher education, technology, banking, the legislature and judiciary, tourism, commerce, trade, and so on.

2.9.3 'Expanding circle' countries

Kachru (1992) used the label to refer to a primarily, non-English speaking context. However, English use is considered significant in the execution of a limited number of functions, notably, in conducting trade or business and diplomacy. Often, the classroom is classified as the only isolated environment ('island') in which English is used in an otherwise English-free region. The Asian continent is usually cited as a typical illustration of this phenomenon. Countries in the Middle East and the Arab World are also a good exemplification of this category. Kachru describes the teaching and use of the English language in these contexts as basically a foreign language:

The Expanding circle includes the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL contexts (i.e., varieties that lack official status and are typically restricted in their uses (1992: 356–57).

2.10 ENGLISH USE IN BOTSWANA

English has been designated the status of an official language alongside Setswana. English is therefore a second language in Botswana due to the major part it plays in helping the country pursue national ideals. That is, in addition to the frequency with which English is used as an aid to the pursuit of national goals, the nation derives numerous practical benefits from its use. Overall, it is used to assist the nation to perform socio-economic, political, cultural and professional functions. Consequently, English has

become the dominant and even the sole medium of communication in some areas of the country's public life, including:

2.10.1 The media

A perusal of most, if not all the private and public print newspapers in Botswana shows that they use English as a medium of pursuing their general goals of 'informing', 'educating' and 'entertaining' the nation.

2.10.2 Education

According to information (Botswana, 1993) English is a compulsory medium of instruction in Botswana's public classroom T & L, commencing at standard five. The RNPE (Botswana, 1994), however, had recommended a reduction of the age limit to standard two. Also, terminal examinations at all levels of the education system (with the exception of the subject 'Setswana') are written in English. The important role or special treatment assigned to English in the education of Botswana children is stressed: on school premises, they were "not allowed to respond to teachers in Setswana, unless they were in a Setswana lesson" (Moeng, 2011:10).

In the country's private education environment, English is, perhaps, accorded an even more prominent status than any of Botswana's twenty-three indigenous languages. Here, the primary and secondary ladders of education treat English as both the language of education and social communication. In these English-medium schools, therefore, English has been designated the status

of a compulsory language of communication. This situation is reinforced by the fact that most of these schools are located in urban centres. Their location, coupled with the exorbitant tuition fees that are charged, guarantees that such institutions become the preserve of the cream of Botswana society. By virtue of being the exclusive hub of children from the middle and high echelons of Botswana society, as well as, children of expatriate workers, foreign business people and diplomats, these schools have managed to establish and sustain an “English only” policy in the discharge of their mandates. Again, since a large majority of their teachers are expatriates, this had ensured the high premium associated with English as a medium of communication, further boosting the high level of English communicative proficiency students of such schools are reported to normally attain.

In contrast, the majority of learners in public schools come from working class homes. This has implications for their use of English. For example, public schools treat English as primarily a foreign language, since, working-class parents do not frequently use English as a means of communication to perform their social chores. Thus, the majority of learners in public schools approach English as basically a classroom experience. By extension, the English communicative proficiency of these learners is generally limited or unsatisfactory.

2.10.3 Professions

Recruitment procedures, as well as progression on the job are gradually placing accent on English communication skills as an important prerequisite. Moeng (2011:10) quips, “Everything is done in English. You have interviews in English”. Meetings and

minutes at most work places are conducted and recorded primarily through the medium of English.

2.10.4 Social lives

English is spoken at home by many in the middle and high strata of society as a medium of day-to-day interaction. Thus familiarity with the 'standard' language (high-touch) of these ladders of society is an important condition for entry and maintenance of these social brackets. In other words, communicative ability in the English language is an important symbol of urbanisation in Botswana. The high value that Botswana aspiring for a cosmopolitan life place on English is referred to by Moeng:

English is widely used in the urban areas. This is mainly so because English is both an official and business language thus glorifying and celebrating English speaking, while looking down upon people not fluent in English (2011:10).

Regarding the high priority placed on English over the indigenous languages at school, the same source, quoting a commentary by a learner, puts it this way:

"...at school it was emphasised that we speak English," Lucia explained, adding that "for you to be 'in' you need to speak English, so we grew up knowing that it is an important language to speak (2011:10).

2.10.5 International relations

Botswana is a member of several regional and international groupings, including the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) and the United Nations (UN). As Clark alludes, a country's membership of international bodies presupposes, among others, a challenge for it to inculcate high levels of English language proficiency in order to establish and sustain relationships with other countries: "(...) a political commitment to better communication with other member countries and to better understanding of their culture" (1987:114). For example, within SADC English acts as the regional lingua franca. Thus Botswana is reliant on English to conduct commercial, technological, social and economic transactions with her SADC partners.

Overall, Botswana's membership in these international and regional bodies implies that the country's English language education should strive to inoculate among the learners skills and knowledge of English as an International Language (EIL).

Despite apparent evidence of its classification as a second language in Botswana, to some degree, English is also still regarded as a foreign language. For example, there are still some pockets of the country where English is rarely used and when its use does take place, it is largely viewed as an alien language. The practice is prominent among the masses in rural areas where English plays little or no meaningful role in helping the citizenry realise its life needs. Conversely, communal needs are successfully accomplished through the use of the mother tongue or some local dialects. Children from these backgrounds commence schooling and continue with the learning of English as basically a foreign language because they would have had little or no contact with the TL prior to commencing formal classroom tuition. Even after

formal language learning has started, the tuition exercise remains very much a classroom experience which is devoid of the naturalistic features and principles associated with language use outside the classroom. Outside the school, the student hardly has the opportunity to come into contact with the TFL. This discrepancy is precipitated by the fact that the mother tongue is readily available for assisting perform a variety of tasks that the English language would, otherwise, be expected to help in their execution. Thus, the use of English foreign language is a restricted one confined to very specific goals.

Owing to the critical role expected to be played by the English language in facilitating the achievement of national ideals, it is essential that EFL and ESL should be taught properly to develop high levels of proficiency in the language. Consequently, in the next section, we intend to discuss the CLT paradigm as being among the main teaching approaches that are recommended as most effective in promoting high levels of English FL/SL communicative proficiency among learners and by extension, contribute to a nation's global competitiveness.

2.11 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

CLT also known as the Communicative Approach (CA) developed during the late 1970s and early 1980s (cf. among others, Roberts, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Galloway, 1993; Wilkins, 1976). Hiep extols its virtues:

CLT is the right method not only for teaching English, but the spirit of it can also benefit teaching other subjects. It aims to teach

things practically useful to students in a relaxing manner (2007:197).

Yule (1996:193) refers to CLT as the most novel method of FL/SL teaching: “more recent revisions of the L2 learning experience can be described as Communicative Approaches”. The almost universal appeal of CLT is underscored by Savignon:

CLT has become so familiar to discussions about the practice and theory of second and foreign language teaching as the Big Mac is to fast food (2005: 635).

Littlewood (2011: 543) expresses little doubt about the value of CLT as a way of developing a “post method pedagogical framework (...) within which teachers can design methods appropriate to their own contexts but based on principled reflection”.

Thompson (1996:9) emphatically endorses the advent of CLT as the most modern and popular innovation in L2 teaching, worldwide:

...communicative language teaching is accepted by many applied linguists and teachers as the most effective approach among those in general use...whatever the situation may be as regards actual teaching practices, communicative language teaching (CLT) is well established as the dominant theoretical model in ELT. Girvan (2000: 129) concurs with this description and according to

Savignon (2003:56) that communicative competence and communicative language teaching remain today a contentious topic.

Despite the introduction of CLT seemingly having been universally accepted as marking a major or real paradigm change in language teaching, the innovation is, nonetheless, often presented as a loose teaching regime (Cook, 2008: 250 and Richards & Rodgers (2001:161).

Correspondingly, researchers (Brown, 2007:241; Hiep, 2007:193) had observed that the original proponents of CLT regarded it as “a broad theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching.” In other words, the pioneers of CLT viewed it as a more encompassing approach to language teaching rather than a method. Taking that one subscribes to the perspective of CLT as ‘a list of general principles or features’, it is therefore not surprising that as an umbrella term, not a great deal has been written about the learning theory underpinning the CA. Cook (2001: 216) buttresses this line of thought:

The communicative style does not hold a view about the L2 learning as such,
but maintains it happens automatically, provided the students interacts with
others in the proper way.

Hiep further elaborates the position:

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the level of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit (2007:195).

Thus, in strictly pedagogical terms, CLT is not viewed as a method. It is, instead, regarded more as an approach:

It would be inappropriate to speak of CLT as a 'method' in any sense of the word as was used in the twentieth century. Rather, CLT is an approach that understands language to be inseparable from individual identity and social behaviour (Savignon, 2005: 648).

Already in 1987, Riley stated that the Communicative Approach is not a "method" (1987:83) but an approach. The advocacy for CLT as an approach is, in actual fact, endorsing the objective of the innovation as described by Thompson (1996: 9) of "helping learners to practice the skills needed to put their knowledge of the foreign language into use". Since CLT places greater emphasis on 'practice' as a means of promoting language proficiency, it, in many ways, shares similar characteristics with the 'skill-learning theory; of language pedagogy, as is referred to by, among others, Richards and Rodgers (2001:161), citing Littlewood (1981) and Johnson (1982).

Notwithstanding the charge that CLT is not underlined by any clear and detailed learning theory, its proponents, however, maintain that learning takes place naturally / automatically, provided a meaningful context exists within which learners are able to interact. To that end, Cook (2008: 251) refers to learning in COLT as 'same as language using'. O'Neill (2000: 4) echoes the same goal for language learning in CLT: 'learning a language means learning to perform communicative speech acts with it'.

CLT teaching was, therefore, primarily motivated by the need to redress the challenges (or deficits) the traditional, structure-based methods of L2 teaching, especially the A-L, GTM and SM, were faced with. Specifically, the CA focused on rectifying the shortcomings of its preceding methods, wherein language learners were required to master precisely the grammatical elements of the TFL or TSL as the exclusive underlying factor for the development of their English language communicative proficiency. As a consequence of this requirement, traditional methods of EFL/ESL were criticized for having achieved very little in promoting classroom discourse which is reminiscent (equivalent) to the negotiation of meaning that is known to take place in naturalistic environments outside the classroom.

The innovation was therefore basically introduced as an anti-structural perspective to learning. It emerged as a vehicle for helping create balance between theory and practice through enabling learners the opportunity to practice communication resembling what goes on in real-life (social) setups. The thrust of the communicative movement hinges on the philosophy that

striking a complementary relationship between the two competencies (pragmatic and generative), would prove a good recipe for developing full ESL proficiency in both ‘basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency’, as has been suggested by some scholars, including Cummins (2000:74).

In essence, therefore, CLT sets out to correct an identified lack of genuine communication in the classroom by attempting to minimise language exercises that are out of context and essentially meaning-free. Kirkgoz (2010: 179) sums up the objective of a COC:

promoting learners’ communicative proficiency in English, by fostering integrated development of four language skills with a particular emphasis on speaking and listening, focusing on learner-centred instruction.

In the chapter that follows, it is intended to discuss some of the theoretical ideas and pedagogical practices of a COLT, that have been articulated by scholars in the subject area as predisposed to help develop the learners’ CC, through grounding teaching activities in functional and social reality.

CHAPTER THREE: MAJOR TECHNIQUES FOR A COMMUNICATIVE-ORIENTED TEACHING AND LEARNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion on a theoretical framework that characterises and underpins a foreign or second language teaching based on the CA. The first instalment of this discussion was engaged on in chapter two of this study. This study takes the view that a more detailed or whole explanation of the theory on CLT teaching is essential to supply because despite the CT having been widely accepted as the most modern and effective tool for the teaching of the TFL /TSL, its actual application in real-life classroom language teaching has been reported as faced with controversies. The contradictions and debate surrounding CLT teaching have created some uncertainties (ambivalences) among language educators and researchers as to what exactly constitutes the characteristics and tenets of the CA. Heugh (2013) points to the following so-called unintended consequences of CLT:

- Ambiguous signals were given to teachers
- There was an inadequate training of teachers
- There was a de-emphasis on writing and reading skills development
- ELP was often misunderstood as being mainly about speaking and not about reading and writing.

Several other scholars have described the confusion that educators encounter in interpreting and applying the communicative paradigm in their language classrooms. In enunciating what some scholars, including Littlewood (2011:541) have referred to as the ‘problem of definition [that] bedevils CLT’, Harmer (2003: 289) stated that: “The problem with CLT is that the term has always meant a multitude of different things to different people”. In Ethiopia, for example, teachers reported that “their understanding of ‘communicative language teaching’ was that acceptable teaching practice included ‘practising’ their own ‘broken English’ on students in the classroom” (Benson, *et al.* 2012:46). Savignon (2007:208) refers to the challenges that the teachers the world over, are faced with, in conceptualizing and applying the CA which stems from the contradictions that are endemic to CLT theory:

“The so-called CLT has become the buzz word in discussion of the practice and theory of second and foreign language teaching. The appeal is seemingly world-wide. And yet when it comes to curriculum design and implementation, there persists widespread confusion and debate.”

Thompson (1996:9) also discusses the problem relating to a lack of synergy between theory and practice in CLT teaching and the consequent ambiguity it had caused language teachers in interpreting precisely what CLT represents:

“...the principles of CLT are largely treated as clearly understood and accepted (...) Despite this apparent unanimity, many teachers remain somewhat confused.”

Richards & Rodgers (2001:157), citing Savignon (1983), offer what appears one of the most insightful descriptions of the difficulties teachers come across in conceptualizing CLT that emanates from varying interpretations of the paradigm:

“The wide acceptance of the Communicative Approach and relatively varied ways in which it is interpreted and applied can be attributed to the fact that practitioners from different educational traditions can identify with it, and consequently interpret it in different ways.”

Some scholars (including Lucantoni, 2002; Thompson, 1996) have identified several misconceptions that language teachers hold in relation to CLT that, in turn, contribute to an inadequate conception of the CA by these teachers as well as their inappropriate or partial implementation of the paradigm. Irrespective of the points of view these scholars subscribe to, all seem to concur that four misconceptions held by the teachers about CLT teaching are salient:

— **CLT entails abdicating from teaching the TL grammar**

Advocacy for abstaining from teaching the grammar of the TL2 has motivated two seemingly contradictory arguments. One view maintains that language use is a complex phenomenon that cannot be facilitated by a mere explicit or prescriptive teaching of the grammatical, structural, lexical and phonological rules of the

TL2. Instead, the argument goes, the grammatical rules of the TL2 should be taught indirectly or in context as part of what has been termed ‘communicative tasks’ or ‘fluency activities’. An opposing school of thinking, however, posits that as a backbone of communicating in any language, the TL grammar should be taught directly to facilitate ‘noticing’ the ways in which such psycholinguistic elements are intricately employed to facilitate efficient communication. This perspective argues that expressing meaning is conditional to being able to formulate the structural patterns of the TL correctly. The thesis ultimately concludes that since CLT appears to underrate the role played by the teacher and some more orthodox language teaching methodologies, in favour of frequent participation in pair and group work by the learners, it is implied that there exists some mysterious or ‘invincible’ source from which the learners are expected to get the knowledge and skills to allow them to facilitate their meaningful participation in group work through the medium of a TFL/TSL.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:163) share the sentiment that as part of efforts at making language learning practically oriented, CLT tends to underrate the role played by an explicit knowledge of grammatical and structural aspects of the TL. This anti-structural view can be held to represent the language learning version of a more general learning perspective usually referred to as “learning by doing” or “the experience approach” (Hilgard & Bower, 1966).

- **In the communicative classroom, normal didactic work is substituted with group work.**

From the sentiments expressed in the immediate preceding discussion item, group work is treated in CLT as if it is an inevitable tool for developing communicative proficiency in the TL. However, according to some research (see, for example, Savignon, 2008; Thompson, 1996) group work is by no means an absolute essentiality of CLT teaching. Instead, group work is an additional feature recommended as a tool for enabling learners to practice the development of oral communication skills in the TFL/TSL. Other related language teaching techniques that recommend practice (through inter alia, group work), as a vehicle for promoting the development of communicative proficiency include SLA research and skill-learning theory of language teaching (see Richards & Rodgers, 200, for details on these techniques). Needless to say, however, that the most serious weakness of classroom FL/SL group work has been described as concentrated in its inherent association with ‘Western individualised’ styles of learning. That is, owing to an over-concentration on Western ideals, administering classroom FL/SL pair and how group work has had some negative sociocultural implications for learners. Scholars such as Tanaka (2009) charge that group work models for CLT pay only scanty attention to the learning cultures in popular use among the societies from which these learners originate. Among the major complaint levelled against the approach is what has been described as its negligence of the use of the learners’ native languages as an aid to classroom communication.

- **The approach focuses on teaching oral communication skills to the exclusion of the three other traditional language skills.**

This misconception is primarily motivated the fact that CLT gives prominence to pair and group work as a means of helping learners

acquire communicative competence in the TL. But the bottom line, as shown by research, is that the approach recommends learning activities that are ‘practical oriented’ in all the four traditional language skills.

— **Adopting a Communicative Approach to teaching is accompanied by a huge increase in the workload of the language teacher.**

Research indicates that this allegation is gradually becoming a norm rather than a myth. Furthermore, evidence shows that even in its original sense, the charge was a misconception mainly due to the extent that it related to the weak version of CLT. But, in truly communicative work (where the strong form of CLT is practiced), there is evidence that the teacher’s professional responsibilities have increased tremendously. In some setups, teachers are assigned responsibility to design fluency tasks that will ensure meaningful interaction among learners. In addition, they have to assign learners some roles to play during the conduct of a communicative activity. To compound the situation, the teacher might not even have formal training in CLT teaching. Thus, they participate in CLT teaching on the basis of the individual research they have conducted in the subject area as well as any in-service training that may have been offered.

An in-depth discussion on these four factors is undertaken by, among others, Thompson (1996:10–14) and Cook, (2008:247-271). Concerning this study in particular, section 3.2 of this chapter discusses some six select aspects of the CT. The section will also provide a detailed exploration of a limited number of issues previously reported by this study as among the primary factors on

which teachers base their misconceptions about CLT. A description of the main theoretical issues is intended to create a pool of ideas that will serve as a yardstick for helping cross-reference some questions (issues) that would probably emerge as we undertake the process of analysing data derived from survey questionnaires, as well as observing real-life classroom language teaching by secondary school teachers in Botswana, in chapters five and six of this study. In other words, a detailed account and adequate grasp of the theoretical insights underpinning CLT teaching is invaluable in furnishing the researcher with a tool-kit for cross-referencing data, thus contributing towards making a meaningful and empirical interpretation regarding the extent to which the teachers have adequately / satisfactorily conceptualized CLT theories, as well as determine how they have appropriately applied or deviated from these theories in their real-life classroom teaching.

The disparity in the opinions of English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners about what really constitutes CLT teaching, as was reported here, is a source of some serious concern. Among the possible repercussions of a lack of consensus on the interpretation of CLT is that language teachers in Botswana might be influenced to become resistant to applying the CLT paradigm in their classrooms. Alternatively, the varying perceptions of CLT by educators could influence language teachers to only apply CLT theories partially. Lessons from other parts of the world bear testimony to this hurdle: in the UK, for example, when the CA to the teaching of foreign languages (especially German and French) was first introduced, teachers faced difficulties interpreting and

implementing CLT teaching. Therefore, a full description of the theoretical issues underlying the communicative innovation to the teaching of EFL/ESL is a crucial means of helping ensure a valid assessment of the extent to which language teachers in Botswana have adequately understood CLT theories and relevantly applied the paradigm in their classroom practices.

3.2 THEORETICAL ISSUES

This sub-section previews the influence of the CT on six select areas of language pedagogy:

- The teaching of the English grammar;
- Criteria teachers utilise in responding to linguistic errors made by learners;
- Modalities for conducting classroom discourse;
- Taking turns to contribute to classroom discussion;
- The techniques of questioning;
- Factors in choosing teaching materials and classroom activities.

These aspects were chosen because they have been classified (described) as forming part of the vital components of ESL pedagogy. The primary goal is to investigate how communicative theories have impacted on language teaching in these areas, in an effort to develop the learners' 'communicative competence', through making teaching practical-oriented, as well as being

engrained in social reality. In particular, the discussion focuses on describing how communicative perspectives have been successfully applied (or otherwise) to help transform language teaching from its present theoretical and uncommunicative or pseudo nature to making it resemble every day, ordinary discourse as is known to take place in social setups. Theoretical insights are therefore intended to be utilised as a source for cross-referencing as well as making objective commentary, to evaluate the degree to which language teachers in Botswana have internalised and applied communicative theories to help make ESL teaching emulate ways in which language is normally used for genuine communication.

The immediate preceding section has highlighted the importance of providing an in-depth theoretical description of the major issues that underpin a specific research exercise. A detailed description of the major theoretical issues raised by comparative studies as possible underlying factors for a communicative-based language teaching will be useful to this study as a means of generating a pool of ideas that can be relied upon in chapters five and six to validate or cross-reference the findings regarding the extent to which Botswana's ESL classrooms had conformed or deviated from applying communicative theories in an effort to help improve the English language proficiency (ELP) of the learners. Theoretical insights are therefore an important aid for the researcher to use to structure his classroom observations. As a result, they are regarded as a critical vehicle for safeguarding the researcher against the desire to intuitively and prescriptively direct how an innovation ought to be applied. The urge to do this would appear inevitable with respect to CLT teaching wherein studies

(cf., for example, Soneye, 2010; Cook, 2002; Nunan, 1987; Edward & Westgate, 1987; Candlin, 1987; Hiep, 2007) have reported a 'lack of congruence between theory and practice'. Hind-sight from findings of past research is also helpful in minimising the contradictions that have been reported as characterising the interpretation of the features and principles of CLT by many educators.

In a nutshell, theoretical foundations play an essential part in guiding the application of language skills. They are therefore a necessary requirement for this study wherein often problematic situations have been reported to arise in CLT teaching when attempts are made to apply theory to practice.

In order to pave the way for an informed discussion or evaluation) on the feasibility for Botswana to reform her ESL teaching from structure-based to communicative or practically-oriented (i.e. focused on emulating social realities) as will be undertaken in chapters five and six of this study, it is first intended to prepare a ground for this discussion by providing a theoretical description of six select issues that have often been identified as among the main factors that underpin an ESL pedagogy modelled on the CA. The six theoretical issues that form part of the discussion intended to lay ground for evaluating the extent to which Botswana's ESL teaching has approximated CLT teaching are:

3.2.1 The teaching of grammar

The teaching of grammar is focused on because in section 3.1 of this chapter, it was observed that there are conflicts between theory and practice in CLT teaching. Further, evidence points out

that despite what appears to be an overwhelming theoretical approval of the teaching for a communicative objective by language practitioners, evidence nonetheless indicates that the world over, instructions on language form predominates during real-life English language classroom lessons. Nunan (1987:141), citing Sato (1983:283), strongly endorses this line of thinking:

... there are comparatively fewer opportunities for genuine communicative language use in second language classrooms. Thus Long and Sato report: 'ESL teachers continue emphasise form over meaning, accuracy over communication'. ... A disconfirming study is yet to be documented.

Wilkins (1976:8) quips: "In materials themselves, learning of form is sometimes adequately provided for, but the learning of meaning is neglected". Clarke (1989: 84) agrees:

While most modern textbooks work hard at achieving at least the aura of authenticity, it should be noted that much of their content still focuses on knowledge of the language rather than its use.

Ellis (2004: 252) also laments the inadequacy of real task-based pedagogy in EFL/ESL lessons:

...a rarity even in classrooms where the teacher claims to be teaching communicatively. The main reason for this lies in the difficulty teachers and students have in achieving the required orientation.

A general description of the term 'grammar' is supplied by Gass and Selinker (1994:6): "...the knowledge we have of the order of elements in a sentence". Cook (2008:18) adds "...the order of words...the 'computational system' that relates sound and meaning". A common feature (also characteristic weakness) of these two definitions is that they are both narrowly focused, thus, viewing 'grammar' prescriptively as an outline of the rules that language users employ to formulate sentences. That is, grammar is merely understood as rules of usage needing to be rigidly mastered through constant exercise. The mastery of such rules is seen as a precondition for 'automatization'. Broadly, a teaching framework that recommends grammatical input as the main agent for developing learners' language proficiency is contemporarily referred to in the literature (Brown, 2007:276; Ellis, 2004:255; Richards, 1999:4) as "form-focused instruction / pedagogy". Brown (2007: 276), citing Spada (1997:73), defines the concept 'form-focused instruction' as "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learner's attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly". Richards (1999: 4) explains 'explicit instruction' or 'task-supported language teaching' (as it is referred to by some authorities, including, for example, Ellis, 2004:28): "... a target form may be presented formally, together with information about how it is used, followed by practice". Ellis (2004:29) affirms the focal attention this technique places on mastering the linguistic items as a means of developing proficiency in the TFL/TSL:

... a linguistic item is first presented to the learners by means of examples with or without an explanation. This

item is then practiced in a controlled manner using what we have called ‘exercises’.

Brown (2007:276) describes the typical features of ‘explicit instruction’ as underlined by “discrete-point metalinguistic explanations and discussions of rules and exceptions, or curricula governed and sequenced by grammatical and phonological categories”. Explicit pedagogy is a popular mode of instruction among educators who subscribe to traditional oriented T & L or to the weak version of CLT. According to research (Richards, 1999:6; Ellis, 2004:29) explicit instruction popularly makes use of a pedagogical procedure known as ‘Presentation-Practise-Production’ (P-P-P). The thrust of this technique hinges on the belief that the development of proficiency in the TFL/TSL is principally, a product of frequent practice on select or specific linguistic forms (items). The items so rehearsed are subsequently regarded as replicable to several situations of communication. This prescriptive view or direct method of grammar teaching does not pay enough attention to how native users of the language deploy it to convey meaning. Its advocates regard mastery of the discrete elements of language form as an end in itself, as far as the acquisition process is concerned. Ellis (2004:256) reflects similar sentiments:

These techniques ... can be used when the teacher chooses to abandon his / her role as a language user momentarily in order to function as an instructor, i.e. to negotiate form rather than meaning.

The above-referred statement leads us to conclude that explicit form-focused instruction is mainly concerned with display or uncontextualized meaning of some aspects of language form. 'Exercises' are used as the principal technique for conveying this 'semantic meaning'. Ellis (2004:3) defines the term 'exercise' as "the systematic meaning which forms can convey irrespective of context". An exercise is therefore, a language teaching technique whose main purpose is to involve learners in the manipulation of language forms as an end in themselves. That is, the mastery of language forms is pursued for largely platonic reasons. Participants in this process are treated purely as learners, and thus no deliberate intention is taken to assist them to develop the skills in putting these language forms to some pragmatic functions.

Contemporary linguists have rejected the apparently prescriptive or traditional approach to grammar teaching described above. A major source for their objection was the approach's lack of regard for 'context of use' as a major determiner for the meaning of some aspectual features of language. Using the mantra 'descriptive grammar', linguists and educators of a communicative extract (cf., Cook, 2000: 20; Gass & Selinker, 1994:7), and exponents of the CA, have proposed an expanded view of grammar teaching, to reflect how languages are actually used to pursue social communicative purposes. Proponents of CLT teaching especially sought to dispel the myth created that through a direct teaching of the morpho-syntactic elements of the language, each grammatical item could be assigned a single meaning. Communicational-based linguists and educators advocated that an indirect teaching of language forms through the medium of authentic texts will create a

concrete and encompassing meaning for such elements by drawing attention of learners to how these forms are normally used in real-life situations.

In another words, indirect teaching relays the pragmatic meaning of forms implicitly through the use of ‘tasks’ drawn from authentic materials. Edward & Westgate (1987:20) enunciate the value of ‘contextual factors’ to pragmatics: “predicts the meaning of an utterance in a specified context”. To that end, the concept ‘implicit form-focused instruction’ has been suggested to explain how communicative activities or tasks can be used as means of developing genuine classroom communication among learners. The primary goal of an implicit instruction is to highlight that pragmatics, “the ways in which we use language in context” (Gass & Selinker, 1994:10), plays an important complementary role (to the explicit teaching of language forms) in the realisation of meaning. Through the concept ‘retrospective approach’, Thompson, (1996:11) echoes the principles underpinning the indirect teaching of grammar:

The view that grammar is too complex to be taught in that oversimplifying way has had an influence, and the focus has now moved away from the teacher covering grammar to the learners discovering grammar. ... The retrospective approach also has the advantage that, if the lesson is conducted in English, it encourages the learners to communicate fairly neutrally about a subject that is important to what they are doing: the language itself.

The sentiment expressed by Thompson above that learners need to have their attention only incidentally drawn to language form

via participating in communicative activities, is re-affirmed by Brown (2007:276) and Richards (1999: 5), borrowing from Ellis (1997). These scholars have adopted the concept 'grammar consciousness raising' arguing that rules governing language forms and their application would be better internalised by the learners, not so much through direct transmission of the knowledge of the individual rules of grammar but rather by virtue of experiencing the same in fluency-based tasks. Lightbown and Spada (2006:110) summarise the perspective of the CA on grammar teaching by placing the emphasis on interaction, conversation and language use, rather than on learning about the language.

According to Lightbown and Spada (2006) the topics that are discussed in communicative and task-based instructional environments are often of general interest to the learners. Typically advertisements and newspaper articles may be used creatively in setting a task. "The language that teachers use for teaching is not selected solely for the purpose of teaching a specific feature of the language, but also to make sure learners have the language they need to interact in a variety of contexts" Lightbown and Spada (2006:110.)

Supporters of the strong version of CLT are not against the teaching of grammar per se. Instead, their critique is directed at the discrete, uncontextualised teaching of the individual elements of language form. They have expressed a reservation that the meaning generated by stating rules of grammar in a prescriptive and subjective manner would adequately cater for the

sophisticated ways in which language is used in real life (social) situations. In other words, they question the extent to which it is feasible for the explicit form teaching to facilitate skills transfer to a multiplicity of situations of language use.

By virtue of being located within social reality, tasks would appear to command an edge over other instruments for helping develop skills in language use.

3.2.2 Responding to learners' errors

Scholars (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Edwards & Westgate, 1987) highlight that the linguistic errors that learners commit in the classrooms have attracted a lot of interest from researchers. These authorities also surmise that this aspect of classroom business has generated immense interest among researchers owing primarily to the fact that the ways in which the teachers respond to the errors that learners make during lessons are apparently remarkably different from how errors are usually handled in everyday or ordinary human interactions. Furthermore, the issue relating to the best practices that teachers could possibly adopt in order to address errors committed by learners in their spoken language has drawn intense and at times contradictory overtones among educators and linguists inclined towards communicative approaches. Yule (1996:194) acknowledges the prominent attention CLT teaching assigns to handling linguistic errors that are made by learners: "one radical feature of most communicative approaches is the toleration of errors produced by learners". The value of analysing and understanding the role that the phenomenon of correcting errors committed by learners plays in

language acquisition is conspicuous in the observation by Brown (2000:218):

While the diminishing of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency, the ultimate goal of L2 learning is the attainment of communicative fluency.

In order to create clarity for the discussion on this matter, it is prudent to first work out an operational definition for the term 'error'. Brown (2000: 217) attempts a working definition for the concept 'error' by contrasting it with the term 'mistake', as follows:

“... mistakes ... are not the result of a deficiency in competence but the result of some sort of temporary breakdown or imperfection in the process of producing speech. These hesitations, slips of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities and other performance lapses in native-speaker production also occur in L2 speech. Mistakes, when attention is called to them, can be self-corrected.”

Brown (2000: 217) also describes an 'error' as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner”.

These definitions clarify that whereas errors signal a defective proficiency in the communicator's language performance, mistakes on the other hand are occasional lapses which can form a transitory part of a proficient user's body of language.

Applied linguists subscribing to the weak form of CLT theorise that a 'rigorous immediate' correction of the learners' language errors should be done to prevent learners from an exposure to incorrect or 'incompetent' forms of language use and the possibility of legitimising them. This line of thinking also draws from a perspective held by a groundswell of researchers that at times, learners possess personal opinions regarding how language learning ought to be constituted. Researchers holding this view therefore emphasize that disambiguating learners from some of their misconceptions is an important precondition for effective language acquisition. Pica (2000:9), elaborates on the idea:

One of the earliest claims to emerge from L2 research was that learners' errors reflected their hypotheses about the language they were learning. This is a claim that continues to be held widely to date. Thus, instruction or corrective feedback cannot alter the path of language learning. However, research has shown that they can accelerate learners' movement and progress along the path, if provided at a time that is developmentally appropriate.

Some studies (see, for example, Edwards and Westgate, 1987; Soneye, 2010; Brown, 2000) justify **the** practice of conducting direct correction of learners' errors by alluding to the context 'marked usages' of language. Implied is that certain forms of speech may seem so typical of particular phenomena to the extent of appearing the only forms suited to describing them correctly or appropriately (registers and genres, for example). Other key theories appearing to have influenced educators to become somewhat intolerant towards errors committed by learners

include the ‘Interactional Hypothesis’ and ‘Noticing Hypothesis’ both of which are discussed by Ellis (2004:46– 47), citing Long (1983, 1996) and Schmidt (1990, 1994, 2001), arguing as follows, respectively: “Comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition”, and:

...explicit knowledge is seen as facilitating implicit learning in two main ways first, it aids the processing of *noticing*. That is, if learners are armed with explicit knowledge of a linguistic feature, they are more likely to notice its occurrence in the communicative input they receive and thus to learn it implicitly. In other words (*sic*) explicit knowledge helps to make a feature salient. Second, explicit knowledge may assist *noticing-the-gap*. If learners know about a particular feature they are better equipped to detect the difference between what they themselves are saying and how the feature is used in the input they are exposed to. Explicit knowledge of the feature can make it easier for them to make ‘cognitive comparisons’, i.e. to compare their own norms with the target norms exemplified in the feedback.

The two views imply that whilst L2 acquisition is primarily an implicit undertaking which takes place naturally as we struggle to communicate, successful task performance is, nonetheless, heavily underpinned by the interlocutor’s knowledge of the TL form[s]. Also that due to the prominent role that a knowledge of the TL forms play in enacting task-based activities, it is necessary that CLT teaching should consciously develop the knowledge of these forms among learners.

Yet another theory that supports the necessity to teach language forms explicitly is that of 'Relations of recommended precedence' (see Wilkins, 1976 for example). This school of thinking is underlined by the philosophy that mastering language forms is a prerequisite for the performance of speech acts. In conformity with this idea, any error that learners make is recommended for correcting. The teaching strategy associated with this perspective is described by Wilkins:

"... the principle of working from the familiar to the unfamiliar and of using the familiar to teach the unfamiliar. The efficient teaching of one item will presuppose the prior acquisition of certain other items. The factors involved will be partly linguistic and partly pedagogic and they will result in preferred orderings of grammatical forms" (1976: 7).

Based on the thesis that an overt knowledge of the discrete language forms plays an important role in the acquisition process, proponents of this theory argue for the necessity to conduct an explicit or direct instruction and corrective feedback on the linguistic forms of the TL during the enactment of task-based activities. Pica (2000:8), borrowing from Brock, *et al.* (1986); Harley, (1989); Lightbown and Spada (1990); Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993); White, (1990 & 1991; Day and Shapson (1991) and Lightbown *et al.* (1991) endorse the reciprocal benefit of running communicative activities as well as offering explicit instruction in the grammar of the target language as means of developing the English language proficiency (ELP) of the learners. In this connection, he notes that research has shown consistently that

the most effective instruction is that in which meaningful communication is emphasized and form is addressed.

The schools of thoughts referred to above presuppose that linguistic forms are an integral part of the process of conveying meaning. Consequently, it is theorised that as the foundation or bulwark for the implicit learning of the target language it is imperative for learners to be thoroughly indoctrinated into the use of the phonological, lexical and structural aspects of the target language. To that end, to adherents of this principle, any element of deviation from the perceived 'acceptable norms' is viewed as a mark of 'incompetence', warranting 'active immediate' correction.

An additional, probable factor that persuaded some English language educators to insist on an explicit knowledge of the TL form (resulting in an immediate correction of grammatical errors committed by the learners), emanates from the crucial role that grammatical forms are supposedly understood to play in facilitating educational achievement. Brown (2000: 234) affirms this function, arguing that "most of the research suggests that form-focused instruction indeed increases learners' level of attainment". Mitchell (1988:36) concurs and even extends the idea. Consequently, she labels a competence in grammar as offering 'practical' benefits and a measure of 'security'. These factors, in turn, translate into aiding learners' general knowledge through activating their language awareness. A final factor predisposing some educators and researchers to become intolerant of learners' errors, seemingly derives its **origins** from the thesis that foreign and second language learning environments

present different challenges from a L1 learning context. Specifically, it is hypothesised that the differences between the two settings present a number of serious obstacles to one of the objectives of CLT, namely, making L2 learning to resemble natural uses of language as are happening in real-life contexts. A major factor advanced to explain the distinction in the requirements for learning between real-life situations and classroom contexts is that people outside the classroom primarily use a language that has been biologically engendered to pursue their 'mundane' everyday needs. They have also undergone a lengthy and sophisticated natural process of socialization into the cultural rituals or nuances of putting this language into use. In contrast to the theory of first language acquisition, children in foreign or second language learning and using situations are confronted with the problem of the effects of a lack of a process of natural language development as well as limited or no meaningful exposure to language use in the environment (see Nunan, 1987 and Webb, 2004, for details). Thus, the desire to teach 'pure' language forms is seen here as an important factor for mediating the discrepancies inherent in the hitherto idealised exposure to foreign languages. That is, a teaching which drills learners into the 'correct' or 'accurate' use of limited examples of the phonological, grammatical and lexical aspects of a language is perhaps perceived as a force for helping foreign and second language learners develop skills and behaviours in language use reminiscent of the native users of the target language. Put differently, explicit grammatical explanation is perhaps seen as a vehicle for mitigating the possible difficulties that L2 learners are likely to face inferring meaning of language forms from communicative activities without having had the

hindsight of a prior adequate and meaningful exposure to the language in the environment.

O'Neill (2000:6) exemplifies some specific ways that the teaching technique which is deliberately biased towards developing ability to use language forms accurately is viewed as a probable preparatory ground for developing skills and behaviours in real-life language use:

Many typical forms of classroom behaviour, such as strict turn-taking, teacher-dominated interaction, and so on, make it possible to focus on things that we normally would not focus on in the world outside the classroom because in the world outside the classroom we would not have the time to focus on them or even think about them.

The perspectives explored above appear to have some common ground. Particularly, they stress that learning a second or foreign language places some heavy cognitive demands on the learners. Consequently, that such an endeavour could be best pursued through a systematic approach to studying the different units that makeup language as a preparatory platform for learning the language implicitly at a later stage.

In contrast to the views that extol the virtues of deliberate (and systematic) teaching of the linguistic forms of the TL as a precondition for developing 'CC' that was explained above, educators subscribing to the 'strong version of CLT' maintain that errors of language forms learners commit during participating in

fluency-based activities need to be largely embraced. Researchers espousing this philosophy (cf., Larsen-freeman (2000:132); Prabhu (1987:27) as cited in Ellis (2004:255–256) hypothesise that errors of a linguistic nature being committed by learners should be condoned as part of communicative-based instruction. These two scholars remark thus, respectively:

Errors of form are tolerated during fluency-based activities and are seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills. Students can have limited linguistic knowledge and still be successful communicators.

And:

...correction during a task is ‘incidental’ rather than ‘systematic’ in nature. In incidental correction, only ‘tokens’ are addressed, i.e., there is no attempt to generalize the type of error, it is seen by the participants as ‘a part of getting on with the activity in hand, not as a separate objective’ and, crucially, it is transitory.

The two researchers commonly emphasise that in implicit or task-based language teaching (TBLT), the efficiency or clarity with which a message is delivered becomes central, to the extent that accomplishing social (communicative) meaning at times is pursued, paying little or no attention to grammatical propriety. O’Neill (2000:3) gives credence to the sentiment: “Instead of correcting mistakes, we should be doing things that will extend the communicative range of learners”.

In line with this broad approach, advocates of the strong CLT suggest that the linguistic errors being committed by learners’

during the course of meaning-focused small group work should be accommodated or embraced as symbolic of the language acquisition process being put into active practice. Scholars such as Savignon (1978:3) had cited areas in which errors of a linguistic nature could be tolerated, including circumlocution, pronunciation, accuracy, propriety, etc. This line of thinking further observes that erroneous performances need to be noted so that skills in their appropriate use could later be practiced via exercises focused on developing semantic meaning. That is, during communicative activities, the teacher may jot down the errors that learners are committing so that at a later stage he/she engages learners in an exercise to perfect skills in using the language forms in question during more accuracy-based activities. Ellis (2004:260) illustrates a possible modality of reviewing the errors that the learners make:

While the students are performing a task in groups, teachers can move from group to group to listen in and note down some of the conspicuous errors the students make, together with actual examples. In the post-task phase, the teacher can address these errors with the whole class. A sentence illustrating the error can be written on the board, students can be invited to correct it, the corrected version is written up and a brief explanation provided.

Other strategies for post-task (or explicit) treating of errors include:

Consciousness-raising (CR) tasks which, whilst seen mainly as autonomous tasks are, nonetheless, used as back-up activities to

sensitise learners about language items for which their use has either proved inadequate or were omitted from the task. For example, learners could study excerpts from their task performance, identify erroneous utterances, as well as providing the corrected version.

Production-practice activities, including gapped and jumbled sentences, repetition, substitution, etc. have persistently been used despite criticism often levelled at their alleged ineffectiveness in expanding learner's interlanguage. Their perseverance stems mainly from their value in 'automatising' the language forms learners have not yet fully mastered.

Noticing activities, which are remedial exercises targeted at gauging how far the learner had subsequently made progress with linguistic forms that had previously (especially during CR tasks) proved to fall outside the learner's interlanguage. Dictation exercises that were enriched through incorporating the requisite target structure(s) are often cited to illustrate this point.

In conclusion, advocates of the strong version of CLT call for stricter adherence to the art of tolerating errors of language forms committed by learners during the enactment of fluency tasks. Notwithstanding this point, however, there are some exceptions to the norm of not correcting the errors of language forms being committed by the learners. Scholars such as Mitchell (1988:32–33) have cited circumstances necessitating adherents of the strong CLT to exercise a waiver to this position. Some situations in which such teachers are reported as having been amenable to correcting

errors include: A category of errors for which its presence or production is regarded as posing real danger of inhibiting communication. Teachers would specially correct an error relating to the linguistic item on which the core of the syllabus attention is presently focused. In line with this stand, errors of the nature described here are prone to be subjected to vigorous on-the-spot correction, if they are made in the context of a whole class interaction rather than during interactive small group sessions.

The weak and strong forms of CLT therefore regard errors of language forms that are made by learners as either a permanent or temporary feature of the learner's emerging language repertoire, respectively. To that end, the weak and strong versions of the CA subscribe to the concepts 'fossilization' and 'stabilisation ('cryogenation') of the learner's interlanguage respectively, as discussed in chapter 2 (p49?). A further discussion of these issues will be conducted in item 5.1.4. when we consider factors in successful group work.

3.2.3 Patterns of interaction

In the immediate preceding sub-section (3.2.2) this study pointed out that the traditional, explicit form-focused language pedagogy presented itself primarily as a pseudo L2 learning and using setup. The classroom was not viewed as a 'real' situation in its own right. To borrow the terminology used by Cook, the classroom was instead regarded as a 'pretend' L2 situation (2000:221). Edward and Westgate (1987: 28) describe classroom language in the same vein:

... proper language of instruction ... often assumed to be necessary for the serious business of formal education, both in the social sense of being more fitting and in the cognitive sense of being structurally superior.

Ellis (2004:252), citing Goffman (1981), affirms the artificial nature of classroom language teaching:

Classrooms are governed by an 'educational imperative' which dictates the kind of discourse that arises. It is for this reason that teachers and students find it difficult to consistently orient to language as a tool and to adopt the role of language users when they both know that the *raison d'être* for their being together is to teach and learn the language.

The major ideas inferred from these words are that as a decontextualised setting, the classroom is often characterised by a highly formal and businesslike variety of language that is weaned of the ordinary and relaxed atmosphere that marks day-to-day social interactions. As a result, classroom discourse is marked by high order language that is also often theoretical and abstract. Edwards and Westgate (1987:33) had also previously offered the same interpretation:

Most of the expository language of teachers and textbooks is language at the apex of a pyramid of experience. ... abstractions are free-floating and are not connected to any previously narrated stories. That is, they are unattached to those detailed empirical referents, which can alone give them life.

Language educators such as Cook, 2000; Soneye, 2010; Edwards and Westgate, 1987, have identified the over-dominating position of the teacher over the discourse as one of the major factors making the classroom a ‘contrived L2 learning setup’. The teacher’s dominance of classroom interaction derives from his perceived role as the ‘disseminator of superior knowledge’. Several metaphors have been used to describe the domineering (and probably also negative) position of the teacher, including: “being the wise post-figurative person of the academic style or the martinet of the audio-lingual” (Cook, 2000:214). O’Neill (2000:2) alludes to the negative effects that the dominant role of the teacher is likely to exercise on classroom discourse: “The teacher doles out formal knowledge of the language like a cook giving prisoners thin soup and stale bread in a Victorian prison”. Classroom teaching setups predominated by teacher-talking-time (T-T-T), have been accused of reducing the participation of the learners in discourse to merely reacting to the teacher’s invitation to recite (display) how well they have comprehended some abstract information. A typical feature of the learning style involved chanting information (especially, discrete linguistic form) in chorus-like technique after the teacher has completed his/her delivery. This ‘repeat after the teacher’ technique is in line with one of the perceived objectives of an explicit form-focused teaching, namely an alleged capacity to generate an ‘on-the-spot assimilation’ of the linguistic items in question by the learners. To borrow the words of Long and Crookes (1992:31) as cited by Ellis (2004:207), linguistic syllabuses “present linguistic forms separately” and “attempt to elicit

immediate target-like mastery of these forms”. However, the technique has been reported by many scholars (cf., for example Edward and Westgate, 1987; Soneye, 2010) as having debilitating effects on the development of the learners’ oral communication skills. All in all, didactic methods reliant on the initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) technique were test-centred, teacher-centred and text-book-centred, and viewed as a means of preparing the learners for formal employment as well as facilitating their enrolment for further education. Savignon (2005:648) agrees: “High stakes language tests often determine future access to education and opportunity”. Cummins (2000:88) also refers to the negative effects that a teaching oriented towards examinations has on learners’ communicative capabilities:

The reality of teachers teaching to the test rather than promoting extensive reading and writing for authentic purposes is evident in educational jurisdictions throughout North America that have fallen victim to ‘knee-jerk’ accountability.

The IRF technique viewed learners as passive recipients of information, incapable of generating new knowledge. Other negative connotations associated with these types of learners are: ‘reservoirs’ or ‘receptacles’ of information. Tanaka (2009:113) quotes Holliday (1994) to reflect the docile role learners were expected to play in traditional language learning contexts, as “empty vessels”, which a teacher can arbitrarily fill with new knowledge or behaviour. Edwards and Westgate

(1987:43) describe typical (traditional) classroom discourse as non-conversational. The main goal of teaching and learning in this context is to equip learners with factual information about the TL, so that they are able to recall these structural data about the language during examinations time. Effective learning was regarded as a sophisticated undertaking requiring the TL to be split into several small units in accordance with their ascending levels of difficulty. The teaching approach wherein language is considered a complex phenomenon whose effective learning desires it to be split into several units that are offered as discrete elements, in smaller quantities and in accordance with their order of simplicity until the structure of the whole fathoms, has been alternatively referred to by scholars (cf., Wilkins, 1976:2), as 'synthetic language approach' or the 'technique of minimum contrast'. Such kind of teaching does not purposively target to develop the skills of the learners in exploiting language for social communicative needs. Rather, in the rare occasion that it attempted to develop communicative skills, this task was undertaken towards the end of the learning exercise through the now obsolete interactional strategy of IRF, that has been described by several authorities (including Ellis, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2006, Edwards & Westgate, 1987). IRF relied heavily on dialogues and drills as its instructional techniques for developing skills in communication. However, the main fallacy of the technique was the insistence that frequently and / or routinely memorising and repeating a select group of contextualised linguistic structures would enable learners to replicate them to several specific situations of language use. The shortcomings of IRF referred to by Soneye

(2010:218), borrowing from Ufomata (1995), as well as Edwards and Westgate (1995):

Teachers ask too many questions 80% of which require mere recall of knowledge produced after the teacher's pronunciation (Ufomata, 1995) and the students from my experience normally give it almost verbatim. This method is known as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) discourse structure, discussed by Edwards and Westgate (1994). Initiation-Response-Feedback or IRF is a pattern of discussion between teachers and learners. The teacher initiates, the learner responds, the teacher gives feedback.

A serious weakness of IRF that had motivated educators, such as Soneye (2010), Cummins (2000), and Edwards and Westgate (1987) to call for its abandonment is that its interactional pattern primarily requires learners to regurgitate information ('wisdom') transmitted by the teacher, without any requirement to engage in meaningful or an innovative negotiation of meaning. Soneye (2010) affirms this complaint against IRF: "This approach to exchange of information in the classroom is more about the learner replicating the teacher than communicating or being creative". During the rare occasion that learners are afforded opportunity to speak, the teacher continues to cling to his controlling posture, deciding who else should speak, to whom they should speak and on what subject. The teacher also takes decisions regarding how the participants should talk as well as the duration of the talk. The teacher is also pre-allocated the privilege of evaluating (or even discarding) the contributions of some of the interactants.

The negativity of a protracted T-T-T, especially its role in making classroom language teaching non-communicative, is perhaps better clarified by McCarthy (1999: 19):

It is a peculiar place, a place where teachers ask questions to which they already know the answers, where pupils (at least younger pupils) have very limited rights as speakers, and where evaluation by the teacher of what the pupils say is a vital mechanism in the discourse structure.

In summary, classrooms in these setups denied learners the chance to use language for authentic purposes. That is, learners were offered little or no opportunities to practice spontaneous interactions or negotiation of meaning with their teachers or with their peers. Instead, learners studied only that which was imposed on them by the educational authorities. The disadvantages of a language teaching technique consisting of the teacher as the central disseminator of information is alluded to by Soneye (2010:20): “teacher explanations alone are often tedious, full of terminology and difficult to follow. There may be no indication of whether the students have understood”.

All in all, the fewer opportunities that classroom teaching allocated to the learners to take part in discourse are characterised by low-quality negotiation of meaning owing to the fact that interactions tend to be chiefly focused on reacting to the teacher’s questions, for which there are some predetermined answers. The responses of the learners also tend to be very brief. But for any meaningful L2 teaching and

learning to take place, it is desirable for learners to be exposed to frequent and qualitative participation in discourse. The need for learners to participate in oral classroom discourse is underlined in the assertion that “spoken language, like an outer coat of an orange, gives an impression about the speaker to the listener or hearer” (Soneye, 2010:219). Thus, truly communicative classrooms are marked by regular learner-to-learner verbal encounters as well as exchanges between the teacher and learner(s).

3.2.4 Taking turns to participate in classroom discourse

In sub-section 3.2.3 of this study it was observed that classroom discussion is non-conversational. That this discrepancy stems from, among others, the numerous privileges enjoyed by the teacher in dominating instructional communication. For example, the teacher has exclusive right to determine the following aspects of the discussion: subject matter, interactants, timeframe, quality of the talk, etc. Traditional classroom talk is thus pseudo and contrasts sharply with how conversations are conducted in real-life situations. Nunan (1987:137) highlights some of the major attributes of real-life communication that CLT aspired to replicate on classroom communication:

“...genuine communication is characterized by the uneven distribution of information, the negotiation of meaning (through for example, clarification requests, and confirmation checks), topic nomination and negotiation by more than one speaker, and the right of interlocutors to decide whether to

contribute to an interaction or not. In other words, in genuine communication decisions about who says what to whom and when are up for grabs.”

In the traditional classroom, the teacher exercises rigid control or ‘directs’ most of the actions transpiring there. By setting one of its ostensible goals as the desire to make classroom talk resemble natural conversations, communicative language use implies democratising relationships between the teacher and learners. A critical area that was earmarked to be made egalitarian involved how the turns to *contribute to classroom* discussion are conducted. CLT seeks to present the teacher and the learners as equal partners as far as negotiating a place (space) to contribute to a discussion goes.

To that end, the concept ‘learner autonomy’ discussed in studies by, for example, Little (1990), Clarke, (1989), and Riley (1987:84) is relevant here. In this context, autonomy refers to the capacity that learners have to initiate and successfully manage their own learning programme. An autonomous learner is one who has learnt how to learn, to identify his/her needs, to design learning strategies and to evaluate own progress – in other words, to self-direct learning.

Cook (2008:268) affirms the part played by the concept ‘autonomy’ in helping classroom communication move towards being conversational, noting that it liberates learners from being primarily “consumers of the teacher's wisdom to also become producers of information”.

Democratising classroom relations resulted in several restrictions being imposed on the teacher's controlling streak over classroom processes. Some areas in which the CLT reform targeted to constrain the actions of the teacher included:

- Minimising the frequency with which s(he) directs questions at individual learners in order to determine how well they have comprehended the subject matter.
- Reducing their role as a gatekeeper charged with marshalling participants into the discussion. The decision to participate in the discussion or not was now left with the individual learner to take. In the event the learner decides to contribute to a discussion, he/she was equally entitled to competing with both their peers as well as the teacher, for seizing the flow and making their point.

Notwithstanding the discussion on the reduced powers of the teacher, s(he) still retained a reasonable measure of control over classroom communication: he/she still sets parameters regarding the sort of talk considered pertinent and continued to design the work plan (sets up communicative activities), for instance.

3.2.5 Questioning Techniques

The discussion in sub-sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 have shown that there is a huge mismatch between classroom communication and ordinary day-to-day discourse, regarding the ways in which

the patterns of interaction and the modalities of taking part in interaction are conducted. The main factor in this disparity was identified as residing in the fact that the teacher is often the main instigator of classroom communication as well as the dominant contributor to the ensuing interaction. The domineering stature of the teacher in what at times also seems a one directional flow of communication is, primarily, established and sustained through the use of 'questions'. The questions posed by the teacher have been identified as serving two critical functions:

- Help gauge the extent the learners have internalised the subject matter
- Facilitates opportunity to persuade learners to take part in classroom interaction.

Despite what seems a crucial part played by questions in the instructional process, scholars (McCarthy, 1999; Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Soneye, 2010) have opined that often the criteria for designing such questions and the uses to which they are put in the classroom stand in sharp contrast to the ways in which the questions designed are made use of in everyday social communication. The overall effect of the disparity in the manner in which questions are crafted and utilised between the larger society and the classroom is that it makes classroom communication artificial. Some major ways that the questions asked in the classroom contribute towards making instructional communication pseudo include:

3.2.5.1 Criterion for asking questions

The majority of the questions the teacher poses in the classroom have been referred to as the 'display-type', meaning that they are low-order questions that enquire into issues for which the teacher already possess answers to. Such questions in many instances elicit simple or one-word responses from the learners. As such, learners are often placed under only little or no cognitive pressures in processing the answers to those questions. Consequently, the responses generated by these questions do very little to familiarise the learners with spontaneous conversations that are known to take place in ordinary social communication. In other words, by placing minimal mental pressures on the learners in processing the answers to them, these questions contribute very little towards improving (expanding) the learners' communicative competence. That is, display questions do not maximize interactions between learners with a view to increase their interlanguage. Rather, questions of this nature only manage to get learners to display their recall of facts about the grammatical, lexical and syntactical features of the TL. Because this modality of communicating employs the IRF interactional pattern, it in most cases arouses very brief answers from the learners. Typical responses usually consist of what Nunan (1987:142), had referred to as 'monosyllables and short phrases', and which in turn fail to generate an appreciable quantity and quality of genuine communication. In order to help redress the T & L problem wherein the language classroom is pseudo or non-communicative, CLT teaching urged educators to embrace the learner-centred approach to FL/SL tuition. This approach focuses on getting FL/SL instruction to closely emulate the

concreteness with which language is used in ordinary social communicative contexts. From this set goal, learner-centredness seemed to have appeal for educators as the best prospect for assisting to develop genuine communication skills and knowledge among classroom language learners. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 117), citing Halliday (1978), points out that a FL/SL teaching that is properly situated in social reality should exude what is termed the 'triple macro-functions of language':

- **Textual:** phonological, syntactic and semantic signals that enable an interactant to interpret and transmit a message.
- **Interpersonal:** sociolinguistic features of language necessary for establishing roles, relationships and responsibilities in a communicative situation.
- **Ideational:** comprising concepts and processes underlying natural, physical and social phenomena.

In line with these principles, CLT teaching hypothesises that in addition to designing activities that are relevant to the background experiences of the learners, language teaching should also be made increasingly genuine through frequent use of 'referential-type' or 'information' questions. Such questions are described by research studies (cf., for example, Lightbown & Spada, 2006) as open-ended, for which there is no one correct answer. Referential questions are considered advantageous to learners in that they are comparatively more sophisticated, in turn, requiring learners to produce longer tracts of language. In other words, through their characteristic

feature of open-endedness, referential questions possess the potential to stimulate increased quantities and better quality of genuine classroom discourse. An addendum is that they are also capable of promoting the learner's capacity to engage in critical thinking. Some of the most persuasive arguments for the preference of referential questions as an aid for developing interactive and unpredictable classroom communication are advanced by Nunan (1985), cited in Nunan (1987:142), and Lightbown and Spada (2006:130), respectively: "the most likely explanation for the success of referential questions is that they stimulate learners to engage their 'schematic knowledge representation' and "... are thought to require more cognitive processing and to generate more complex answers". Inter alia, it could be deduced commonly from the two ideas that since referential questions are designed at a relatively higher level of competence than display questions, they are better placed (more disposed) to engage the mental faculties of the learners in processing the responses.

3.2.5.2 Pointed questions

Another feature making classroom communication artificial is that most of the time, the questions that the teacher asks are directed to specific learners. Secondly, such questions often require on-spot-responses, thus placing the learners under immense compulsion to speak or write the TL. These practices are in direct contravention of the norms of natural discourse. One major way in which channelling questions directly to individual students is not consonant with the norms of ordinary conversations is that the questions are often intended to

facilitate practice with a select number of grammatical elements rather than engaging learners in conversational interaction (or a negotiation of meaning). In a conversational discourse also, interlocutors have the lee-way to choose whether or not they intend taking part in the discussion rather than appearing to be coerced to do so as is the case with classroom communication.

3.2.6 The choice of classroom activities or teaching materials

Section 3.2.5 of this chapter as well as chapter 2 (section 2.7.10) of this study underscored the importance of matching classroom language teaching materials to the background and past experiences of ELLs, as a recipe for helping them maximise learning. Among others, it could be deduced from this idea that selecting classroom activities is ideally preceded by an in-depth analysis of these learner's needs. In COLT, this statement entails that relevant activities should generally be purposeful, meaning that they must be related to real-world activities, since such materials are regarded as predisposed to implant knowledge and skills in the functional aspect of language use. Thus, activities are in essence, chosen paying attention to their relevance to the needs of the learners for real-language use. Suitable activities are thus considered to be those that the learner has the greatest likelihood to come across in his/her everyday life or is most probably disposed to perform using the TFL/ TSL .

Studies (cf., for example, Wilkins, 1976; Little, 1990; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Clarke, 1989), report that, like the case of English for specific purposes (ESP), the bulk of the teaching of

English to develop skills in its communicative functions, is premised on the use of 'authentic materials'. Clarke (1989:74) quoting Robinson (1980:35) affirms this idea: "The use of authentic data is seen as an essential component of an ESP course and also of any communicative syllabus".

A detailed discussion of the term 'authentic materials' is undertaken in section 3.3.2 of this chapter. Suffice to only mention here that in its original perspective, the concept 'authenticity' refers to a language tuition that relies heavily on, among others, materials which were initially designed for non-pedagogic purposes. The use of the truthful or 'real thing' was regarded as potentially better placed to serve as a preparatory tool for minimising the problem that the L2 learners reportedly encounter, especially comprehending messages during oral communication with native users of the TL. Wilkins (1976:79) refers to this problem:

Learners who may have followed conventional language courses and who may have developed a considerable classroom competence find that when they come into contact with native speakers of the language, they meet serious problems in comprehension. They may be able to perform adequately themselves in speech, but they frequently cannot understand what native speakers say to them.

Some scholars (cf. Clarke, 1989), echo the efficacy of replicating authentic materials in the language classroom as a means of providing meaningful context for learners to mimic and ultimately internalise knowledge and skills in the ordinary, everyday use of

the TSL, tantamount to those normally employed by native speakers. By virtue of providing ESL learners with a relevant meaningful platform to practice using the language with increasing accuracy and appropriateness, authentic materials are viewed as an almost inevitable vehicle for improving the learners' inter-language resulting ultimately, in boosting their confidence in using the language.

3.3. SOME ASPECTS OF A THEORY OF LEARNING FOR THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two of this study (i.e. sub-section 2.11, paragraph 2), argued that the CA does not have a strong and clearly-defined theory of teaching, as is custom with some more orthodox teaching methods. Instead, the approach aims at identifying and emphasising a set of principles and characteristics which are believed had, hitherto, not been assigned thorough and more convincing advocacy by the more pluralistic teaching methods. Thus, CLT teaching is meant to complement the major teaching methods in existence by offering techniques for buttressing and making language teaching more effective. Savignon (2007:207) perhaps had this idea in mind in describing CLT as: "... the identification of practices or strategies of teaching designed to reflect local needs and experiences". Despite seemingly not having a fully-fledged theory of teaching of its own, CLT is, nonetheless, not entirely devoid of a pedagogical framework in its pursuit of developing CC among learners. Deriving from the objective of seeking to develop learners' language proficiency through a

teaching practice that is practically oriented as well as being grounded in social reality, some researchers (Cook, 2008:250; Ellis, 2004:28; Savignon, 2002:3) concluded that CLT is underpinned by the 'functional' theories or 'functional competence' and the theory of 'communicative competence'. In particular, the weak form of CLT is inspired by the notional/functional theories. 'Notional/functional' syllabuses were introduced in order to reform the structural methods of language teaching (especially the Audio-Lingual method) by organising language learning around a specific context. The variety of functions that could be employed in order to typify each context was then identified as the bases for language learning. For example, a notion (context) such as the 'the railway station', could be accompanied by numerous language functions such as relaying complaints about the late departure of a scheduled train, for instance; making inquiries, such as about costs for travelling. On the other hand, the strong version of CLT derives its motivation from the theory of Task-based learning. This concept is premised on the thinking that knowledge and skills in the functional use of language could be efficiently developed by immersing learners in situations resembling real-life language uses. Consequently, it is recommended that since group discussions closely emulate social conversations (real-life communication), inculcating knowledge and skills in the functional use of language among learners should be primarily taught through engaging them in learner-centred, interactive small-group and pair work. These sessions are considered best suited in developing the learners' inter-language because communication takes place among equals or ensures greater symmetry of roles, to use words from Ellis (2005:252). Freedom from the teacher's

intimidation enables learners to scaffold each other's contributions in order to find a solution for the problem at hand.

Although CLT does not offer a concrete theoretical framework on how T & L ought to be conducted, in all, several fields have had some influence on its expressed objective of developing EFL/ESL communicative competence, including the theory of SLA. Particularly, the CA derives its influence from the two paradigms of social reconstruction (namely, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics) as well as from progressivism. CLT further borrowed the concept of 'communicative competence' from sociolinguistic as a guiding principle regarding 'what it means to know a language' and as a basis for designing the goals of SL teaching and learning. Psycholinguistics has benefitted CLT by enabling it to utilise the view that learning a foreign language has much in common with processes of acquiring the first language and that active involvement in using the target language to achieve real communicative ends makes an important contribution in developing proficiency in the target language (Mitchell, 1988). CLT has also taken the general concept of 'learner-centredness' from progressivism. In other words, from progressivism CLT has borrowed the concept 'learner autonomy' in the choice of classroom materials and participation in classroom discourse, as means of helping freeing students from the hitherto 'totalitarianism' imposed by the collectivist culture of teaching and learning (Cook, 2002). The CA thus specifically borrowed from SLA research the concept independent grammar (or language) assumption (IGA / ILA) which postulates that effective language teaching:

Liberates the teacher from contrived grammatical progressions and allows them to desist from correcting all the student's mistakes: learners need the freedom to construct language for themselves, even if this means making 'mistakes'. So the favoured techniques change the teacher's role to that of organiser and provider rather than director and controller. The teacher sets up the task or the information gap exercise and then lets the students get on with it, providing help but not control. The students do not have to produce near native sentences: it no longer matters if something the student says differs from what natives might say (Cook, 2002:215).

Other scholars (cf., for example, Reagan, 1999; Savignon, 2007; Girvan, 2000) have observed that in pursuit of its objective, CLT derives a theoretical inspiration from a multitude of disciplines. They cite specialisations such as philosophy, anthropology, cognitive psychology, linguistics and educational research. Primarily, CLT is described as having borrowed its theoretical perspective from humanistic-based studies. Savignon (2007:209) elucidates the concern of CLT teaching with human freedom.

A perusal of some of the major research works reveals that CLT is especially theoretically influenced by the 'social constructionist' perspective (Reagan, 1999, Girvan, 2000). Constructivism can be regarded as a theory on how to learn as opposed to a method of teaching.

The thrust of constructivism is to rebut the belief of traditional educators that effective learning is dominated by the teacher's direct delivery (transmission) of knowledge to learners. In its extreme form, constructivism advocates that the learner is the most central figure in the construction of classroom knowledge. But the moderate (social) form of constructivism maintains that knowledge creation is an active enterprise, jointly constructed by the teacher and the learners. Consequently, constructivism views knowledge as a cognitive construct. That is, the process of generating knowledge represents a mental engagement or active participation on the part of the learners. Reagan (1999:414) quotes Merrell (1992:102) to reaffirm the argument by constructivist thinkers that learners play a dominant role in generating knowledge:

Emphasis is placed on the individual learner's construction of his or her knowledge. Beyond this, though, constructivism assumes not only that learning is constructed, but also that the learning process is a personal and individual one, that learning is an active process, that learning is collaborative in nature, and that all learning is situated.

Contrary to the popular classification of constructivism as not being a teaching method, a compromise form of constructivism (comprising features of both the radical and social versions) had proposed eight principles, regarded by many as providing a useful theoretical guideline to effective teaching (see Reagan, 1999:416 for details). In a nutshell, the eight principles are anchored by the overall philosophy that whereas learning takes place in a social

matrix or is socially mitigated, to some extent it is personally created (cf. Tanaka, 2009:107; Savignon, 2005: 638; Tan, 2005:21; Reagan, 1999: 416). The eight features taken together had inspired a blend of learning referred to invariably by metaphors such as 'learning by doing', 'guided discovery', and 'structured induction', etc. The most outstanding attribute of this regime was that it sought to make the learning environment more learner-centred. Among others, this philosophy was aimed to be realized through a practically-oriented learning, as well as, grounding learning materials and activities in social reality. Reagan (1999: 417) elaborates this point:

Constructivist teaching typically involves more student-centred, active learning experiences, more student-student and student-teacher interaction, and more work with concrete materials and in solving realistic problems ... Nevertheless, students will create their own meanings based on the interaction of their prior knowledge with instruction, and the meanings they make may not be the ones the teacher had in mind, no matter how constructivist the instruction. ... Teachers create constructivist learning experiences for students based necessarily on what they, the teachers, find salient.

In line with some of the popular pedagogical objectives during the latter part of the twentieth century, such as learner autonomy and self-directed learning, CLT perhaps rightly borrowed the philosophy of learner centredness from constructivism. The learner-centred philosophy, therefore, helped in shaping the identified objective of CLT: assisting to improve the learners'

communicative competence through applying both the formal properties of the language and its sociolinguistic aspects. The learner-centred methodology is explained by Riley: “...the more decisions taken in collaboration or by the learner alone, the more learner-centred the approach in question”. (1987:82). CLT is learner-centred because of its insistence on learners taking greater responsibility in performing communicative tasks that simulate real-life situations outside the classroom. Modern learner-centred interactive techniques are recommended as ideally suited for promoting communicative abilities among classroom EFL/ESL learners, which are reminiscent of those normally employed by native users of English in the real world outside the classroom. In other words, in CLT contexts effective classroom language teaching techniques are considered to be those that are predisposed to giving learners the opportunity to enact meaningful activities, whose accomplishment involves immersing learners in linguistic skills and behaviours equivalent to those which are characteristic of the native speakers of the language. To that end, appropriate classroom activities have often been characterised as those requiring learners to use language spontaneously or involve them in genuine communication. In chapter 5, item 5.2.4.1, we referred to such activities as ‘the optimum interactional parameters’ or ‘the learning group ideal’. In all, suitable learning techniques (or activities) are taken to be those that afford learners the opportunity to interact with one another on subjects that are socially relevant, so as for learners to emulate the underlying ways in which native speakers of the target language make use of it to pursue real-life needs. In other words, the overall

thinking is that a meaning-centred technique is better placed to develop EFL/ESL communicative proficiency among learners. Thus, CLT sought to manipulate learner-centeredness through using pair and group work as means of exposing learners to the meaningful uses of the TFL/TSL use. In other words, frequent and meaningful use of the TL in a manner reminiscent of the ways in which it is normally employed by its native speakers (or 'time on task', to use a phrase by Cummins (2000)) is thus regarded as an essential stimulant for the learners' competent use of the second language. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 132) stresses the importance of adopting and maintaining a positive attitude toward using the target language.

Scholars such as Kahraman (2010:110), citing Ellis (2001) and Sharwood-Smith (1985), question the validity of the theory that mere maximum exposure to the TL will result in the development of communicative proficiency in it. This scholar argues that meaningful occurrence, coupled with a limited, judicious use of the L1 serve as the foundation for the development of the learner's cognitive capability in learning and using the target language.

Several strategies are employed in the learner-centred philosophy in order help make learning to become more 'interesting', 'enjoyable', and 'motivating' to undertake:

- Making learning practically oriented through participating in pair and group work, as well as role-playing.

- Injecting learners' background and experience in task-based activity and material.
- Requiring the learner to focus on both the language and the learning experience.

Learner-centred instruction is beneficial in assisting learners to “take responsibility for their own language skill development and to help them gain confidence in their ability to learn and use the language” (Savitri, 2009:135).

The introduction of autonomous classroom language learning is associated with serious hurdles, though. Giving learners some measure of autonomy over their learning challenges the teacher to possess additional knowledge and management skills in order to fit well into their new role as a facilitator (monitor) of student learning as Riley (1987: 83) also mentions.

The teacher's changed role is probably part of what Tickoo (1996), described as the most unusual feature that the CA had thrust on non-Western language learning environments. Owing to the peculiarities of the context of learning, the anticipated dominance of classroom discussion by learners is unlikely to happen in non-European setups as in Botswana where learners are accustomed to listening to their teachers as opposed to their peers. Cook (2000: 214) also alludes cultural barriers to CLT: “A communicative style with its emphasis on spontaneous production by the learner is unlikely to go down well with cultures that value silence and respect.”

Learners are also often hindered from participating actively in communicative tasks by a possible mismatch between their learning expectations and the preferred institutional curriculum and methodology choice. Researchers (Roberts, 2004; O'Neill, 2000) blame the problem on the fact that many times, curriculum reforms are foisted on stakeholders without being preceded by a proper needs assessment of the context of learning. In such scenarios, the introduction of an innovative reform primarily driven by mere philosophical or intuitive factors, and, political expediencies. Some scholars (Girvan, 2000:130) note that a failure on the part of an innovative reform to address the pragmatic and social factors facing the school system results in policy pronouncements assuming a 'symbolic' function. Another factor cited as giving rise to this conflict is the overarching influence that examinations exercise on the lives of the citizens (see, for example, Nkosana, 2006:55, for a description of the Chinese scenario). In many contexts, exams have been found to exert a huge negative wash-back effect on stakeholders to abandon methodological innovations. In language studies, for instance, several cases are reported in which the so-called 'examinations syndrome' (especially form-focused exams) are opined to have marginalised well-intentioned curriculum reforms, in preference of, for example, a teaching directed at addressing specific needs of learners, including preparing school leavers for passing university entry-level examinations and for taking up social roles. In scenarios such as these, only cosmetic changes (such as content of course books or documents) are likely to take place, whilst methodological change largely remains elusive.

From the foregoing therefore, CLT does not appear to offer a concrete theoretical framework on how effective T & L ought to be conducted. The nearest that comes to a theory of learning in the CLT paradigm, however, is the ‘functional view of language’. Reliant on the functional theory of language, as well as cognitive psychology, CLT had invoked the principle of learner-centredness, especially in its effort to make the connection between form-function more explicit. Deriving insights from the two theories, we can characterize CLT teaching as made up of the following techniques and activities:

3.3.2 Authentic materials

In sub-section 3.2.6, this study claimed that in its original sense, the term ‘authenticity of material’ referred to materials for which in their original conception, they were not intended for teaching purposes. Using real-life materials was thought to be among one of the important vehicles for helping impart the knowledge of the notions and functions of the target language to the learners. The inclusion of materials which emulate real-world activity or are imbued with ‘situational authenticity’, to borrow words from Ellis (2004: 6), has been described as one of the most effective recipes for reducing the artificial nature of classroom teaching. Owing to this perceived important role played by authentic materials, the communicative movement hypothesised that introducing real-world material, such as newspaper articles in language teaching would go a long way in revolutionising classroom communication. Particularly, the originators of the term ‘authenticity’ reasoned that the introduction of real-world materials in language teaching

classroom in their so-called ‘un-doctored’ state was an effective vehicle for helping classroom communication move closer to emulating the ways in which the TL is used by its native speakers (NS) to satisfy real-life, social communicative needs. The primary influence behind this measure is that employing authentic materials helps classroom communication to approximate real-life communication as is often conducted in naturalistic, everyday setups. The benefits associated with authentic materials in assisting to implant knowledge and skills in social conversational interactions are elucidated by Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Nunan (1991:279) also explains the role of authentic materials in CLT teaching as putting an “emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.” Acar (2010:14) stresses the important part such materials have in modelling language teaching and use on norms of the native speakers of the language.

In summary, the determination of the effectiveness of classroom language learning materials is guided by their potential in facilitating the direct teaching of learners about the natural uses of the target language. This objective is pursued through an exposure of learners to written materials and oral language production by native speakers of the TL.

Among the principal attributes of the native language speaker that CLT recommends for classroom L2 communication to replicate include spontaneous / unpredictable use of language. The objective of targeting the outcome of language instruction as the internalisation of the culture of the TL group is an indisputable

one. However, in the globalising world, the English language is gradually gaining wider acceptance as an international language. As a result of this development, research studies (cf. Savignon, 2007; Cook, 2008) indicate that acceptable norms_of English language usage could perhaps no longer be interpreted solely on account of the attributes exuded by native speakers of the language. That is, ELP could no longer continue to be measured solely against the dialect of English hitherto referred to as 'received pronunciation'.

In other words, the expanding role of English as an international language has given impetus to the debate on the relaxation of the power and appropriacy of modelling English language teaching and use on the norms of the native speakers of the language. In particular, it has heightened a call for recognition of the various regional dialects of English as standard languages (Englishes, to use the words of Kachru, 1992) whose norms and practices warrant pedagogical acknowledgement. Cook (2002) therefore rightly points out that the major contribution of CA to language teaching is centred on its views on developing learners' independent language system (i.e. interlanguage). The challenges posed by a redefinition of the ownership of the English language is perhaps addressed by an expanded (revised) concept of authenticity, that Clarke (1989), had identified as comprising three principles.

The three principles that the emerging concept of authenticity or using the real thing is constituted of are:

Text authenticity: derives from the original argument that undated material, embedded in the learners' areas of specialisation and initially not meant for teaching, "boosts students' motivation, thereby making learning better and faster" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 8).

Authenticity of task to text is premised on the assumption that utilising authentic texts in ESL classrooms is often incongruous with the functions to which such materials are usually put in normal real-life situations. The ritual wherein learners are always required to respond to several recall questions, subsequent to reading a comprehension text, is cited by many as one instance of an anomalous use of a written text (Clarke, 1989; Nunan, 1987).

Learners' response to materials as an underlying factor for authenticity is underpinned by the idea that authenticity is not an inherent feature of materials: it is, instead, cast upon them by the extent to which learners possess relevant background (discursive and social) to render an appropriate response.

All in all, advocates of the use of authentic materials maintain that due to their strong interrelatedness to the needs of the learners, such materials are capable of providing learners with motivation and purpose for learning the second or foreign language (see, for example, Clarke, 1989:73). In other words, the main argument is that real-life activities expose learners to the actual linguistic world outside the classroom and provide them with a drive for learning the foreign or second language.

The use of authentic materials is, however, not unaccompanied by challenges. One such problem is that using the real thing in the classroom might prove an expensive venture: meaning that

employing real-life materials such as articles from newspapers and television broadcasts could become a costly exercise for classroom teaching. In addition, it is complained that using teaching materials in their unedited or un-doctored form might well turn out to be linguistically difficult for learners to comprehend (Wilkins, 1976:79; Clarke, 1989:74). This is especially the case with young learners and non-native speakers of the foreign and second language at hand. A final query is that often it is very difficult to provide an authentic item whose appeal or relevance is of a cross-disciplinary nature — meaning, one which is capable of generating the type of discourse which is relevant to all learners irrespective of their backgrounds. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, and the fact that the use of authentic materials had not transformed the classroom into becoming the real-world, authentic materials continue to be recommended as a vehicle for boosting the status of classroom learning by assisting in making classroom communication emulate interactive and conversational discourse as it takes place in everyday social setups. In some cases, however, their inclusion is merely meant to create an ‘aura’ or ‘semblance’ of reality, to borrow words from Clarke (1989:84), whilst their actual exploitation remains largely rooted in traditional methods of language teaching.

3.3.3 Small-group work

CLT teaching involves learners in several forms of small group interaction as a means of making the language classroom ‘extrapolate’ social reality. As a result, learners are required to simulate communicative activities that are meaningfully related to their background and past experiences in the belief that this would

instil sufficient motivation into the learners to internalise the knowledge and skills in using the TL. Research studies (Savignon, 1991:268) remark that the knowledge generated that way possesses the greatest possibility of being transferred and applied to some other related situations of language use: "...involvement in communicative events is seen as central to language development". Roberts (2004:22) explains that teaching the FL / SL through the use of communicative activities makes learning equivalent to "interaction ... that learning involves doing". Ellis (2004:69) concurs: "tasks are viewed as devices for generating interaction involving L2 learners and through this interaction affecting the course of acquisition". Small-group work has an overall advantage of enabling learners to work out a solution to a problem through negotiating with their peers. Both Mitchell (1988:63) and Ellis (2004:213), citing Prabhu (1987), highlight the central benefits of pair and group work to the process of increasing the ELP of the learners.

Borrowing from Ellis (2004: 70-71), the concept 'negotiation of meaning' can be described as discursal strategies that interactants (especially native speakers) employ to resolve any problem of 'non-understanding' that could possibly take place during the course of a discussion. The process of negotiation naturally involves some form of dialogic or discourse. Via the medium of language and strategies, learners navigate a maze of diverse opinions prior to arriving at a common understanding. Disagreements are therefore a natural path to reaching this consensus as Chen and Hird (2006:76) also point out.

As critical instruments for problem-solving, group tasks employ language in a manner that strongly resembles the ways in which language is usually deployed to serve communicative needs in real-life contexts outside the classroom. During the course of negotiating, for example, learners are impressed upon to activate whatever language resources they have at their disposal to help establish human relationships, formulate opinions and attitudes before they could ultimately express a conclusion or consensus. Markee (1997:78), quoted in Ellis (2004:224), summarises the benefits of this interactive process:

There is some research which suggests that providing learners with the opportunity to negotiate leads to more successful task outcomes (for example, Gass and Varonis, 1994; Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki, 1994). One possible explanation is that negotiation increases the amount of time learners spend on a task.

Important communicative skills and techniques include:

- **Clarification request**, signalling that the utterance of the interactant has either been misunderstood or is incorrect in one way or the other, thus desiring to be repeated or reformulated. Examples could include phrases such as 'Pardon me...', repetition of the error as in 'what do you mean by...',
- **Metalinguistic feedback**, entailing comments, information and questions that address the errors encountered in the original statement made by the interlocutor. Usually, such information is advanced to solicit the correct form of the statement made by the communicator without providing an overt correction of their

initially erroneous utterance. An example could be: What are the endings we put on verbs when we talk about the past?

- **Elicitation**, referring to the three techniques the communicator uses to directly solicit the correct form from their interlocutor, namely: elicit completion of their own utterance, pose questions to seek correct forms, or ask the interactant to reformulate their own utterances.

- **Example: S: My father cleans the plate.**

T: Excuse me, he cleans the???

S: Plates.

- **Recast**, explained by Ellis (2004: 349), citing Long (1996: 436) is an utterance that rephrases a preceding utterance “by changing one or more of its sentence components (subject, verb or object) while still referring to its central meanings” .

According to Lightbown & Spada (2006: 126), recasting could involve an entire or partial reformulation of the interlocutor’s original utterance. These scholars also classify recasts as the most frequently used feedback type. Recasts are normally offered in veiled form, unaccompanied by any precursors or introductory cues to the erroneous form(s), such as, ‘use this word’, ‘you mean’, or ‘you should say’.

S: Why you don't like Marc?

T: Why don't you like Marc?

- **Repetition** entails re-uttering an erroneous statement made by the previous interlocutor. Specifically, a contributor to a negotiated meaning adjusts their intonation to highlight the erroneous point the other interactant had made. Research studies

(Lightbown & Spada, 2006:126) describe repetition as the 'least frequently used feedback type'.

The negotiation process is not without some hurdles, though. Mitchell (1988: 63) describes one chronic weakness of small group work, as a tool for the TFL / TSL skill acquisition:

Learners can never rely on each other as correct models of FL usage, nor support each others' attempts to speak as fluent speakers could. This form of organisation also seems to demand some special skills of the teacher; the capacity to monitor the level of activity in the class generally while interacting with a single pair or group and the capacity to distribute attention 'fairly' around the class, perhaps over a period of days, both seem necessary.

One major idea deductible from these words is that the process of small-group work, no doubt, stretches the linguistic resources and management skills of both the teacher and student participant in the FL/SL classroom communication.

3.3.3.1 Stages in effective group work

Chen & Hird (2006: 76), quoting Tucker (1965) outline four typical markers (phases) of successful group process:

- **Forming**

Entails diligence in assigning members to their respective groups so as to facilitate optimum functionality of such groups. In order to assist groups progress towards accomplishing a set objective, the teacher is recommended to become actively involved in group

formation. This intervention by the teacher is a helpful factor in distributing attributes (including gender, personality, ethnicity, ability — especially, communicative proficiency and talent) equitably across groups, leading to optimum communication.

- **Storming**

In this phase, groups engage in intense debate in order to help socialise individual members into the objectives and techniques for performing the task. Thus, this stage helps in clarifying the place or role of individual members in the task performance. This process in which members brainstorm so as to establish common ground for performing the task is described in the literature (cf., for example, Matsutov, 1996, as quoted in Ellis, 2004: 189) as ‘inter-subjectivity’. Inter-subjectivity involves exchanges among group members targeted at helping them agree on a similar goal(s), as well as procedures for performing the task. Linguists inclined towards socio-cultural theory maintain that inter-subjectivity is best established through a reliance on the learners’ mother tongue. Ellis (2004:188), however, laments the advocacy for using the learner’s L1 as a vehicle for assisting L2 learners to determine goals and procedures for undertaking a task. This reservation perhaps represents the sharpest contrast between SCT and CT which supports the idea that activities in L2 teaching ought, as much as possible, be carried out using the TL.

- **Norming**

The stage models participants into expectations associated with their assigned roles in a task. Overall, group members are

predisposed to perform *the responsibilities of their assigned roles more* efficiently. Here, the teacher helps orient task participants into the activities connected to their assigned roles. In other words, the stage contextualises members regarding the expectations of their assigned roles. For example, members might rehearse the linguistic resource and behavioural pattern typical of their assigned responsibilities. Through empowerment of group members with the responsibilities of their assigned roles, the stage thus motivates members into taking ownership of the task, leading to heightened possibility of efficient task enactment. ‘Meta-talk’ is another important criterion for empowering learners to assimilate the goals and procedures for participating in a task. The process consists of consultation among learners themselves, via the medium of their mother tongue.

- **Performing**

Enacting the task can be divided into three levels, namely, the phase preceding actual implementation of the responsibilities of the assigned roles. The stage is characterised by, among others, the selection of an activity or topic of discussion. In the relevant research (for example, Ellis, 2004) this act has been described as ‘designing an activity from a task’ (see pp. 4, 5 & 6, of the present chapter for discussion on the distinctions between the two terms). Scholars such as Little (1990:1) assert that successful language use is predicated on a pedagogical system which gives learners the widest possible autonomy in choosing learning activities. Giving learners freedom over the selection of classroom materials is seen as a means of helping energise (and sustain) their interests in the learning process though attempting to address their perceived

needs and wants. Despite the somewhat hyped debate about the need to give learners freedom to choose their own learning materials, evidence seems to prove that to some extent a collective decision between the teacher and learners in choosing a topic is an essential motivator for effective learning. Researchers (Kirkgoz, 2010; Soneye, 2010; Mitchell, 1988) clarify that partnership between the teacher and the learners in choosing the topic for classroom discussion is precipitated by the need to make the classroom activity more purposeful. These scholars stress that the teacher's superior language knowledge would assist learners to select an activity of a sufficient social (affective) and motivating nature. The central role played by the teacher in helping learners choose appropriate classroom learning activities is perhaps more persuasively portrayed by Larsen-Freeman (2000:127): "one of the teacher's major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication". Basing classroom activities in social reality is regarded as a critical factor in ensuring their potential for facilitating a more open-ended discussion and an extemporaneous use of language. Larsen-Freeman (2000: 127) confirms this claim: "The social content of the communicative event is essential in giving meaning to the utterances". Savignon (1978: 5) stresses the importance of paying greater attention to interactivity in the selection of classroom language teaching activity.

Enactment of the roles associated with the task

The actual implementation or performance of responsibilities and activities associated with some assigned roles is dependent on the observance of certain rules of operation. Overall, the concept 'primacy of speech or oral skills' as alluded to by Edwards and

Westgate (1987: 19) and Mitchell, (1988: 36) is the major factor underlying the preference or predominant role played by small-group work in COC. The movement for increased oral interaction in the language classroom precipitated a demand for increased learner-talking-time that characteristically embraces or simulates genuine communication. To help reflect this new and radical transformation wherein the teacher now traded off his/her hitherto domineering 'talk and chalk', in favour of a negotiated meaning from among the learners themselves, western small-group interactive techniques became the preferred norm for promoting the new order in classroom language teaching. Mitchell (1988:82) uses the descriptors 'supervisory or prompting role' to portray the new partnership between the teacher and the learners in constructing meaning through small-group discussion. Scholars, including O'Neill (2000); Mitchell, (1988); and Little (1990) stress that because learners would have been afforded autonomy to design tasks and activities that suit their own taste, the possibility that they will participate actively in task performance as well as using the TFL creatively, is bolstered.

Learners' participation in the choice of classroom language teaching activities is viewed as a stimulant for their heightened interest in the learning process. As a consequence of this aroused interest, it is expected that such learners would enact group work characterised by an intense involvement in communicative activities. To that end, a typical task performance is expected to portray learners talking animatedly to one another and listening attentively in order to comprehend the message, leaving their seats in order to perform tasks associated with the activity, and so on. The need for the learners to dominate classroom activities in a

communicative-oriented teaching environment is underlined by Tanaka (2009:112–113), citing Breen and Candlin (1980), and Richards and Rodgers (2001):

In CLT, learners are expected to be negotiators and active participants. Also, they are expected to interact more with each other than with the teacher and to express their own original thinking.

3.3.3.2 Strategies for ‘negotiating meaning’ or effective negotiation

The following are techniques or exemplars of learners’ active engagement with communicative tasks:

- **Enabling role:** entailing posing thought-provoking questions as well as contributions intended to break the ice or point attention of members to the objective of the task at hand.
- **Supporting:** assisting by supplying outstanding gestures, or providing peculiar (odd) expressions.
- **Sustaining:** an attribute normally associated with listening skills: entails agreeing with others’ contributions, or adding new dimensions (angles) to issues, with a view to helping discussions mature further.
- **Gear changing,** a contribution aimed at refocusing (tacking) discussion back to its original direction. Since the intervention is a remedial action triggered by the desire to prevent the discussion from veering off from its intended objective, a lot of tact is required to guard against the effort being misinterpreted as

'bludgeoning persuading', a terminology used in the literature to refer to attempts at chauvinistically stealing the limelight from other members.

- **Offering** is the practice of presenting unbiased ideas for possible consideration by group members. The art of initiating issues for an open scrutiny by the members is seen by some as the backbone of group processes. Related to this point is the issue of clarification request, entailing members asking contributors to offer additional information in order to create clarity and detail on the matter.
- **Synthesising** involves identifying points of common-ground leading to a consensus so that a conclusion could emerge.

In summary, displaying the above-referred attributes during small-group work delineates the language learner as ideally engaged in the negotiation of meaning. However, research studies (Coleman, 1987; Cook, 2008; Thompson, 1996), have opined that some teachers are resistant to engage their learners in group-work processes as described in COC, owing to several possible factors. The primary reason is that teachers might feel either ill-equipped to administer such small-group work, as it just saddles them with an untoward amount of extra responsibilities. Research (Mitchell, 1988) shows that even in situations where teachers regard themselves as professionally trained to teach CLT, some teachers have still demonstrated a reluctance to administer group-work as part of their classroom language teaching. This reservation is motivated by the fact that teachers have felt exposed to a number of insecurities during the time of the learners' engagement with communicative tasks: teachers have often felt under-employed, for example. Further, the noise emanating from participants'

encounters is construed to often call into question such teachers' management capabilities. This perceived chaos might even be misconstrued as representative of their abdication from responsibility. To some extent, though, the fears of these teachers are understandable: they derive their roots partially from the new descriptors for projecting the teachers' role in CLT teaching as 'manager of learning resources'; 'interested participant'; 'co-communicator' or 'facilitator of activities' , 'monitor', etc. (cf., among others, Larsen-Freeman, 2000:129–130; Savignon, 1978:5; Little, 1990:3; Coleman, 1987). Larsen-Freeman (2000:128) adds to the scepticism of these teachers on clarifying the role of the language teacher in COC as that of 'monitor': sets up communicative activities and 'does not always himself interact with students'. Further, during the time communicative activities are underway, the teacher acts as an advisor, attending to learners' queries and evaluating their performance. Edwards and Westgate (1987:11) perhaps provide greater clarity on the role of the teacher with respect to small group work:

Teachers should therefore, take care to act more as consultants and less often as transmitters of information, should recognize discussion as a proper form of 'real work' and should encourage pupils to generate their own questions and to explore alternative answers.

How then, should a language teacher conduct themselves during small-group work, in order to strike a balance between being seen not abdicating their responsibilities, whilst at the same time giving learners enough latitude to dominate classroom discourse?

3.3.3.3 Strategies for teacher self-deployment during learner-learner communicative activities

Despite our earlier observation that a truly communicative classroom is dominated by L-L discourse, there however still remain some areas of communication in which the teacher's performance continues to be expected as an important cog, complementing L-L interaction. Some of the important behaviours that the teacher is expected to exhibit in order to strengthen the learners' performance of communicative foreign language activities, include:

- **Nudging learners into participating**

Freshmen (and for that matter any other uninitiated participant) are reportedly reticent or extrovert and less inclined toward taking part in classroom discourse. Reluctance to contribute to communicative activities becomes a serious problem when such a contribution is made through the intermediary of a foreign language. In other words, spontaneous production is naturally accompanied by some degree of stage fright and the difficulty is exacerbated when such an extemporaneous performance is conducted in a language that the communicator does not command adequate proficiency. Whilst the individual learner enjoys the freedom of choosing whether or not to participate in a discussion, the teacher, nevertheless is entitled to use his / her position as an 'adult' and 'more proficient user' of the TFL to diplomatically nudge or prompt the persistently silent or withdrawn members of the group into making a contribution to

prevent their silence from impacting negatively on attempts at realising the group's set objective.

- **Correcting learners' errors**

The position of the teacher as an 'interested participant' or 'observer', described by, among others, Savignon (1978:5), supposedly entails resisting the temptation to get actively engaged in the discussion. Among the major exemplars of an avoidance of active involvement includes refraining from correcting language errors committed by learners. In other words, linguistic errors committed by learners are treated as part of the developmental phase in the process of the 'stabilisation' or 'cryogenation' of the learner's interlanguage, if we adopt the terminologies used by Brown (2007:270) and Brown (2000:231) respectively, in preference of the gradually obsolete word 'fossilization'. Thus, in the spirit of the two terms, an erroneous use of a linguistic form is regarded as a temporary phenomenon which has the potential to translate into correct norms at a certain stage. The two words are preferred over the term 'fossilization' which has an alternative meaning, implying a permanent adoption of an erroneous form into the learner's linguistic repertoire, as is often the case with the accent of many FL/SL users. In circumstances where it appears obviously necessary for the teacher to intervene in L-L discussion, the teacher should, however, initially await the learners' invitation or approval of the advisability of such an intervention prior to taking on the moment. Even after ascertaining that participants are encountering problems with a particular point of discussion, (and some have started looking up to him for a possible solution), the teacher's response to them should still remain calculated and

sophisticated. He/she should initially seek to confirm that the pool of aptitude in existence has been exhausted prior to acceding to a plea from a section of the learners to give his/ her opinion on the issue currently being discussed. Thus, the teacher should redirect the issue to some endowed members of the group, with the aim to use them as 'resource persons'. The teacher's intervention should only be permitted after it was thoroughly confirmed that a solution could not be found from the input of the group members themselves.

The practicability and effectiveness of redirecting a problematic discussion point to group members for their exploration and possible solution are better optimised if classes consist of mixed ability learners. Exploring a solution to the problem from among group members is also feasible if different levels and years of study (degree, diploma and certificate) are combined, as it is the case with many communication and study skills courses, including at the UB where "...all CSS programmes currently offered to first year students have a similar focus" (University of Botswana,, 2000: viii).

- **Directing attention to language form**

The immediate preceding subsection showed that although in COLT, L-L discourse is supposed to predominate, there are peculiar circumstances that the interjection of the teacher in these learner-learner exchanges is viewed as acceptable. This study has cited a number of sources showing that learners are primarily handicapped from achieving their intended communicative goals by an inadequate linguistic resource. Educators and linguists subscribing to this perspective stress that learners are often

incapacitated from making clear and objective descriptions of phenomena and objects by their inadequate repertoire of vocabulary, structural, grammatical and other aspects of language form. Some scholars, including Tough (1976, 1977), as cited in Edwards & Westgate (1987:171), however, maintain that the learner's parental background and socialisation process rather than their inadequate linguistic resource are important factors which directly influence the child's effectiveness in putting language to its communicative uses. These scholars argue that particularly the educational and occupational positions that the child's parents hold rather than the level of his linguistic resource, are important considerations for helping shape the ways in which the learner frames language to serve communicative purposes. Their thesis is that families differ in terms of their social status and in the manner in which they are amenable to treating children as 'conversational partners'. That, based on the dialogic experience that the child had accumulated in the home environment, he / she would be inclined to carry on with this experience into the school system.

Irrespective of the argument as to which of these two factors is a valid or real motivation for the development of the learners' capacity to use language for communicative purposes, the bottom line is that after it has been confirmed that the learners are faced with problems in deploying language to best describe the issue under review, the teacher should then have legitimate reason to directly enter learner-learner discussion. Thus in CLT the teacher is regarded as a 'resource person', in their quest to supply learners with the correct language item that appropriately describes the subject under review. Proponents of the CLT paradigm further

argue that supplying language forms that explicitly describe a subject matter is ideally to be done using the TL. In contrast to this perspective, scholars leaning towards the SCT or socio-affective sphere (cf., for example, Kirkgoz, 2010; Ellis, 2004; Pica, 2000) hold that occasionally the teacher could scaffold L-L exchanges through supplying suitable language forms in the learners' mother tongue in order to bring the cultural background of such learners into the classroom, thereby providing them with an affective stimulus or intrinsic motivation for learning the language. Pica (2000) highlights the specific sociocultural benefits of infusing the learner's native or community language into the SL / FL classroom learning.

In addition to group work, other agents of interactional pedagogy are:

3.3.4 Task-work

Some scholars (Savitri, 2009:131; Ellis, 2004:32; Cook, 2002:221) associate the emergence of task-work with task-based language teaching, whose background is strongly linked to the Indian, Bangalore project which was conducted by Prabhu in 1987. The project goal broadly centred on disproving the traditional thesis that the classroom is not capable of operating as a genuine and autonomous language learning and using situation. With specific reference to India, Ellis (2004: 32) explains that the Bangalore project was in response to the 'structural-oral-situation method', a predominant language teaching method in the country's southern secondary schools at the time. According to Ellis, this traditional (linguistic) syllabus consists of a graded list of grammatical structures (2004:207).

The introduction of task-work was motivated by a widely held view that classroom language learning was non-communicative or taught, to use the words of Savignon (1978:4), “book conversations as opposed to a practical knowledge of the language”.

Task-based teaching methods were introduced to redress these prescriptive and un-communicative techniques of the traditional, explicit form-focused pedagogy. The main benefit of tasks is that they asked learners to engage in activities simulating real-life situations or to practice naturalistic interactions. Ellis (2004:3) enunciates the intended goal or usefulness of task-work in developing conversational skills among learners:

...a ‘task’ requires the participants to function primarily as ‘language users’ in the sense that they must employ the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities. Thus, any learning that takes place is incidental. In contrast, an ‘exercise’ requires the participants to function primarily as ‘learners’; here learning is intentional.

Edwards & Westgate (1987:45) outline the defining characteristics of a contemporary or conversational classroom language learning environment:

- ‘talk between equals’, in as far as organising turns and determining topics are concerned
- no predetermined expert in the form of the teacher who is supposedly imbued with supreme knowledge
- without constraints to reach authoritatively determined conclusions

- unrehearsed intellectual adventure
- absence of a doorkeeper, with responsibility to examine the credentials of entrants into the flow of speculation

The concepts ‘Collaborative discourse’ and ‘Instructional conversation’ have been suggested to reflect the new or interactional relationship between the teacher and the learners advocated by CLT. Ellis (2004:182) uses the words collaborative dialogue to mean: “dialogue in which speakers are involved in problem solving and knowledge building”. Referring to instructional conversation, he says it is a:

... pedagogic interaction that is teacher-led and directed towards a curricula goal, for example, enabling a student to perform a structure that they have not yet internalized, but is conversational in nature, for example, it manifests equal turn-taking rights and is unpredictable.

The terms ‘tasks’ and ‘exercises’ demand learners to pay attention to ‘pragmatic meaning’ and ‘semantic meaning’, respectively, as this study has previously shown.

Task work (or ‘communal learning through tasks’, as it is referred to by Cook, 2008: 262), regards language learning as synonymous with communication. Hence, it is heavily dependent on ‘Western small-group interactive techniques’ as the primary agents for constructing social meaning. Chen & Hird (2006:70), citing Barnes & Todd (1977); Barnes (1992) and Mercer (1995) subscribe to this line of thinking:

“The use of group work has been increasingly advocated for in EFL settings. The value of small group work stemmed from demonstrations of what could be achieved in situations where English was a first language and informal talk between students was shown to be a means of students developing their understanding collaboratively.”

Richards (1999:4) refers to what seems one of the detailed and more convincing benefits of task-work for L2 learners:

“As students carry out communicative tasks, they engage in the process of negotiation of meaning, employing strategies such as comprehension checks, confirmation checks and clarification requests. This leads to a gradual modification of their language output which overtime takes on more and more target-like features.”

The numerous statements advanced above, make it safe to argue that owing to the compulsion it places on learners to activate whatever language resources they possess to negotiate meaning with their peers, task work is thus regarded by educators as amongst the most efficient instruments for developing fluency in the TL. In this connection, Ellis (2004:254), quoting Nunan (1989), argues that task-work is an effective means of performing one of the leading goals of task-based pedagogy, namely, ‘stretching learners’ inter-languages’. The value of task-work as a tool for impelling L2 learners to put their language resource to use is

probably, best summarised by Richards (1999:3) and Ellis (2004:9), respectively:

The belief that successful language learning depends upon immersing students on tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and to engage in naturalistic and meaningful communication is at the heart of much current thinking.

A task should incorporate some kind of 'gap', i.e. information, opinion, or reasoning gap. The gap motivates learners to use language in order to close it. The participants choose the linguistic and non-linguistic resources needed to complete the task. The work plan does not *specify* what language the task participants should use but rather allows them to choose the language needed to achieve the outcome of the task.

Task-based teaching has its disadvantages, though. Scholars such as Richards (1999) and Cook (2000) argue that through its advocacy for fluency or a conversational use of language as the major goal of language learning, task-work seems not concerned with the complex or deeper intellectual goal of language learning. Cook (2000:223) explicates the suspicion that making language learning practically oriented might lead to a watering down of its credentials as a school subject:

In schools some felt that it should no longer be part of the core academic curriculum but an optional extra, like keyboard skills, because it no longer contributed to the core educational values of the school. At universities in England if not elsewhere this has led to a down-valuing in terms of esteem. The consequence [was] that

language teaching is only about teaching people to order coffee in a bar in Paris. Task-based can be seen in a similar light: if its only expressed goals are fluency, accuracy and complexity in classroom tasks, how can this provide the general educational benefits and intellectual challenges of other subjects?

Richards, citing Higgins and Clifford (1992:61), alludes to the limitations of task-work as a vehicle for developing L2 proficiency among learners. This scholar specifically complains against the tendency in which educators hurriedly engages learners in the negotiation of meaning **while still possessing** limited language resource. In this connection, Richards remarks: “in task-work, communicative competence is [often used as] a term of communication in spite of language, rather than communication through language” (1999:4).

The importance of ascertaining whether or not learners possess a reasonable stock of language before engaging them in task-work is argued by Brown (2007:243):

In order to successfully accomplish a task, a learner needs to have sufficient organizational competence, illocutionary competence to convey intended meaning, strategic competence to compensate for un-foreseen difficulties, and then all the tools for discourse, pragmatics, and even nonverbal communicative ability.

Studies (Richards, 1999; Ellis, 2004) refer to the difficulties task work places on L2 learners by insisting that they communicate creatively in order to accomplish a ‘specified outcome’, irrespective of **the** inadequate language resources that such

learners might be possessing. Faced with this hurdle, L2 learners often resort to a number of less successful techniques, including, utilising 'minimalised' and / or 'lexicalised' language. The term 'minimalisation'; is referred to by some research studies (cf., for example, Soneye, 2010; Ellis, 2004, citing Seedhouse, 1999:254), to describe the tendency in which classroom language learners often resort to using some very brief utterances which do not consist of the full elements of a normal English sentence. The learners avoid framing their communication in complete sentences, preferring, instead to condense their utterances into one word or phrasal form. They regard this practice as a coping strategy against the cognitive and socio-cultural challenges likely to be exerted on their limited language resources, were they to utilise complex and longer stretches of language. Using highly compressed utterances implies that on several instances, learners do not really interact much among themselves: there is not a great deal of pragmatic meaning being negotiated. According to Ellis (2004:254), borrowing from Nunan (1989), over-reliance on display language as well as minimalised expressions is a handicapped communication strategy because they 'do not help to 'stretch' inter-languages of the learners, one of the stated goals of task-based pedagogy'. These minimalised and monosyllabic utterances of the learners do not adequately promote both qualitative and quantitative genuine communication.

Besides constraints imposed on learners by their limited linguistic resource, another main factor contributing towards making TBL a less effective organ for inoculating adequate English second language communicative proficiency, is often attributed to the

inherent 'nature of the task itself'. The complaint here is that since the 'task plan' is regarded as the primary determinant of the language skills acquisition process, the nature of this so-called 'task plan' often negatively impacts on the extent to which it is possible to promote genuine communication among classroom interactants. Ellis (2004: 251–252) cites Breen (1998) to elucidate the problem:

A common assumption of task-based teaching is that the texts, the discursive practices and the social practices of the classroom that are constructed by and through a task resemble those found in non-pedagogic discourse. ... As Breen points out, the 'texts' of lessons, i.e. the actual language produced by the participants, are typically, teacher-centred with learners 'not actually required to do much overt or explicit discursive work, while the 'discursive practices', i.e. the means by which the texts are produced, construct learners as primarily responsive and seemingly fairly passive participants in the discourse' and 'the social practices', i.e. the organizational and institutional circumstances that shape the texts and discursive practices, are directed at the avoidance of trouble.

From the words above, it could be deduced that contrary to the popular view depicting learners as unquestioning, compliant participants who naturally adhere or orient to the requirements of the 'task-plan', researchers in SCT (cf., Ellis, 2004:183–4, citing Lantolf (2000) and Leontief (1978) have advanced the concept 'activity theory', to dispute this line of thought: it is argued that since learners are people who have sociocultural experiences, they

often seek to draw from their schemata to influence their execution of classroom tasks. It is in particular posited that in many instances learners strive to influence or modify the procedures for implementing the task and the nature or strategies of the ensuing interaction, as well as the goals of the task. Ellis, therefore, describes the activities of the task plan as “socio-historically determined” (2004:187) to reflect that, since learners have heterogeneous biological and social characteristics, they are often bound to interpret the requirements of the task in varying ways and also utilise different operational strategies to work towards achieving the goals of the task at hand.

According to an SCT-motivated perspective, therefore, success in performing a task does not reside entirely on the propensity of the learner to offer a homogeneous and uncritical interpretation of the task plan: it is equally impelled by the extent to which the learners are capable of generating interaction between themselves and the task under review. To that end, common ground between SCT and the strong form of CLT is entailed in the fact that both maintain that in order for the contemporary EFL / ESL classroom T & L to succeed in democratising its discourse, and move towards achieving a truly ‘collaborative dialogue’ and ‘instructional conversation’, it is incumbent upon task designers to aim to cater for the probable motives underpinning the participation of learners in communicative activities when drawing up a task plan. That is, in order to help promote an egalitarian classroom discourse-type, educators should recognise learners as people with past world knowledge they could rely on in order to interpret a task plan.

In summary, task-work emerged as an agent for de-emphasising the theoretical, pseudo and decontextualised teaching associated with the traditional classroom. To that end, the main call of TBL is that the classroom should reflect in the most optimal manner, natural language use or real-life communication as it is practiced in everyday social conversations outside the classroom.

3. 3.5 Information-gap exercises

Cook (2008:248) describes this technique as the ‘mainstay’ of EFL/ESL teaching. Like role-plays, information-gap exercises have been found to be beneficial in helping learners imitate practices which occur in the real world outside the classroom. Through this technique, learners are introduced to two pieces of information based on the same phenomenon but depicting slightly different aspects of it, in order for them to experience an information gap to bridge. A picture showing two scenes taking place at the bridge of the *Nyamambisi* river (reflecting some minor differences) would be a possible example. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000:129), information-gap takes place when “one person in the exchange knows something the other person does not”. Pica (2000:13) describes the pedagogic value of information gap exercises, and the criterion for setting them up:

Each student is given a portion of the information needed to carry out the task, and is required to exchange this information with the other students in order to complete the task successfully. Such tasks thus provide a potential context for learners to focus their

attention on the form and meaning of the messages, as messages providers and as meaning comprehenders.

In other words, through information-gap activity, the teacher deliberately seeks to orchestrate a dialogue among learners by contriving or initiating two somewhat different versions of the same phenomenon or object. The value of such an activity is that it necessitates learners to talk to one another, so as to solve a communicative goal. By virtue of requiring learners to improvise dialogues, these activities compel learners to activate whatever language resources they have at their disposal in a bid to accomplish a communicative goal collaboratively. Larsen-Freeman (2000:126) describes the critical role played by information-gap activities in developing capacities to use language for communicative purposes, among learners:

Games are important because they have certain features in common with real communicative events. There is a purpose to the exchange. Also, the speaker receives immediate feedback from the listener on whether or not s(he) has successfully communicated. In this way they can negotiate meaning. Finally, having students to work in small groups maximizes the amount of communicative practice they receive.

Ellis (2004:214) affirms the leading part of this criterion, in promoting the functional and social uses of language:

... they did involve learners in other cognitive operations of value, i.e. determining criteria of success and relevancy, and were often

needed to provide the students with the body of information needed to carry out the reasoning task.

Information-gap activities are underscored by the belief that effective L2 learning is a direct result of meaningful use in the classroom. Consequently, just like task work, it is underpinned by the philosophy that language learning is equated to practicing communication in the classroom.

3.3.6 Role-Plays

The term pre-supposes that such activities require learners to assume particular roles and in pairs practice the linguistic functions associated with those roles in specific contexts. Typical instances include, for example, practicing how to use the language of a barman, a hotel clerk doing hotel bookings, staff at a bus or train station, or channelling a complaint with a relevant authority, etc. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000:134), the CA places a premium on role-plays because “they give the student the opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles”. Larsen-Freeman further explains the benefit of involving classroom learners in communicative activities reminiscent of real-life situations: “the social content of the communicative event is essential in giving meaning to the utterances” (2000:127). The main difference with the information-gap exercise is that in role-playing, the learner is required to improvise a conversation based on an authentic activity whereas, an information-gap exercise is designed around a pseudo or contrived event or phenomenon. Advocates of the efficacy of role-play exercises as instruments for language teaching (including

Clarke, 1989), reason that they ought to be premised on authentic materials, in order for them to generate enough interest from learners as well as their language skills application.

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that the traditional methods of classroom language teaching regarded the knowledge of the grammatical and structural aspects of TFL/TSL as a critical factor in developing communicative competence. In contrast, contemporary methods of language teaching, especially those ground in communicative approaches, viewed the knowledge of the systemic elements of the TFL/TSL as playing a secondary or complementary role to the knowledge of the functional and social aspects of language use. As a result, communicative approaches paid attention to teaching the individual elements of language forms only indirectly through communicative tasks, with the hope that only when the knowledge of the TL forms is developed in their context of use, will learners be in a position to put such forms to better or more appropriate instances of language use.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of the study, as stated in Chapter one, section 1.6, was to help improve the low ELP proficiency of Botswana's learners by investigating the possible causes of this unsatisfactory ESL communicative proficiency in the urban JSSs of Botswana.

By seeking to report on the interface between the theory and practice of CLT in Botswana's urban junior secondary schools (JSSs), a multiple method research design, comprising both a theoretical and empirical approach, was chosen. This research design sought to determine whether teachers in Botswana's JSSs understood and embraced CLT and whether real-life classroom language teaching is, indeed, representative of the principles and characteristics of CLT teaching .

A diversity of issues needed to be investigated, necessitating the use of a variety of research strategies, namely a literature survey, quantitative research in the form of a survey and qualitative research in the form of classroom observation. The multi-faceted nature of the problem under review made it appropriate to use more than one method of gathering data for the study. A mixture of approaches was selected because its various techniques

complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, leading to better validity and reliability of results.

As set out in Chapter one, the following set of research questions guided this research endeavour.

QUESTION I

What is the state of English Language Proficiency (ELP) in Botswana's Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs)?

- (i) How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs rate the English Language Proficiency (ELP) of their pupils?
- (ii) How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs characterise the English usage of their pupils?
- (iii) If teachers in Botswana's JSSs do not rate their pupils' ELP as adequate, what do they consider to be the main factors contributing to this state of affairs?

QUESTION II

How is CLT received in Botswana's JSSs?

- (i) Do teachers in Botswana's JSSs understand what is meant by CLT?
- (ii) How do teachers in Botswana's JSSs rate their professional preparedness to handle teaching in the CLT context?
- (iii) What is the extent of Botswana's JSSs ESL teachers' knowledge of CLT ?
- (iv) Do teachers in Botswana's JSSs take ownership of CLT?

QUESTION III

To what extent does classroom practice in Botswana's JSS's reflect CLT?

- (i) To what extent do the didactic methods used by the teachers Botswana's JSSs adhere to CLT theory?
- (ii) What didactic methods would best suit CLT in Botswana's JSSs?

4.1.2 Multiple method research (MMR)

The process in which a researcher uses a multiplicity of methods to source out and analyse data for a research study has been referred to by several researchers (cf. for example, Walsh, 2001; Denzin, 2012; Guion, *et al.* 2013) as 'triangulation'. Walsh (2001:69) describes the technique of triangulating as follows:

a kind of 'belt and braces' or insurance policy approach that is used to try to counter the weaknesses that exist in different methods of collection and analysis. ... Triangulation-by-method and triangulation-by-analysis enable the researcher to explore various aspects of the same topic, looking at it from different sides or angles. In terms that we have used previously, researchers can collect both quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Research investigations that use triangulation tend to be based on one main data collection method that is supplemented by others.

Guion, *et al.* (2013:113), quoting Thurmond (2001), list the specific value of triangulating research methods as increasing confidence in the research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem.

In summary, employing an MMR that infuses aspects of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to collecting and analysing data, enables the researcher to acquire a more widened scope and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The advantage described here is made possible by, among others, exploring the problem of the study from several theoretical perspectives, thereby ensuring a high degree of validation for the findings of the study. In other words, utilising numerous methods for collating research data as well as analysing its findings has the advantage of enabling the various techniques to complement each others' strengths while at the same time making up for their inherent weaknesses.

A detailed description of the main research methods used by this study is given below

4.2 LITERATURE SURVEY

As part of this study, an extensive literature review was conducted. Generally, undertaking a broad literature

review in the subject matter was considered advantageous to the researcher in the following ways:

- It provided background information to the numerous research methodologies that others have utilised in the umbrella field of social sciences (and the specific area of language education), so as to assist to broaden his knowledge and skill-base in a quest to find answers to comparable research curiosities.
- It familiarised him with a wide variety of research methodologies, thereby enriching his choice of research design methods and instruments that will assist in finding answers to his own research questions.

The review of the relevant literature in the subject area was an important aspect of this study, since it helped to situate the research within a particular field. To that end, the study of the literature on an EFL/ESL teaching and learning oriented towards the CA resulted in two chapters: chapter two: Theoretical perspectives on CLT teaching, and chapter three: Major techniques for a communicative-oriented T& L.

The value of a theoretical framework to a study of this nature need not be overstated. Suffice to mention here, however, that one of the benefits of providing an in-depth theoretical platform is engrained in its practicality, as described by some scholars (Denzin, 2012) of serving as a 'critical interpretive' and analytical tool for the findings of a study of the phenomenon under review.

Lastly: the literature review was invaluable in providing an answer to the question: “What didactic methods would best suit CLT in Botswana’s JSSs?”. The answer to this question will be found in chapter three, where the theoretical aspects to this question are addressed as well as in chapter 6, where theory and practice are contextualised.

Due to the multi-faceted nature of the issues involved, as has been described above, and in order to find answers to the research questions as phrased in 4.1.2 above, the literature survey was followed by quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis .

4. 3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The quantitative or positivistic design method has been described by researchers (Walsh, 2001; Mouton, 2001; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) as referring to an approach that is used to elicit numerical data that can be analysed statistically. Gall, *et al* (2003:634), describes ‘quantitative or positivist’ research as follows:

“Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings. The dominant methodology is to describe and explain features of this reality by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and by subjecting these data to statistical analysis.”

The most widely adopted instrument for collating and analysing quantitative data is the questionnaire or the survey technique. Walsh (2001:69) refers to the value of a questionnaire as entailed in enabling the learner to decipher “patterns and relationships about which [they] could only generalize from a large number of respondents”. Quantification of data, according to some scholars (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989:115; Mouton, 2001:153), is beneficial in guaranteeing that the research results are ‘generalized to a large population’. Harklau (2005:177) agrees: “quantitative data may be believed more valid and generalizable”.

This study relied on the questionnaire as a means of pooling the teachers’ opinions and perceptions regarding the state of their understanding of CLT and the extent to which they believed that they have applied communicative theories in their language classrooms. The questionnaire was preferred primarily because of its agility in surveying a representative sample of the target population in which the study was interested. Second, a questionnaire can be posted to the respondents, they can complete it at their convenient time free from possible intimidation and or pressure exerted by the presence of the interlocutor during a face-to-face interaction.

The main disadvantage associated with the use of the questionnaire is that its entries are often consisting of

close-ended questions, rating scales and forced choices. Thus, they may inhibit respondents from offering their open and authentic opinions on the subject matter. For a simple and detailed outline of the pros and cons of the questionnaire as a data collection instrument, the table below was extracted from Walsh, (2001:64).

Table 4A: Advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire

Advantages	Limitations
They can offer a cheap and efficient way of collecting data.	It can be difficult to get people to complete. The response rate of postal questionnaires is particularly low.
They can collect a large amount of data relatively quickly.	Respondents often have limited choices of answers as they can only provide responses to a restricted range of questions or scales. They may not reveal or express their real views or attitudes if they don't match the 'forced choices'. the
They are relatively reliable as a method of data collection.	Unless the questionnaire is conducted face-to-face, the researcher can't be sure of the true identity of the respondent.
A comparison of the respondents' answers is possible.	If the questionnaire is posted, the researcher can't be sure that respondents have understood the questions and can't use follow-up questions to explore unusual answers.

In view of the characteristics of the questionnaire, as discussed above, especially its ability to ensure validity and reliability of the outcome of a research project, this study opted to use it as one of the instruments for data

collecting. Of the 29 questions comprising this questionnaire, 28 used a Likert scale, requiring teachers to choose their preferred responses from a range of between 3–7 options) and a dichotomous scale that asked teachers to choose their answers from two possible options (YES, NO), and in some cases, a third option (UNCERTAIN). These 28 questions, therefore, were either in the form of varying scales from which respondents have to pool their options or they took the form of forced answers. Only one question (i.e. 18) was open-ended, requiring respondents to describe behaviour, attitude, and knowledge, etc. about CLT.

The questions that constituted the questionnaire were categorised into the following sub-topics:

- The teachers' demographic profiles
- The ESL communicative proficiency of secondary school learners.
- The CLT curriculum
- Respondents' knowledge of CLT
- Teaching and assessment methods
- Teacher preparedness

Initially, it was planned to administer the questionnaire for the teachers in a block format. As a result, the researcher had intended holding sessions with all the English language teachers per school, for the purpose of completing the questionnaires en masse. This strategy was considered advantageous in the sense that it could enable the teachers

opportunity to make on-the-spot follow-ups on issues they might need clarity. However, upon visiting the schools, tight teaching schedules interfered with the plan, as teachers could not find common time within which to complete the questionnaire as a group. Owing to this challenge, the researcher compromised, leaving copies of the questionnaires with heads of English language departments for distribution to staff for self-completion at their own convenient time. The researcher then undertook follow-up visits at a later date for the sole purpose of collecting the completed questionnaires.

Notwithstanding a relatively lengthy questionnaire (it comprised 29 questions, and was four pages long), overall, the document appears to have been well-received by the teachers. As it is shown in chapter five (item 5.1.1), 85% of the target English language teachers responded to this questionnaire. Twenty-one of the thirty five participating schools recorded 100 % response rate to the questionnaire completion task. And for many schools, the entire set of questions was responded to. To offset this problem therefore, a multiple approach to research design was needed to reinforce the quantitative approach.

4.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In view of the structured nature of questionnaires, it was not always possible for the respondents to make follow-ups or expand on their answers. Gall, *et al.* (2003:267)

allude to the restrictive nature or scope of quantitative-based instruments for collecting data:

... data collection in quantitative research generally is driven by a priori hypotheses, questions or objectives. ... In quantitative research, observers tend to concentrate on specific aspects of behavior and to ignore context.

Wragg, *et al.* (1987:708) describes the most serious weakness of the quantitative approaches to research as the oversimplification of human communication by concentrating on frequency of occurrence, rather than concentrating on teacher and pupils' reasons for behaving the way they did. Wragg, *et al.* (1987:708) states;

Qualitative and ethnographic research accuses these investigators of generalizing from the specific or using phrases beginning "many teachers"... or "most pupils"..., without rigorously collected evidence to support such assertions.

In relation to the focus of this study, responses to close-ended questionnaires were inadequate to satisfactorily answer the research questions. Since the application of CLT theory occurs in the context of real-life classroom teaching and learning, a naturalistic study of an actual classroom teaching situation in Botswana's JSSs was undertaken in order to gain a broad and in-depth insight of classroom practices.

Owing to the requirement that a phenomenon must be observed and analysed in its naturally occurring condition, the qualitative approach is considered one of the best tools for studying a subject in a deepened, objective and authentic manner. Gall, *et al.* (2003:634) define 'qualitative or post-positivist research':

Inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction.

This researcher chose to model the investigation of this phenomenon on an ethnographic form of qualitative studies in addition to a quantitative research design method that has been described earlier on. A description of the principles and practices of an ethnographic approach to classroom research was engaged in borrowing a leaf from Lightbown and Spada (2006:133). The two scholars observe that ethnographic studies are broad-based, aimed at studying a phenomenon in its totality (including how its social, cultural, and political realities influence the learners' cognitive, linguistic and social development). Taking into account the umbrella nature of this description of the term ethnography and the limitations it imposes on the present

study, this researcher adopted what could be safely labeled a 'mini ethnographic approach' to research design as a guideline for reviewing the manner in which CLT was introduced in ESL teaching and learning in Botswana. This approach which is characterised by a primary focus on pedagogical issues, is tantamount to what Harklau (2005:178) called the 'Ethnography of teaching and Learning'. An alternative label for this type of research design is referred to by among other scholars, Gall, *et al.* (2003:629) as "Microethnography", denoting an anthropological investigation **into** "small cultural units, such as sub-cultures that exist within a country".

The paramount feature of ethnographic methodology has been identified by many scholars (Lightbown & Spada, 2006: 133; Gall, *et al.* (2003:267) by the fact that 'observation' ranks second "as the major technique for collating data for a qualitative research, relative to interviews and analysis of documents". Gall, *et al.* (2003:267) list as important principles of ethnographic research the fact that the focus of observation is wider and that observers look at behavior and its environmental setting from a holistic perspective. They also emphasise the critical complementary role played by the observation technique in unearthing the hidden features of a phenomenon. Researchers are thus able to provide a more complete description of phenomena. In addition, data thus gathered provide an alternate source for verifying the

information obtained by other methods through the process of triangulation.

The following quote by Harklau (2005:180) also makes clear the ethnographic method:

The hallmark of ethnographic methodology is participants observation. This traditionally has meant residing or spending considerable lengths of time interacting with people in everyday naturalistic settings.

According to many researchers (for example, Wragg, 1987; Harklau, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006), ethnographic research credits the bulk of its origin from anthropological studies. As a result, ethnographically inclined classroom research (just like studies in anthropology) thrive on a verbatim audio and video recordings of events, behaviours and interactions as are taking place among participants. The importance of a video-recording as one of the data collection methods is captured by Gall, *et al.* (2003:273): “At their best, visual records illuminate important aspects of culture and social interactions”. Ethnography of classroom research also consider detailed field notes as forming an important part of characterising the attributes of the phenomenon being studied.

According to numerous handbooks in the subject area (Gall, *et al.* 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006) an ‘objective

narrative description' is recommended amongst the most effective techniques for reporting the findings of a qualitative ethnographic investigation. Through this technique, the researcher is provided a platform to authentically explain the events, practices and interactions that have been experienced taking place consequent to the researcher's natural observation of a phenomenon. Walsh (2001) emphasizes the importance of naturalistic approaches in investigating and recording people's personal experiences.

There are several shortcomings associated with the use of qualitative ethnographic approaches, though, such as a heavy dependence on the researcher's communicative skills. In particular, the researcher's descriptive interpretive and reflective skills are called into play in documenting / recording the activities of the research project, particularly its methodologies and findings. A failure to command adequate linguistic proficiency by the researcher, therefore, implies dire consequences. For example, the researcher's weak communicative skills could result in the processes and findings of the project being only vaguely or ambiguously communicated.

Making major use of audio and video recordings has also been described by scholars such as Gall (2003:273) as associated with weaknesses: "...documentary-style visual records , particularly those of the early twentieth century anthropologists, while seemingly neutral, reified the

relationships of superiority and inferiority endemic in colonialism”. The problem of including unrelated activities as part of these recordings, mainly ‘off-task’ talking or ‘background noise’ have also been identified as possible challenges.

In order to help investigate the extent to which the English language teaching taking place in the classrooms in Botswana was being conducted in compliance or otherwise with the characteristics and principles of CLT teaching, this researcher resolved to undertake a mini ethnographic investigation of ESL teaching in the environment. Consequently, the researcher participated in a personal observation of ESL lessons as were being conducted in naturalistic classroom environments in Botswana. In line with principles of ethnography of teaching and learning, the researcher adopted the position of ‘detached participant’, whose main role was to document events, activities or processes as they were unfolding during the lessons.

Documenting activities, events and interactions taking place between the teacher and the learners was done aided by a specific theory of teaching. Especially, the researcher opted to rely on the COLT classroom language teaching observational scheme as has been described by Lightbown and Spada (2006:114), citing Spada and Frohlich (1995). The COLT observational scheme is modeled on the qualitative ethnography of classroom teaching theory. It

approaches classroom lesson analysis from two angles:

- Part A or general premise — reviewing teaching in terms of content (opportunity for learners to choose the topic for discussion), focus (whether on language form or meaning), and organisation of activity types (whether pedagogic activities are learner or teacher-centred).
- Part B — description of the particular elements of language that characterise the interactions between the teacher and their learners, including: volume of language produced, whether the language produced is spontaneous or a restricted code, the nature of questions asked by the teacher, and the teachers' response to errors committed by learners.

This study, however, did not intend to investigate and report on these issues in a preplanned manner. Instead, the researcher entered classroom sessions as a neutral observer of their activities. In other words, the researcher adopted the status described by Gall, Borg & Gall (2003:268) as:

... **observer-participant role**, [in which] the researcher acts primarily as an observer, entering the setting only to gather data and interacting only casually and non-directly with individuals or groups while engaged in observation.

4.5 SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE AND RESEARCH GROUP

Initially, this study planned to use a sampling frame comprising JSSs situated in both urban and peri-urban areas. However, after some preliminary work it was realised that a sample population of this nature was too large. It was also not economically viable. Initially, out of a total 473 urban and peri-urban junior secondary school teachers, 337 were intended for sampling, representing 71% of the sample frame. Due to financial and time constraints as well as other logistical challenges, a decision was taken to concentrate the focus of the study solely on the urban JSSs of Botswana and to include the entire cohort of ESL teachers as the research population for this study. This meant a target population of 153 ESL teachers in the 34 public junior secondary schools based in Botswana's urban areas.

The choice of JSSs and not Senior Secondary Schools as research site is based on the view that for an educational reform to be successful or meaningful, it should originate from the 'root' of the system. The researcher therefore focused on language teaching at junior secondary education level on the assumption that developing a strong theoretical and practical understanding of CLT teaching at this level will have some osmotic effect, enabling CLT innovation to be effectively infused at senior secondary level as well, since the CLT innovation is being

introduced simultaneously at both levels of the education system.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher subscribes to a broad politico-geographical division of Botswana into two: the northern and southern parts of the Dibete cordon fence. In line with this division, the schools found in the northern part of the country are located in the city of Francistown as well as the towns of Sowa, Selebi Phikwe, and Orapa. In the Southern part, the schools are found in the capital city, Gaborone, and the towns of Lobatse and Jwaneng.

The rationale for choosing urban JSSs as the research site, is that English is not used to perform the same functions in peri-urban areas as in urban areas. The use of English in per-urban areas is largely limited to the classroom. English is viewed more as a foreign than a second language. In this study ESL is understood as a language that is used widely in government, industry, commerce and education, and to a large measure also frequently in social situations. Lucantoni (2002:3), citing UCLES IGCSE ESL 2003 examination captures this perspective of the term ESL: “English as a Second Language is based on the widespread use of English as the medium of instruction and as the language of commerce or the environment”.

4.6 SAMPLE SELECTION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Sampling has been defined by Walsh (2001:42) as “...a group of people or number of items out of the whole population, to represent it”. Gall, *et al.* (2003:235–6) adds: “...selecting members of the research sample from a defined population, usually with the intent that the sample represent that population.” Choosing a sample population is a critical element of researches of which the investigations are centred on the human subject. This chapter has also shown (item 4.3) that an appropriate (or representative) sample serves as the basis for replicating or generalising the results of a study on related investigations. Several scholars, including Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and Walsh (2001) have identified two techniques of choosing a research sample, namely:

4.6.1 Probability method

Through this technique, the elements being studied are taken to possess almost identical features. As a result, any one of the subjects stands an equal opportunity to be randomly selected to participate as the subject of an investigation. That is, there is no rigid factor for a preference of an object A over object B, for example, because the selection criterion is dependent on chance. An important challenge, however, is that the researcher is required to conduct a precise quantification of the research population prior to performing a random selection of the sample. The technique of simple random sampling, whilst

arguably meant to minimise the extent of subjectivity that the individual researcher's choice is destined to pose, is nonetheless two-pronged: by picking the subjects to be studied by chance, the possibility of choosing elements that do not optimally or ideally typify the phenomenon under review is created. To minimise this negativity, researchers have suggested a second version of random sampling, 'stratified random sampling', in which the subjects are clustered into small units or groups. Samples are pooled from each of these groups to guarantee that they are optimally representative.

4.6.2 Purposive method

In this modality, the possibility of any one member of the sample frame being selected to participate as part of the group to be studied is uneven. That is, a number of variables (including age, level of education, ethnicity, etc.) are taken into consideration as the basis for determining an individual member's entitlement to form part of the group planned to be studied. Since the individual members of the research population are selected on account of their personal attributes, members possess what has been labeled as 'unequal' chances of being selected to take part in the research project. Through its sampling technique, referred to as 'quota sampling' researchers operating within this sample technique premise that there is no strong justification for a rigid sample frame. What the researcher mainly needs to do is simply infer the probable research population. Walsh

(2001:46) illustrates how the quota sampling technique operates (subsequent to the researcher's prediction of the sample frame) resulting in members of the research population having an unequal chance of being selected to participate in a research study:

The researcher must identify the key criteria that all participants need to meet and then approach people randomly to ask whether they meet the criteria and recruit a quota of this group for research purposes. Whilst the quota for a particular group has been filled, the researcher won't seek or include any more people from that group.

In selecting the teachers to form a sample population for this study, the two sets of sampling techniques mentioned above were considered appropriate in various ways. The choice of a sample population for the task of completing a quantitative survey questionnaire, for example, was primarily conducted through a simple random selection technique. This selection criterion was underlined by the philosophy that all the members of the research population were qualified teachers: they possess either a diploma or a degree in the specialist subject (English language), plus a certificate or a diploma in education. Secondly, all the teachers were perceived to have been committed by policy to 'teach communicatively'. Thus a random picking of any one of those teachers was considered an appropriate yardstick for soliciting a representative view regarding the extent to which Botswana's language teachers perceive

themselves to have understood, embraced and applied communicative strategies in their ESL teaching.

4.6.3 Research group

4.6.3.1 Questionnaire

Research frame: 153 teachers from 32 JSSs.

Originally, 34 JSS's schools were targeted, as explained on page 229. Of these schools, one was used in the pilot study and 1 school declined to participate.

Bearing in mind the fact that the size of the research frame (153) is not very large, all the language teachers for the 32 participating JSSs were classified as eligible to constitute a representative sample population for this study, irrespective of their other individual characteristics.

Number of respondents: 135.

4.6.3.2 Classroom observation

17 teachers were observed while teaching, from a total target population of 135. These 17 teachers represent 12.56% of the research group of 135 teachers.

Choosing a research sample for the qualitative study was based on the same technique of sampling as that we have just explained above in section 4.6. To that end, in choosing the initial seventeen ESL teachers whose lessons were observed, the technique of simple random sampling was applied.

However, in choosing the final five sets of lessons to be transcribed and discussed in order to exemplify the degree to which they have converged (or otherwise) with the characteristics and tenets of the CLT approach, **purposive sampling** was used. Purposive sampling is also called non-probability sampling. In this kind of sampling, the researcher, because of factors like money and time constraints, may choose, based on his or her own knowledge of the data that was collected, to choose a particular, smaller sample of the data to analyse (Compare Krathwohl, 1998, May, 2001 and Robson (2002). This route was taken in the present study.

Taking into account the limited variations in the teachers' profile in terms of their nationality and educational background (as is noted in chapter five of this study), a narrower sample population was preferred. The preference of a small sample size was further informed, among others, by the need to guard against possible repetition of data, leading to audience monotony. Irrespective of the length of time allocated to recording each teaching session, the criteria for choosing and reviewing (observing) the subjects were uniform: each teacher was randomly selected, followed by a one-off observation of their lesson.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

4.7.1 Quantitative data

Questionnaires were handed out to 153 ESL teachers at 32 JSSs. They were completed by the staff at their leisure and the completed questionnaires were collected at a later date. 135 completed questionnaires were collected.

4.7.2 Qualitative data

Lessons conducted by 17 ESL teachers teaching at some of the 32 JSSs were observed by the researcher whilst attending these lessons. The lessons were also video-recorded. The lessons were subsequently transcribed.

Five lessons of the original seventeen were then selected to form part of the sample population to be studied in-depth, namely:

Lesson 01: The progressive tense

Lesson 02: Prepositions

Lesson 04: Punctuation marks

Lesson 05: Spelling

Lesson 08: Exploration of a street scene

Bearing in mind constraints imposed by limited financial resources, as well as insufficient time, this study projected to record a minimum twenty (20) minutes, i.e. half a lesson or a maximum of forty (40) minutes (a full lesson). But being alive to the fact that some lessons might contain very little of the features of CLT & L (whilst others could very well contain a majority of those features) in rare occasions,

some recordings also strived to cover double lessons (i.e. 80 minutes). In addition, the researcher also took down notes for his personal consumption. These notes were helpful in shedding insights into events and interactions whose meanings would otherwise have been too subtle to be deciphered from a video recording.

4.8 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.8.1 Quantitative Data

In Chapter five, numerical data obtained from the questionnaires are presented in the form of numbers and percentage in order to determine the rate of frequencies of each option chosen for a specific questionnaire question. In addition, graphs and tables are used to visually present the data.

After presentation of the data, the data was analysed against the background of CLT theory. This analysis is presented as a descriptive narrative. Due to the restrictive nature of closed questions and the often inconsistent nature of the responses to various aspects of the questionnaire, the researcher had to apply his own experience and knowledge in order to place the quantitative data in context. The study therefore introduced speculative commentary based on theoretical and practical issues from past research in the analysis section of Chapter five.

4.8.2 Qualitative data

Presentation and analysis of data obtained through classroom observation was undertaken in Chapter six. The transcribed texts of five of the video recorded ESL lessons were used as the basis for an objective narrative description. The transcript data was coded and discussed under specific headings. As with the quantitative data, the analysis was informed by the theoretical framework of this study as well as by other research undertaken in the field of ESL T & L.

4.9 THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

The Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria assisted in the quantitative part of the study. A statistician, Ms. Jacqui Sommerville, and a lecturer, Dr. Crafford, were assigned to work with the study fellow in designing and piloting a draft questionnaire. Piloting or pre-testing the questionnaire was seen as a means of minimising inherent structural weaknesses found on the document. For the study under review, two schools were identified for this purpose, namely, Bokamoso JSS in Gaborone and Tsodilo JSS in Maun. To facilitate this task, the Department of Statistics helped the researcher to convert his initially long and primarily qualitatively-designed questionnaire into a largely close-ended quantitative data collection instrument. The draft questionnaire was transformed from an initial ten-page document, comprising thirty-nine largely qualitative questions, to a short version — a four-page

document made up of twenty-nine mainly quantitative questions.

After the final version of the questionnaire was administered, the Department of Statistics offered further help in recording the information that was collated in readiness for analysis. After collecting all the completed questionnaires, the researcher was required to code all the responses. Each of the 32 participating JSSs was assigned a unique number, with an appropriate number written in the V2 box for each of the teachers at that school. For the open-ended questions, the researcher made a list of all the components that existed or were mentioned by the teachers. After the task of coding the questionnaire responses was completed, the Department of Statistics continued assisting the researcher by offering its data capturers to type the response codes into the computer. Verification that the data captured corresponds to the responses on the questionnaire, thus in fact paved the way for an analysis of the data.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The data for the empirical part of this study was obtained from human subjects. It is therefore important to pay sufficient attention to certain 'ethical' or moral issues in order for the study to command sufficient credibility. Walsh (2001:70) describes research ethics as pertaining to the "standard of behavior and the practical procedures that researchers are expected to follow". Borrowing from

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and Walsh, (2001) four components can be identified as making up the realm of ethical issues:

- Honesty and integrity, a requirement that impresses upon researchers to be open and truthful with regard to their methods and professional behaviour.
- Guaranteeing rights — ensuring that data obtained from the subjects of the research is accorded privacy and confidentiality from disclosure to the third party.
- Protection from harm — avoiding misrepresentation of information from sources.
- Positive contribution — the need to ensure that the research in question is going to result in increased scholarship and further development of the human species.

Taking all this into consideration, ethical clearance was applied for and obtained from the University of Pretoria.

All respondents that took part in this research gave their written informed consent. Absolute anonymity and confidentiality was assured.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1. DATA PRESENTATION

The primary objective of this chapter is to present and discuss the responses of ESL teachers for Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs) in Botswana that are located in the urban areas to a survey questionnaire. These reactions are in terms of teachers' knowledge of the CA to ESL teaching, as well as their attitudes, opinions, or perceptions towards an ESL teaching modelled on the communicative style.

5.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Number of participating teachers: 135 teachers of English language in Botswana's urban JSSs, from a possible research population of 158 (85%) participated in the study. Participants were assigned secret identification codes (001–135) to safeguard confidentiality.

Participating schools: 32 JSSs (from a total of 34) participated in the project. The schools were given code numbers (01–32) to keep them anonymous, as well as to prevent possible prejudice to responses. Two schools in Gaborone did not take part in the project, since one (Bokamoso JSS) was previously used to pilot the questionnaire, and the other (Marang JSS) declined to participate.

Status of participating teachers: 133 citizen (98.52%) and 2 (1.48%) expatriate teachers took part in the study. Regarding their gender, female teachers (101) dominate their male counterparts.

Gender:

Female teachers (101 or 74.8%) are in the majority. Only 34 male teachers took part in the research.

Age:

The teachers are relatively young. Almost half of the teachers, 67 (49.26%) are aged between 30–39 years old. 52 (38.5%) are between 20–29 years and only a small number 14 (10%) are older than 40 years. Two (1%) did not disclose their age.

Qualifications of teachers:

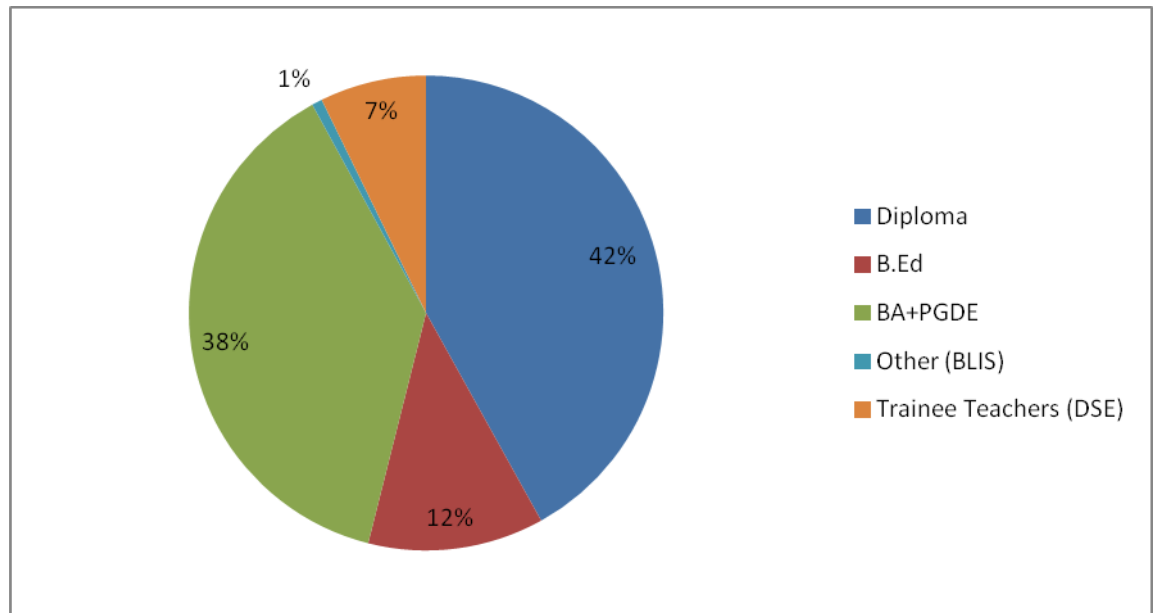


Figure 1B: Qualifications

- 2 teachers have a BA plus a PGDE (Post Graduate Diploma in Education, a one-year programme of study for graduates wishing to pursue a teaching career in their specialist areas) and an Other qualification (i.e. MA Development Studies, and MBA)

- 1 teacher has a B Ed and another qualification (i.e. Diploma in HRM)
- 2 teachers have a diploma and another qualification (CLS and CLS+BLIS)

Respondents' teaching experience

Table 1: Teaching experience

Teaching experience	Teachers	Percentage
0-11 months	18	13.3%
1 – 5 years	48	35.5%
6 - 10 years	32	23.7%
11 -15 years	33	24.4%
16 –20 years	3	2.2%
21– 25 years	0	0%
26 - 30 years	1	0.74%

5.1.2 ESL proficiency of secondary school learners

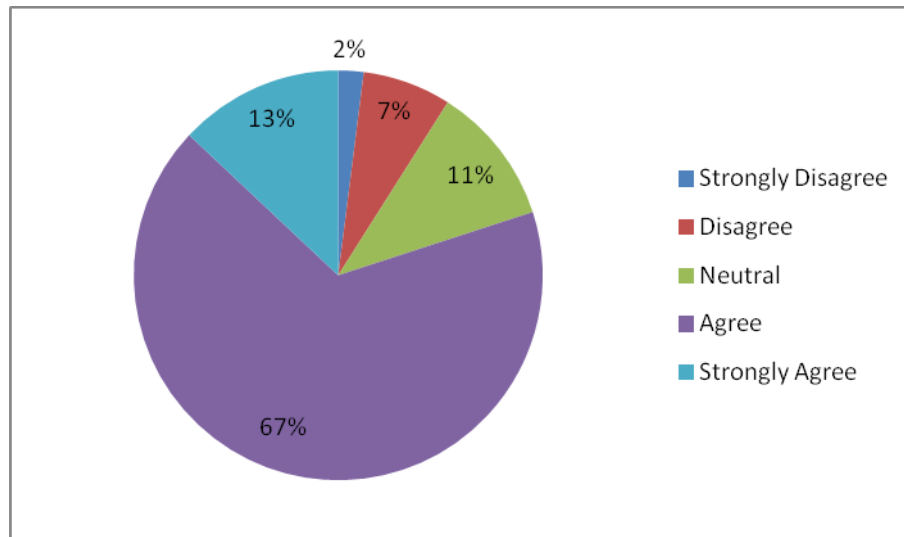


Figure 2A: Opinions of teachers on learners' ESL proficiency level.

From the figure above, it is clear that the majority of teachers (80%) agree that the ESL proficiency of their students is inadequate.

The following factors outside the classroom contribute to a low ESL proficiency:

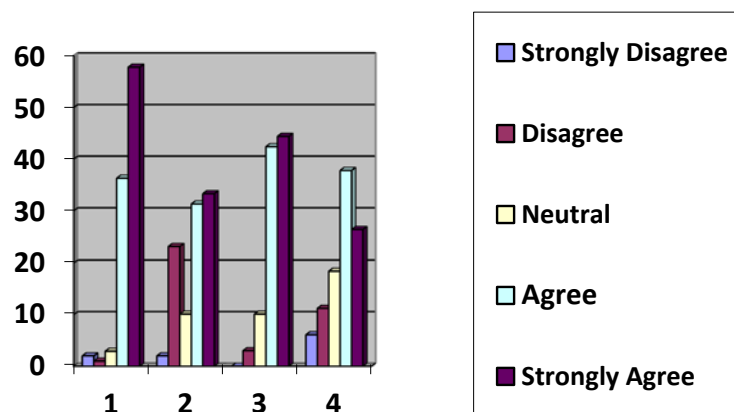


Figure 2B: Factors outside the classroom contributing to a low ESL proficiency

Key:

1. Interference of first language - 94% agreed.
2. Negative attitude towards English - 65% agreed.
3. Lack of 'English-speaking culture' - 87% agreed.
4. Lack of education or poor language background of parents - 64% agreed.

The following factors inside the classroom contribute to a low ESL proficiency:

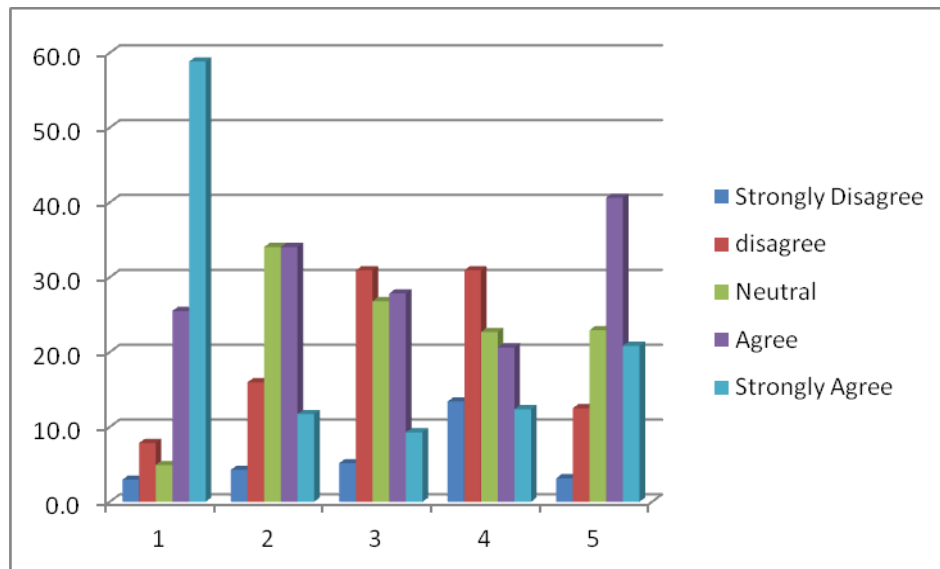


Figure 2C: Factors inside the classroom causing a lack of ESL communicative proficiency.

Key:

1. Large class size - 84% agreed.
2. The current (CLT) curriculum - 46% agreed.

- 3. Unsuitable teaching methods - 37% agreed.
- 4. Inappropriate training of teachers - 44% disagreed.
- 5. Gap between theory (of CLT) and practice - 61% agreed.

Teachers reported that their students exhibit the characteristics below (fig. 2D):

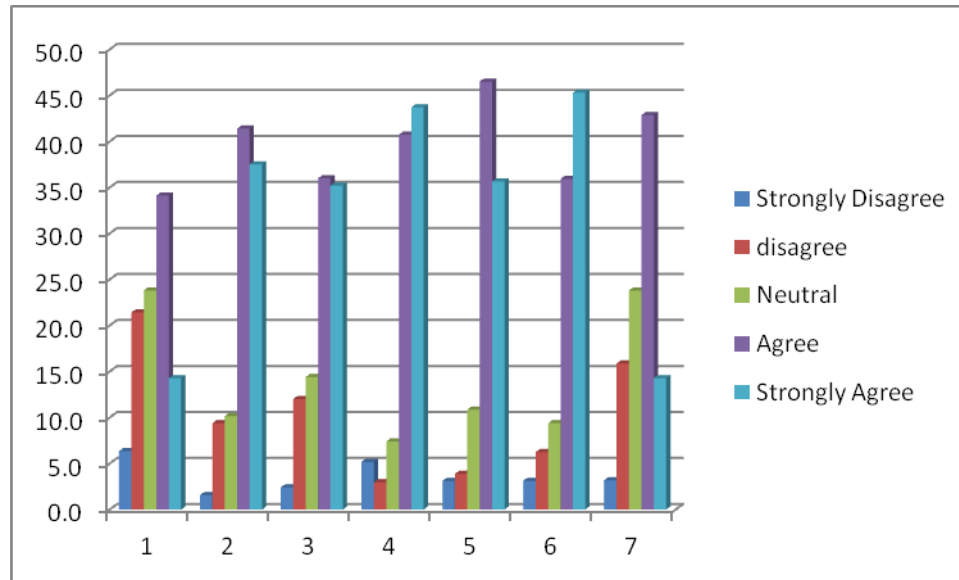


Figure 2D: Characteristics of ESL learners.

Key:

- 1. Many get low marks (and even fail) in English language exams and tests - 48% agreed.
- 2. They lack creative expression in written language - 79% agreed.
- 3. They lack confidence when speaking - 71% agreed.
- 4. They code-switch between English and mother tongue when speaking - 87% agreed.
- 5. There is direct translation from the mother tongue - 79% agreed.

6. There is discomfort with using English outside the classroom - 81% agreed.

7. They find it difficult to interpret materials in English - 57% agreed.

5.1.3 The communicative language teaching (CLT) curriculum Appropriateness of CLT

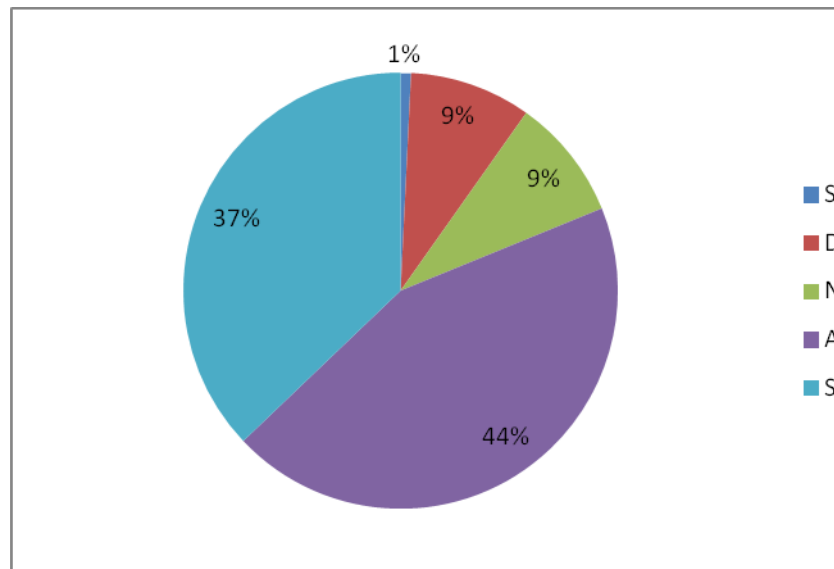


Figure 3A: Suitability of communicative approach (CA) in developing ESL proficiency.

The above figure shows that 81% of teachers agree that CLT is an appropriate approach for helping improve (increase) learners' limited English communicative abilities.

Teachers commented on some elements of the CLT curriculum as follows:

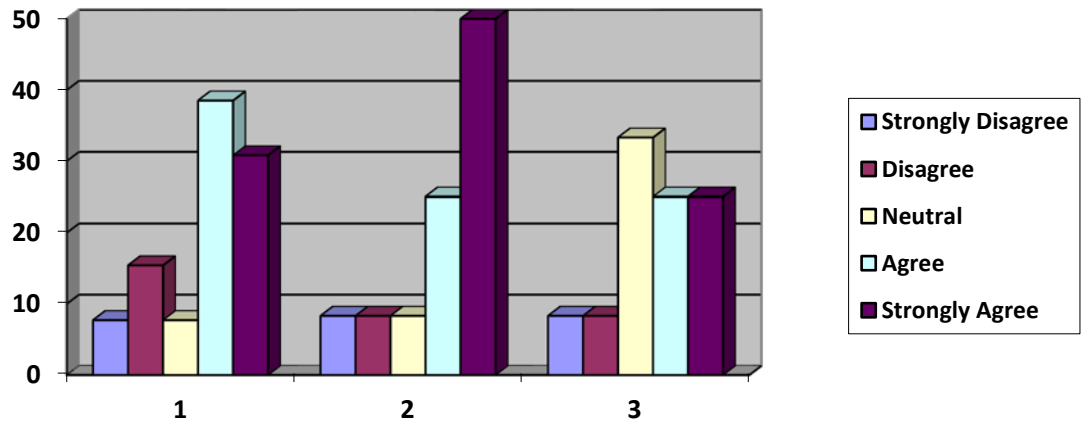


Figure 3B: Teachers' comments on elements of the CLT curriculum.

Key:

1. There is over-emphasis on writing to the neglect of oral communication skills - 69% agreed.
2. Absence of 'motivational' (suitable communicative) tasks to enable students to embrace the target foreign or second language - 75% agreed.
3. The emphasis on 'Western' educational and cultural values hinders students from other cultures - 50% agreed.

5.1.4 Knowledge of CLT On 'Communicative Competence' (CC)

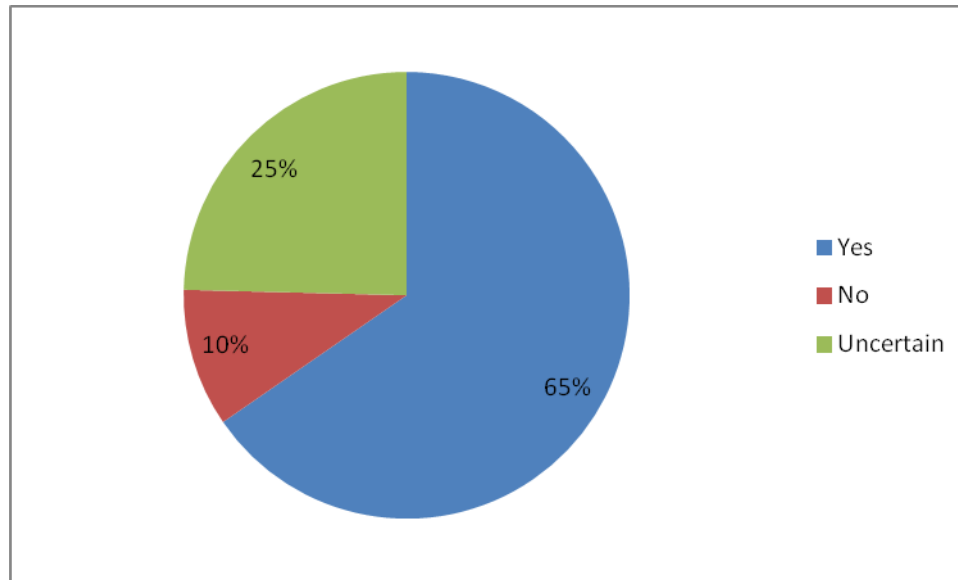


Figure 4A: Teachers' familiarity with the concept CC

The above figure indicates that a 65% majority confirmed that they are familiar with the concepts of CC.

Teachers evaluated the suitability of developing CC as a goal of ESL teaching as shown in Fig. 4B below:

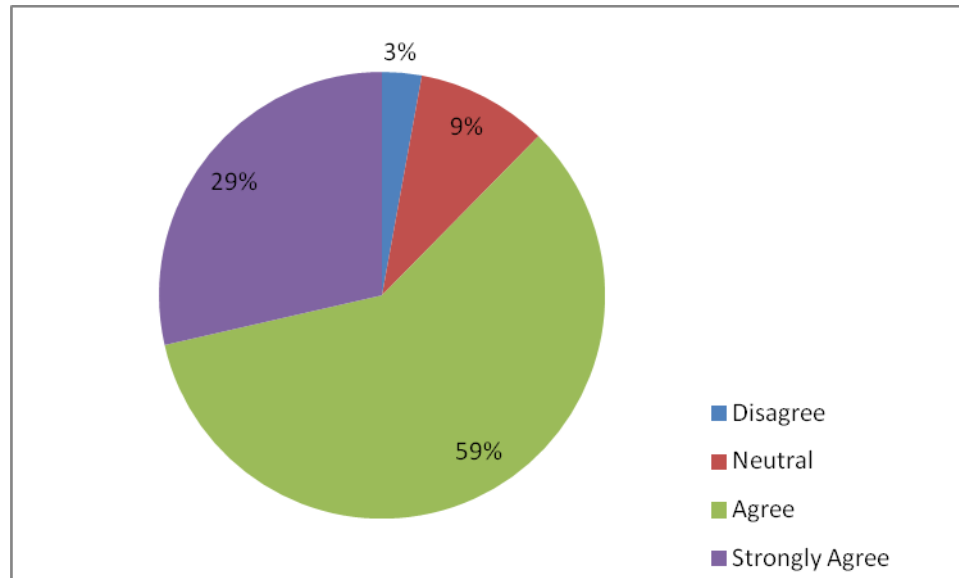


Figure 4B: Evaluating suitability of CC.

Figure 4B shows that teachers (88%) support the development of CC as a suitable objective for ESL instruction.

Teachers assessed the value of some elements of CLT as follows (Fig. 4C):

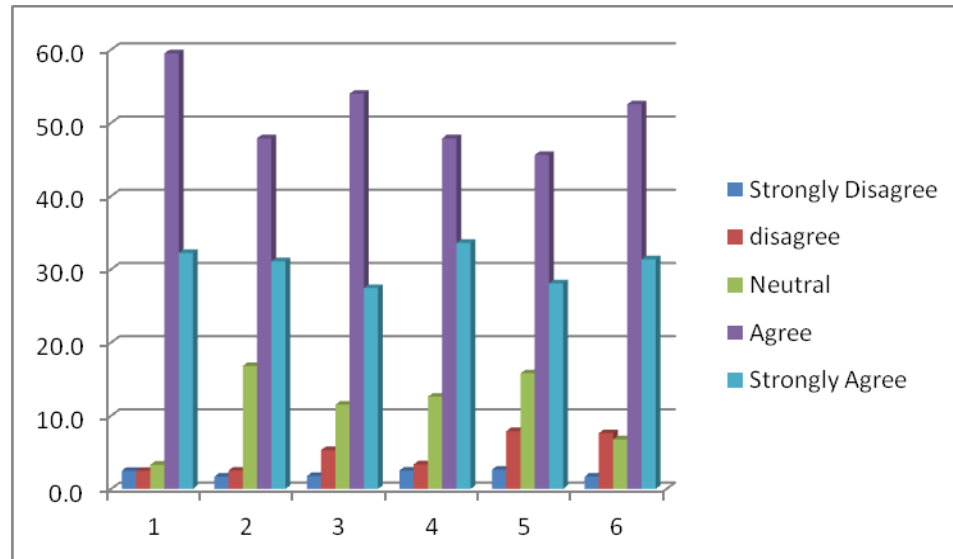


Figure 4C: Assessing the value of some elements of CLT.

Key:

1. Focuses on improving learners' oral communication skills - 93% approved the point.
2. Achieves communicative competence - 78.99% endorsed the statement.
3. Promotes spontaneous use of the language - 81% confirmed that developing unpredictability in language use is an essential function of CLT.
4. Tolerance of errors as a means of ensuring adequate practice of language use - 81.5% accepted that students' language errors should be tolerated as part of the target language acquisition process.
5. Writing is an essential element - 74% agreed with the claim.
6. Grammar plays a crucial development role - 84% acknowledged the statement.

Teachers evaluated the novelty of some features of CLT as follows:

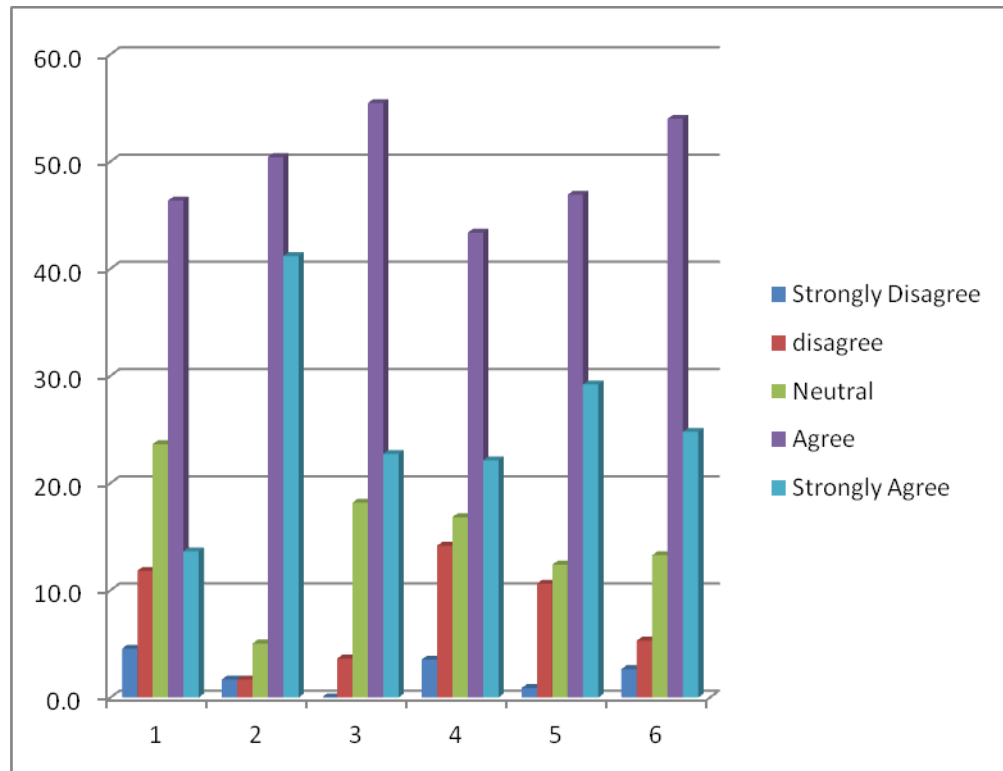


Figure 4D: Assessing novelty of some aspects of CLT

Key:

1. Syllabus emphasises learners' communication in the target language over a systematic study of grammar - 60% agreed.
2. Using a learner-centred approach - 92% agreed.
3. Creating a social context as the basis of effective ESL instruction - 78% agreed.
4. Spending equal time on each of the four skills - 65% agreed.
5. Learners do most of the classroom talking - 76% accepted the idea.
6. Assessment of communicative effectiveness - 79% endorsed the suggestion.

Speaking and writing skills

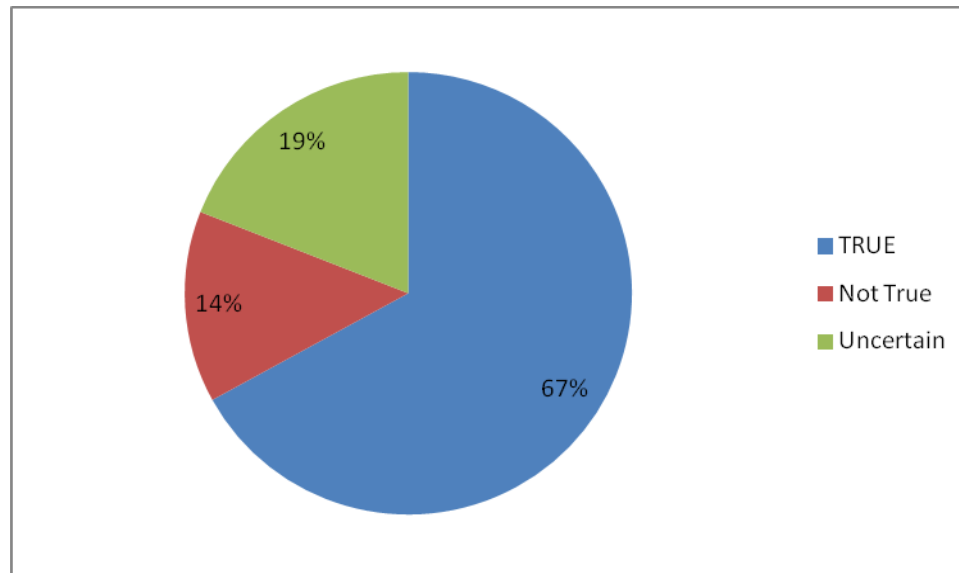


Figure 4E: Emphasis on speaking and writing

The above figure shows that 67% of teachers conceded that within a communicative curriculum, emphasis should be evenly distributed between the two traditional skill areas of writing and speaking.

5.1.5 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Teachers' opinions on some of the main attributes of Botswana's teaching methods are given below.

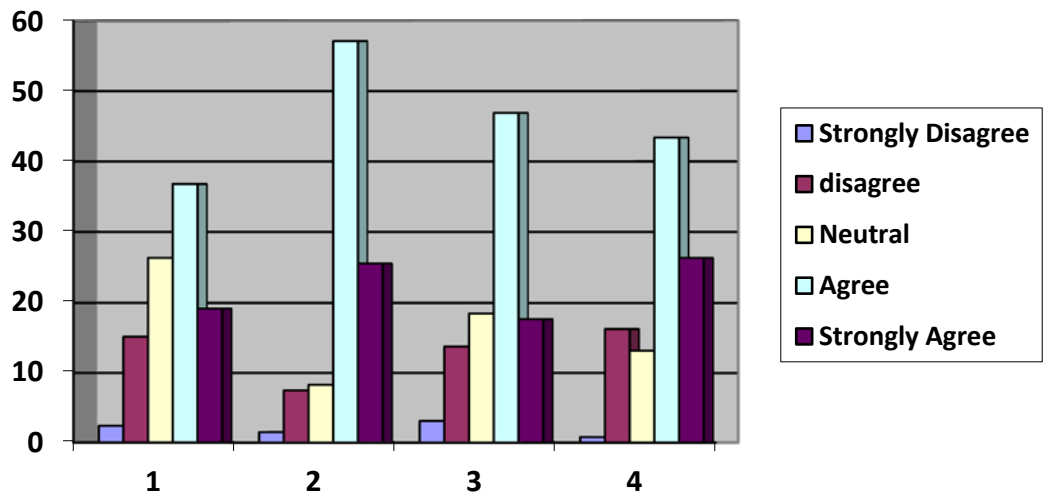


Figure 5A: Exemplars of teaching techniques

Key:

1. The learning culture is too passive - 56% agreed.
2. There is an over-reliance on course book materials - 83% endorsed the statement.
3. Learners memorise too much - 65% agreed.
4. There is not enough practice in each skill - 70% approved the claim.

Teachers supplied their views regarding the extent to which they use some teaching and learning strategies, shown in figure 5B.

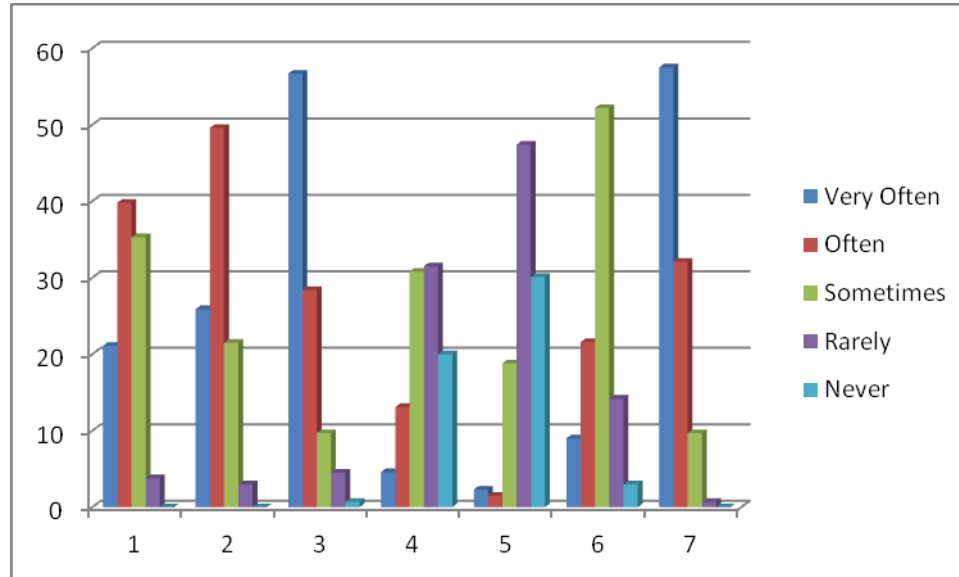


Figure 5B: Teaching and learning strategies

Key:

1. Paired work - 61% agreed.
2. Group discussion - 97% endorsed the strategy.
3. Individual learning activities - 95% agreed.
4. Seminar/tutorial presentations - 52% acceded.
5. Project work - 77% confirmation.
6. Role plays - 83% approval.
7. Class discussions - 99% agreed.

Teachers' views on the regularity with which they use some teaching techniques are shown below.

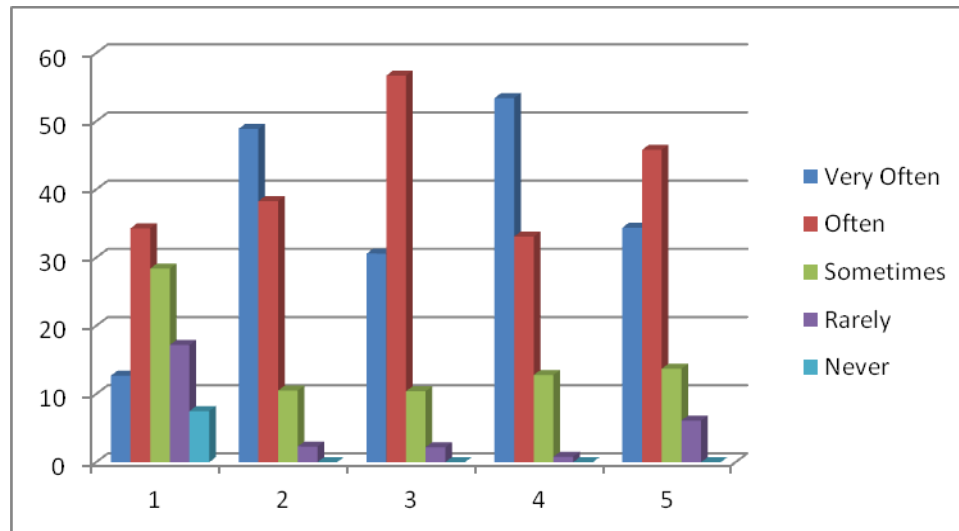


Figure 5C: Teaching techniques

Key:

1. Assess speaking skills - 75% agreed.
2. Give grammatical exercises - 98% agreed.
3. Assess writing skills - 75% agreed.
4. Correct errors - 99% agreed.
5. Use content-based topics - 94% agreed.

Knowledge of 'authentic materials'

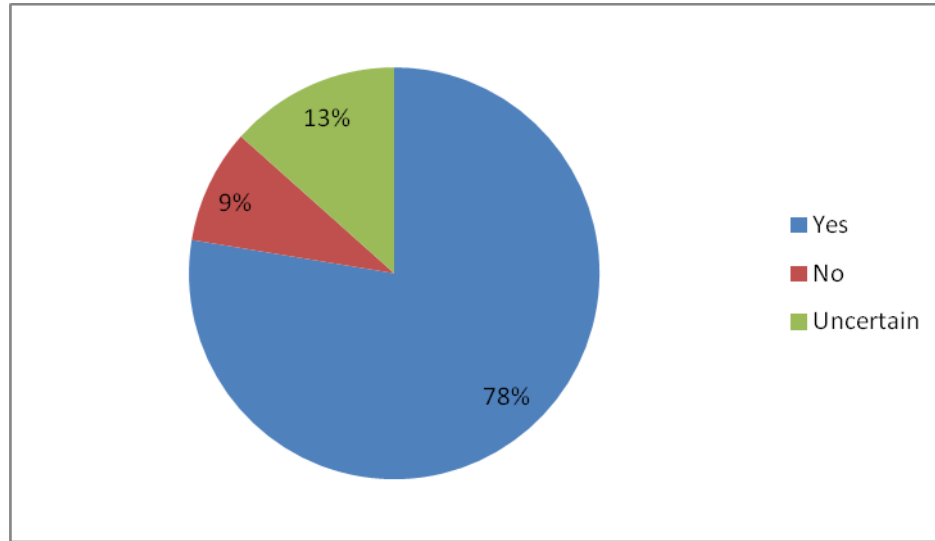


Figure 5D: Understanding of the term 'authentic materials'.

The figure above indicates that 78% of the teachers claim to know what authentic materials are.

Teachers evaluated the rate at which they use authentic materials as shown in Figure 5E, below:

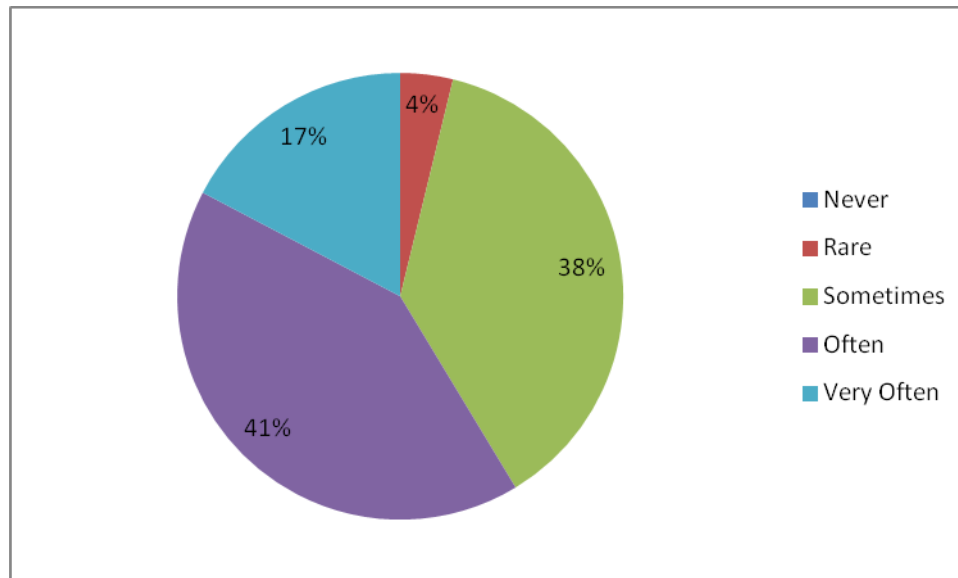


Figure 5E: Frequency of use of authentic materials

Figure 5E shows that 96% of respondents stated that they frequently use authentic materials in their teaching.

5.1.6 Teacher preparedness

Teacher training.

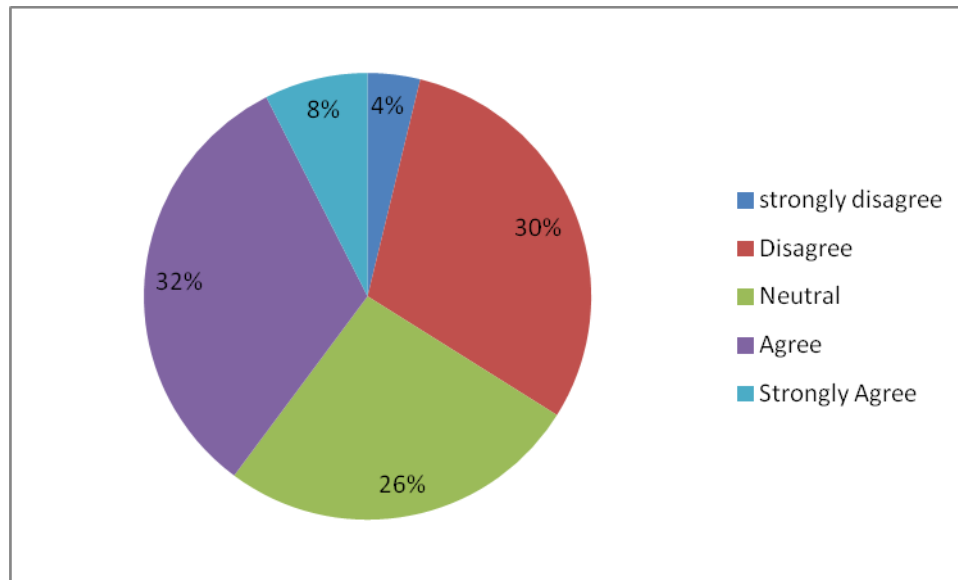


Figure 6A: Comments on preparedness to teach CLT.

The figure above shows that 40% of teachers agreed that they are adequately trained to teach 'communicatively'.

Teachers gave the following feedback regarding the state of their professional training (personal tool kit):

1. Ability to monitor (manage) student's interaction: 74% agreed that they were adequately trained in this aspect.
2. Confidence in the English language: 79% confirmed that their training has equipped them with enough confidence to teach English communicatively.
3. Spending an equal amount of time on speaking and writing: 53% acknowledged this factor.

4. Initiative and creativity: 69% acceded that the training they had received instilled initiative and creativity in them.

Models of professional training.

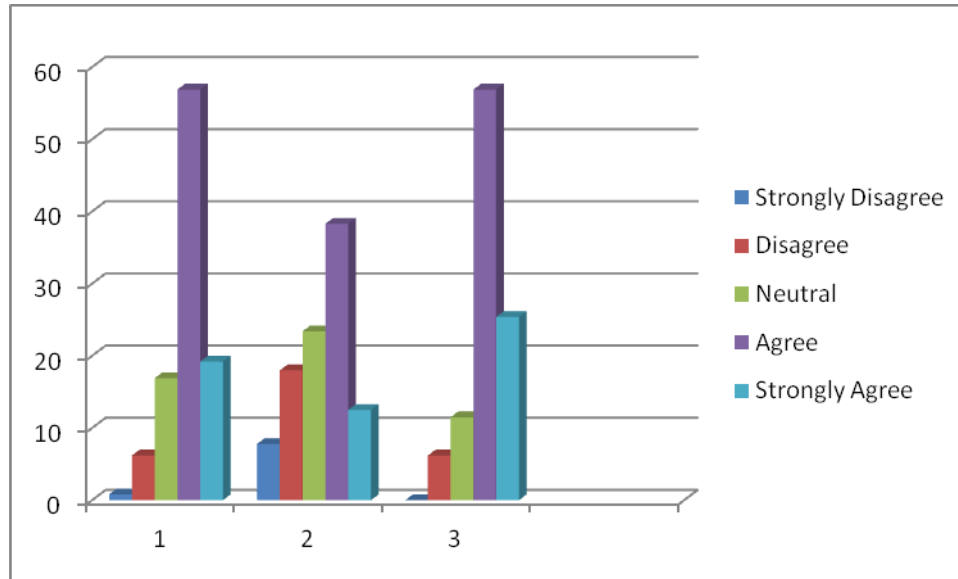


Figure 6B: Modes of training for CLT teachers.

Key

1. **Formal teaching and learning programmes** - 76% endorsed the factor.
2. **In-service training** - 51% agreed.
3. **Individual teacher's activities (initiative)** - 82%agreed.

Teachers' views on consultation about the introduction of CLT

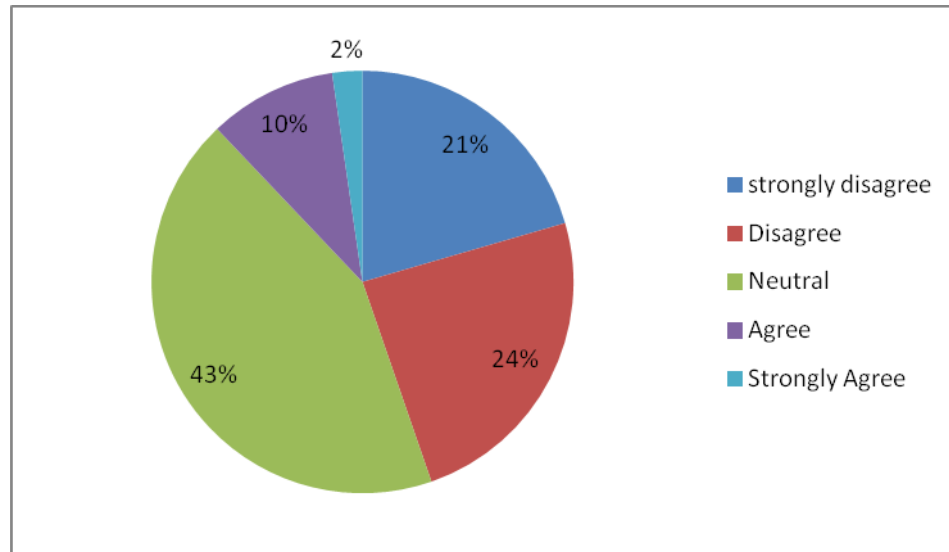


Figure 6C: Comments on consultation about the introduction of CLT

From figure 6C, it is clear that a substantial minority of teachers, 45% denied that they were consulted by educational authorities regarding the introduction of CLT.

Lack of consultation had the following effects (fig. 6D):

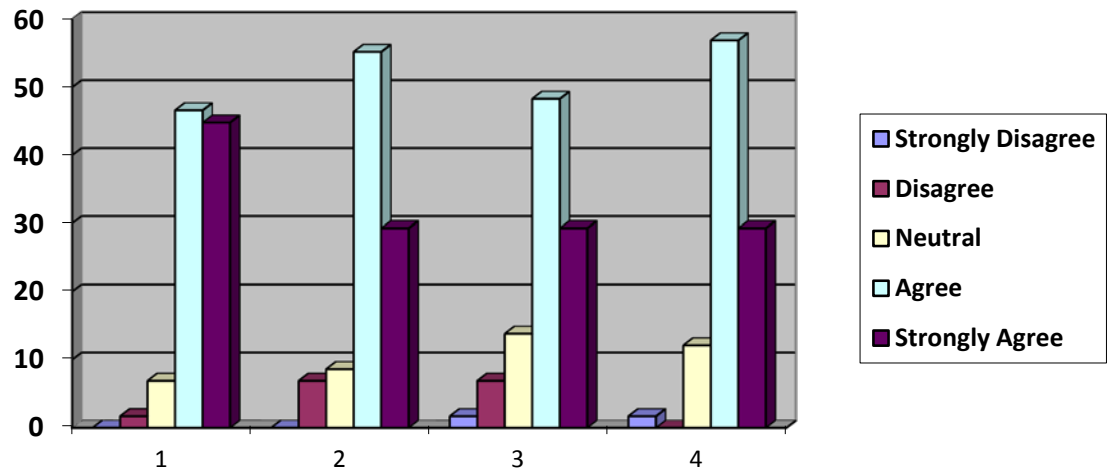


Figure 6D: Effects of non-consultation on teachers.

1. Inadequate understanding (knowledge) of the principle of CLT to be able to approve of it - 91% agreed.
2. Continued use of traditional (drill-oriented) methodologies - 84% agreed.
3. Under-utilisation of the communicative objective; teachers do not teach communicatively - 78% agreed.
4. Teachers select only those aspects of CLT that they consider applicable to their students: 86% agreed.

5.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

This section provides a detailed discussion of some of the quantitative findings presented in the first part of this chapter, by placing them within the theoretical framework that informed the research. Careful analysis is important in the light of the fact that the responses to different sections of the questionnaire are often inconsistent. Because respondents were given little or no opportunity for an open-ended discussion of the issues addressed

in the questionnaire, this analysis includes also some speculation by the researcher as to possible reasons for the findings.

5.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The majority of the respondents are non-native English teachers. Research by Girvan (2000) and Uso-Juan & Martinez-Flor (2008), showed that many non-native EFL and ESL teachers the world over have little training in English language teaching methodology and a limited knowledge of the TL culture. This could mean that one should take this demographic fact into consideration when interpreting the findings - findings which, amongst others, demonstrate a certain lack of knowledge regarding CLT. When making recommendations in Chapter 7, we will return to this point.

5.2.2.1 Qualifications and experience

The teachers are well qualified and one could therefore assume that they possess the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to teach ESL within the new CLT curriculum. In addition, 69 (51%) of the teachers have been teaching for more than 5 years. One could argue that the teachers with less than five years' experience are recent graduates who would have received training in CLT, but that the older teachers may not have this background. It could imply that these teachers knowledge and teaching skills may have fossilized or may be inadequate, thus providing a reason for their failure to answer some of the questions regarding CLT and the Communicative Approach.

5.2.2 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) PROFICIENCY

This section attempted to answer the research question: 'How do teachers rate the state of English communicative proficiency among Batswana learners?'. An overwhelming number of teachers (80%) rated the ESL communicative proficiency of their learners as unsatisfactory or poor. It is however not quite clear what the teachers understand by the concepts 'communicative competence' and 'language proficiency', concepts which were discussed at length in Chapter 2. It is also not clear whether the teachers judge learners' proficiency in terms of examinations results - a factor that is not necessarily a reliable indicator of learners' actual proficiency in English.

The majority of teachers agreed that the following factors outside the classroom contribute to a low ESL proficiency:

Interference of first language

Although a large number of teachers (94%) acknowledged that the mother tongue (L1) contributes to low ESL proficiency, their responses do not enable us to deduce what they think of the role of L1 in L2 education. We do not know whether they hold progressivist or pluralist perceptions regarding the role of the L1. (For a full discussion of these issues refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2).

Negative attitude toward English

A majority, (65%) agreed with the suggestion that there exists a negative attitude towards English among Batswana learners. This answer, nevertheless, does not assist us to infer the exact causes of this phenomenon. SLA research enables us to speculate on three possible causes: the learner's socio-political climate, the

nature of their socialisation and their personal experiences (Savignon, 2005). Clark (1987) suggests three other factors that may probably be responsible:

— Perhaps students are unaware of the importance of learning a second language as a tool for conducting effective business communication, as well as communicating with other nations (and facilitating understanding of their cultures).

— They have had no 'apprenticeship' or exposure to the nature and value of learning a foreign language and see speaking a non-native language as the importation of an alien culture (and they are unaware of the value of cultural diversity).

— They might be harbouring a feeling of the hegemony of their native language, emanating either from a supremacist view of such a language or a culture of resistance to an imposition of foreign languages.

The third factor proposed by Clark does not seem likely since English has been widely accepted in Botswana as a lingua franca. Because the teachers did seem aware of such an attitude, this aspect of ESL should be investigated further in follow-up studies.

Lack of 'English speaking culture'

87% teachers agreed to this statement. Once again we have to speculate about possible reasons for this point of view. One reason might be found in the Botswana national social characteristic which reportedly encourages introvertedness (Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2). Perhaps, an analogy could be made with Japan, where Girvan (2000:128) reports that while in theory the country has embraced internationalisation (Kokusaika) in

practice, the chances of actually using English outside the classroom are constrained by the country's national ideology of Nihonjiron (Japaneseness). In Botswana, an integral part of the national social trait, Botho, detracts children from actually using English in the social environment outside the classroom (see Chapter 1, Section 2.7.5). Public discourse in English among Botswana children is viewed by the populace as a semblance of lacking in manners or respectability.

Lack of education or poor language background of parents

A majority (64%) of teachers confirmed that poor or absence of parent-child literacy experience contributes to a low ESL proficiency. For a comparative discussion on how different kinds of families initiate children into learning, Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3 of this study has argued that a better learned family creates a facilitative environment while a family which is not well-versed into a 'book culture' renders learning a hostile undertaking.

In contrast to the factors outside the classroom, teachers' opinions differed considerably regarding the factors inside the classroom that contribute to a low ESL proficiency:

Large class size

84% agreed to this statement. This finding is in line with previous research findings (cf. Mitchell, 1988; Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2005; Kirkgoz, 2010) which also indicated that large numbers lower ESL communicative proficiency by making it impossible to effectively implement and monitor paired and group oral activities. Large class sizes make it virtually impossible to administer rigorous individualised assessment techniques, as are

advocated by some of the earliest proponents of CLT, including Brumfit (1988).

The current CLT curriculum

Although only 43 (32%) teachers were of the opinion that the new CLT curriculum is one of the causes of the learners' limited English communicative proficiency, we want to contextualise this response. Worldwide, the ELT curriculum is often blamed for not adequately preparing learners to perform certain social functions through the medium of language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Roberts, 2004; Hiep, 2007). The curriculum is often regarded as a mere window dresser, whilst teaching continues to be conducted in the same old ways. This finding should also be viewed in light of the fact that curriculum change is often viewed as a top-down imposition that bears little or no teacher input. (Compare Figure 6C above which shows that a minority of 45% disagreed that they were consulted by educational authorities regarding the introduction of CLT. Note as well that a significant percentage (43%) remained neutral on this aspect.) Teachers might therefore resist the innovation and continue to teach and assess the discrete linguistic forms and not the functional and social uses of language, as are advocated by CLT. In practice teaching continues to emphasise mastery of the formal properties of the language as an end in itself, without paying attention to the ways in which those forms are employed to express communicative needs (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Savignon, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Wilkins, 1976).

Unsuitable teaching methods

Teachers were ambivalent regarding this issue with 37% agreeing that inappropriate teaching methods cause a poor ESL proficiency

and 36% disagreeing with the statement. The mixed response might imply that the teachers are not familiar with CLT methodologies.

Inappropriate training of teachers

Once again the responses to this question do not give a clear picture of teachers' perceptions. They must be compared to those given to other questions in the questionnaire to get an overall picture. Only 32% agreed with this statement and 24% remained neutral. Although 44% disagreed with the proposition that unsuitable training causes low communicative proficiency (figure 2C), figure 6A showed that the group had mixed opinions on whether they were adequately trained to teach the new curriculum, with 34% disagreeing with the statement, 40% agreeing and 26% remaining neutral. In another question (figure 6D) 91% agreed that one of the effects of non-consultation was an inadequate understanding of CLT, which might also be understood as a critique of the training provided. Yet another reason for the apparent contradictions in the responses, might be the possibility that the respondents have withheld their true opinions.

Gap between theory (of CLT) and practice

A majority (61%) agreed that there is a gap between the theory and practice of ESL teaching. This is a significant finding, pointing to an awareness by the teachers that it is not easy to make classroom teaching truly communicative. (In the next chapter, this is investigated further.)

Conclusion

The research questions: 'How do teachers rate the state of English communicative proficiency among Botswana's secondary school

learners?' and "What do teachers consider to be the main factors causing learners' inadequate ESL proficiency in Botswana?" were answered. All four factors outside the classroom were endorsed by the majority of teachers. With reference to factors inside the classroom, four factors were confirmed by a majority of teachers. However, only a minority agreed that inappropriate training is a contributing factor.

The research question: "What are the characteristics of the ESL learners in Botswana's Junior Secondary Schools?" was answered as follows:

Many learners get low marks (and even fail) in English language exams and tests

Figure 2D shows that a minority of teachers (48%) agreed with this statement - in total 52% disagreed (28%) or remained undecided (24%). This perception is in sharp contrast to the evidence presented in Chapter one (Section 1) of this study, which demonstrates a persistent decline in English language exam results for the two tiers of Botswana's secondary education. This answer is therefore not consistent with the real exam results. One reason for the response might be that teachers fear that agreement with the statement might reflect an inability to teach well. After all, research (Cummins, 2000: 96) identifies the main causes for a poor academic performance by bilingual students as socio-political and instructional. Hiep (2007:198) further states that EFL / ESL teachers "lack confidence or skills to generate independent CLT practices".

Learners lack creative expression in written language

A very large percentage of teachers (79%) agreed that their students lack creative expression in written language. This response is consistent with teachers' previous comments that learners' ESL communicative ability is low (cf. figure 2A).

Learners lack confidence when speaking

A large majority (71.2%) agreed that Botswana secondary school students exhibit a lack of confidence when speaking. This response ties in with the response to a previous question (cf. figure 2C) in which teachers overwhelmingly agreed (84%) that Botswana's JSS education is characterised by large class sizes which in turn might have the effect that not enough attention is paid to speaking activities in class.

Learners code-switch between English and mother tongue when speaking

Teachers agreed overwhelmingly (84%) to this statement.

There is direct translation from the mother tongue

A majority of the teachers, 79%, agreed that their students directly transfer from the mother tongue during communication. The literature points out (Tomlinson, 2005; Cook, 1993; Gass and Selinker, 1994) that ESL learners often produce errors of syntax and pronunciation thought to be attributable to the influence of the first language, although Cook (1993) reports that this influence is stronger where there are similarities between the L1 and the L2 being studied, which is not the case in Botswana.

There is a discomfort with using English outside the classroom

81% of teachers agreed that Botswana learners are uncomfortable with using English outside the classroom. Such a standpoint appears consistent with studies (Akindele & Trennepohl, 2008; Molefhe, et al. 2007) describing Botswana learners as typically introverts. Research, (Savignon, 2005; Cook, 2002; Tomlinson, 2005) confirms that effective teaching and learning in CLT takes place among learners who are extroverted.

Learners find it difficult to interpret materials in English

A majority of the teachers (57%) agreed that Botswana's learners encounter difficulty in interpreting materials in English. This is in accordance with the high failure rate in both JC and BGCSE English language exams (cf. Chapter 1 Section 1.2.1). However, as we saw above, only 48% of these same teachers agreed that 'many students get low marks in English language exams and tests' -once again a somewhat contradictory finding.

Conclusion

The research question: 'What are the characteristics of the ESL learners in Botswana's Junior Secondary Schools?' was answered. All seven statements referred to above were endorsed as being characteristic of the ESL learners in Botswana's Junior Secondary Schools.

5.2.3 THE COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) CURRICULUM

This section relates to answer the research question: 'Do teachers understand what is meant by CLT?'. A series of sub-questions attempted to give a comprehensive answer to this question.

The majority of teachers (81%) agreed that CLT is the most suitable teaching approach for ESL. This endorsement implies that they have adopted an innovation which was elucidated in detail in Chapter two. Whether this endorsement translated into practice, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

When asked to respond to statements regarding elements of the CLT curriculum in order to answer the question: 'Does Botswana's ESL curriculum conform to CLT theory': (cf figure 3B above), the majority of teachers agreed that because of an over-emphasis on writing to the neglect of oral communication skills and the absence of suitable communicative tasks, Botswana's ESL curriculum does not conform to CLT theory. In addition, 50% of the teachers seemed to think that the CLT curriculum is heavily biased towards Western European educational and cultural ethos. This raises a serious concern that the curriculum will remain largely a 'wholesale import', unaccompanied by the necessary adaptation to make it suitable to the local environment, as reported by some scholars in related contexts: Chen & Hird, (2006); Girvan, (2000); Tickoo, (1996); Tomlinson, (2005). Tomlinson warns that "most methodologists seem to agree that language teachers must pay attention to local conditions rather than taking a set of ideas around with them" (2005:47). In all, adopting rather than adapting methodological innovations imported from Western nations could, as a result of their strong sociocultural leanings, alienate learners.

5.2.4 KNOWLEDGE OF CLT

The following section in the questionnaire concentrated on teachers' knowledge of CLT and the curriculum that is followed in Botswana's schools. As was shown in Section 5.1 above, although

a majority of the teachers (65%) stated that they were familiar with the term 'Communicative Competence' (CC) and a large majority (88%) thought that developing CC was an appropriate objective for ESL teaching, very few teachers demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of what this term actually entails.

Regarding CC being a suitable goal for ESL teaching: the very small number that reserved its opinion (10%) or disapproved (2%) of CC as a goal for ESL teaching, might be displaying an attitude similar to those cited by Tickoo (1996) in India, where communicative innovations were suspiciously viewed as importing foreign, potentially unsuitable and radical ideas into the country, or in Japan where Girvan (quoting Phillipson (1992) reports that embracing communicative-oriented reforms was perceived by a section of the population as some form of 'linguistic imperialism' (2000:128).

Figure 4C shows that a clear majority of teachers agreed that the elements listed there are important elements of CLT and a majority agreed on novel aspects of CLT (figure 4D). This response once again indicates that teachers are, at least in theory, aware that they should possess skills in setting up 'communicative events' (Savignon, 1991:265). Hiep (borrowing from Holliday (1994) refers to "the learning group ideal" or "the optimum interactional parameters" (2007:195) - this refers to the skill in managing activities targeted at giving learners opportunity to interact meaningfully with each other, in a manner reminiscent of the real world outside the classroom.

Based on their feedback, the teachers also seem to be aware that tolerance of errors is a distinguishing aspect of CLT. In a teaching

oriented towards the CA, precision or accuracy in grammatical and lexical forms counts very little as attention is focused on 'prefabricated chunks of language' which helps the learner to convey meaning in order to solve practical problems (Richards, 1999). A teaching practice biased towards promoting the pragmatic language competency as advocated by some ESL theorists (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Yule, 1996; Richards, 1999; Savignon, 2005; Wilkins, 1976) will be expected to be in vogue in these teachers' classrooms. A teaching to promote generative competence will be viewed largely as complementary to this goal, and thus language form is taught largely as a 'consciousness-raising' task (cf Chapter 2, Section 2.12.2 for a more in-depth discussion on this matter).

The majority of teachers (74%) also agreed that writing plays a central role in conveying and interpreting meaning. The teachers seemed aware that CLT is not restricted to oral communication to the exclusion of the three other skill areas. This response underscores the idea that since CLT places attention on 'looking closely to what is involved in communication' (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Savitri, 2009), emphasis on 'meaning potential' should not be restricted to oral communication skills, but should be extended to making writing more interactive. This is important because, in the written code, the communicator is not in attendance to gauge the receiver's comprehension. Thus, as part of both 'progressive pedagogy' (Cummins, 2000) or 'reciprocal teaching' (Cummins, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2000), effective methods of teaching both oral and written languages are recommended as those in which language use and development are deliberately integrated with curricular content, instead of being taught as isolated entities. To

that end, embedding curricular content into an authentic language activity is seen as the best way of engendering active collaboration of learners in negotiation of meaning. Research supports this point, using the phrase 'reciprocity or writing with the receiver's perspective in mind', to describe this action (cf, for example, Savignon, 2005; Mitchell, 1988; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Webb, 2004). The small minority of 12% who disagreed with this statement are, perhaps, ESL teachers who, according to research (Mitchell, 1988, Heugh, 2013) erroneously hold a view that CLT is skill-specific (restricted to oral communication) to the exclusion of the three other skill areas.

A large majority of teachers, 85%, agreed that grammar plays an essential part in developing learners' communicative proficiency. The teachers' opinions could be interpreted as in line with research findings (see, for example, Chapter 2, Section 2.5.5), positing that internalising the grammatical rules of a language is a prerequisite for proficiency.

Conclusion

Based on their responses, teachers seem to embrace crucial aspects of CLT theory. Whether this also translates into classroom practice, receives attention in Chapter 6.

5.2.5 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

This section pertains to the research question: 'Are Botswana's didactic methods grounded in a teaching for communicative purposes?'

Figure 5A shows that the majority of teachers agreed to the following characterisation of classroom teaching in Botswana's JSS's: the learning culture is too passive; there is an over-reliance on course book materials; learners memorise too much and there is not enough practice in each skill. The responses to the following sub-set of statements regarding the frequency with which certain teaching and learning strategies are used in class are important because they give an indication of the extent to which CLT theory has been put into practice by the teachers in the research group (figure 5B).

Strategies used often or very often

The following strategies were used often or very often by the majority of teachers. As with all the answers in this section of the questionnaire, the responses will have to be considered together with actual classroom practice in Chapter 6.

Paired work

61% reported that they used this strategy often (39.8%) or very often (21.1%). A significant percentage (35.3%) also used it sometimes.

Group work

A total of 76% used group work very often (25.9%) or often (49.9%). Together with 21.1% who used it sometimes, this looks like a very popular teaching strategy, even though large class sizes were reported to being a factor hindering ESL proficiency.

Individual learning activities

With 85% of the teachers reporting that they used this strategy very often or often, it looks like the most popular strategy in

Botswana's classrooms. There is however, some doubt in the researcher's mind as to whether this strategy is understood correctly by the teachers, since the research group were also of the opinion that teaching is very theoretically based.

Role-Play

This seems to be a popular strategy with 83% of respondents using it very often (9%), often (21.6%) or sometimes (52.2%). It is once again a finding that contrasts with the supposed theoretically oriented nature of Botswana's classrooms. CLT approaches see role play as a tool for the creative development of new language skills (that have not previously been learned) among students. The central part played by role play in developing new language skills is echoed by Lightbown and Spada (2006:113): "In student-student interaction, learners may practice a range of sociolinguistic and functional features of language through role-play". Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2008:165) agree:

Another activity that may work well in the oral skills class is role playing. In particular, this activity has been claimed to be suitable for developing cultural variation in speech acts such as apologizing, suggesting, complimenting, among others.

Savitri supports this dimension of role-playing: "Through these activities, the learner gets an access to the social, cultural, and pragmatic aspects of language" (2009:132).

The choice of role-play as part of the popular techniques underlying their teaching could be understood to refer to the improvisational type. This is especially the case if one takes into cognizance the enormity of the constraints to non-whole-class-

teaching (as was previously discussed in the present chapter) specifically the theoretical nature of instruction that is induced, among others, by large class sizes.

To confirm the extent to which Botswana's ESL teaching had effectively utilised role-playing (or otherwise), chapter six of this study will be devoted to analysing a number of individual language classroom teaching sessions.

Rarely used strategies

The following strategies were used sometimes, rarely or never.

Seminar / Tutorial presentations

The majority used this strategy never (20%), rarely (31.5%) or sometimes (30.8%). Only 18% used it often or very often. A possible explanation for this is that students are, reportedly, reluctant to participate in seminars when they do not directly contribute to continuous assessment (see, for example, Transferable Personal Skills in Employment, 1986, for details).

Project work

Only 4% of the respondents confirmed that they use project work often or very often, with 18% using it sometimes. 77% rarely or never make use of project work in their classrooms, even though it is strongly recommended as among the most suitable strategies for developing learners' problem-solving and communication skills. Projects are usually introduced in the final year to help equip learners with skills required to solve a practical problem (Transferable Personal Skills In Employment: 1986). Projects also exert huge demands in terms of time and responsibilities on both teachers and learners.

Class discussion

Confirmation by 90% teachers that they use class discussion as one of their favourite teaching strategies, does not give us insight into the nature of the 'class discussion' they have in mind. But borrowing from research (Clarke, 1989; Savitri, 2009; Transferable Personal Skills In Employment: 1986), we can deduce that they are perhaps thinking of effective class discussion as generated by the use of authentic materials. Even if they have authentic materials in mind, lack of clarity still persists regarding these teachers' capacity to utilise such materials, because as research had shown (O'Neill, 2000; Tomlinson, 2005; Brown, 2007), authentic materials are often utilised inauthentically because teachers lack genuine commitment to teach communicatively. The nature and purpose of class discussion shall form part of the issues to be explored further in Chapter 6 of this study.

Teaching techniques

In another sub-section of the questionnaire teachers rated the frequency with which they use some teaching techniques as follows:

Assess speaking skills

In a response to an earlier question as to whether there is not enough practice for each skill, a large number of teachers (70%) admitted that Botswana's ESL teaching and learning is predominantly theoretically based. The fact that 75% reported that they frequently assess speaking skills is, therefore, a surprising turn of events.

Grammar exercises

Teachers confirmed (87% said regularly and 11% infrequently) that they do use grammatical exercises. Only 2% stated that they never used this technique.

A motivation for using grammatical exercises regularly cannot be easily determined from these responses. Research (Richards, 1999; Savtri, 2009) suggests two main perspectives from which the teaching of grammar could be modelled, depending on the version of CLT that is being employed, namely:

— The moderate position, employed in contexts where the weak version of CLT is in popular use. This position advocates the inclusion of form-focused instruction and regards grammatical simplification as a tool for enhancing the efficiency with which meaning is conveyed. It is mainly associated with the GTM. Language forms are offered in an explicit manner (i.e. as a list of abstract, non-contextualised structures). Learners are then expected to transfer this mastery to engender their production and interpretation of meaning.

— The radical position, utilised in environments where the strong version of CLT is in vogue. This position argues that grammar should not be taught as an end in itself; rather, only a passing reference to grammar should be undertaken. In this regard, language forms are offered in the context of 'task-work' and their meaning is deductible from speech acts in which they occur (Richards, 1999; Clarke, 1989). In this perspective, the secondary role played by grammar is entailed in the observation that "only an incidental exposure to comprehensive input is enough to trigger acquisition" (Richards, 1999). Richards further identifies three

stages at which grammatical input could be factored into a communicative task: pre-task, during the task and after the task (1999: 6-7).

The following techniques were all used, by a clear majority, very often, often or sometimes.

Assess writing skills

75% teachers indicated that they assess writing skills. The exact assessment strategies that these teachers have in mind cannot be deduced from their responses.

Error correction

Teachers agreed (99%) that they often use error correcting as a technique for ESL teaching. This raises a number of questions, including: what kind of errors need or need not be corrected; when is it permissible to correct an error, and how are errors corrected? Generally, research points out that as part of CLT teaching, mistakes involving language forms should only be corrected if they relate to an item that is currently the subject of discussion and also when the mistake occurs in whole class discussion and not during an open-ended one (Richards, 1999; Mitchell, 1988; O'Neill; 2000). A detailed exploration of the strategies that educators in Botswana employ in order to react to errors committed by learners during classroom language teaching sessions is undertaken in chapter 6 of this study.

Use content-based topics

A majority of teachers (94%) stated that they use content-based topics either often or sometimes. From the discussion on how

theoretical perspectives have underlined materials design in CLT teaching (refer to chapter 2, item 2.7.10) we can infer the uses to which these teachers put content-based topics, as well as the factors underlying the choices of such topics. Especially, these data enable us to deduce that the choice of such materials should be underlined by 'authenticity'. Further, that the chosen subject matter should be understood to have relevance to the student's academic, social and professional practices. In chapter two, we have also alluded to the value of using authentic materials by pointing out that they are a means of engaging learners' interest through relating the task to his own life and providing a purpose for undertaking the activity.

The use of authentic materials

As we have shown in chapter 2, 'authenticity of materials' is among the primary tenets of the communicative approach. Thus, when teachers strongly acknowledged that they are familiar with this principle (78%), they could be interpreted as giving a positive indication that they will later on appreciate and effectively apply these resources in their classroom teaching. However, given the several contradictory statements that teachers have made so far, in connection with other issues comprising this study, their claim to be familiar and skilful in using authentic materials should be tested during classroom observation.

As was expected from the response above, the majority of teachers (96%) stated that they use authentic materials in their teaching. Once again, more information is needed to give a comprehensive report about the actual use of authentic materials in classrooms.

Conclusion

The research question: 'What kind of educational strategies, techniques, activities and materials are used in Botswana's ESL classrooms?' was partially answered through responses to questionnaire questions. Although it looks as if many aspects of CLT are incorporated into ESL teaching, this must be investigated further, since the possibility does exist that teachers answered with CLT theory (and not actual classroom practice) in mind.

5.2.6 TEACHER PREPAREDNESS

As part of the research question relating to teachers' understanding of CLT, teachers were asked about their preparedness to teach using the communicative approach.

Regarding their training, only 40% agreed that Botswana's teachers are adequately trained to teach communicatively. A significant percentage (60%) disagreed or were uncertain (i.e. 34% and 26% respectively). The overall impression is that Botswana's ESL teachers feel that they do not possess sound theoretical and practical understanding or knowledge to efficiently implement the communicative approach. One must deduce that teacher training is seen as problematic by the teachers themselves. Taking into account that another finding of this research is that teachers are in fact well qualified, this response is a cause for concern.

Teachers gave the following feedback when asked to evaluate their own training in the following areas.

Ability to monitor (manage) students interaction.

A large majority, 98 (74%) confirmed that they are adequately trained to facilitate learner-learner oral interaction. This is a surprising opinion, when viewed against the background that in the immediate preceding answer, teachers were undecided as to whether or not they are qualified to teach communicatively. An unequivocal claim by teachers that they are sufficiently equipped to manage oral communicative activities (an essential component of CLT) thus appears to be a contradiction.

Confidence in the English Language

A large majority, 107 (81%) agreed their training provided them with the confidence needed to teach ESL. However, taken together with the previous response where teachers did not feel that their overall professional training is sufficient to enable them to teach communicatively, makes this response also problematic.

Spending an equal amount of time on speaking and writing

A majority of teachers 70 (53%) acknowledged that their training in this skill is adequate.

Initiative and Creativity

The majority of teachers, 90 (69%) agreed that their professional training programmes had equipped them with adequate initiative and creativity. Perhaps, this point of view accords favourably with the observation made earlier that almost three quarters of the teachers have work experiences of less than 10 years (see Table 1 in this chapter). These teacher are probably fairly recent graduates and by implication might have benefitted from instruction on CLT since they studied at a time Botswana had started embracing the innovation.

When asked about the types of training that played an important role in inducting them into the communicative approach to ESL training (cf figure 6B) the finding that 82% agreed that their own initiatives played an important role, seems significant. Clearly, the majority of teacher feel that their own initiatives are more important than formal or in-service training. It can be safely deduced that to some extent, the CLT innovation was not systematically thought out and implemented in Botswana's ESL T & L. Especially, an impression is created that the implementation of CLT was not preceded by formal professional training and induction of teachers.

5.2.6.5 Views on consultation regarding the introduction of CLT.

Only 16 teachers (12%) agreed that they were consulted by educational authorities before the introduction of CLT. Significantly, 43% offered no opinion here, making it really difficult to know whether these teachers were in fact consulted or not. 45% disagreed that they were consulted. This leads one to conclude that ESL teachers largely regard the introduction of CLT teaching in Botswana as a top-down Ministry of Education imposition.

Consequently, the majority of teachers agreed that this lack of consultation had the following effects: inadequate knowledge (understanding) of the principle of CLT to be able to approve of it; continued use of traditional (drill-oriented) methodologies; under-utilisation of the communicative objective and the selection of only certain aspects of CLT that are considered applicable to learners.

The answer to the research question, 'Do teachers take ownership of CLT?' is that the majority of teachers declined ownership of the introduction and implementation of the CLT innovation in Botswana's ESL teaching and learning. This finding is not surprising bearing in mind that research (Savignon, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Girvan, 2000) rated absence or inadequate consultation amongst the major inhibitions of the implementation of curricular innovation world-wide. In Japan, for example, evidence shows that English teachers in particular have been subjected to all sorts of top-down educational changes during the last decade (Girvan, 2000:133).

In addition to lack of adequate consultation, a host of other factors may be responsible for teachers' failure to 'teach communicatively', including the possibility of a lack of correlation between the syllabus and the preferred didactic methodology. This discrepancy was explained in chapter two (item 2.7.9(b)), as born out of a failure to precede the design and choice of a curriculum and teaching methods with a full stock-taking exercise of the local sociocultural milieu. In view of this weakness, curriculum content and methodological practice have been described as often conflicting with the real school culture. For a full enunciation of this issue, the reader's attention is drawn to chapter 2 (item 2.7.9).

5.2.7 CONCLUSION

We conclude this chapter with the observation that the research questions have either been partially or entirely answered. A disturbing phenomenon, however, is that some answers to these questions are saddled with contradictions as pointed out above. As yet we can not offer outright explanations for this state of affairs.

One possibility is that teachers had a tendency to 'please by giving the answer they think is wanted' (Coleman, 1987:216). Teachers may also be coerced into giving inauthentic opinions by the urge to maintain face as trained professionals.

In chapter six the data obtained in the qualitative part of the research are presented and discussed.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter five, the results of the quantitative part of this study (the questionnaire responses), were presented, analysed and interpreted by situating the responses within CLT. The interpretation of the findings was partly facilitated by cross-referencing the teachers' responses against insights gathered from literature and previous research. One of the observations that emerged from the quantitative analysis was that there were numerous inconsistencies in the teachers' answers. In order to gain more knowledge about why this might be the case and to find out how theory and practice meet in Botswana's ELT classrooms, and in keeping with the mixed methodology of the study, a mini-ethnographic study was undertaken, consisting of live observations of ESL lessons.

As was pointed out in Chapter five, relying only on questionnaire responses is not a satisfactory way of finding answers to the research questions. The questionnaire responses disclosed only a partial insight into the state of Botswana teachers' conceptualization of ELT modeled on CLT. Prew (2012: 42) highlighted that competently trained teachers are a critical factor to the success of an educational innovation. He mentions that teachers must be trained appropriately, with multiple entry points into the profession. According to him explicit political support is needed that acknowledges the important role they play in society.

This chapter therefore makes another contribution to ascertain

whether the teachers in Botswana's JSSs are indeed well trained. The overarching question underlying the discussion of the qualitative data is: what is the degree of compliance between theory and practice of CLT in Botswana's junior secondary schools? The following question and sub-questions as formulated in chapter one, informed the methodology used in this chapter:

Main question

To what extent does classroom practice in Botswana's JSS's reflect CLT?

Sub-questions

To what extent do the didactic methods used by the teachers in Botswana's JSSs adhere to CLT theory?

What didactic methods would best suit CLT in Botswana's JSSs?

The last question will be answered by referring to relevant literature throughout this chapter.

6.2 ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

6.2.1 Research group

As explained in Chapter four, 17 teachers were selected to be observed by way of random sampling.

6.2.2 Data collection

The 17 ESL lessons were video and/or audio-recorded while the researcher was present during these recordings. The 17 recorded lessons covered the following topics and content:

Lesson 01 — Progressive tense

Lesson 02 — The role of prepositions

- Lesson 03 — Reading: identifying themes in a story
- Lesson 04 — Punctuation marks
- Lesson 05 — The teaching of spelling
- Lesson 6 — Picture reading: Pollution
- Lesson 7 — Authentic reading and use of Poem: Woman
- Lesson 8— Exploration of a street scene
- Lesson 9— Analyzing a novel: The prodigal daughter
- Lesson 10 — Comparing settings: The Plays of Goggle Eyes and Shaka Zulu
- Lesson 11— Identifying main characters: The Play of Shaka Zulu
- Lesson 12— Reading text: Malnutrition
- Lesson 13— Deducing themes: The Play of Goggle Eyes
- Lesson 14— Reading text: Folklore Medicine
- Lesson 15— Poetry: simile, metaphor, personification, rhyme, repetition and mood (from *The Anthology of poems*).
- Lesson 16— Parts of Speech
- Lesson 17—Poetry (rhyme, personification, simile)

In total 17 lessons of 20 - 40 minutes each were recorded. Because of the amount of data thus gathered and time and resource constraints, it was decided to analyse five of the 17 lessons in detail. During the lesson observation, the researcher also took down notes as a memory aid. Taking into account the resource and time constraints, as well as the fact that data generated from observations of individual lessons were somewhat overwhelming (and in some instances also repetitive) the desire to analyse only a randomly selected sample was heightened. The fact that there were only limited variations in terms of the teachers' nationality and educational background also motivated the choice of a narrower sample to analyse. (The decision to use a narrower sample of five lessons

was explained in Chapter four.)

As a last step in the data collection, the five selected lessons were transcribed. These transcriptions were used as a basis for the descriptive analysis.

6.2.3 Data analysis

The following presentation and analysis of the findings was organised around certain areas of ESL pedagogy. The areas were identified first of all based on an analysis of the data obtained during the classroom observation. In the second place the areas were selected because of the attention they received in the CLT theory as presented in Chapters two and three of this study. The areas are:

the teaching of grammar

classroom discourse

error correction

patterns of interaction /turn taking in classroom discussions

the choice of teaching materials and classroom activities.

The five lessons that are discussed in some detail are:

Lesson 01: The progressive tense

Lesson 02: Prepositions

Lesson 04: Punctuation marks

Lesson 05: Spelling

Lesson 08: Exploration of a street scene

6.3 The teaching of grammar

The recorded lessons were used as a case study to analyse the way in which aspects of English grammar were taught. The purpose of the analysis was to judge the extent to which the

actual teaching complied with CLT.

For the purpose of this analysis, the teaching of spelling and punctuation was included under the “grammar” heading, although they are strictly speaking not “grammar” as this term is defined and generally understood. The rationale for including them is that they are part of the syllabus and thus take-up valuable teaching and learning time. Four of the five recorded English language sessions, coded as L01 (The progressive tense), L02 (Prepositions), L04 (Punctuation) and L05 (Spelling) were used for this analysis.

In the following analysis excerpts from the relevant lessons are cited to illustrate how the teaching of these grammatical elements complied with or deviated from the principles and characteristics of CLT. Problems are identified and remedial measures are suggested which would make teaching more compliant with CLT.

Lessons 01, 02, and 05 share many similarities and display many of the characteristics of a traditional, form-focused pedagogy. These three teaching sessions present the progressive tense, prepositions, spelling and punctuation marks, respectively, as discrete language elements, unaccompanied by a context of use. They were taught in a prescriptive manner, by giving the rules, followed by a list of examples.

Lesson 05 (Spelling) in particular, was a clear example of teacher-led, form-focused pedagogy. Learners were engaged in a competition to determine the correct forms for a select number of vocabulary items. Four learners were randomly

picked from the class by the teacher, and each was assigned four lexical items to spell out. The best performer was awarded a prize. The vocabulary items in question were chosen by the teacher, who also orally dictated the individual words unaccompanied by any context of use. Participants were required to all sit in front of the class facing other learners and to respond by orally spelling out the vocabulary items. The rest of the class members assisted the teacher as nominal judges, as in most cases the teacher freely passed judgment on whether or not contestants were correct without recourse to the class. The teacher assigned the following words to the learners:

Learner N—flabbergasted, sterile, commence, accommodation

Learner T—meticulous, insinuate, unfortunate, decision

Learner C—lieutenant, ambitious, automatic, yesterday

Learner S—predicament, surprise, accuse, clarify

Requiring learners to take part in spelling contests is seen by some as advantageous to learners because they “boost confidence, develop presentation skills and develop their writing skills with their newly acquired vocabulary” (Echo Newspaper, 08-14 December, 2011: 29). The teacher explained that the vocabulary items were chosen primarily based on the frequency with which they are misspelled by learners. Other criteria for choosing these items, more in keeping with the theory of CLT, such as frequency, level of difficulty, and possible use in real-life situations familiar to the learner were not taken into consideration. Because the teacher used the chosen vocabulary items in an isolated manner, devoid of any context, it is very unlikely that learners would be able to deduce their meaning and therefore acquire these items as

part of their own vocabulary (not that this was the objective of the lesson.). As they were not included in communicative tasks, there seems to be little communicative value in treating these words only as frequently misspelled items. In other words, the ways in which these items were used weakened their potential for linguistic exploitation. The teaching technique minimized their contribution to the learner's expanding vocabulary knowledge. McTeague (1980: 33) notes:

The practice of presenting students with a word list devoid of any context seriously distorts the student's understanding of language in general and of the relationship between spoken and the written mode. It is also the source of some serious misconception about learning to read and to write.

McTeague (1980: 35) also sums up the advantage of another possible approach wherein spelling is deduced from the context in which the vocabulary item is used:

This systematic approach to spelling arises from the context of language use in the classroom in all subjects and the good results become a contribution to an enriched language environment.

The advantages of requiring learners to deduce the correct spelling forms of some lexical items indirectly from the context of a passage are many. For example, learners will be able to infer the pragmatic meaning of the vocabulary items simultaneously with taking decisions on their rightful spelling forms. Also, learners could possibly be made to work as a team to co-decide on the rightful spelling forms for the vocabulary

items under review. Further, possible uncertainties or encumbrances in deciding the correct spelling forms as might arise from the use of, for example, homonyms (words pronounced alike but having different meanings such as, “seller” and “cellar”) will be eliminated. Teaching vocabulary in context is also bound to make the exercise more realistic and might provide learners with a motivation for wanting to learn.

The same lesson model of taking discreet language items out of context and focusing on them was found in Lesson 01 (The progressive tense) and Lesson 02 (Prepositions). These lessons all made use of a drilling technique as the main teaching technique. Moreover, the lessons did not only focus on explaining the use of these grammatical items, but also on the metalanguage of terms and definitions. In addition to presenting the rules governing the correct use of the grammar items, abstract definitions of prepositions and the progressive tense, as well as a taxonomy of the different types of verbs used, were the main topics of the lessons.

Treating grammatical structures in this way - isolated, devoid of context and not used to aid communication between the learners themselves — is not in keeping with CLT. Different functions of the present progressive tense, such as channeling complaints, for example, (e.g. “You are driving too fast”) are not illustrated at all. Instead, very simple example sentences are given and repeated by the learners in a chorus fashion very reminiscent of classrooms of fifty or sixty years ago.

Lesson 01 is a clear example of focus on form and is modeled on a synthetic language teaching strategy. According to Wilkins (1976: 2), this technique is predicated on the belief that by

teaching the different parts of language separately and step-by-step they will be acquired through a process of gradual accumulation until the whole structure of the language has been built up.

In line with the synthetic language teaching strategy described in chapter 3 (Section 3.3.2), the teaching of verbs and tenses in L01 is treated as an inventory of discrete grammatical structures linked to lexical items. One major weakness of teaching the structural and syntactical elements of English in isolation is that whilst examples like: "The team is playing now" are perfectly correct as present progressive forms, they nonetheless fail to familiarize learners with alternative contextual or pragmatic meanings of the forms.

The abstract teaching of grammatical elements that has characterised the recorded lessons 01 and 02 might have its roots in the widely held view by generative linguists and SLA researchers (see, for example, Ellis, 2004: 106-107) that a large part of linguistic knowledge is constituted of formulaic chunks. In line with this philosophy of generative linguists, language is regarded as a separate mental faculty and linguistic competence is treated as independent performance.

Some final observations on the teaching of grammar

Teaching grammar and language forms by focusing on discrete forms **but in the context of a communicative activity** would be a better way of going about this endeavour, considering the type of learners being taught and the purpose for which language is being taught and used. Prescriptive techniques appear suitable for introverted and more academic-inclined learners whilst the more communicative techniques would appear more fitting to professional learners seeking to upgrade

their skills and aptitude in certain identified areas.

The heavy influence played by examinations on grammar teaching can not be emphasised enough. Although testing and assessment did not form part of the scope of this thesis, this researcher is of the opinion that it has no doubt had a hand in the preference of an abstract teaching of grammar.

Overall, there is a protruding evidence of the dominance of an explicit teaching of the discrete language forms. This prescriptive teaching of the grammatical, structural, and lexical elements of the English language in the absence of a fluency task, perhaps implies that the teachers think that these aspects play an important role in the language acquisition process.

What could be some possible critical roles that these linguistic elements are understood to play, which have given rise to the phenomenon wherein the bulk of the teaching is focused on developing an explicit knowledge of them? There is no one single correct answer, but one can speculate, based on past research, that this direct teaching of the TL form might be a reflection of a world-wide concern that both TBL and CLT seem to pay not enough attention to the teaching of “grammar”, as an important aid to the development of learners’ communicative abilities (see for detail, Thompson, 1996; Cook, 2008). Both TBL and CLT are seen to be lopsided in their attitude toward “grammar” as a instrument for the learners’ meaningful contribution to communicative activities, and by extension to the growth of their inter-language. Both assume that learners are to rely on “their own language resources”, in order to participate in communicative activities.

Taking into consideration the perspectives expressed above, one of the possible explanations for this direct teaching of grammar might be that teachers regard the action as a remedial measure to ameliorate a perceived anomaly wherein CLT asks learners to instantly engage in the creative use of the language, without initially providing the critical prerequisites for such a performance, including the teaching of the TFL grammar (cf. chapter 2, 2.13.2). Through this action, these teachers are, perhaps, expressing a desire to put measures in place to correct a fear that if no remedial measures are put in place, FL and SL learners might not be able to participate meaningfully in communicative activities, owing to an inhibition originating from their inadequate stock of language as is often reported by research. For example, this study has observed that the requirement of a COLT of speedily engaging learners in the creative use of the TL without prior confirmation as to whether or not they possess relevant linguistic background to measure up to the task, is counter-productive (for elaboration of this point, refer to Chapter 2, item 2.13.4).

This aspect of the study has pointed out that as a result of a shortfall in linguistic resources, learners are often distracted from engaging in spontaneous negotiation of meaning with their peers and their teacher. This problem also causes the learners' contribution to classroom discussion to be restricted to responses to the teacher's initiated enquiries. Further, the insecurity emanating from a limited knowledge of the TFL, as well as its socio-cultural context of use, coerces these learners' to react to the teacher's questions through answers that often take the form of very short expressions - "minimalized" or "lexicalized" aspects of language.

In a teaching scenario targeted to develop the explicit knowledge of the TL forms, the teacher dominates discourse through the use of a pattern of communication known as the I-R-F: The teacher initiates, the learner responds, the teacher gives feedback. The I-R-F discourse structures may have a serious negative impact on the learners' oral communication skills. It primarily requires learners to "repeat after the teacher", factual information that must be internalised for purposes of recall, later on during the examination.

We want to conclude discussion on the teaching of the TFL form (or grammar) by observing that the teachers in the transcribed lessons might have been motivated to teach the grammatical, lexical and structural form of English by a feeling that there is a need for a pre-task stage whose purpose is to equip the learners with the requisite knowledge and skills that would enable them to competently take part in communicative activities.

6.4 The nature of classroom discourse

Based on the observation of the 17 lessons, the nature of classroom discourse can be summed up as follows:

- teacher centred
- questions and answers
- chorus-like responses
- drilling techniques

In both L01 and L02, the teaching and learning took the style that Nunan (1987: 138) defined as 'conditioned classroom reflexes'. In such a classroom, display questions, memorization,

teacher talk and controlled practices are frequently made use of to give learners the chance to practice using a select number of the syntactical and structural aspects of the language. To that end, in L01 and L02, learners were drilled on the definition of a preposition and a verb / tense. They had to render these definitions verbatim and also had to recite the different types of verb and preposition and the rules governing their use.

In L01, for example, the convention for forming the “past and present progressive forms”, was taught as follows:

T: Our verb in the past progressive is formed in the past of be, a verb and an –ing.

The past of be, a verb and an –ing.

T: In the present progressive, the present of be, ... a verb, plus an –ing.

T: Should we go further? Should we go further?

L: (In chorus) Yes!, Yes!

T: Nicky!

L1:The team is playing now.

T: The team is playing now. It is the same as that one: ‘Is playing now!’ Where is the verb?

T: Duelang!

T: Which one is it? Is playing! Is playing!

L: Past progressive

T: Past progressive. Is playing! Is playing!

L: Present perfect

T: Present perfect, correct?

L: No.

T: No.

T: Thusie!

L: Present progressive

T: Present progressive! Present progressive! Present of be! Lo ne lo re ke mang kana sentence e le? (Setswana equivalent of: “What did you say that sentence was, by the way?”): “The team is playing now!”: Is playing, present of be, a verb and then an –ing. Then it makes a present progressive or a present continuous.

There is no evidence in the recorded lessons of a learner-centred approach. In L01 and L02 (the progressive tense and prepositions respectively), the two teachers engaged in what has been referred to by Soneye (2010: 218) as an elaborate “teacher-to-class mode” of delivery. This practice centred on defining the terms “verb” and “preposition”. A detailed listing of the various types of verb and preposition together with examples in each group were given. This traditional method of teaching is described as the ‘transmission-oriented view of learning’ (cf., for example, Reagan, 1999: 414). Its technique of teaching is underlined by behaviourist psychology. The main feature of a T & L modeled on behaviourist psychology is that language structures are presented in the form of short dialogues. Typical techniques include drilling exercises on the use of specific grammatical structures. In these lessons learners repeatedly listen to recorded conversations and then mimic the pronunciation and syntactic structures of those dialogues.

During the process of teacher-to-learner delivery that we have referred to above, especially in lesson 01, learners act mainly as passive on-lookers or what is often described in the literature (cf., for example, Nunan, 1987; Ellis, 2004; Edward and Westgate, 1987; Soneye, 2010) as “non-conversational” classroom discourse. Alternatively, this type of discourse has been referred to as teacher-dominated and non-

communicative. It is a teaching style that heralds from before the paradigm shift to CLT.

The teaching of prepositions as illustrated in Lesson 02 to a large extent also exudes the features of a formulaic presentation of language forms that is not attached to any contextual referents - as was also the case in Lesson 01 and Lesson 03 - and in the absence of a communicative activity.

Failure to teach prepositions in the context of an authentic text implies that the teaching in Lesson 02 subscribes to the ideas of generative linguists. Their thinking is underscored by a rule-based system. Consequently, their teaching philosophy is that grammar is taught (and acquired) abstractly with the ultimate goal to facilitate learners' recall / memory of factual information and how grammatical rules are strung up to form correct sentences, and not so much to develop genuine communication.

6.5 Error correction

In order to illustrate classroom practice pertaining to error correction, Lessons L01 and L08 are analyzed below. The discussion intends to focus on describing the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies that the teachers have made use of to help treat the language errors the learners have committed, as a tool for helping developing communicative competence in line with CLT.

LESSON 01: Progressive tense

T: Should we go further? Should we go further?

L: (In chorus) Yes!, Yes!

T: Nicky

L1: The team is playing now.

T: The team is playing now. It is the same as that one: 'Is playing now!' Where is the verb?

T: Duelang! Which one is it? Is playing! Is playing!

L: Past progressive

T: Past progressive. Is playing! Is playing!

L: Present perfect

T: Present perfect, correct?

L: No.

T: No.

T: Thusie!

L: Present progressive

T: Present progressive! Present progressive! Present of be! Lo ne lo re ke mang kana sentence ele? (What did you say that sentence was, by the way?): "The team is playing now!": Is playing, present of be, a verb and then an -ing. Then it makes a present progressive or a present continuous.

From this excerpt it would further seem that the teacher is demonstrating sensitivity to the philosophy that immediate and over-vigorous correction of the linguistic errors committed by the learners has potential to inhibit their learning (see chapter 3, section 3.3.3.3). As a result, when two of the learners erroneously suggested that the sentence: "The team is playing now," is in the "past progressive" and "present perfect" tenses (ref, lines 8 & 10) respectively, the teacher chooses to

avoid an overt objection to the two learners' apparent incorrect responses. She does not institute any correction and / or negative feedback, preferring to leave the responsibility to solve some communication problems to the learners themselves. Thus, she initially behaves as if she is unaware of the imperfect responses, resorting instead, to re-echoing the responses of the two learners for the benefit of their classmates. By simply re-echoing the learners responses without correcting the errors, coupled with her repetition of the original question as if she is recasting the originally question, for ease of comprehension, the teacher motivates the learners to engage in further conversation. Thus, through a neutral re-echoing of the two learners' supposedly erroneous responses, without taking a position on whether or not the two are correct, the teacher is creating an opportunity for self-directed learning. Especially, she nudges learners into seizing a chance to self-correct (see pp146-47, for details on the concept "nudging").

In line with the principles of the CA, the teacher adopted the "malleutic" position. Riley (1987:84), explains the term as equivalent to the role of a midwife who is neither father nor mother and where the teacher does not have all the answers.

In conformity with this principle the teacher is, to some extent, alive to her role as an independent facilitator who should, to a considerable degree, avoid acting as an intruder to the learners' self-directed learning. To that end, despite knowing that the statement: " the team is playing now" is neither the "past progressive" nor the "present perfect" as is being claimed by the learners, the teacher chooses to delay her feedback and even pretends to be unaware of an erroneous

response. Through this process the teacher is, to some limited extent, opening the door for learners to engage into a hypothetical speculative discourse (interpersonal interactions) in a bid to work out a possible solution to their communication problem.

However, in a real communicative teaching sense, encouraging learners to name the tenses is not adequate evidence of the use of language for communicative purposes. The teacher is merely focusing on drilling the learners to recall the abstract terms for English tenses rather than encouraging them to actually use these tenses in an authentic communicative task. In the true sense of the word, (as understood in CLT), the kind of “error” committed by the learners in the above excerpt, has nothing to do with communicative proficiency but instead it shows an understanding (or not) of the abstract concept of the progressive tense.

Notwithstanding the claim made above about self-directed learning and the constraints it places on the teacher's will or liberty to correct the errors made by the learners, the recorded lesson L01 presents evidence that the teacher is searching to balance her non-interference in the language learning experience against a desire to explicitly teach the "tenses" of the English language, owing to the critical role she perceives this form of the tense plays in underpinning the implicit performance of language functions. This objective impresses upon the teacher to strive to establish a fair balance between her role as helper or facilitator of learners' self-directed learning and the other as a disseminator or supreme knowledge. She actively stretches learners to confirm that they have developed a clear knowledge (grasp) of the English

“tenses”. She seeks to achieve this by stretching learners’ imagination until they ascertain clearly, that the statement: “The team is playing now” is in the ‘present progressive’ form. Thus, the teacher solicits ‘pushed output’, which is described by some scholars (cf., for example, Ellis, 2004:72) as output that “the learners are capable of producing on account of constant probing by the teacher”). She does this partly, by resorting to using a technique for “avoiding conversational trouble”. As a result we see that she poses some comprehension checks as a means of ascertaining whether or not the learners have understood the concept and rules for stringing up the “present continuous tense”. In other words, the teacher nudges the imagination of the rest of the class members by requesting their opinions regarding the apparently incorrect responses by two of their colleagues.

Therefore, while the teacher initially seemed open to tolerating (accommodating) ambiguities, she, however, appeared cognizant that the statement: “The team is playing now”, constitutes an aspect of the syllabus on which major focus is presently placed. This development, together with, the fact that the statement is practiced as part of whole class learning, impressed upon the teacher to ensure that such a grammatical aspect requires developing an explicit knowledge among learners. As a result, the teacher does not completely “relinquish topic control” to the learner as she had initially signaled when she failed to correct the two erroneous learner responses. She therefore seeks to correct the two erroneous answers by resorting to using strategies for repairing trouble. Thus, by means of protracted requests for clarification from group members, the teacher is able to confirm their [abstract] comprehension of the English “present progressive tense”.

Utilizing pushed output would appear to suggest that to some extent the teacher subscribes to some of the principles of the CA, especially, the requirement to engage learners in interpersonal interaction. A second instance of what seems to be the teacher's adherence to Communicative Approaches can be deduced from the fact that error correction seems to play a peripheral aspect of the teacher's pedagogical responsibilities. In circumstances where error correction is essential to avoid future comprehension problems, the practice is carried out in an unobtrusive manner.

Overall, however, the discrete or explicit teaching of language forms and the minimalized learner responses imply that to a considerable degree, linguistic structures are treated as an important tool for the acquisition process. Consequently, the bulk of the teaching is focused on the need to promote an explicit abstract knowledge of the language. Owing to this approach, the strategies for negotiating meaning are not enough. This is evidenced by, among, others, minimal or absence of the modification of the teacher's output (including using a simpler grammar or vocabulary) or the interactional structure of the conversation, such as, for example, requesting clarification.

To that end the majority of the interactions that took place were initiated by the teacher and the learners' participation in discourse took the form of responses to the teacher's stimulus. This teacher initiation and learner response pattern of communication is typical of the mode of discourse prevalent in traditional classrooms. These issues shall be discussed further in the next section.

6.6 Interaction in the classroom, learning materials and

activities.

This sub-section discusses the ways in which classroom teaching and learning materials and activities were used to help instructional discourse to closely emulate real-life conversations as they are known to take place in day-to-day setups. To assist analyze the extent to which the phenomenon taking place in Botswana's language classrooms resembles social communication, Lesson 8, a language teaching session exploring a picture based on a street scene was transcribed.

The transcribed lesson is attached as Appendix A.

In this lesson, the learners were asked to describe the attributes of the street, as depicted in the picture, which they considered similar, as well as, distinct from those normally encountered in their own city, Gaborone. This transcribed lesson will be used as the main evidence for drawing conclusions about the general nature of EFL teaching, but other lessons will also be referred to when necessary.

Important aspects that will be discussed are:

turn-taking

the techniques for questioning;

factors in the choice of classroom activities.

Choice of classroom materials

The choice of classroom materials should be underpinned by the desire to introduce learners to the use of natural language (cf. Scheppegrell, 1990; Tomlinson, 2005; Savignon, 2007; Cook, 2008). This might be accomplished by exposing the learners to reading, speaking, listening and oral language production by native speakers of the target language (TL).

Thus, ideally, EFL / ESL teaching materials should be marked by a healthy balance between foreign and local-based resources Tomlinson (2005:138).

In Lesson 01 and 02 the absence of any communicative tasks or authentic texts which would have some connection to real world scenarios is noted. Some comments about the use of authentic texts are warranted at this stage. It is not uncommon in CLT that teachers develop their own texts. The art wherein the teacher designs a text by adopting the original model (as found in authentic material) is in consonance with what Widdowson (1978: 89), as cited in Clarke (1989:75) described as creating a simple account of an initial authentic material. He explains this as:

... not an adoption of a given model but it is an integral text created by a 'reformulation of the propositional and illocutionary development. It is therefore, genuine in its own right, relying, as other pedagogical materials do, on the simplification of propositional content and not structure or lexis.

Lesson L08 relied on a picture depicting a "street scene". The picture in question is an authentic material, derived from the book *English In Action*, by Grant & Brennan (2005). The pictorial in question portrays the numerous characteristics of a city. As the subject (topic) of their language teaching lesson, learners were asked to identify a number of scenes in the pictorial, and then compare and contrast those happenings with what they have experienced taking place in their own city, Gaborone.

Suitability and effectiveness of this choice of material

At face-value, selecting a “street scene” as the subject of a classroom language lesson would appear an appropriate practice. The socio-cultural relevance of this topic to urban-based learners appears indisputable: they are likely to know or be familiar with this kind of scene very well. From its inherent interest and relevance, this authentic activity appears most likely to offer learners a motivation to improvise conversations in order to communicate meaningfully in the second language. A topic centering on a scene in a street will expose learners to an experience that suits their everyday life. Based on its relevance to the learners’ backgrounds, this topic is likely to generate tremendous interest among them, thus providing an impetus for negotiating meaning. The teacher’s skillfulness in utilizing relevant procedures to manipulate the task would also be a determinant for the success of the material as a teaching tool.

Owing to the strong influence that a chosen teaching material has on the effectiveness of a classroom discourse, we wish to kick start the discussion in this section by looking at the suitability of the choice of the subject matter for the classroom teaching session L08. The suitability of the subject matter derives from the fact that a happening in a street is an authentic experience with motivating value, since it is probable that learners might encounter such a scene in their daily routines. As such, owing to its inherent interest and relevance, this authentic activity appears most likely to offer learners a motivation to improvise conversations in order to communicate meaningfully. Learners could be presumed to have been provided with a sufficient basis for linguistic exploitation. The activity creates hope for offering the learners

opportunity to collaborate with each other in using language to solve real-life problems.

Notwithstanding the positive role expected to be played by the chosen subject matter in engendering meaningful communication, as was referred to above, some objects forming part of the picture could, depending on the relative development of the city in question, be viewed as alien. This challenge, possibly, could create a cultural barrier, distracting from effective communication. In addition to the degree with which the learner is familiar with these objects, the educational and occupational background of their family, is considered as playing a critical role in either facilitating or weakening their ability to put language to its communicative purposes. The teacher's skillfulness in utilizing relevant procedures to manipulate the task would also be a determinant for the success of the material as a teaching tool.

Task-based learning

With respect to communicating through task-work, especially picture description as is presently the case, we would like to draw on Ellis, 2004; Cook, 2000; Richards, 1999, and observe that in order for Botswana's classroom teaching to succeed in utilizing these as tools for developing the skills in learners for the communicative use of the language, it is necessary to pay attention to the following critical factors:

- The use of pictures as teaching materials should be underlined by the principles of "the same or different"(i.e., outlining the attributes for similarity and difference between objects conditions an activity to have a definitive outcome.
- The language used to describe pictures should be

accurate in order to enable the recipient to identify the object from among a group of others.

- The activities should be biased towards developing pragmatic meaning among learners. Implied is that interaction among group members becomes a norm.
- Teaching and learning materials used should be authentic, in order to sharpen the learners' skills in the functional and social uses of the TFL / TSL. Artificial materials could be used, subject to a confirmation that they will be able to elicit language uses that resemble real life situations.

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In spite of the advantages described above, communicating through task-work, especially picture description as we are faced with, in this case, is often associated with a number of challenges. Overall, since tasks require participants to accomplish an activity within a certain stipulated time, participants are often, reported to become overly concerned with finishing the activity within the set time, to an extent that employing a suitable language to reflect the communicative purpose of the activity becomes peripheral.

Regarding the picture description task, generally, Coughlan & Duff (1994), as quoted by Ellis, (2004: 186), opine that it does not constitute a 'natural communicative activity'. Implied in this is that a teacher who makes use of this activity is required to take a central role in directing (shaping) the actions of participants towards achieving a more communicative-like type of language use.

Research (Nunan, 1987; Edwards & Westgate, 1987) indicates that whilst learners might be familiar with the activity being

described (such as is the case with a picture description), they may still be unable to put language to its communicative use owing primarily to a socio-cultural background that has not adequately socialized them into the effective ways language is deployed to serve communicative functions. Due to the combined effects of the teacher's lack of skills in manipulating resources, absence of a proper socio-cultural environment to indoctrinate learners into the functional aspects of language use, and the pressure exerted by the desire to perform a task within the stipulated timeframe, the type of discourse emanating from a picture description has often been found to be pseudo or as talk that is taking place for its own sake, without an expressed purpose of serving some identified communicative needs.

Much will therefore depend on the actual classroom discourse.

Propensity for linguistic exploitation

The selection of a familiar subject matter presupposes that learners have been provided with an appropriate mental character for wanting to perform the task or activities associated with the subject. Choosing a relevant subject matter provided learners with the necessary "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), to use the relevant jargon (for detail on the concept, see Ellis, 2004: 179, citing Vygotsky, 1978). Suffice to only paraphrase here that the ZPD refers to the mental stimulation that a task participant obtains from the closeness of the task to his knowledge of the world. Basing the subject of a lesson on an issue of an inherent interest and / or relevance, bestows the authentic activity with the capacity of motivating learners to improvise conversations. It offers an opportunity to build learners' confidence to communicate

meaningfully in the target language. In other words, to a considerable degree, it would seem that the chosen activity was well placed to provide learners with a relevant experience for participating in negotiating meaning. As a result, it appeared that an expectation was set in motion that the chosen material would provide learners with sufficient basis for linguistic exploitation. Since the authentic material in question had a broader socio-cultural relevance, it was well positioned to reach out to a wider spectrum of academic disciplines. To that end, its associated tasks were expected to create opportunities for learners to collaborate with each other to solve communication problems. Put differently, basing a lesson on natural phenomena, projected the ostensible (professed) aim of the lesson as centred on promoting the functional aspects of language use. From the onset therefore, an expectation was set that the topic is likely to generate tremendous interest.

The modality for initiating discourse

According to communicative-based teaching approaches, the responsibility to initiate discussion (or conversations) in a language classroom is the prerogative of both the teacher and the learners. This implies that the teacher and the learners are treated as discursal compatriots, who enjoy similar rights to initiate, sustain and terminate communication. To evaluate the feasibility to which these ideas have been incorporated into Botswana's classroom teaching, we refer to Appendix A.

It is very clear from the transcription that there is no question of a meaningful conversation in this lesson. The teacher initiates all interactions and all interactions are only between the teacher and a learner or learners. There is little opportunity

for learners to give their own responses to the street scene, all responses must be in answer to questions by the teacher. The teacher does orchestrate moves to open up the communication and to facilitate conversation between herself and the learners, however, there is no suggestion that learners should interact amongst themselves. The teacher remains firmly at the centre of the classroom, literally and figuratively.

In contrast to the volubility by the teacher, learners tended to adopt a somewhat dormant posture. There are very few instances where learners took a personal initiative to facilitate interaction. One example is where a learner asked the meaning of the word “kerb” (see line 86 of Appendix A). Despite the perceived zeal to communicate by the teacher, most of her moves and initiatives consisted, in their entirety, of posing “display” questions, requiring learners to recall theoretical data. She asked many “Wh”- questions which asked for repetition of previous answers. This style of designing questions typically asks of learners to regurgitate factual information, rather than engage them in interpersonal interaction with a view to negotiate new meaning. The practice in which interlocutors relate to language chiefly as learners rather than as its users makes the interactions that result from these excerpts to resemble what Wells & Montgomery (1981), as cited in Edward and Westgate (1987: 169) have described as ‘display exchanges’. The two scholars explain the main objective of this type of questioning as meant to demand the learner to ‘show whether he / she knows the answer, rather than that the questioner should obtain some new information’.

In other words, by devoting the bulk of the focus to the typical ways in which language is taught and learned in a normal

classroom situation, we find that the majority of tasks being undertaken as part of the recorded classroom session L08 are highly controlled to reflect traditional classroom teaching. This is typified by, among others, the predominance of focused activities over open-ended ones.

Learners are asked to list the objects found in the picture which are not yet characteristic features of their city. They must then also state what the normal uses of those are. Overall, asking learners to study a picture and then list the expected functions of the objects forming part of it which are not yet found in Botswana, would appear to depict an incongruous relationship between an authentic teaching material and the accompanying questioning technique. Especially, the technique of questioning does not reflect the normal purposes for which we would like to familiarize ourselves with the physical characteristics of a location, such as, being able to follow directions or instructions to navigate one's way through a city or to locate a specific place of interest.

In a normal real-life situation, we do not study the physical features of a city so as to be able to handle focused questions of the nature shown here. Thus, whilst at face value, basing the topic of a lesson on a scene from a street (i.e., an authentic material) could project an element of realism, in essence, the actual utilisation of the material is capable of generating only very little genuine communication. Naturally, only limited conversational communication could be made possible by these activities. In other words, focused activities of this type do not go a long way in generating fluid, free-floating exchanges among learners, which are regarded as a major ingredient of communicative proficiency.

In contrast, real tasks do not require the teacher to condition the learners' linguistic choices as has been the case here. Instead, wide parameters are put in place to allow learners opportunities to make an uninhibited choice of a variety of language forms and purposes. Ellis (2004:9-10) explains what a good task is like:

...a task creates a certain semantic space and also the need for certain cognitive processes which are linked to linguistic options.

Thus, a task constrains what linguistic forms learners need to use, while allowing them the final choice. As Kumaravadivelu (1991:99), puts it, task 'indicates' the content but 'the actual language to be negotiated in the classroom is left to the teacher and the learner.

The following two examples from Appendix A illustrate the complaint that the communication is pseudo and unaccompanied by meaningful negotiation of meaning:

T: How about a telephone box? A telephone box. Thato, Cindy, Ticky? What can you see? What can you tell us about the public telephone booth? What is next to it?

L: Litter bin

AND

T: Okay, now! Still looking at that picture, some of the things in there we do have. Some we don't have in our country, or we have never seen them. What is it that you think we don't have in our country or in our city in Gaborone? Kutlwano!

L: A parking meter.

Characteristics of classroom intercourse

Above, we observed that asking learners to identify and describe objects from a pictorial that are not yet part of their own city does not constitute a realistic task. In this activity, the teacher had exercised complete control of the intercourse through directing closed-type questions to the learners. The learners are, therefore, afforded no opportunity for an open-ended discussion of the street scene before them. To that end, in the interaction referred to above, the teacher probably engages in elaborate talking with an express purpose of conditioning learners to undertake a closed-type talk in which there is not much exchange of new information.

This is evidence that this teacher has not yet fully understood CLT: no pair and group-work were instituted, the specific task centres on the names of certain objects and not on a conversation between learners, the teacher exercises rigid control of the class by conditioning learners to give one-word responses (either individually or in a chorus).

Code-switching

As is clear from Appendix A some code-switching takes place, but the teacher does not overindulge the learners here. She quickly takes them back to English. Since code-switching was not the topic of this thesis, nothing more will be said about this.

Open-ended tasks

Above we have observed that the teacher is engaged in an elaborate, closed-type of talk that does not provide much new information. The teacher could make the task more

communicative by employing open-ended type questions which require learners to describe or relate how the various objects in the picture impact on their lives. To that end, the teacher should have targeted, for example, dividing the class into pair or small-group work, and then asking them to describe the differences and similarities between the street scene shown in the picture and the city, Gaborone. Learners could also be asked to critically describe the pros and cons of some objects found in the picture, which are not yet part of their own city. On the basis of using referential-type questions, the teacher could have prevented or lessened her rigid control over how learners ought to describe the scene. In turn, these could have resulted in the discourse becoming realistic, as among others, learners would become more spontaneous in their use of the language in contrast to the present situation wherein they are merely reactive to the teacher's probing by chanting in chorus or rendering some very brief expressions.

"Teacher talk"

Appendix A shows evidence that the teacher is engaged in over-talking, to elicit very brief and display-type responses from the learners. In contrast to the learners' condensed (often one or two word) responses, her contribution consists of longer and more complex tracts of speech. Compare lines 28, 71, 101 and 119, where teacher speaks for long stretches on her own.

Since the learners are not interacting among themselves, there is not a great deal of cognitive and socio-cultural pressures being exerted on them. In other words, the instruction thrives on sheer relaying (transmission) of information as opposed to interpreting meaning.

This excerpt from Appendix A illustrates the contrast between the teacher's and the learners' communication:

Teacher: Different pictures of what? So, like I said, it is for advertising. Just like the advertiser booklet that you usually go through lo batla bo Sudoku and all those things. It is used for advertising. If you are a business person, and you have this project that you want people to buy, you go to the advertising people and then very soon, we'll be seeing your products there and we'll be able to go and buy it. It's where people sell their products, sell themselves. If we are in school and we have something, let's say magwinya and they are the best in town. And we want them to be the best even in the country. We go to these people, they make an advert and then very soon people will be coming to our school to buy this magwinya because they have seen that in the advertisement in the booklet. Okay.

Learners: (In chorus) Yes!

In general the learners' communication consists of one or two word - "minimalized" expressions as described by Seedhouse, 1999, cited in Ellis, 2004:254 – and the teacher makes little effort to illicit another kind of response.

Owing to the teacher's indulgence in over-talking, chiefly aimed at drilling learners to render display information, the teacher conditions learners to give one-word responses (either individually or in chorus) in an effort to confirm the ideas advanced by the teacher in her protracted statements. Ellis (2004: 254), citing Nunan (1989) describes some analogous situations (involving Cambodian and Hungarian learners) in

order to create a better appreciation of the negative effects of these focused tasks. He especially concludes that over-reliance on display language and minimalized expressions is a handicap since they do not help to stretch learners' inter-languages.

Owing to the orientation of classroom towards helping learners pass theoretically-inclined examinations, most English language classrooms are characterised by an absence of communicative features. This is a factor often cited as the reason for the absence of task-based learning in ESL classrooms, where the goal is rather to prepare learners for written examinations.

The following excerpt clearly illustrates the absence of any real communicative activity:

T: But where do we have tall buildings rona mo Gaborone, where can we, where can I find one?

L: BBS (Slightly inaudible)

T: BBS. Thank you.

T: Hey, Tumelo, what else do we have in our town?

L: We can find it in BBS

T: We can find it in BBS. Thank you.

T: Thabang!

L: A pedestrian crossing.

T: A pedestrian crossing. Do we have one?

L: (in chorus) yes, yes.

T: Where do we usually have such pedestrian crossings?

L: (in chorus) inaudible

T: Ah! No chorus! No chorus!

T: Gofaone! Where do we find a pedestrian crossing?

L: Inaudible

T: Or where? If we were to leave now and go out, where would we find one? Where would we find one?

L: Along the road

The dominance of display information in lesson L08, could be attributed to a questioning technique that addresses the psychological dimension of the learners' 'ZPD' to the exclusion of the social component. Since the questions solicit primarily factual data, the learners only have to mechanically activate their level of attentiveness in order to be able to answer these questions. Alternatively, a majority of these answers could be easily determined through recourse to the text itself since all the objects found on the picture are labeled. The possibility that an urban dweller would rely on their world knowledge (schemata) to jog their memory in recalling the uses of these objects is very high. This would be especially applicable in helping them remember the names of the items that are already found in their city. Taking these factors into consideration, it is therefore, not surprising that in the entire lesson very few learners ask questions themselves.

A major problem with lesson 08 is that there is no suggestion of a real communicative task. Simply answering a teacher's questions is not considered a suitable task for CLT.

Taking turns to participate in discourse

The sub-section seeks to exemplify whether (or not) Botswana's ESL teaching modeled on CLT has democratised the relationship between the teacher and learners, in the classroom. Factors in the confirmation check included the feasibility of creating an environment characterised by competition by the two parties to grab opportunities for taking part in instructional conversation. Second, whether the teacher persists in rationing chances to learners for them to speak in class. From the recorded classroom interaction L08,

there is evidence that interactants conduct discourse under an environment characterised by unequal relationships. In contrast to the conventions of natural discourse for example, where the right to participate in a discourse is competed for and / or is “up for grabs” the teacher appears to be posing as a senior partner in the activity. Appendix A as a whole aptly illustrates this point. Not only does the teacher willy-nilly decides who should talk, how and on what subject, but she appears to have been arrogated the right to ‘spotlight misbehavior’ if we may borrow words from Edward & Westgate (1987:44). These tendencies are exemplified in the following excerpt (Lines 41-51):

- T: Hey, Tumelo, what else do we have in our town?
L: We can find it in BBS
T: We can find it in BBS. Thank you.
T: Thabang!
L: A pedestrian crossing.
T: A pedestrian crossing. Do we have one?
L: (in chorus) Yes!, yes!.
T: Where do we usually have such pedestrian crossings?
L: (in chorus) inaudible
T: Ah! No chorus! No chorus!
T: Gofaone! Where do we find a pedestrian crossing?

In the above interaction, the teacher behaves as if she is a senior partner in a discourse. She often resorts to heavy-handed tactics, rendering classroom interaction non-conversational. For example, she unilaterally marshals learners Tumelo, Thabang and Gofaone into taking the platform to talk. She acknowledges and awards positive feedback for an irrelevant answer, but she also admonishes and ignores a

response because it was offered in a chorus. That is, as a result of the teacher's rigid control of discourse, she often dictatorially, cuts the line of thought, as is demonstrated here.

Possible reasons for the teacher's intolerance of open-ended discussion by learners (including engaging in chorus-like conversations) are many. In some instances teachers erroneously think that learners lack the necessary discursual competencies to engage in meaningful interpersonal interactions. Edward & Westgate (1987: 171) cite this obstacle to L-L interaction, saying that learners lack experience in verbalizing thought.

Teachers are also reluctant to relinquish control of a classroom to often noisy or chaotic interactional situations. Finally, teachers are often averse to permitting open-ended talk because it constrains their already limited time allocated for indoctrinating learners into factual information in readiness for recalling it in order to meet the requirements of an examinations–inclined curriculum.

The inflexible control the teacher exerts on classroom processes leads her to pose display questions in order to relay theoretical knowledge that learners are perceived to lack. Consequently, the classroom is constituted primarily of teacher-talk, with learners serving as mere recipients of the teacher's expert knowledge.

Conclusion

Overall, the research question that guided the research reported on in this chapter was answered as follows:

ESL teachers demonstrate partial knowledge and / or approval of CLT, by grounding their teaching in authentic materials. However, the utilisation of such materials has often revealed that teachers still lack adequate skills to best put such materials into effective use. To that end whilst teachers have shown an appreciation of CLT, they nonetheless employ a mix of traditional and modern teaching techniques, leading to the bulk of information being communicated consisting of the direct transmission of theoretical or abstract knowledge.

Task-based teaching is thus, mainly employed to provide a semblance of compliance with a language teaching that is targeted at promoting functional aspects of language use. Thus, it would be safe to observe that Botswana's ESL teaching and learning is biased towards the weak form of CLT.

The didactic methods used resemble traditional teaching much more than CLT. Chorus-like responses, one-word answers and minimal interaction between learners characterise the classrooms. Teachers remain firmly in control, dominating the use of the language and allowing little if any free-flowing conversation. Grammatical structures are taught for their own sake without any communicative context.

The picture painted in this chapter is of a CLT curriculum that is only followed in name with little evidence of an internalisation of the key concepts that were discussed in chapters two and three of this study. In Chapter seven some recommendations are made to improve this situation.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the major issues that the study has raised. The conclusions that were arrived at are relied upon as a vehicle for helping derive some possible solutions to the sub-problems of this study (cf. Chapter one, section 1.2.2), as were initially identified in relation to the main problem of the study, viz. that secondary school leavers and graduates in Botswana display limited and / or inadequate ESL communicative proficiency.

The problem of an inadequate English proficiency was presumed to have its roots in the present teaching curriculum, which although communicatively based, does not appear to be delivering the results predicted by the world-wide paradigm shift. In contrast, the teaching regime seems to primarily consist of teaching that over-concentrates on developing one language competence (grammatical or linguistic competence) to the exclusion of another (communicative competence). A culture of learning based on rote learning seems to flourish still despite an educational policy that sought to remedy this by advocating and adopting the Communicative Approach to the teaching of foreign or second languages.

The discussion on each of the sub-problems of this study will be accompanied by a statement describing whether or not the problem has been adequately resolved or treated.

In this chapter, it is also intended to discuss the extent to which the findings of this study are compatible or have deviated from the main principles and practices of CLT, as were discussed in the main theoretical chapters (i.e., chapters 2 and 3). Accomplishing these activities [i.e., working out some answers to the sub-problems of the study, as well as determining whether the findings are commensurate with major CLT tenets and practices] will be understood as providing the basis for evaluating the extent to which the researcher has been successful in addressing the main problems of the study.

In line with the findings that the study had arrived at, a list of recommendations would then be made. Finally, the shortcomings of this study are advanced and suggestions made regarding further research in the subject area.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This study investigated evidence of a discrepancy between CLT theory and practice in Botswana's Junior secondary schools.

In order to formulate a theoretical framework that will underpin the discussion and analysis of how the learners'

ESL communicative competence is developed, an extensive review of literature was undertaken. To that end, two chapters (2 and 3) were written in order to provide underlying perspectives and concepts. This knowledge was used in interpreting the findings.

The “Constructivist epistemology” (see, for example, Reagan, 1999: 413) and the “Cognitive psychology” (cf. Kumaravadivelu, 2006:118) were selected to serve as the underlying conceptual frameworks for this study.

The Constructivist epistemology, a blend of learning principles consisting of shared ideas between “Social constructivist”, in essence entails the rejection of the traditional transmission-oriented view of learning as well as, behaviorist models of learning, in favour of a process of constructing knowledge, is heavily dependent on the social matrix. Constructivist-based classroom language learning subscribes to the principle of “guided discovery”: that is, irrespective of the activities that the teacher engages on, the learner will ultimately construct meaning on their own terms. Among the leading language learning techniques of this approach is that it discourages the ‘Transmission / lecturing approach, in which the TL is learned through studying its structural components. From “Cognitive psychology”, the CA derived the concept of “Learner-centredness”, as expounded by, among other Kumaravadivelu (2006: 118), in which knowledge about the TL use is hypothesized to be generated by the learners

themselves through engaging in reciprocal interaction with either the other learners or with the teacher. The backbone of learner-centredness is the philosophy that through participating in communicative tasks, the learner indirectly learns the grammar and the social functions of the TL. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 115), cites Newmark (1966), to emphasize the value that Learner-centred methodologists place on “learning by doing” as a tool for developing the social and functional knowledge and skills in the TFL / TSL—...’complex bits of language are learned as whole chunk at a time rather than as an assemblage of constituent items’.

Thirty two Junior Secondary schools were selected as the subject of this study. The focus / objective was to explore how the schools in question have embraced and applied CLT strategies, to help improve English communicative proficiency for a variety of learners.

The study has shown that despite the introduction of CLT having been massively approved and declared an “institutional methodology” that was anticipated to offer the best solution to the challenges of an inadequate English language communicative proficiency by learners, the bulk of the ESL teaching and learning taking place in Botswana’s classrooms remains theoretical—it is focused on developing and testing the learners’ mastery and recall of the individual grammatical and syntactical elements of the TL.

The results of the quantitative study were inconclusive. On the one hand teachers appeared to approve of and knew what CLT was. On the other hand, their theoretical knowledge did not seem as sound as it should be. The teachers themselves seemed to feel that they were left out of the decision making process and their answers also suggested that they had to rely on their own initiatives to augment their teaching.

In the qualitative part of the study it was demonstrated that little of the typical and fundamental aspects of CLT were apparent in the classrooms. Limited attention is devoted to developing the learners' skills and knowledge of how language is effectively used as a vehicle for conveying meaning in different socio-cultural contexts.

In contextualising the findings within CLT research, the study attributes this discrepancy to, among others, what appears a top-down decision taken to implement the communicative curriculum in Botswana's ELT, prior to ensuring that the CLT paradigm has been adequately conceptualised by the language teachers.

Inter alia, the exemplars of this weakness include the continued predominance of traditional didactic methods, especially, the techniques that are theoretically-inclined towards asking learners to regurgitate factual information as opposed to practicing how language is used as a tool for communicating meaning in concrete social situations.

Notably absent from the classroom teaching is real task-based learning activities and a learner-centred teaching style.

7.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to arrive at its findings. However, it used only urban schools as its research site, thus leaving out the rural areas of Botswana. Further research is therefore necessary to arrive at a more comprehensive overview of the gap between theory and practice. Although the present findings are significant, hesitation is called for before generalising them to the whole of the Botswana education system.

Due to time constraints use was not made of interviews or focus groups. This researcher is of the opinion that these additional methodologies might enrich the current findings.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The shortcomings mentioned above may serve as an impetus in a follow-up study.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THE THESIS

7.5.1 Teacher training

It seems clear that pre-service and in-service training should be far more focused on preparing teachers for their new role as facilitators. Many of the current misconceptions could be addressed and solutions could be sought for in consultation with teachers themselves in an endeavour that should not be seen as yet another top-down process.

7.5.2 Teaching to the paper

The tyranny of examinations should be faced and addressed by policy makers. It is possible that more emphasis on oral examination and speaking in class could help balance the theoretical slant of the teaching. This aspect deserves further investigation.

7.5.3 Make the move to task-based learning

No other principle of CLT seems to be as important as task-based learning. Researchers such as Ellis and Nuhan view this approach as one that facilitates proficiency at best by providing necessary interactive and communicative inputs. The weak form of CLT uses tasks simply as a way of still focusing on forms (grammar) instead of making use of tasks as way of experiencing the real use of a language.

Some key characteristics of task-based learning are:

- The use of natural language by using tasks that

concentrate on meaning rather than on grammar.

- Learner-centred. The dominance of the teacher is removed.
- Focus on form still remains an important aspect.
- Tasks accommodate different tempi and ways of learning.
- Tasks provide opportunities for testing hypotheses about the language, interaction and meaning negotiation.

An important advantage of task-based learning is that it heightens intrinsic motivation of learners.

All in all, the Botswana educators and policy makers should take note of what is going on in the JSSs and take steps to improve the overall teaching and learning in ESL classrooms.

THE END

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

PLEASE FILL OR TICK (✓) IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE. CONTINUE YOUR WRITING ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER, WHERE NECESSARY.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION						
1.	IDENTIFICATION CODE:					
2.	NAME OF SCHOOL:					
3.	EMPLOYMENT TERMS:	CITIZEN <input type="checkbox"/>	EXPATRIATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
4.	GENDER:	MALE <input type="checkbox"/>	FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/>			
5.	AGE (in years)					
6.	QUALIFICATIONS:	1	2	3	4	5
	1. Diploma					
	2. B.Ed					
	3. BA + PGDE					
	4. M.Ed					
	5. Others Specify:					
7.	WORK EXPERIENCE (in years)					
SECTION B: ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) PROFICIENCY						
8.	The ESL proficiency of Botswana secondary school learners is inadequate.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					
9.	Learners' inadequate exposure to meaningful English language use in Botswana is among the primary causes of a low ESL proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					

10.	<p>The following are among the key exemplars of Batswana learners' inadequate exposure to meaningful English language use.</p> <p>Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5</p>						
	❖ Uneducated and poor language background of parents.						
	❖ Negative attitude toward the target language.						
	❖ Interference of first language						
	❖ Inadequate teaching and learning resources.						
	❖ Lack of "English-speaking culture".						
	❖ English is a 3 rd or even 4 th language, thus, learners primarily communicate in their mother tongue with parents and peers.						
11.	<p>The following are among the major causes (beside inadequate exposure) of an insufficient ESL proficiency of secondary school learners.</p> <p>Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5</p>	1	2	3	4	5	
	❖ Large class size.						
	❖ Inappropriate ESL curriculum.						
	❖ Unsuitable teaching and learning methods.						
	<p>I If you think that Botswana's teaching and learning methods are unsuitable, please indicate how true you find the following statements:</p> <p>Not at all true 1 Partially true 2 Neither true nor untrue 3 True 4 Very true 5</p>	1	2	3	4	5	
	- There is a passive learning culture						
	- There is over-reliance on course book materials						
	- There is a predominance of abstract learning and memorization over practical studies and acquisition and application of skills.						
	❖ ESL teaching staff that is not adequately trained to teach communicatively.						
	❖ Lack of convergence between communicative theory and practice.						
12.	<p>How valuable do you rate the following factors as indicators of a lack of English communicative proficiency by Batswana learners?</p> <p>Not at all valuable 1 Minimally valuable 2 Neither valuable nor Unvaluable 3 valuable 4 Very valuable 5</p>						
	❖ High rate of failure / low marks in English language examinations and tests.	1	2	3	4	5	
	❖ Lack of creative expression especially in written language.						
	❖ Lack of confidence during oral communicative activities						
	❖ Code switching especially during oral communication.						
	❖ Direct translation from mother tongue to English.						
	❖ Reticence / discomfort with using English outside the classroom.						

	❖ Failure to comprehend/ interpret materials written in English.					
13.	Botswana's ESL curriculum is suitable for developing learners' communicative proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					
14.	Please answer this question if you disagree or strongly disagree with the statement in 13, above. The following aspects of the curriculum obstruct successful development of learners' communicative proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					
	❖ Overemphasis on writing to the neglect of oral skills.					
	❖ Absence of "motivational tasks" to enable students to embrace the target foreign and / or second language.					
SECTION C: KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)						
15.	Rate the primary goal of the CLT approach to ESL teaching and Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
	Not at all important 1 Minimally important 2 Neither important nor unimportant 3 Important 4 Very important 5					
	❖ To promote fluency and accuracy among learners in using the target (English) language to communicate.					
	❖ To achieve communicative competence – being able to function in all contexts.					
	❖ Most students think in the mother tongue and directly translate to English when writing. By encouraging oral use and confidence in the language, CLT thus promotes spontaneous use of the language.					
	❖ Teaching and learning intertwined with learners' daily lives to make an easier and approachable learning, not only of English, but learning in general.					
	❖ Teaching that encourages independent learners, capable of researching for themselves instead of being spoon fed.					
16.	CLT is an appropriate teaching and learning approach for developing Botswana learners' ESL communicative proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					
17.	I consider the following as important aspects of CLT.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5					
	❖ Focuses on improving learners' speaking skills.					
	❖ CLT enables the learning of writing and speaking skills thus helping boost learners' confidence and fluency in the language.					
	❖ Places emphasis on learners' involvement in teaching and learning.					

	❖ Emphasis is on social context, learner to learner interaction, the use of authentic materials and encourages pupils to acquire functional (meaningful) use of language.					
	❖ Tolerance of errors allows flow of communication, thus ensuring adequate practice of language use.					
18.	<p>Writing is a critical element of CLT.</p> <p>Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>If you agree or strongly agree, how true are the following statements regarding the role of writing in CLT?</p> <p>Not at all true Not true Neither true nor false True Very true 1 2 3 4 5</p>	1	2	3	4	5
	❖ Proficiency in language is dependent on competence in all the(four) skills					
	❖ Awareness of the distinction between oral and written communication is an important requirement for using language effectively.					
	❖ Writing enables learners to express themselves freely and clearly without interference of the audience (teacher and other learners) and is, thus, an important tool for practicing how to speak.					
	❖ An understanding of the complementary relationship between written and oral communication (combination between speaking and writing) is an essential prerequisite for effective communication.					
19.	<p>How frequently do you make use of content-based topics in your ESL teaching and learning modelled along the communicative approach?</p> <p>Never Rarely Occasionally Often Very Often 1 2 3 4 5</p>	1	2	3	4	5
20.	<p>Evaluate the extent to which Botswana's ESL teaching and learning modelled on the communicative approach is outstandingly new (innovative) in the following aspects:</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good Very Good Excellent 1 2 3 4 5</p>	1	2	3	4	5
	❖ Syllabus emphasizes learners' communication in the target language as the primary goal of ESL teaching as opposed to the systematic study of grammar.					
	❖ Employing learner-centred approach and authentic materials as means of assisting students to acquire language proficiency in a manner equivalent to that of native speakers.					
	❖ Creation of a social context in delivery of instruction, which attaches meaning to language learning.					
	❖ Creating balance of emphasis among the four skills especially a shift away from the teaching and assessment of writing to speaking.					

	❖ Learners do most of the classroom talking and the teacher is only the facilitator of learner-to-learner interaction.					
	❖ Assessment of communicative effectiveness					
21.	I am of the opinion that among the key challenges to implementing the communicative approach in Botswana's ESL teaching is its "Western" educational and cultural orientation. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>					
22.	ESL teaching in Botswana secondary schools is experiencing some pedagogical problems. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5
23.	If your answer to 22, above, is yes, how applicable are the following problems to your situation? Not applicable 1 Neither applicable nor inapplicable 2 Partially applicable 3 Applicable 4 Very applicable 5	1	2	3	4	5
	❖ Poor resources for use during classroom instructions					
	❖ Student disinterest owing to lack of encouragement from home					
	❖ Large classes which impact negatively on the use of student-centred methodologies.					
	❖ Underutilization of school libraries for extensive reading					
	❖ Absence of a policy making speaking of English compulsory on school premises.					
24.	I am conversant with the concept "communicative competence" Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>					
25.	The development of communicative competence among learners is a suitable goal for ESL teaching in Botswana. Strongly disagree 1 Disagree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Agree 4 Strongly agree 5 If you disagree, elaborate your answer:	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Identify and briefly explain the main components of "communicative competence".					

27.	Grammar plays an important role in the development of learners' communicative competence.					1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree					
	1	2	3	4	5					
	If you agree or strongly agree, please answer the following									
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree					
	1	2	3	4	5					

APPENDIX B

Transcribed lesson 08

TOPIC: A street scene

Textbook used: Grant & Brennan 2005. English in Action. Audio – recorded.

1. T: We'll be talking about a street scene. It's a scene from a street, and it is there in your Text book, page 57. Do you all know what a street is?
2. L: (In chorus) yes, ma'am!
3. T: We've streets in our, our villages, our cities, our towns, places where we live. Unfortunately, we never take care to know the street names that we live in. We know.., straight?
4. L: (In chorus) No, yes!
5. T: Ah!, Tell us, what's the street names?
6. L: My Village?
7. T: Yes
8. L: Ah! Moshupa.
9. T: Moshupa, Moshupa, Moshupa street!
10. L: Yes!
11. T: Aha!
12. L: Lekhubu street
13. T: Lekhubu street
14. L: Lerala clause
15. T: Le..?
16. L: Lerala clause!
17. T: Lerala clause, and where is that, Ledumang?
18. L: Taung
19. T: Taung, wena Katlego?

20. L (Katlego): Tsholofelo
21. T: Tsholofelo!
22. L: Tshweneng
23. T: Tshweneng. Anyone from Ledumang? Who stays in
Ledumang?
24. L: (inaudible)
25. T: Ha?
26. L: (inaudible)
27. T: Sebutle! Okay. So we all do have streets and there are streets
names. If you don't know your street name, please go and find
out. Find out your street name.
28. T: So, it is a street scene. A scene in a street. A happening in a
street. How is that street? Look at that street in your text book. Is
it the same thing that you have wena in your street, that show
(??) in the case of Gaborone? Gaborone is your capital city, a kere?
Do we have the same things that we have in that picture page; yes
or no?
29. L: (speaking at the same time with the teacher. (In chorus) yes!,
yes!, yes!
30. T: We do have! Okay. What do we have in our city that we have
there?
31. L: Tall buildings.
32. T: Kagisano, mma?
33. L: Tall buildings
34. T: Tall Buildings. We do have tall buildings, don't we?
35. L: (in chorus) Yes!
36. T: Do we?
37. L: (in chorus) Yes!
38. T: But where do we have tall buildings rona mo Gaborone. Where

can we, where can I find one?

39. L: BBS (Slightly inaudible)

40. T: BBS. Thank you.

41. T: Hey, Tumelo, what else do we have in our town?

42. L: We can find it in BBS.

43. T: We can find it in BBS. Thank you.

44. T: Thabang!

45. L: A pedestrian crossing.

46. T: A pedestrian crossing. Do we have one?

47. L: (in chorus) Yes!, yes!.

48. T: Where do we usually have such pedestrian crossings?

49. L: (in chorus inaudible)

50. T: Aah! No chorus! No chorus!

51. T: Gofaone! Where do we find a pedestrian crossing?

52. L: (Inaudible)

53. T: Or where? If we were to leave now and go out, where would we find one? Where would we find one?

54. L: Along the road.

55. T: Where exactly? Just pick a particular place that you won't be mistaken to find a pedestrian crossing.

56. T: Mothusi

57. L: (Slightly inaudible) Near Marang!

58. T: Near Marang, Marang Junior. So, schools, schools should have pedestrian crossings, why?

59. Ah! Ah! Taurus, why?

60. L: Because there are a lot of kids.

61. T: Because there are a lot of kids crossing. That is there to allow them to cross with ease, why because as cars move in, as they jump in what they do is to stop to allow the children to pass

through, a kere?

62. L: (In chorus) Yes, ma'am!

63. T: So, let us identify that list there. Here is a picture of a city street. And let's find the following:

64. So, we'll do that, alright.

65. T: Can you find a pedestrian crossing?

66. L: (in chorus) Yes, ma'am!

67. T: Can you? What is it next to? Mogoditshane! What can you see next to a pedestrian crossing?

68. L: inaudible

69. T: Mma! Keorata!

70. L: Traffic Island.

71. T: You can see a traffic Island. Very good. You can see a traffic Island. How about a traffic light? You know them as robots. But there are traffic lights because they control the traffic. How about a traffic light? What can you hear when you are standing next to a traffic light? Dolly!

72. L: Standing post.

73. T: Is there any post next to a traffic light?

74. Ls: (In chorus) Yes, there is!

75. T: How about a telephone box? A telephone box. Thato, Cindy, Ticky? What can you see? What can you tell us about the public telephone booth? What is next to it?

76. L: Litter bin.

77. T: You have a litter bin. Is that correct?

78. Ls: (In chorus) Yes!

79. T: Yes, it is! How about a drain? Is there a drain there?

80. L: (In chorus) Yes!

81. T: Fanilo, where is it?

82. L: (Inaudible)
83. T: Mma! What is next to a drain?
84. L: You have a kerb and also a public telephone.
85. T: Ah! How about a parking meter?
86. S: What is a kerb?
87. T: What is a kerb? Boemo wants to know. Who has an idea what a kerb is?
88. L: Kerb?
89. T: Mm! Who has an idea? You have that drain there. What is a kerb? What do you think it is? Eh! A kerb. Definitely, it is not some.., eh! Pasika!
90. L: (Pasika) Someone, someone that transports people.
91. T: Someone that transports people? That is called a cab (*pronounced as "kerb"*), yes, but that is not like that kerb is about. That is not what that kerb refers to! That one is Cee Aee Bee, wena Pasika, but this one is Kay Eee Ar Bee.
92. L: (Inaudible)
93. T: What does this kerb refer to? Tumelo?
94. L: Esh! (in mother tongue) Ke tselanyana e e ka ha.
95. T: (In mother tongue) Tselanyana e e ka ha e!
96. L: Ee! Ee nang le bo white
97. T: Do you have an idea, wena Pasika?
98. L: (Utterance in mother tongue – inaudible)
99. T: Oh! Well, do you have an idea? A kerb is, you have a walkway. Take an example, this new road that we have. You have these (?)s that have been put up there. You have seen them?
100. L: (In chorus) Yes!
101. T: That's your kerb! So, the kerb here, in that picture is right along that line there! That is your kerb. If you are driving a

car and then one of your tyres goes into eh!, this kerb, there is bound to be some movement in the car and it tells you—“Now you are going off the road”. Okay! The last thing, ah!, an advertising hoarding, an advertising hoarding. Where is it? What is it next to? An advertising hoarding.

102. T: Neo
103. L: (Neo) Next, next to office block.
104. T: Eh! Just along the office block. And what do you think that is? What does it represent?
105. T: The hoarding, the advertising hoarding, what is it used for? It's self-explanatory. The –
106. T: Thuso! Just try.
107. T: I'm sure you have seen some
108. L: To show the name of the shop.
109. T: To show the name of the shop!
110. T: That can be a very good use for it. Ah!
111. L: To advertise what is in the shop.
112. T: That could be another good use of the hoarding. Good.
113. T: Have you been to River walk?
114. L: (In chorus) Yes Ma'am!
115. T: There is that big!! television there! Just opposite River walk, you have seen it?
116. L: (In chorus) Yes!
117. T: What do you usually see in that TV?
118. L: (In chorus) Inaudible
119. T: Different pictures of what? So, like I said, it is for advertising. Just like the advertiser booklet that you usually go through lo batla bo Sudoku and all those things. It is used for advertising. If you are a business person, and you have this project

that you want people to buy, you go to the advertising people and then very soon, we'll be seeing your products there and we'll be able to go and buy it. It's where people sell their products, sell themselves. If we are in school and we have something, let's say magwinya and they are the best in town. And we want them to be the best even in the country. We go to these people, they make an advert and then very soon people will be coming to our school to buy this magwinya because they have seen that in the advertisement in the booklet. Okay.

120. L: (In chorus) Yes!

121 T: Okay, now! Still looking at that picture, some of the things in there we do have. Some we don't have in our country, or we have never seen them. What is it that you think we don't have in our country or in our city in Gaborone? Kutlwano!

122L: A parking meter

123T: Has anyone of you seen a parking meter here in Gaborone?

124L: (In chorus) No!

125T: Do you know what it is or do we, can we think what it is used for?

126L: Inaudible (Murmur)

127T: Can you? Has anyone been to Zimbabwe?

128L: Yes!

129T: Yes!, who?

130L: Murmurs

131T: Who has been to Zimbabwe?

132T: You've been to Zimbabwe, have you seen a parking metre in Zimbabwe?

133L: Inaudible

134T: You've forgotten? Mma!

135L: Inaudible

136T: Dead?

137T: Have you been to Zim? There are parking meters in Zim. So, if you look at where that parking

138 meter is, you've taxi rank and then you've a motorist, moving away. What do we think the

139 parking meters are for? What are they used for? It's also self-explanatory. Oarabile! What do

140 you think they are used for? Well, for parking cars? Not very far from the answer. Parking

141 meter! Pasika?

142L: Parking the meter

143T: Pardon! Broken down cars! Katlego.

144L: Parking small vehicle

145T: Pardon! Parking small vehicles!, not very far. Modisane!

146L: Passport for parking

147T: He says it's a passport to parking. Do you set a passport in order to be able to park?

148 What exactly are you saying here? Or what do you think he is saying?

149 He has a very good idea. But, what is the parking, that is figurative, it is not literal in literal

150 Terms. What is Modisane saying?

151L: (In chorus) Inaudible

152T: Modisane do you want to say that in clear terms?

153L: Unclear

154T: Permission! In the form of what?

155L: (In chorus) Money

156T: In the form of money. It's a parking meter. It's a meter that is

there. So, only you do is you
157 come zoo! Tse! You park your car! And only you've to do is put
in some money. There are
158 different types. Probably, 30 minutes would be fifty thebe, if it
was here. Eh! 60 minutes
159 would be one pula. If you know you are going to be there for
more than an hour, so would
160 probably put two pula or one pula fifty.
161L: Inaudible
162T: Mma?
163L: Inaudible
164T: The meter counts. As soon as you put in the money, it starts
counting.
165L: Inaudible
166T: No, the camera or whatever is in the meter! For as long as the
car is there, the meter can
167 Sense. There is a sensor in the meter. And then of course what
[if the time runs out.]
168L:
[if the time runs out?]
169T: What if the time runs out? Then there is someone who comes
in. A policeman. A traffic man
170 who comes in and looks at the time. There would be a ticket
that comes out which says okay
171 Dineo cant be here at this time. Now, what is the time? It is now
four hours since you parked
172 here and you only put in two pula to say, you are going to be
here for two hours, that
173 that you owe two pula

174L: Two

175T: Two pula, so there will be a ticket for you to pay that.

176L: (In chorus) inaudible

177T: What else do you think is there that we don't have? Katlego!

178L: A traffic Island!

179T: A traffic island! Don't we have traffic Islands?

180L: We have

181T: We have! Kearata says we have. Where do we have them?

What are they?

182L: Inaudible.

183T: Exactly! Excellent. We do have traffic Islands. Usually where we have eh!, an intersection.

184 Aah!

185 Okay, let's say this is your road from Phakalane, and then we have this one going to, to

186 Francistown and then this one which comes into Gaborone. And then you have, here, you

187 have traffic lights. After the traffic lights, before the next traffic lights, somewhere here, you

188 have this yellow line, it is usually like this. Especially, it is before intersections, lets say it is here. That is your traffic island. An island just as you know an island to be something that is surrounded by...

189L: (In chorus) water!

190T: An Island is a place, but it is surrounded by...

191L: (In chorus) water

192T: By water. So, and a traffic Island is meant for ,.. What do you think is meant for?

193L: Why do we have traffic Islands?

194T: Letlotlo?

195L: Why do we have traffic islands?

196T: Mothusi

197L: Inaudible

198T: Say it please, try

199T: Anyone, why do we have traffic Islands?

200L: To warn

201T: To call?

202L: To warn

203T: To warn what? Warn what?

204L: The driver that the. The

205T: To warn the driver that probably, the, the, the road is: that it's a paved road. But that's not

206 the reason why we have a traffic island. Traffic islands are meant for the motorists to park

207 there in case they have a problem with their cars. If you are coming into the road and

208 suddenly somewhere around Sebele before you reach the shell traffic lights, you run out of

209 petrol, the best thing for you to do is just not stop there. At least ask for help from some

210 motorists to pull you up to the traffic island. Once there, then your car is safe because there

211 is no car that is supposed, to, eh, use that place. It is only there for those who have eh!,

212 difficulties with their cars.

213T: Okay?

214L: (in chorus) yes ma'am!

215T: It is safe in the in the traffic island unlike when it is just on the road, because there might not

- 216 be any signs to tell those who are coming to say aah!, Aah!
Watch out, Kutlwano has a
- 217 problem there! The other person would come, a tabogile and
then hit on you. So far so good.
- 218 Do you have any questions?
- 219L: (Loudly!) Yes, ma'am! Who is supposed to put the traffic sign?
- 220T: You are supposed to put signs. You are supposed to put signs
that this car has some
- 221 problem, it is not moving. There is, eh! a small, a small red
triangle that you've to put behind
- 222 and in front, and whoever is a motorist is supposed to know
that those signs means that there
- 223 is someone who has a problem, or, even put on your roads.
You'll know that was Mr Zibani??? Who had your own-----?
(inaudible word). Okay!, You know?
- 224 Okay? You know?
- 225L: (In chorus) Yes!
- 226T: Alright, let go to exercise 3 then. Make up six sentences, about
things that make living in the
- 227 city easier, like this you have been given an example. The litter
bin keeps the city clean. Isn't
- 228 that so?
- 229L: (in chorus) It is!
- 230T: It is so, that is why you have litter bins around the school, so
that you don't just litter, throw
- 231 paper everywhere. We put them into their rightful place. So,
make that. You have one there.
- 232 Come up with, six other things that make life, eh, easier in your
own city, looking at that

- 233 picture there. Six sentences in your own exercise book. Five minutes should be gone.
- 234T: Kefentse, Gofaone, le mang.?
- 235L: (in chorus) Gaomangwe.
- 236T: Gaomangwe, tell us what you have there. Just one, one, one, one, one. What makes the city,
- 237 eh!... Wame na Dolly?
- 238L: The Public phone
- 239T: The public phone. How does it make the living in the city easy?
- 240L: When(inaudible utterance)
- 241T: Very good! If you have a cellphone like me, and it breaks down and I'm near the public phone,
- 242 I'm able to call whoever I want to call because there is a public phone near.
- 243T: Lucky!
- 244L: Traffic lights
- 245T: Traffic lights?
- 246L: Control movement of cars.
- 247T: They control the movement of cars. If there were no traffic lights then it would mean that us
- 248 people would not be able to cross the streets. But then we have red, orange and yellow. Red
- 249 is the cars to stop and then you are able to cross the road, a kere?
- 250T: Kefentse!
- 251L: Supermarket
- 252T: Supermarket
- 253L: Provide people with food
- 254T: They provide people with food! We only live because we eat.

Can we live without eating?

255L: (In chorus) No!

256T: Okay! Ah! Mh? So, you go to the supermarket to by some food.