

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a historical review of grammar teaching and the role of grammar in different teaching approaches. It also reviews studies related to communicative language teaching.

#### 1. Historical Review of Grammar Teaching

Grammar has been considered an important component of language teaching for decades. However, the role of grammar and its definition have changed through time according to different language teaching approaches based on different theories or beliefs.

The status of grammar, how grammar is taught, and problems in teaching grammar will be reviewed through examining some language teaching approaches derived from different views, namely the structural view, the cognitive view, and the functional and interactional view.

In early language teaching, *the grammar translation method* used for the purposes of teaching learners to read and appreciate foreign language literature (Larsen-Freeman, 1986 : 4). To achieve the purposes, learners need to learn about grammatical rules and vocabulary of the target language. And language learning involves not only rule learning but also the memorization of rules and facts related to the first language meaning by translation practice (Stern, 1983 : 455; Larsen-Freeman, 1986 : 11 and Richards and Rodgers, 1991 : 4). Within this method, grammar is considered the center of language teaching. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together and the instruction focuses on form and inflection of words (Brown, 1994 : 53). Moreover, since its main purpose is reading, grammar is used as an aid to the study of texts in a foreign language (Richards and Rodgers, 1991 : 4).

Therefore, learners are expected to study and memorize the rules of the target language. Grammar is generally taught deductively, that is, it approaches the language first through detailed analysis of grammatical rules, followed by the application of knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. The grammar translation method has been practiced widely in many language teaching situations. However, it was criticized in the late nineteenth century for the failure of foreign language teaching as it seemed to overemphasize the memorization of unusable grammatical rules and vocabulary. Stern (1983 : 453) stated that it was criticized for the limitations of practice techniques which never emancipate the learner from dominance of the first language.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the study of language appeared to become more scientific and systematic. It also combined with other disciplines, including psychology and sociology. In Europe, *the direct method* was introduced to serve the communicative purpose emphasizing the use of the spoken language which has been neglected in the grammar translation method. It shifted from literary language taught in the former method to spoken everyday language as the object of early instruction. Pronunciation is emphasized since language is primarily spoken. In the classroom, only the target language is allowed to be used in the process of learning/teaching. The activities mainly involve asking and answering questions, imitation, dictation and practice of pronunciation, for instance. Grammar has lost its place in classroom instruction. It is not encouraged to teach it explicitly. Instead, learners are encouraged to discover grammatical rules through the text that is provided in the target language (Stern, 1983 : 459 and Larsen-Freeman, 1986 : 24-25). Stern (1983 : 459) stated "Grammatical observations are derived from the text read and students are encouraged to discover for themselves the grammatical principle involved."

However, this approach leads to problems of how to prevent misunderstanding in conveying meanings without referring to the first language and problems of using language in a real situation (Richards and Rodgers, 1986 : 11 and Brown, 1994 : 56).

While grammar translation and direct methods largely developed in the European school systems, *audiolingualism* originated in America.

The audiolingual method bases its principles on *the structural linguistics* combined with *behavioral language learning theory* which uses the model of stimulus - response - reinforcement to achieve language learning. This teaching method theoretically brings learners up to native levels of proficiency in a short time. Like the direct method, the audiolingual method gives priority to speaking and listening without reference to the first language, and grammar is implicitly learned in class.

The audiolingual views language as a set of habits. To achieve language learning, building up habits on the basis of stimulus - response - reinforcement, memorization of dialogues, imitative repetition, and pattern drills is needed to develop habitual and automatic use of the language as native speakers. This process is based on one of principles of *the structural linguistics* in which the need for practice using language as a means of *native-like* communication is emphasized. Krashen (1984 : 132) pointed out that the goal of the audiolingual method is "...to have the students overlearning a variety of patterns to be used directly in performance..." There seems to be no place for explicit grammar teaching in this method. According to Fries (1957; quoted in Bell 1981 : 97), grammar lessons are set towards the view that learning a foreign language consists not in learning about language but in developing a new set of habits. Therefore, the lesson consists basically of exercises to develop habits, not explanations or talk about language. Grammar is a particular system of devices which a language uses to signal one of its various layers of meaning.

The audiolingual method adopted a strongly *empirical* and *inductive* approach. In the inductive approach, students work out conscious rules on the basis of the dialogue and pattern practice (Stern, 1983 : 462; Krashen, 1984 : 132; Larsen-Freeman, 1986 : 43 and Harmer, 1991 : 31-34).

With the audiolingual method, by overlearning, learners are expected to produce error-free utterances, however, when the learners confront a situation different from what they have practiced, they may face some difficulties in applying

their knowledge in communication. River (1964; cited in Brown, 1994 : 58) stated, "The audiolingual method fails to teach long-term communicative proficiency." Consequently, there have been attempts to find a solution to such problems.

As an alternative to the audiolingual method, *the cognitive theory* known as the cognitive code method, was developed in the mid-1960s in response to the criticism of the structural theory.

*The cognitive code method* reconsiders the view on language as a system which relates meaning to the rules rather as a set of habits as in the structural theory. According to Richards and Rodgers (1991 : 19), "Cognitive code proponents have attempted to link a more sophisticated model of structuralism to a more mentalistic and less behavioristic brand of learning theory." In addition, Richards, Platt and Platt (1996 : 59-60) defined the cognitive code approach as:

...an approach to second and foreign language teaching which is based on the belief that language learning is a process which involves an active mental process and not simply the forming of habits. It gives importance to the learner's active part in the process of using and learning language, particularly in the learning of grammatical rules...

The cognitive code theory is reflected in *Transformational generative grammar (TG)*. TG views language differently from the audiolingual method. It regards language as a system which relates meaning to substance and considers language as a mental process not a behavior (Bell, 1981 : 99-110). *TG* pays attention to the learner's understanding of the structure of the target language. It also emphasizes conscious acquisition of language as a meaningful system (Stern, 1983 : 469). It attempts to reposition grammar in the classroom and to make language teaching more effectively by adding meaning and creative use of language to its principles. It can be noticed that grammar has been shifted to more consideration for meaningful utterances rather than habit formation-drills and repetition.

Grammar plays a role in understanding the sentence structure and its meaning in a certain sentence. It is believed that with language competence the student will be able to use language actively. In language learning, learners acquire competence (knowledge of grammar) which allows them to be creative as language users (experimenting and saying things they have not said before) (Chomsky; cited in Harmer, 1991 : 32-33). Chomsky (cited in Richards, 1987 : 144-145) well-known for his distinction between competence and performance, also states that grammatical competence is the knowledge underlying learners' ability (competence) to produce and understand sentences in a language (performance).

However, this view seems to focus on structure, meaning and creative use of language only at the sentence level. According to Richards (1987 : 144-145), the theory of *TG* captures our ability to realize proposition in sentence structure through the choice of grammatical categories, such as subject, predicate and complement; and through grammatical categories, such as reordering and transformation. Thus, learners may understand clearly the sentence structure but they may not be able to use it appropriately in a variety of contexts. Hymes (1972 ; cited in Yalden, 1983 : 11) has criticized that "Chomsky's categories of competence and performance do not allow at all for whether what we say is appropriate to any given social context."

It should be noted that all the methods discussed earlier, namely, *Grammar Translation*, *Direct method*, *Audiolingual method* and *Transformational Generative grammar*, emphasize the learning of "code" rather than learning the language through communicative activities or in situational context. And grammar still holds its place in the center of the study of language.

From that time we have seen the decline of grammar in language teaching. In the mid 1970s, the key concepts of communication or communicative competence have been developed and widely accepted in the theory, practice and research in educational linguistics and language pedagogy.

In responding to the acceptance of communicative competence, *the functional view* has been introduced. The functional approach views language as a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. It emphasizes meaning and communicative skills (Richards and Rodgers, 1986 : 17). Even though it is similar to TG in that meaning is taken into consideration, the functional view asserts that part of the meaning of a word or a sentence lies in the situation in which it is used (Bell, 1981 : 112). The *Notional/Functional syllabus* is an attempt to express this view of language. It does not examine language in isolation but from its uses and in social contexts. The instruction following the notional/functional syllabus is organized around categories of language use, which are defined as notion and function. *Notion* is the interaction between categories of meaning and grammatical form in most language, and *function* refers to the uses to which language forms are put.

The notional/functional syllabus includes information about language use as well as language form. Learners are taught a certain pair (form-function) at a time. This also causes a problem to learners when they have to deal with other situations that require different language form or function. Moreover, according to Krahnke (1987 : 37), form-function pairing does little to develop interactional communicative ability. This problem has been dealt with in the interactional view.

In *the interactional view*, language is seen as a means for realization of interpersonal relations and for social interaction between individuals. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986 : 17), interactional series focuses on the patterns of moves, acts, and negotiation found in conversational exchange. Hymes (cited in Richards, 1987 : 145), pointed out that in addition to the knowledge of grammar, knowing a language entails being able to use it for social and communicative interaction. Hymes used the term 'communicative competence' to refer to knowledge of both rules of grammar, vocabulary and the semantics, and rules of speaking.

*The communicative approach* derived from functional and interactional views focuses on the teaching of language functions and the use of communicative activities such as role playing, games, problem-solving, discussion and project work, which

encourage students to communicate (Harmer, 1997 : 4-6). Grammar does not have a particular role in the classroom. Grammar teaching is not explicitly presented; on the other hand, inductive teaching is encouraged through the use of communicative activities. In the early stage of communicative language teaching, where the emphasis is strongly on communicative activities which aim to develop communicative competence, grammar is devalued and left out of the classroom.

Grammar is believed to be acquired through the exposure of language input. According to Master (1994 : 229), since the emphasis is on the communicative competence, it is believed that grammatical competence is acquired through comprehensible input provided by the instructor. Krashen (1984, 1982) and Dulay et al. (1982; cited in Nunan, 1991 : 145) set out a number of principles for practice. One of the principles is that learners are encouraged to expose themselves to natural communication in the target language, which is considered necessary for subconscious processes to work well.

After communicative language teaching became widely practiced, many scholars raised the point that focusing only on communicative activities would not help learners develop their communicative ability and that grammar should be considered essential in language teaching. For example, Thompson (1996 : 9-15) pointed out that grammar teaching should be taken into consideration in the language teaching. Some scholars attempt to combine form with function and meaning. According to William (1994 : 107), teaching only language functions is not enough, students need to be taught grammar as well. The form presents the meaning and the meaning is embodied in the form. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997 : 147-148) stated that explicit, direct elements of structures are gaining significance in teaching communicative abilities and skills. In addition, Celce-Murcia (1990 : 204) pointed out that language cannot be used for purposes of effective communication unless all three aspects - grammar, meaning and function - are present and interacting with each other.

Many believe that, even though the focus of communicative language teaching is on function or meaning, grammar still has a crucial role in language teaching. Chantisa Chanprasert (1998), pointed out that in learning language as a means of communication, grammar maintains the standard of the spoken and written language. Chantisa Chanprasert (1998 : 7) said, "...when students do not learn grammar, they may lack accuracy or grammatical competence in using the foreign language, because the sentences of the functions are composed of grammar elements..."

Terrell (1991 : 61-62) stated that grammar instruction is helpful in the acquisition process by marking certain grammatical forms as more important and thereby aiding the learner to establish correct meaning - form connection. Therefore, grammar should be taught in meaningful context. According to Nunan (1998 : 101-109), if students are not given opportunities to explore grammar in context, it will be difficult for them to see how and why alternative forms exist to express different communication meanings. Nunan proposed that grammar instruction would be more effective in classrooms where learners are exposed to authentic samples of language. Therefore, it is not enough to teach only structure and let the students drill, it is also important to give the student a chance to be exposed to the real use of grammar. In other words, using grammar in context helps students learn effectively.

In communicative language teaching, the role of grammar taught in context differs from its role in the former methods. Grammar has changed its status through time from a central role in language teaching to being on the edge of the teaching, and recently to being brought back into the language classroom again. Focusing on grammar teaching in context, *grammar consciousness-raising* has been introduced in contrast with traditional approaches in which the goal is to instill correct grammatical patterns and habits directly (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1996 : 78). In *grammar consciousness-raising*, the emphasis is on form-function relationships and grammatical structures and elements which are situated in a broader discoursal context (Nunan, 1991 : 149). The returning of grammar differ from the traditional since it focuses on learning grammar for the purpose of communication rather than learning it



as a subject matter. Nunan (1991 : 150) stated, “Unlike traditional approaches to teaching grammar, then, grammar consciousness-raising fulfills a process rather than product role: it is a facilitator, a means to an end rather than an end in itself.”

However, focusing on communicative competence and the return of grammar teaching for communicative purposes have caused frustration to some language teachers in applying the approach.

In the next section, some studies on communicative teaching are reviewed to present the communicative teaching situation and the current role of grammar in the classroom.

## **2. Review of Studies Related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Communicative language teaching has been widely accepted in the language class since it was introduced as an approach that emphasizes communicative competence. The students are expected to use language to communicate effectively and appropriately in a certain situational context (Larsen-Freeman, 1986 : 131 and Nunan, 1994 : 27). To make up a person’s communicative competence, Littlewood (1983 : 6) stated “Learners must be aware of the social meaning of language forms focusing on the appropriateness and acceptability of language used in a certain social circumstance.”

According to the global communication needs, English teaching has been in the process of transferring from the popular traditional approach to the up-dated communicative approach, which is known for its emphasis on communicative competence. The CLT has been introduced and practiced extensively in the ESL and EFL teaching context where there is a need to develop the learners’ communicative competence. Even though most English language teachers are concerned with the learners’ need to use English for communication, CLT, which is considered the appropriate teaching approach, appears to be brought into the class more on theory

than the actual practice (Karavas-Doukas, 1996 : 187). This section presents some studies on the language teaching situation focusing on the use of CLT.

While the CLT is claimed to be useful and appropriate in the language class, its practice in the classroom does not occur much after all. Nunan's classroom-based study on communicative language practice (1987) revealed the persistence of non-communicative patterns interaction. In this study, five communicative language lessons were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Five teachers participated in the study were knowledgeable and committed to communicative language teaching. The study found that while externally the lessons were conducted in accordance to the communicative principles - the teachers claimed to be teaching communicatively and focusing on functional aspects of language used - however, after close analysis, there was found to be little genuine communication between teacher and student. Nunan has pointed out some of the classroom constraints in conducting communicative lessons. In Nunan (1987 : 141), citing Long and Sato (1983 : 270), he said that two kinds of constraints affecting the classroom speech of SL teachers were the setting for the conversation, the patterns of speech associated with the role of teacher and the limited linguistic proficiency of the interlocutor. Nunan also pointed out that the learners' attitude is another constraint. Generally, the learners bring with them a particular expectation of what they have to learn in the language class which is often mismatched with the teachers'. Nunan concluded that there is growing evidence that, in communicative classes, interaction may, in fact, not be very communicative after all. This comment has been supported by many studies such as Sano, Takashi and Yoneyama (1984); Gorsuch (2000); Li (1998); Xiaoju (1984); Roa (1996); Yu (2001); etc.

In the Japanese English teaching situation, CLT also plays a role in the teaching as in other English teaching contexts. However, the CLT is only partly used in the Japanese English language classroom. Sano, Takahashi and Yoneyama (1984) asserted that for many teachers, communicative goal is far too ambitious to be aimed at in the classroom. They stated, "...teachers often find this too distant a goal to aim at

in the classroom, particularly where the need to use the foreign language is not felt by the students to be pressing..." (p.170). Therefore, they believed that the approach used in the language class should vary according to the environment in which the teacher is working. In 1977, they proposed, roughly at the same time, a communicative language teaching approach which was somewhat different from the CLT developed in Europe. In Japan, English is not an instrument to do something with, it is only a subject in the curriculum. Teachers find it necessary to give learners the linguistic ability to meet their need to express themselves. The structure-based syllabus is a guideline in developing the teaching. However, it is encouraged to use the structure in meaningful communicative situations. Communicative activities are conducted in the classroom together with the presentation of linguistic items. There are some difficulties in conducting communicative activities in a large class within a short time. Difficulties faced by the Japanese English language teachers include limited exposure to English, the great linguistic differences between English and Japanese and the competitive entrance examination focusing on accurate knowledge of grammar.

Accordingly, in a study on the influences of EFL educational policies and educational cultures on Japanese English language teachers' approval of communicative activities, Gorsuch (2000 : 687) stated that teachers felt that the university entrance examination and the curriculum are incongruent. While Japanese English language teachers pay attention to preparing the students for the university entrance examination which emphasizes knowledge of grammar points, vocabulary, and English usage, the curriculum (*The Course of Study for Senior High School*) is intended to promote development of students' communicative skills. *The Course of Study for Senior High School* derived from the notion that Japanese should be able to communicate in one or more foreign languages. According to Gorsuch's survey-study, the university entrance examination preparation has an influence on Japanese high school EFL education.

It appears that there are conflicts in English teaching in the Japanese context. While the curriculum aims towards communication, the teaching has been strongly affected by examinations that emphasize accurate grammatical knowledge. While teachers focus on preparing students for the university examination, they seem to leave the communicative activities behind.

The study suggested that in order to teach more communicatively, not only the curriculum, but also the examination should be revised. Communicative competence should be taken into consideration in constructing the examination. Gorsuch (2000 : 701) pointed out, "In order to compete, some universities may change their programs and examinations to appear more international." This may involve interview tests, writing tests, or tests of listening comprehension focused on meaning.

The conflict in practicing CLT also occurred in South Korea. Li (1998 : 677-703) conducted a case study on Korean English language teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CLT. The study found that many Korean English language teachers perceived difficulties in adopting the CLT. The National University Entrance Examination, a grammatical-based examination which requires good grammatical knowledge, has an influence on the practice of CLT. And there are other reasons for difficulties, for example, the teachers' deficiency in spoken English, the teachers' lack of training in CLT, the students' low English proficiency, and the students' lack of motivation for communicative competence. The results of the study suggested, "...to adopt CLT, EFL countries like South Korea will need to change their fundamental approach to education and that implementation should be gradual and grounded in the countries' own EFL situations..." (p.677) .

The English teaching situation in China is also affected by CLT innovation. According to Xiaoju (1984 : 2-13), the teaching of English for communication was undertaken for the Chinese students to develop their communicative competence. The practice of CLT in China is concerned with cultural appropriateness. In order to call any classroom activities "communicative", Xiaoju suggested conditions that must be considered: real situation, need and purpose; substance for communication; freedom

and unpredictability. Such conditions seem to be unfamiliar to English language teachers in China. The introduction of CLT seemed to face some difficulties caused by the strong hold of traditional teaching which focuses on form of language.

According to "Reconciling Communicative Approaches to the Teaching of English with Traditional Chinese Methods" proposed by Roa (1996 : 456-471), the practice of CLT in China did not produce the expected result which was to develop learners' communicative competencies. In traditional Chinese English teaching where the teachers play a major role in dispensing passive learning, the communicative activities are perceived as a kind of entertainment. In China, the teachers are expected to follow the curriculum which emphasizes the teaching of grammar, reading and writing, with little emphasis on listening and speaking.

This traditional teaching is influenced by the traditional national examination which is the discrete-point, structurally-based national examination. It was also found that, regarding Chinese teachers' lack of English proficiency, they were uncertain in answering questions about the target language, sociolinguistics, or culture as they may arise from interactions in the classroom.

In "Communicative Language Teaching in China: Progress and Resistance", Yu (2001) points out that one of the most important constraints is the lack of qualified English language teachers. A number of teachers know only some basic English grammar and vocabulary. The grammar-translation method is the most acceptable because they can basically teach English in Chinese. Even though the CLT was introduced in China in the 1970s', in the late 1980s' most of the English language teachers in China still relied on the traditional method for their teaching. Yu identified some constraints on the practice of CLT from both teachers and students. A crowded classroom, often up to 60 students, makes it difficult to manage learner-centered teaching. In addition, the teachers are traditionally expected to be "knowledge holders"- if the teachers conduct any other activities other than display their knowledge in lectures, then they are not doing their job (Hui, 1997 : 38; cited in Yu 2001 : 196-197). Yu concluded, "To adopt the relatively new CLT approach in China

inevitably involves transforming the traditional analytic grammar-translation approach, which is no easy task ” (p.197). The article also suggested that the teachers should undergo training that will promote theoretical awareness as well as their linguistic abilities.

In EFL and/or ESL situations, to practice CLT, teachers need to be trained, as lack of training makes it difficult to use the CLT approach in the classroom where the traditional approach is normally used. CLT also prevails in the Hong Kong English teaching situation. However, there is a dissatisfaction with English teaching because of a failure to communicate. While CLT has been introduced in Hong Kong, it tends to play a smaller role than the traditional approach in the English classroom. The reasons for the apparent “failure” of CLT in Hong Kong schools include the lack of trained teachers and a shortage of stimulating materials and resources (Evans, 1996 : 34). Accordingly, the Government’s Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) revised its English language syllabus. The new syllabus emphasizes fluency and communicative effectiveness as well as the production of correct English sentences (CDC, 1981 : 13-14; cited in Evans, 1996 : 31). Also, the public examination has an influence on English teaching. Furthermore, Lee (1996 : 100-117) pointed out that while the current English syllabus is based on the communicative approach, many teachers still base their teaching on the habitual teaching methods. There are many reasons involved in the lack of practicing CLT in Hong Kong:

- teachers’ lack of confidence in using English;
- schools’ preference for traditional approaches;
- large class size;
- lack of stimulating materials;
- inadequate listening facilities; and
- lack of assessment framework to reflect the goals of the syllabus.

(Education Commission 1994 : 26; cited in Lee, 1996 : 101)

Surprisingly, although English language teachers, particularly in ESL and EFL countries, realized the need for communication, they tended to unsuccessfully develop the traditional classroom to the communicative classroom. CLT has rarely been practiced in the classroom where the emphasis is on accuracy.

According to several studies and articles on the practice of CLT, it can be noticed that CLT is widely accepted more in terms of theory rather than actual practice in the language classroom. CLT is found useful; however, to practice it in the language classroom the activities should be adapted to suit the nature of the context of English learning and teaching. The practice of CLT in the Asian English Teaching situation appear to have a question on the place of grammar since it used to hold the central role in the traditional classroom.

English teaching in the Indonesian context is similar to other English teaching/learning contexts reviewed earlier. CLT has an influence on English teaching, since the Indonesian English syllabus's goal is to help students develop their communicative competence in English. However, when it comes to practice, many teachers feel that CLT is unsuccessful in developing the students' ability in using the target language for communicative purposes within an acceptable accuracy (Sunaryo, 2001 : 1), which explains the prevalence of traditional teaching in Indonesia. Sunaryo (2001 : 2-3) stated two major types of misinterpretation of this approach.

First, there are a number of teachers who believe "CLT means not teaching grammar". Many teachers feel that their students do not have enough basic grammatical knowledge in communication. Teachers complain that the curriculum which is based on CLT does not have a place for grammar teaching in the classroom. Sunaryo feels that, actually, grammar plays a part in the curriculum. Grammar is taught through context with the consideration on function and good form. And it is taught in consideration of helping learners understand and use language correctly.

The Indonesian English language teachers' perception that "CLT means not teaching grammar" is similar to Thai English language teachers'. According to Nisai Kaewsanchai (2001 : 1-18), there has been some misunderstanding regarding CLT. As

CLT focuses on function over form, grammar can possibly be neglected. Actually, grammar is considered an essential component of the English language that must be learned and taught. Nisai Kaewsanchai felt that the teachers may face some difficulties in conducting CLT with the lack of real situations for using language; however, CLT is still useful and teachers need to plan and design their lessons carefully and conduct the activities appropriately and effectively (p.5). This will help students to use English accurately and fluently in different situations.

Second, the misinterpretation of the belief “CLT means teaching speaking only”. There seems to be an agreement in the English teaching class that communication mainly refers to speaking. Therefore, teachers are mainly concerned in their teaching with developing learners’ speaking ability. However, this does not match the learners, teachers and parents’ expectation, that English is needed for academic purposes involving science and technology.

Sunaryo concluded in the article that CLT is considered the appropriate and suitable approach in developing communicative competence. The emphasis of CLT should be not to focus on only speaking, but other skills should be given attention. In order to teach language communicatively, grammar should not be neglected from the language classroom. Sunaryo (2001 : 3) stated “Grammar is the framework through which meaning is expressed. Therefore, teacher-fronted grammar instruction is advisable for communication purposes so that a balance between fluency and accuracy can be achieved”.

In the Thai English teaching situation, English has long been taught in consideration of the communicative goal. The English curriculum has been established according to CLT. At the present time, the 1996 curriculum focuses on the development of the learners’ communicative competence (Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, 1996). In Thailand, CLT appears to be appropriate for the English teaching situation where the learners’ communicative competence needs to be developed. Similar to other EFL contexts such as Hong Kong, Japan and



Indonesia reviewed earlier, communicative competence is considered necessary in learning English.

CLT is needed in the English classroom where there is a need to develop the students' communicative competence. Even though CLT has proved its value in the English classroom in the Thai context, after close observation, it is seen that CLT is accepted more as theory rather than as actual teaching.

The survey study on the secondary English teachers' opinions concerning the communicative approach in English teaching conducted by Uraiwan Saringkanun (1984) showed that many teachers in the study emphasized their teaching of grammatical knowledge. They viewed CLT as an approach that does not pay attention to grammar teaching, and therefore CLT, in the teachers' opinion, does not help the students enhance grammatical knowledge. This is similar to "Returning to Explicit Grammar Instruction to Keep the Balance Between Accuracy and Fluency" proposed by Sunaryo (2001). The paper points out that there are a number of teachers who complain the students' lack of grammatical competence is the result of the communicative approach that do not provide a teacher-fronted grammar program (p.2). Similarly, Thompson (1996 : 10) points out that CLT is perceived as an approach that does not include grammar teaching in the classroom. He believes "this is the most persistent - and most damaging - misconception".

In the Thai context, English teaching has long been based on communicative use of language, and the curriculum has been revised to be more appropriate and support the communicative goal (Amporn Sribunruang, 1991 : 2-4). Communicative language teaching has been practiced much in the Classroom. Later, there are studies firmly incorporating Uriwan Saringkanun's (1984). To confirm that, Wannee Chaivipanont (1989) did a study on the teaching/learning behavior in secondary English classroom presenting the situation of CLT practiced in the English classroom in the Thai context. Even though the curriculum focuses on communicative competence, traditional teaching focusing on teaching grammatical structures plays the major role in the English classroom. However, an attempt to conduct CLT can be

noticed during the observed lessons. The teacher made an effort in playing down his role, giving an opportunity for the students to interact in English.

In addition, the study of Siriporn Chantanont (1990) comes up with the comparable situation of CLT practiced in Thailand. She did the study on the relationships between teaching behavior and students' time-on-task with English learning achievement of the upper secondary school students. She concluded that the current situation of the teaching behavior was that most of the upper-secondary English teaching teachers did not use the communicative approach in their teaching even though they understand the communicative approach at a certain level (Siriporn Chantanont, 1990 : 114). There are also a lot of teachers who believe that the communicative approach lacks the teaching of grammar accuracy, therefore they did not use the communicative approach in their teaching. It can be noted that many teachers consider grammar teaching is important in the English class. Moreover, she discussed that the teachers' confidence on their language proficiency is one of the factors that influence their use of the communicative approach. She stated that many teachers are afraid to change from the traditional teaching to the communicative teaching.

It seems to be important for English language teachers in the Thai situation to be trained to use CLT effectively in their teaching. According to "A Study of Techniques Used in Teaching Communicative English by Teachers in Schools under the Jurisdiction of the Office of Udon Thani Provincial Primary Education" by Amporn Sribunruang (1991 : 83-84), many English teaching teachers did not have a chance to attend a seminar or training program on communicative teaching. This seemed to cause a lack of confidence, and is one of the factors that influenced the use of communicative techniques in the classroom.

To the same extent, in China and Hong Kong, the teachers' lack of confidence appears to be caused from a lack of training. In an examination of post-war developments in English language education in Hong Kong, and the communicative English language syllabus, Evans (1996 : 43) pointed out that one of the constraints in

practicing CLT in Hong Kong is the teachers' lack of training and in some cases their lack of confidence in using English results in a heavy dependence on the textbook. In addition, the study "It's Always More Difficult Than You Plan and Imagine: Teachers' Perceived Difficulties in Introducing the Communicative Approach in South Korea" by Li (1998 : 688) showed that the lack of training in CLT and few opportunities for retraining in CLT are some of the difficulties in practicing CLT caused by the teachers in South Korea.

It is interesting to learn that despite the value and fame of CLT, there is a question of the students being unable to communicate in English with foreigners with ease. This may be an effect of the emphasis on grammar teaching in the traditional English language class.

In the Thai context. CLT appears to be accepted in theory. A number of teachers understand and realize the importance of CLT; however, they seldom practice it in the English classroom. With the lack of confidence, the effect of University entrance examinations, misunderstanding of CLT, the absence of real situations in which to use language, the shortage of material, and so forth, teachers may be frustrated with an approach that gives a wide and indefinite concept like communicative language teaching. It is worthwhile to quote the conclusion of Nunan on his classroom-based study which demonstrated the importance of validating theory against what actually happens in the classroom:

...There is growing evidence that, in communicative classes, interactions may, in fact, not be very communicative after all. Despite this, strategies are being developed to increase the opportunities for genuine communication. It is teachers themselves who need to become the prime agents of change through an increased sensitivity to what is really happening in their classes.

(David Nunan, 1987 : 144)