CHAPTER - ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Nepal: An Introduction

Nepal, an independent Hindu kingdom since time immemorial, is situated on the southern lap of the great Himalayas bordered with India to the east, south and west, respectively, and the Peoples' Republic of China to the north. It is rectangular in shape and extends 850 km from east to west and with a mean width of 193 km from north to south in an area of 147,181 square kilometres. It lies between 26°22' N to 30°27' N in latitude and 80°14'E to 88°12'E in longitude.

Diversity in topography, climate, natural vegetation and wildlife make this country look very beautiful. Great rivers, high hills, snow-peaked mountains including the perennial beauty of nature, that is Mount Everest, in the north and flora and fauna of the hills and great Tarai plains of the south provide enchantment to the lovers of nature. Mount Everest, the mystery of nature: Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha; and "the bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous" (Turner 1930:ix) people are the glories of Nepal.

The population of the country, according to the 1991 census, is 18,491,097 with an annual growth rate of 2.08%. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal - 1990 has declared her a Hindu Kingdom taking into consideration the overwhelming population of the Hindus, i.e. 86.51%. However, 7.78% of Buddhists, 3.53% of Muslims and the people of other faiths find this country a land of peace and religious harmony. The literacy rate as of 1991 is 39.6% for both sexes. 54.4% for the males and 25.0% for the females.

Being predominantly an agrarian country, Nepal engrosses more than 80% of the labour force in this sector. However, a policy of economic liberalization recently adopted by the democratic government is heading the country towards industrialization.
There is a constant increase in the number of educational institutions in Nepal. The current statistics show that there are 19,498 primary schools, 4,230 lower secondary schools, 2,309 secondary schools, 89 higher secondary (10+2) schools and 126 campuses (colleges) in the kingdom. There are three universities, namely Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Sanskrit University, and Kathmandu University. Of the three, the first one is the oldest and the largest university which imparts higher education through its four Faculties, namely Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Law, and Management. Besides these, there are five institutes such as Agriculture and Animal Sciences, Engineering, Forestry, Medicine, and Science and Technology (Population Monograph of Nepal, 1995).

1.2. A Brief Sketch of the Linguistic Situation of Nepal

Nepal is a country of multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities. The people of Nepal speak different languages, belonging to different ethnic groups and observe different religions. However, they have an undercurrent of unified linguistic structures. The Census of 1991 records 32 languages spoken as mother tongues in the country. Acharya (1991) divides these languages into four familiar language-families, just as the case in India, i.e. Indo-European (IE), Tibeto-Burman (TB), Austro-Asiatic (AA), and Dravidian (D).

Nepali which is spoken by more than half of the total population (50.31%) belongs to the Eastern Pahadi dialect of the Indo-Aryan language family similar to other cognate Indian languages like Hindi, Maithili, Bengali, Gujarati, etc. It is the only national language of the country. Nepali is used as a medium of education. It is also the language of legal affairs, business transactions, mass media and administration. As a lingua franca, it happens to be an important binding force. The other major languages of Nepal, besides Nepali, are Maithili (11.85%), Bhojpuri (7.46t), Tharu (5.37t), Tamang (4.89t), Newari (3.73t), Magar (2.33t), Rai/Kirati (2.38t), Awadhi (2.03t), Limbu (1.37t), Gurung (1.23t), and Urdu (1.09t). Rest of the languages
have less than 1% of native speakers. An interesting feature of the 1991 census is that it records, for the first time in its history, the native speakers of English comprising 0.01% of the total population of the kingdom (Statistical Pocket Book: Nepal 1994, Population Monograph of Nepal 1995).

The Article 18:1 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal-1990 makes a provision that "Each community residing within the kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture" (p.13). The Constitution also reserves the right of each community "... to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to its children" (18:2 p.14). The National Language Policy Suggestion Commission 1993 suggests the Government to implement the Article 18:2 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal-1990 in terms of its viability. But so far this provision has not been put into practice and therefore, Nepali remains the language of instruction in all the primary schools of Nepal.

1.3. The Status of English in Nepal: A Second or a Foreign Language?

It has already been mentioned in section 1.2 that Nepali is not merely a national language symbolically but is also a language used in a wide number of official domains including administration, governance, legal procedures, and business transactions. To a large extent, it is also used as the medium of education, and is, of course, the sole language of wider communication. With this background in mind, one has to consider what follows as an attempt made to locate the status of English in the kingdom - whether it is a second or a foreign language.

The labels second and foreign have sometimes been used interchangeably. At other times they have remained much debated subjects. Therefore, these terms need to be defined so as to demarcate the status of English in Nepal. In lay persons' terms, English holds the position of a second language for the native Nepali speakers and that of the third for the non-native Nepali speakers, because in the letter's case language learning follows
a chronological sequence of their mother tongue, Nepali and English. But such an interpretation of the labels second and foreign language is not very satisfactory.

In this regard Quirk et al. (1985:5) are of the opinion that a language used by persons for communication across frontiers who are not from the country of origin of the said language is a foreign language. Such a language is used for the purpose of listening to broadcasts, reading books or newspapers, engaging in commerce, etc. English in Nepal is characterized by most of these features of foreignness which requires to be contrasted with the label second language.

Richards et al. (1985:108) define a second language as "... a language which is not native language in a country but which is widely used as a medium of communication (eg in education and government) and which is usually used alongside another language or languages." If English is viewed according to this definition, its use in Nepal is much restricted to the field of education. The language of administration, except for entering into correspondence with a foreign country or an International organization, is strictly Nepali which also performs the role of a lingua franca among divergent linguistic communities. So English is not employed here, as Littlewood (1984:2) mentions, to serve the "... social functions within the community where it is learnt". Neither is it a lingua franca nor is it the language of any social group here. A recent Census Report shows that only a negligible percentage of population (that is, 2,784 people contributing 0.01% to the total) speak English as mother tongue in Nepal (Statistical Pocket Book: Nepal, 1994).

The conditions stated in this definition are applicable in the context of India, Nigeria and "... millions of immigrants from a wide range of language backgrounds as well as for the speakers of American Indian languages" (Crystal 1987:368) in the USA but not in the context of Nepal. Thus, English in Nepal cannot fit into the category of a second language.
In the perspective of a foreign language, Richards et al. (1985:108) observe it to be a language "... which is taught as a school subject but which is not used as a medium of instruction in schools nor as a language of communication within a country (eg in government, business, or industry)." The characteristics of a second language as defined here correspond with the roles English plays in Nepal. In fact, English is learned here, as Littlewood (1984:2) states, "... primarily for contact outside one's own community." The term community in this case must be taken globally, and not in its limited, local sense. Thus, in a more restricted sense, it is "... a non-native language taught in school that has no status as a routine medium of communication in that country" (Crystal 1987:368).

Ringbom (1987) has drawn a very clear-cut distinction between a second and a foreign language in the following way: "There are important contextual differences between the two, which have considerable effect on the learners. In a second language acquisition context, the language is spoken in the immediate environment of the learner, who has good opportunities to use the language for participation in natural communication situations. Second language acquisition, may or may not, be supplemented by classroom teaching. In a foreign language learning situation, on the other hand, the language is not spoken in the immediate environment of the learner, although mass media may provide opportunities for practicing the receptive skills. There is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in natural communication situations" (pp.26-27).

Ringbom's line of demarcation between a second and a foreign language perfectly suits to the Nepali situation in the case of English. It certainly falls under foreign category. His analysis of how these differences affect the learning of a language is a very crucial point. After analysing these situations, it can be concluded that English belongs to the foreign language category in Nepal.
1.4. The Status of Teaching of English in Nepal: Historical Perspectives

Scholars are of divided opinion regarding the first introduction of English in Nepal. Historical evidence, however, suggests that the history of English in Nepal may date back to the days of a seventeenth century king of the Malla dynasty named Pratap Malla (1641-74 A.D.) who ruled over Kantipur (Kathmandu) because modern Nepal was not unified until 1768. An inscription carved in dedication of the king at Hanumandhoka (an old Royal Palace) reads that he knew fourteen different languages including English. However, not much can be inferred from this.

Aryal (1970) believes that the English language gained access to Nepal during the final period of the Malla regime, i.e. in the early nineteenth century, through the Christian missionaries. Jha (1989:111-114) on the other hand, holds a different view and gathers that "... the factors that are directly responsible for the coming of the English language in Nepal may be traced in the Anglo-Nepalese commercial and military contacts on the one hand, and the recruitment of hundreds of the Nepalese to the Gurkha regiment of the British Army on the other". History records that these events first began to take place after the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816, and stretch over the pages of history till date. Certainly, there must be several similar historical facts behind the access of English in Nepal.

Jung Bahadur Rana, the first Prime Minister of the Rana dynasty, took a great interest in the English system of education after his visit to the UK. He, therefore, opened a school in 1854, the first school in Nepal called the Durbar School. It was meant to educate the children of his family. This marks the beginning of the formal teaching and learning of English in Nepal. However, it was not introduced at the higher education until 1918 A.D. when the then Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Rana established Tri-Chandra College, the first college in the Kingdom, with which virtually begins the history of higher education in Nepal.
For many decades English remained the medium of instruction in Tri-Chandra college and in a few high schools set up elsewhere though the Boards of Patna and Calcutta were the proto-types of the Nepalese educational system until late- Malla (1977:21) comments on the then prevailing situation of English thus: "Till the 1940s and 1950s even in secondary schools English language and English curriculum occupied an important place. Many SLC candidates voluntarily opted for English as the medium of examination for all subjects other than Sanskrit and vernaculars."

Nepalese history made a great leap forward into an age of modernization in the year 1950 when the people unfettered themselves from the clutches of the 104 year old autocracy. The revolution leading to the overthrow of power brought the citizens the dawn of democracy and it marked the beginning of Nepal's exposure to the outside world.

In 1959. Nepal established Tribhuvan University, the first university in the Kingdom, which gave a high priority to English in its curriculum. But after a decade, a nationwide master plan known as The National Education System Plan (NESP 1971-76) was implemented which tried to introduce an overall change in the system of curriculum, textbook, examination, etc. from primary to the university levels of education. The NESP had an immediate impact upon the Nepalese educational system and consequently upon English as well. First, it made a reduction in the weightage earlier given to English at both the school and the college level syllabuses. The school level English was reduced to a single paper carrying 100 full marks from the usual two papers carrying 100 full marks each. Similarly, at the college level, the Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL, i.e. Intermediate) English was allotted 15 credit hours (equivalent to 150 marks), thus, making a curtailment of 5 credit hours (equivalent to 50 marks) from the usual practice. These credit hours were spread over three consecutive semesters, which varied from Institute to Institute, ranging between 6 to 15. In the same way, the Diploma (Bachelors) Level English also had to undergo curtailment and the new allotment ranged between 3 to 12 credit hours depending upon the requirement of the Institute.
Secondly, the plan made English no longer a compulsory school subject, though it remained compulsory at higher levels, by making a provision to opt for any of the UN languages - not necessarily English. But to introduce any other UN language was next to impossible, and English took its position as ever. Awas-thi (1979:64) found that "The majority of people in different groups did not want English to be substituted by any other language. They were all in favour of continuing English in the SLC despite the high percentage of student failure in this course".

Thirdly, a decision made by the government at the same time to switch over from English to Nepali medium in schools to begin with and gradually in campuses left a worsening effect upon English and ironically the government could not achieve its goal either. All these steps led to the deterioration of the standard of English. There was then a less opportunity left for the learners to get exposed to English even in a formal setting.

In 1981 Tribhuvan University discontinued the semester system and reintroduced the annual system of teaching and examination. This brought a change in the structure of English syllabuses also. The new syllabuses allotted an increased weightage of 100 to 200 marks to campus level English. However, the situation of the school level English continues to remain as before.

1.5. English Language Teaching in Nepal at Present

The current state of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal has to be viewed in terms of the structure of Education here. The school level education consists of five years' primary, three years' lower secondary, two years' secondary, and two years' higher secondary teaching. Similarly, tertiary level education, too, has a four-tier structure: two years' Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL), two years' Bachelor's level, two years' Master's level, followed by the research degree level.
t present there is an overlap between the two years' post secondary level education because the universities and the higher secondary schools both are conducting this programme simultaneously.

However, there is a plan to terminate this programme from university education in the near future. Tribhuvan University so planning to introduce a three-year Bachelor's degree programme.

The relative weightage attached to the ELT at the school s in Nepal is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Hours/Week</th>
<th>Full Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Secondary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mo. / HMG, Ministry of Education, Culture & Social Welfare.

Private schools start English at the pre-primary level and stretch up to the secondary level. The higher secondary curriculum is designed and implemented by the Higher Secondary Education Board. The Board is also responsible for the preparation of textbooks and for conducting examinations. The weightage and duration given to the ELT at the primary levels are given below:
Tribhuvan University has recently decided to discontinue the PCL in Law from the year 1995. The differences in weightage and duration in the teaching and learning of English shown in Table No. 2 from one Faculty/Institute to another is based on the decision made by the respective Faculty/Institute. At the Master's level, the Faculties of Education and Humanities and Social Sciences offer a two-year specialization in English education and English literature, respectively.

1.6. Need for English Language Teaching in Nepal

It has been made clear in section 1.3 that English never occupied the status of a second language in Nepal. Instead, it has remained only a foreign language, taught and learned for use in restricted domains. However, it has remained an inseparable part of Nepal's academic pursuit. Further, strikingly one finds
From the utility point of view, the number or people who make use of English in their day to day affairs has not been ascertained yet since no survey has been carried out so far on how often this opportunity is accorded to them. So people's attachment with the English language in Nepal as Davies et al. (1984:7) point out "... has other than instrumental values, symbolic and sentimental ones." To some extent, this statement is true. It is also true that to be educated today means to be a fluent speaker of English. Thus, it has been a question of prestige to be able to communicate in English.

The explosion of knowledge has narrowed down the size of the world. Consequently, no country likes to remain isolated from it. The only vehicle for the transmission and proliferation of this knowledge in most part of the world is English. The universal importance of English cannot be denied as Quirk et al. (1985:5) observe, today: "It is needed for access to at least half of the world's scientific literature, and the most important scientific journals are in English. (It is the language of) ... principal advertising and sales medium, it is the language of automation and computer technology. Not only is it the universal language of international aviation, shipping, and sport, it is to a considerable degree the universal language of literacy and public communication. It is the major language of diplomacy, and is the most frequently used language both in the debates in the United Nations and in the general conduct of UN business".

This reflects Nepal's need for English regarding which Malla (1977:12) has also clearly stated that "Nepal needs English because Nepali, her national language, is not developed enough for two ... communication needs: 1. It does not have access to the scientific and technical knowledge of the modern world 2. It
is not enough for establishing effective channels of communication with the rest of the world". It is a fact that the medium of instruction in science and technical institutes under the Nepalese Universities is exclusively English, and it is also the only language of communication used to promote Nepal's increasing diplomatic relations with the outer world. Similarly, it is also true that "... for a vast majority of the college and university-going population of Nepal, English is necessary mainly as a library language - language to have an access to textbooks, lectures, and journals, on the one hand, and as a language to express one's thoughts and ideas in written, academic exercise on the other" (ibid:16). Thus, English is a tool for acquiring academic excellence and is a means of communicating one's own ideas whenever and wherever one is required to do so.

Khaniya (1990) expresses similar views when he states that English in Nepal serves two purposes - educational and occupational - educational for making use of lectures and reading materials, and occupational for obtaining jobs in the fields of tourism, foreign missions, etc. In this regard, the researcher would like to add the use of English for professional purposes as well, that is, those who are related to professions of a doctor, engineer, etc. cannot perform their duties efficiently without English.

From an economic point of view, English becomes inevitable to foster tourism and international trade. The sheer natural beauty of Nepal attracts thousands of tourists every year. Recent statistics show that 334,353 tourists visited Nepal in 1992 contributing a remarkable increase of 31.2% in the influx while compared to that of 1990, providing job opportunities to a sizeable population (Statistical Pocket Book: Nepal. 1994). English has so far been used as a chief language of tourist trade. In the same way, as a business partner of several countries, Nepal has to employ English to transact business and talk on matters of commercial concern.
Keeping all these factors in view, Verma and Pandey (1988) conducted a survey on the Causes of Failures in English in the SLC Examination and came out with a conclusion that 90% teachers, 100% headmasters, 82% students, 100% District Education Officers, and 88.3% parents disagreed with the idea of changing the existing compulsory status of English to an optional subject for the SLC students. Their finding confirms the earlier study carried out by Awasthi (1979) viz. that the peoples' attachment to English is very strong which is further confirmed by the present study. It reveals the fact that, though the majority of the total 270 students under study speak Nepali at home, they read English stories, novels, poems, newspapers, magazines; listen to English music: watch English movies but they confess that they donot understand English songs. Though the majority of them commit errors both in speaking and writing, they can read English passages accurately with reasonably high speed. The majority of them also claim that their performance in English was good in school examinations. Some of the male parents are educated and hold jobs or do business. The students also state that they speak English with their brothers, sisters and friends (see Appendix 1, Table 2).

Another factor indicating the need for English in Nepal is the sheer number of ever growing private boarding schools and the attraction of the parents towards them for educating their children through the English medium. At this juncture, the prediction made by Davies et al. (1984:4) that "The need for English in Nepal is strong and likely to become stronger" seems more meaningful today. Bearing this in mind, they also suggested that "Despite the difficulties of teaching English successfully in the Nepalese situation, it should not be abandoned" (ibid, 4). Therefore, the continuity of English accompanied by its improvement in its present condition is the only option left for the government and the people of Nepal. No section of the population wants to be deprived of it, no matter how difficult it may be to improve Us deteriorating condition in Nepal.
1.7. English Language Teaching in Nepal: Problems and their Causes

English Language Teaching faces a multitude of problems in the total academic scenario of Nepal. It has been a tough piece of meat that can be neither chewed nor digested. The question of its improvement has been a concern for one and all but due to different constraints, its state is deteriorating continuously. Keeping the alarming situation in view, an attempt has been made here to alert the people concerned to this situation so that necessary steps can be taken to improve the present situation. The following sections present a picture of the existing school level ELT situation and subsequently a separate treatment is given to the ELT situation at the higher levels of education.

1.7.1. Teaching of English at Schools

Schools are considered as the foundation of total academic pursuit. All future expansion relies upon this foundation. Therefore, the foundation should be strong enough to take the load of the future. What follows is a description of the school level ELT foundation in Nepal, i.e. a cursory glance at the curriculum, textbooks, teaching methods, etc.

1.7.1.1. The Curriculum

The present school level curriculum was first designed and implemented in 1971 by Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre (CTSD) (now Curriculum Development Centre CDC) under the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Social Welfare, a body solely responsible for framing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing the school level curriculums, according to the aspirations of the NESP which marked a departure from the traditional, literature-oriented curriculum towards a language-oriented structural one. Though revised in 1981, no significant change has taken place in the objectives first laid down for the teaching of school level English. The ultimate aims of teaching English at Primary, Lower Secondary and Secondary Schools of Nepal are to enable the students-.
1) to communicate in speech and writing matters related to everyday activities with other people who speak English, within the range of language elements provided by the curriculum,

2) to understand directions and instructions in life at work,

3) to develop essential reading skills and techniques required for the early as well as later stages of language learning,

4) to develop an interest in reading for both information and pleasure (Lower Secondary Education Curriculum 1981:15).

It was a structural curriculum based on the oral-structural-situational (OSS) approach. This feature of the curriculum contrasted with its objectives, that is, the teaching of English for communication which cannot be attained by merely involving the students in parroting the paradigms after their teachers. Keeping the present direction of the ELT worldwide in view, the school level curriculums need to be reframed giving adequate emphasis on the communication aspect of language. A departure, however, is seen in this sector in the CDC's revision of the primary as well as lower secondary curriculums in 1992, and 1993, respectively. This departure is clearly spelt out in the objectives laid down in the Primary Education Curriculum English 1992 thus: "The broad aim of the course is to develop in students an ability to use English effectively by exposure to the language used in real life situations where children are using English as their mother tongue. At the same time the course is designed to enable learners to internalize the underlying system and structure of the language and to develop functional performance skills in it" (P.5). It has clearly stated that the course aims at developing a well-integrated and comprehensive communicative competence on the part of the learners. Similarly, the Lower Secondary Curriculum English '993 also seems to be keeping the momentum started by its predecessor. Secondary level English curriculum is also in preparation in the same spirit.
1.7.12. The Textbooks

The CDC is also responsible for the selection or preparation of the textbooks. All the school level textbooks (My English Books [MEB 1-4] a series of texts extending from class IV through VII, and English Readers [ER 1-3] meant for classes VIII, IX and X, respectively) are prepared by the Nepalese experts. However, private schools use textbooks approved by the COC. All the present textbooks prepared in the early seventies put "... heavy emphasis on longish reading texts specially written to illustrate specific grammatical points" (Davies et al. 1985-25). Though they were regarded appropriate basically for the situation of the early eighties, they no longer fit in the new curriculums to be implemented soon. Thus, all series need to be rewritten in tune with the new curriculums.

1.7.13. Teaching Learning Method and Situation

The method prescribed for teaching English in the 1971 Curriculum was based on the OSS approach, but a subsequent evaluation shows that due to various constraints, it has never been materialised so far. Though, in most cases, teachers try to follow this approach which is quite suitable for teaching the texts prepared for the Nepalese learners, it is often seen that the teachers talk to themselves to be in control of the overcrowded classes, specially in the urban areas. In most cases the teachers use grammar-translation method. The structure of the classroom, since the benches and desks are "built as one unwieldy structure" (Davies et al. 1984:24) render group work impossible. As they have observed, teaching is always teacher-centered and ironically, the teacher has much more practice than the students. Imparting a skill in such a crowded and noisy environment is impossible. Even a successful and competent teacher cannot handle the situation in his favour. Any change in the ELT methodology cannot bring desired results unless the environment is made more conducive to teaching in a proper way. The situation in the rural areas is more favourable as there are less crowded classes, but the lack of effort on the part of the teachers is quite
obvious there. "Teachers' *irregular* attendance in the classroom" (Verma and Pandey 1988, as quoted in Khaniya 1990:82) is one of the various causes resulting in a large number of student failures.

There is no difference between teaching social studies and English because the latter is considered not as a set of skills, but a subject. In addition, there is a frequent and considerable use of Nepali in the class itself. Consequently, the students hardly get exposed to English. In this regard, Feldman (1989:11) rightly observes that a school student in Nepal "... does not speak English for even ten minutes in ten years of studying the language".

Regarding the teaching of English and the environment in which it is taught in Nepal, Kerr (1994:*) observes: "Teaching instruction consists of grammatical dissection and rote memorization of the text. This gives children no opportunity or encouragement to use the language. Further, the physical conditions of the schools and large student number are not conducive to good teaching and learning. Teachers who are able to make additional teaching materials have no place to either store or display them." This is a candid assessment of the teaching of English at school level as a whole. The only point she missed here is the excessive use of Nepali by the teachers while teaching English which Davies et al. (1984) had rightly pointed out.

To conclude, the ELT in schools of Nepal is in a pitiable condition due to the lack of physical facilities, proper teaching methods and encouraging teachers. Moreover, the schools are badly in need of audio-visual aids to create favourable situation for the ELT.

1.7.14. Teachers and Teacher Training

There is a lack of trained and efficient English teachers in Nepal. Anyone who is not successful in teaching other subjects virtually becomes an English teacher. In this regard Davies et
al. (1984:7-8) state: "... the very obvious lack of English proficiency among teachers which leads to the total failure to provide 'comprehensible input', i.e. to offer a model of spoken English which is always just a little above the students' group and at the same time contains a message which the students wish to understand." They also found that the teachers' proficiency in English was not up to the level they were sought for. For example, the proficiency of English of the graduate teachers teaching English in Kathmandu was found below that of the tenth graders of a well established private high school there. The situation outside the valley is still worse.

In a recent survey regarding the needs of 300 English teachers in the country, Kerr (1994:4) found that "... the standard of written and spoken English amongst government schools teachers ranges from Grade two to Grade four native speaker, with only a few exceptions". Her findings support what Davies et al. (1984) said ten years ago. She also finds that the standard of the teachers teaching English at private schools is not satisfactory because their general range seems to be "... from Grade five to Grade eight standard native speaker." Besides, teacher training is a dire need of the private sector schools, since they recruit teachers on the basis of not academic excellence but depending on personal contacts.

Most of the English teachers are not trained and whoever are trained also need retraining. During the past decade, the Ministry of Education and Culture made training optional and that decision has compounded the problem. Teachers who had taught for a year in a school were regarded eligible to apply for a permanent tenure. This system gave a nice opportunity for the untrained teachers to get a permanent tenure. The following table presents the scenario of teacher training in Nepal:
### Table Mo. 3. Number of trained and untrained teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of the untrained teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>79590</td>
<td>38536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>13647</td>
<td>4623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>12656</td>
<td>5512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Educational Statistics of Nepal: 1993

The total picture of teacher training emerges clearly from the above table. English teachers also fall in this group. The majority of untrained teachers cannot cope with the methodological complexities. They cannot become as innovative as their trained counterparts are. McCafferty (1969 as quoted in Malla 1977:15) finds that "On average, an untrained primary teacher will get five out of six English patterns wrong, and a secondary teacher will get two out of three wrong." This statement clearly indicates the reality in the ELT situation. There is no need to discuss the skills that the eighth grade pass teachers have been imparting to the primary school children of Nepal. However, a recent decision made by the Ministry of Education and Culture and Social welfare to make teacher training obligatory to obtain permanent tenure in schools is a positive sign and it has started motivating a lot of teachers to undergo training.

### 1.7.15. Evaluation

The achievement or success of school level education (Grades 1-10) is assessed by the number of the candidates who pass the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examination conducted at the end of the high school education. This annual examination is also the only measuring rod for testing the success of a student's effort.
A cursory glance at the samples of the SLC failure rates of the last three decades exhibits that the situation is quite alarming. It is an undeniable fact that the majority of the students who fail in the SLC examination are in English alone.

While discussing the scenario of the 1970's regarding the failure rates in the SLC examination, Malla (1978: 2) warns that "...if failure rates at the SLC and university examinations are any reliable indicators, the rates are not only high but disturbingly high because 80% to 90% fail SLC examination because they fail in English". Explaining its probable causes he says that firstly, this ensues to the government's decision to switch over to Nepali medium, and secondly, to the reduction of 100 marks in English after the NESP. The figures of the 1980's as recorded by Davies et al. (1984) exhibit that similarly disappointing trends were continuing because 65.7% of students failed in 1981, 69.5% in 1982, and 61% in the year 1983, respectively.

The following figures for the total SLC candidates that include late 1980's and up to 1990 show that the average marks in English are not satisfactory leading to quite alarming figures of 1991.

Table No. 4. 
Pass percentage and average marks in the SLC English for 1987-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total appeared</td>
<td>50459</td>
<td>56853</td>
<td>64154</td>
<td>100360</td>
<td>94469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass percentage</td>
<td>60.91</td>
<td>60.10</td>
<td>63.23</td>
<td>61.42</td>
<td>29.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average marks in English</td>
<td>33.83</td>
<td>34.30</td>
<td>34.43</td>
<td>32.94</td>
<td>22.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source-- The SLC Examination - 1991 (at a glance)

Another comment regarding the SLC examination is that they "...do not test students' ability to function in English. They are unsuitable and require complete overhaul" (Davies et al. 1984:4). This is confirmed by a report submitted by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate to HMG, which states
that the question papers in the SLC examinations are "... seriously restricted in the range of skills tested, concentrating mainly on the factual recall of textbook information and sometimes encouraging the repetition of learned model answers based on textbook exercises" (UCLES 1985:13).

Feldmann (1989) also makes an interesting observation on the English questions asked in the SLC examination. She says "I cannot help but wonder why the students are never given the opportunity to think for themselves, to come up with fresh, completely individual and thought provoking essays instead of regulating ideas they have ready in a story" (1989:28-29). The SLC questions check only the memory power of the students but they do not give an opportunity to the students to show their own creativity.

1.7.2. Teaching of English at Higher Education

The ELT situation in Nepal is not less chaotic at campuses while compared to that of the schools. If the foundation itself is weak, the input that the campuses receive will certainly be fragile. Malla (1977:1) thinks that "English is by now a bone in nearly everybody's throat, everybody who professes an interest in higher education and its problems". But because of the various reasons stated in 1.6 above, the teaching of English as a compulsory subject has to be continued both at the PCL and Bachelor's level.

By the time the students enter the PCL, they have seven to ten years of English - seven years for the ones who come from the public schools and ten years for the ones who come from the private schools. However, they have to appear at and pass the same examination conducted by the Office of the Controller of Examinations. Now what follows is a discussion on the problems of the ELT and their causes at the University level.
1.7.21- The Curriculum

The ELT curriculum (the terms curriculum, syllabus, and courses of study are used here synonymously) framed by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of Tribhuvan University in 1991/92 for the PCL is uniform for all the Faculties/Institutes. However, as stated in 1.5 above, some Institutes and Faculties take only the component given in the second year. The course objectives for the PCL 1st year are:

(a) to develop in the students ability to comprehend given passages and to answer questions in correct and acceptable English;

(b) to build up vocabulary;

(c) to write different kinds of composition works;

(d) to have a knowledge of the basic grammatical categories;

(e) to give practice in basic English sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation (cf. Courses of Study, Proficiency Certificate First Year, Tribhuvan University.)

The objectives and contents of the courses of study for the PCL 1st year put emphasis on the formal aspect of language but remain silent about functional aspect. While in the second year (PCL), the emphasis is still on reading and writing. It also includes some grammar and some oral English exercises. The courses of study are not specific as to what they mean to impart because they are not framed according to the normal procedure of framing the syllabus before preparing textbooks. The textbooks are inappropriately chosen from the market. There is a dire need to revise the curriculums in tune with the global contexts.

The main objective of teaching compulsory English at the Bachelor's level is to enable the students "... to possess a fairly advanced command of English so that they can use the
language for higher education, communication and in a variety of jobs outside the academia with accuracy, efficiency and fluency."

(Courses of Study, Bachelor First Year, Tribhuvan University 1992). Specifically, the students are expected to get exposed to advanced contemporary writings, reading materials, communication and use-oriented materials. The syllabus, though may be adequate for the development of accuracy, lacks contents to develop the required efficiency and fluency in the students. The new feature of this syllabus is the revival of translation in its traditional nature. This syllabus is also guided by the textbooks selected for it. On the whole, the comments that Malla (1977) made nearly two decades ago, on the then syllabuses equally apply to the present syllabuses also. He says "The present compulsory English courses are ineffective, not only because they do not reflect the need of the students, but also because the courses are ill-defined, aimless, and perfunctory, mainly based on some arbitrarily chosen materials... without thinking of English as a foreign language" (1977:5-6).

Unlike the compulsory English courses of the CDC for the Bachelor's level, the Faculty of Education has prepared and implemented a language based syllabus. The technical Institutes like Engineering and Forestry run their own syllabuses for the Bachelor's level students based on their own specific needs.

1.7.22. The Textbooks

The textbooks prescribed for the PCL are written in India in the Indian context except English for Further Education which is meant for the native English speakers. These textbooks are designed to develop the formal aspect of language only. The exercises meant for practising oral English in the English for Further Education also do not suit to the Nepali classroom situations.

The textbooks prescribed for the Bachelor level compulsory English cover a wider variety of literary genres like essays, short-stories, one-act plays, and a novel. However, the book like
The English we use is meant to introduce contemporary English, but the passages included in it are nearly five decades old. Similarly, the grammar book prescribed for developing communicative skills, i.e. *A Communicative Grammar of English* lacks exercises in it making its use impracticable. An attempt is made to teach the language through literature but due to the lack of an appropriate method, the goal is not materialised.

### 1.7.23. Teaching Learning Method and Situation

The compulsory English Curriculums are silent about teaching methodology. As mentioned earlier (1.7.21), the curriculums themselves are based on the textbooks selected. Nothing has specifically been mentioned about teaching methods and learning activities.

The classroom environment does not permit teachers to give ample practice to the students as is required. They also, in most cases, translate the texts into Nepali and ask the students to do the exercises themselves as the class size is unmanageable. Matthies (1988:4) states that "The students do not form a class, but a crowd of unwilling and uninterested youngsters, who are there not because they want to learn but because their parents and guardians want them to be there." She, assessing the ELT situation in Nepal, further says: "No foreign language can be taught or learned efficiently in a class with more than 30-35 students, because the teacher must be able to monitor their spoken language and adequately correct their written exercises" (1988:17).

All the students who pass the SLC examination think that passing it is a licence to go for higher education. There is no entrance examination system, except in the technical institutes, to screen the able ones for higher studies. In a class of up to 150-200 students, an English language teacher can, if possible, talk only about the history of the English language.
The low proficiency of the input has made the teaching and learning of English a mess. The average marks in the SLC English as discussed in 1.7.15 above bring a very heterogeneous group of entrants for the tertiary level teachers. In such an environment, "Teachers are generally prone to the use of Nepali instead of English for a variety of reasons related with the lack of required academic and professional skills of Tribhuvan University English teachers, students' pressure for explaining English texts all through Nepali medium, lack of teaching aids and equipment, large classes and so on. Consequently, whatever little amount of exposure students are expected to have got further whittled down through teachers' profuse and frequent use of Nepali in English classes" (Bhadra & Yadav 1980:60).

1.7.24. Teachers and Teacher Training

Holding a Master's degree in English Literature is considered a passport for teaching English in Nepal. There is no pre-service (entry) training for university teachers and they hardly get an opportunity to go for any in-service training. Some of them even lack adequate linguistic competence. Bhadra and Yadav (1988:71) state that "There are quite a few Tribhuvan University English teachers who lack adequate language and professional skills and experience, which are assumed to be essential for effective English language teaching."

Unlike schools where underqualified teachers or the teachers of other subjects teach English, campus teachers hold an MA degree in English Literature, but they badly need short or long term training in the ELT. There are quite a few teachers who have an M Ed in English Education, but they are even inadequate for the campuses under the Faculty of Education itself.

1.7.25. Evaluation

Though evaluation is a continuous process, it is non-existent in the tertiary level classes except in technical institutes in which internal assessments are given. The final examination
given at the end of the academic session is the only measuring rod for success or failure of an individual student.

A cursory look at the university level examination reveals the fact that there is a high failure rate in the compulsory English component of the PCL as well as Bachelor's degree. Matthies (1988:4) believes that "The main cause of the failure in Compulsory English is the lack in them (students) of the skill of handling the English language. Since they do not have the required level of skill, they are unable to express their knowledge and information in exact words and sentence structures." Though she blames the learners for exhibiting poor performance in English, the system as a whole cannot prove its sanctity against this alarming situation. There must be something wrong in the whole process of the ELT in Nepal.

Though figures are not available to see the failure percentage in English at the tertiary levels, because detailed reports regarding individual subjects and papers are yet to be prepared, an example from Bhadra & Yadav (1988:15) is presented below.

Table Mo. 5
Failure rate for different subjects (PCL II year) for 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Nepali</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Political Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure percentage</td>
<td>76.43</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>30.71</td>
<td>32.01</td>
<td>47.30</td>
<td>32.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the various factors responsible for making the failure rate in English so high, University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) Report (1987:29) finds obvious defects in the question papers requiring the recall of the things taught. The report clearly mentions that "... even as native speakers, the consultants were unable to attempt many of the English language questions since these were related to recall of textbooks passages rather than linguistic ability." The report further claims that among many other factors responsible for the high
failure rate in the university levels one "... may be the quality of the examination, its relationship to the curriculum and the grading procedures applied" (op.cit. p.24)

No attempt has been made so far to make the comprehensive reporting of the examination data for making use of them for a positive wash-back effect. Therefore, a reform in the totality of the evaluation system is the dire necessity of the present day.

An overall study of the problems and causes of the ELT at the tertiary level education shows that several factors are found responsible for bringing the disappointing results in it. Mathies (1988:22) finds the following factors responsible for making the ELT situation unfavourable to produce the desired result, i.e. "... over-crowded classrooms, overworked and untrained teachers, and inadequately available textbooks and audio-visual aids. It is a wonder to me that anyone learns English well under such circumstances, and yet some do". Thus, the present ELT situation is the result of multifarious causes. What is required now is a rigorous planning and execution of it for the betterment of the ELT in Nepal, otherwise, it is worthwhile to conclude with her observation, "If it (English) has to be taught at all it has to be taught efficiently, and provisions and resources have to be made available. If we find that we cannot afford the necessary funds for the minimum requirements for effective teaching, it will be advisable, perhaps, to forget about English and do away with it, or to make it optional ..." (op.cit. p.5).

1.8. Previous Studies on English Language Teaching Situation in Nepal

There are quite a few studies carried out on the ELT situation in general and on error analysis in particular in Nepal. A few of them like Rathborne (1967), McCafferty (1969) and Davies et al. (1971) deal with the ELT problems based on their own field studies. Some of the problems they raised then are still concerning the people working in the field of ELT. Since then several
changes have taken place, but the ELT situation has not improved visibly. Malla (1977) also shows his deep concern about the ELT scenario. He makes comments on syllabuses, textbooks, policy matters, classroom environment and suggests various measures to be taken for the improvement of its deteriorating situation.

A nationwide survey of the ELT was carried out by Davies et al. (1984) at the request of His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Education and Culture, under the auspices of the British Council and ODA. The team was given the terms of reference to assess the overall ELT situation at schools in Nepal. Specifically, the team was asked to look into the aspects like syllabuses, textbooks, examinations, teachers and students, and their level of competence in English and also to suggest the measures to be taken for the improvement of the ELT situation. The survey team found that there was a strong need for English in Nepal but that the country needed well-trained teachers, improved textbooks, an overhauled examination system, better teaching methods, sufficient supplementary materials and on the whole, a very conducive classroom environment. The team also recommended to open a Centre for English Language Teaching to train and retrain English teachers for improving their low proficiency in English.

Matthies (1988), on the basis of a small scale survey she carried out, emphasizes on a need for massive teacher training programme for the university English teachers. She also suggests the policy makers to "... decide whether English is to be taught as a subject or as a medium of communication" (1988:13). Other suggestions she included are in the form of a support package to the teachers which includes teachers' manual, small class size, audio-visual materials, workshops, in-service trainings, and incentives to the teachers. She also felt the need for conducting more surveys and action researches and, finally, the formation of an association of English teachers like TESOL and IATEFL.

Apart from these surveys, there are quite a few works done on error analysis also. Some of them are discussed below.
Shrestha (1980) conducts a study of errors in the use of prepositions by Nepali and Newari native speakers studying in grade X in Kathmandu with a hypothesis in mind that students are not influenced by their mother tongues in the process of the acquisition of English prepositions. His study reveals that "When we take the performances of the Nepali and Newari students in the use of English prepositions as a whole, we do not find any differences in them which has been revealed by the t-test" (1980:73).

Giri (1981) through A Comparative Study of English Language Proficiency of the Students Studying in Grade X in the Secondary Schools of Doti and Kathmandu comes to the conclusion that the students of urban schools better their rural counterparts in all language skills but writing.

Tamang (1981:1) studies the errors in the use of questions in English by the Diploma Level (B Ed) students. She records that most errors are committed in the use of wrong question forms, inversions of different forms of do as a dummy operator and tense carrier, and the tense forms. She concludes that the errors are intralingual and developmental in nature. Regarding the learners' strategy, she mentions that "The rules applied by the students to frame questions were either incomplete, hypothesized, rules ignored or overgeneralized target language rules". She also gives suggestions to the prospective teachers as to how to deal with such problems.

Shrestha (1989) studies the errors committed by high school students in subject-verb agreement and makes the native English speakers evaluate these errors. He comes to the conclusion that the most serious errors are committed when the grammatical subjects are: pre- or post-modified, indefinite pronouns, dummy there, gerundial nouns, etc.

Gautam (1990) attempts to analyse the errors committed by the PCL first year students of Bhaktapur district in their written work. His study shows that Nepali learners commit maximum number of grammatical errors followed by spelling and lexical
errors. He finds that the errors are a result of both interlingual and intralingual influences.

Singh (1992:45) in his study on the ordering of English adjectives by the students of four Faculties under Tribhuvan University finds that "No group of students excelled in their performance on arranging English adjectives. One group of students performed comparatively better on some items while another group excelled in some other items".

A recent study on error gravity completed by Luitel (1995:41) draws this conclusion: "All the groups of speakers (American, Canadian, British and Australian) agree that the following types of errors are the most serious ones from intelligibility view point:

a) Wrong order of noun phrase and prepositional phrase;
b) Inclusion of unnecessary preposition or definite article;
c) Omission of required `do' auxiliary in negativization; and
d) Selection of unnecessarily inflected verb (except the use of `-ing') in interrogation" whereas, "... all groups of speakers agree that when judged from acceptability view point the most serious and the least serious areas of grammatical errors are deviated question tags due to the use of action verbs, and absence of aspect change in reported speech respectively."

1.9. Objectives of the Present Study

In the background of what has been discussed above, the objectives of the present study are:

a) to identify, classify and describe the errors committed by the Nepali learners of English studying in the PCL First Year at Tribhuvan University, Nepal;
b) to evaluate these errors in terms of their frequency and gravity;
c) to provide pedagogical suggestions; and
d) to suggest measures for the construction of learning materials for remedial teaching.

1.10. Significance of the Study

Since no published materials, except for a few articles, are available on the errors made by the Nepali learners of English, the present study will be useful in a number of ways:

First of all, it will provide feedback to the native learners based on which they will know what is there to learn. Similarly, it will also provide an important feedback to the English teachers with the help of which they can identify the areas of difficulty and focus their teaching on them accordingly.

Secondly, the study will be of immense use to the people involved in designing the English language syllabuses, producing the ELT materials and constructing the English language texts. As a matter of fact, the findings of this work will be of considerable significance to all who are involved directly or indirectly in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language.

Thirdly, it will also put forward a description of the Nepali English in the context of world Englishes. Anyone interested in the varieties of English will thus be benefited by this study.

Last but not the least, the work will also have a theoretical significance for other studies in the field of language teaching. Also this work will throw light on the processes involved in the second language learning in general and in the learning of English as a foreign language in a formal context, in particular.

1.11. Limitations of the Study

The population of the study is limited to 270 PCL First Year students, 30 each, from the Faculties/Institutes of Agriculture and Animal Sciences, Education, Engineering, Forestry. Humanities
and Social Sciences, Law, Management, Medicine, and Science and Technology. Obviously, one could have had a much larger sample of population but such tasks could only be undertaken as a part of a huge survey.

From the point of view of stages of error analysis, the present study is limited to identification, description, explanation and evaluation of overt group errors only.

The study focuses on the overt errors obtained from the tests on listening (discrimination of sounds, comprehension) grammar (multiple choice, error identification and translation) word formation and word meaning, reading comprehension (cloze) and composition writing.

1.12. Conclusion

In this chapter an analysis of the ELT situation in Nepal is presented with a view to discussing the problem it faces in its totality. It is concluded that English is taught in Nepal in an impossible situation because of the ever aggravating problems such as large classes, untrained teachers, lack of audio-visual materials, etc. Some of these problems are elicited in the studies carried out by various people on various aspects. The conclusions drawn by them show the areas of difficulties that the Nepali learners of English face.