Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION AND

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Introduction

Competence in a language is developed by either acquisition or learning. Here, acquisition refers to the “sub-conscious process” in which language is acquired for communication while learning refers to conscious process of studying the grammar and rules of a language (Krashen, 2009). Learning or acquiring a language other than one’s mother tongue or first language (L1) is never easy. In case of the first language (L1), it is easier as the learner grows up and lives in a rich environment where there is abundant use of the language. Besides, the learner needs to use it in daily basis which is contrary for a second language or a foreign language. The process of acquiring or learning a language of another linguistic family includes internalisation of culture in addition to the linguistic features of that language. When a learner learns a second language, he has already acquired the basic system of his mother tongue which is repertoire of basic syntactic relations and categories along with reduced registers of his mother tongue and “fossilised approximate systems in other languages” (Corder, 1982: 85).

Most of the people never acquire a high level of proficiency in second or foreign language (L2). This difficulty in acquiring second or foreign
language (L2) “led to the institutionalisation of second language learning to a much greater extent than with first language” (Brumfit, 1984: 33). The aim of language learning is to acquire communicative competence through talking, corresponding or interpreting (Widdowson, 1988). Simply put, the required competence of the learner is defined and measured in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

1.1 English as a Global Language

In the age of globalisation, English is no doubt the language of international communication. It has an immense impact in the field of science and technology, industry and commerce, entertainment and internet revolution. People all over the world depend on this language for their economic and social advancement. It acts as a world language in three levels as a native language, a second language and a foreign language. Kachru (1985) divides the English speaking world into three concentric circles: inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle. Inner circle includes the use of English as a native language (L1) in USA, Canada; Outer circle includes the use of English as second language (L2) in India, Pakistan, Singapore and the Expanding circle covers countries like China, Sweden, Japan where English is a foreign language. A great number of academic works or discourse are done through English and it is also the language of dominant culture.

Again, Widdowson (2010) sees the spread of English Language not as “a stable and unitary set of encoded forms” but as a ‘virtual language’ that is
adapted, reformed or used in different contexts. English as a global language is now growing roots in a number of countries and communities around the world and the local speakers appropriate this language through a process. English is a means for communication, for higher studies and for taking part in the process of globalisation. As the world is getting smaller with the technological advancement, the interaction of different people from various parts of the world is getting frequent. The interaction is, most of the time, conducted in English. This global nature of English has considerable effect on policies and practises in a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific regions. In these regions, the age at which English is a compulsory subject has shifted down in recent years (Smith, 2002). More importance is given in teaching and learning English as a Second or Foreign language (ESL & EFL).

1.2 English Education

As already mentioned that a language is either learned or acquired, in case of English, it is mostly learned as a language in the outer circle and expanding circle. In most cases, English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught by non-native to non-native learners in which both the students and the teachers have no contact with a native speaker. The approaches adopted for teaching of English have undergone paradigm shift ranging from Grammar translation method to Direct methods, and then to Communicative language teaching method which is currently practised in many parts of the world. The countries belonging to the
outer and expanding circle have its own history of English education and its own aims and objectives. With this view in mind, the history of English Education and its present status in India and Thailand is discussed in the following sections.

1.2.1 English Education in India

English plays an important role in India as a second language. It is a widely taught second language in schools and colleges of India (Kachru, 1971). It is also the medium of instruction in higher studies. It is used for inter-state communication. English newspapers are published in practically every part of India. According to Kachru (1983), three phase that led to the introduction of English as a second language are the missionaries phase in which they were trying to preach and spread Christianity through English; the second phase in which a small group of Indians who were acquainted with English, wanted it to be used as a tool for scientific and material progress; and political phase which firmly established the English language in South Asia.

Although it is generally claimed that Macaulay’s Minute and Lord Bentinck’s consent to it led to the emergence of English Education formally and officially in India in 1835, English Education already started in India with the arrival of the East India Company. Christian missionaries tried to impart English Education to the indigenous people of India. Alexander Duff, a well known Christian missionary started an English school in Calcutta in the early
period (Padma & Vasantha, 2005 cited in Sujeta, 2010). Then it was followed by the foundation of the Presidency Universities in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857 where English was the primary medium of instruction. Thus, the period 1765 to 1947 saw the era of British patronage and encouragement of English Education in India. The spread of English Education led to the emergence of a middle class which opted for English education for better employment and the fortune that came along with it. Several landmark developments in the area of teaching of English in India was made before Independence in which mention can be made of

(a) the Indian University Act (1904) which fixed the area of authority of universities,

(b) the Abbot-Wood report (1936-1937) which asked for basic primary and middle school education based on children’s natural interest and environment and

(c) the Sergeant Committee Report (1944) which suggested for refresher courses to be conducted for teachers especially for those belonging to remote rural areas (Gambhir, 2001)

After Independence, endeavours were made by the government of India to do away with English. The place of English in India was put to question by the appointment of the Official Language Commission by the President of India on 7 June, 1955. However, it remained and the Central
Advising Board of Education introduced the three language formula in 1956. Here, the three languages included mother tongue or the regional language, English and Hindi. According to Article 343 (2) of the Indian Constitution, English was to be used as an official language until 26 January 1965. But due to protest from South Indian States against the use of Hindi, the Parliament of India passed the official Language Act in 1967. According to the Act, English continued to be used in addition to Hindi for the official purposes (Kachru, 1983). Kothari Commission (1966) recommended for both Hindi and English to be link languages and English as the medium of instruction in all major universities. The Commission further recommended for setting up of separate units for teaching English as a language skill. Thus, English is studied as a second language or a third language in many parts of India (Sujeta, 2010).

1.2.2 English Education in Manipur

Before English Education arrived in Manipur, the ancient Manipuris in the valley of Manipur had their own system of education which was focussed on all round development of an individual. It was Sir Gordon who first tried to establish English Education in Manipur in the beginning of the 19th century but his untimely death left it unfulfilled. After him, attempts were made by other officials to establish it. Yet, they all faced failure due to lack of local support. Initially, the Manipuri people were against English Education as they feared that they might be converted into Christianity like they were converted
into Vaisnavism when the Hindu missionary Shantidas came during the reign of King Garibniwaj (1709-1748) (Jamini, 2006).

Though attempts were made by some British officials to establish English school in Manipur, it was Sir James Johnstone who managed to establish an English school during the reign of Maharaj Chandra Keerti in 1885. The school was named after him. In the beginning, the school was run within the premise of the British Residency Compound as a private school. It was closed down for almost a year due to Anglo-Manipuri War in 1891. The school re-opened in 1892 and it started with 117 students (Aruna Devi, 1990). The school is now renamed as Johnstone Higher Secondary School. Thus, English Education had its beginning in the valley area of Manipur. The Christian Missionaries played an important role in spreading English Education in the hill areas of Manipur. Rev. William Pettigrew was a pioneer of western education in Manipur especially in the hill areas. He tried to establish English schools in the valley but he could not succeed because of his missionary zeal. So, he left for Ukhrul, a prominent and exclusive habitation of Tangkhul Naga tribe on the hills and there, he carried out both his missionary work and educational projects.

After British conquest of Manipur in 1891 and re-opening of the Middle English School (established by Johnstone) more schools were opened subsequently. Further, the middle schools were upgraded to high schools.
With the expansion of modern education, the Department of Education was established in 1910. Then, in 1929-30, Matriculation examination centre was opened in Imphal at Johnstone High School by Calcutta University. In post-independent Manipur, English education continued and English is introduced as a second language as early as in Class II. Textbooks were produced by the Board of Secondary Education, (BOSEM), the Council of Higher Secondary Education (COHSEM) and the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT). In addition to that, the educational bodies conduct workshops, refresher courses and other in-services teacher-training programs for teachers who are teaching English in Manipur. It is the medium of instruction in higher education (Gambhir, 2001).

To relate on higher education, Dhanamanjuri College was established in 1945. By 1988, the numbers of colleges increased to 48 under Manipur University of which 27 are government colleges while the rest are private colleges. Again, the Manipur University was established in 1980 by an act of the Manipur Legislative Assembly. It was later on upgraded to the status of central university (Jamini, 2006). The Department of Education which was established in 1910 was bifurcated into two sections—one to look after the school education and the other to deal with the college and university education (Ibid).

Manipuri is the official language of Manipur. In spite of this, most of the works at court administration, public and private offices are carried out in
English. English is the medium of instructions in almost all higher educational institutes and the examinations are conducted in this medium except for the first language papers. English’s empowering position in Manipur can be known through the vast number of English medium private schools and Manipuri parents’ high preference for such schools. Even in missionary schools speaking other language than English is not encouraged and the students are reprimanded. The indulgence in this language and the high status accorded to those who are fluent in English still persist. However, in spite of such high preference for English, students after learning it for more than a decade are still not competent in spoken language and some errors are still found in their writings.

Manipur University was established in 1980 as a teaching cum – affiliating university at Imphal which was converted into a central university. The university has 86 affiliated colleges (Ibid). In the undergraduate level of the colleges under Manipur University, General English is a compulsory subject in the 1st semester. The syllabus consists of grammar and composition and also short stories.

**Under-Graduate Semester System (M.U. Syllabus, 2010)**

**ENGLISH SYLLABUS (2010)**

*(Being Introduced from 2010 Session)*

**SEMESTER-I**
GENERAL ENGLISH-I

Full Marks: 100

Unit I: Grammar 20 marks

Voice: Active/Passive; Speech: Direct and Indirect; Time, Tense and Aspect;
Phrasal Verbs; Auxiliary Verbs; Use of Shall, Will, For, Since; Idioms and
Phrases; Common Errors; Preposition; Synonyms and Antonyms; Syntax

Unit II: Unseen part

(i) Essay: General and Current Topics 20 Marks

(ii) Précis Writing 10 Marks

(iii) Comprehension 10 marks

(iv) Paragraph writing 5 marks

(v) Report writing 5 marks

Unit III: Short Stories 30 marks

(i) Y. Ibomcha Singh: Water

(ii) Temsula Ao: Three Women

(iii) N. Kunjamohan Singh: The Taste of an Hilsa

(iv) M. K. Binodini: A String of Beads
Books Recommended:


1.2.3 English Education in Thailand

Thailand is a country which has never been colonised and Thai is the only official language. Thailand lies in the Southeast Asian mainland. It consists of 76 provinces and its capital is Bangkok. The official language of this country is Thai. Thai is a member of the Tai family of languages and is a tonal language. This language mostly consists of monosyllabic lexicon while the polysyllabic words are borrowed from the classical Indian languages—Sanskrit and Pali (Smith, 2002). In this country, English is a foreign language which has its special status and functions. For some Thais, this is a very important language which they have to master while, for some English is irrelevant. However, in the last two decades their perception of English has changed. The importance of English in today’s world of globalisation stems its position in Thailand. Again, with the fact that English will be the means of
communication in ASEAN countries, the English educators in Thailand face the challenges to well equip their students with this language. (Dueraman, 2012) In Thailand, competence in English is seen as a symbol of sophistication and a way to a more prosperous life (Ibid).

So, proficiency in English is an indicator of high education, high economic and social status. (Hayes, 2008; cited in Dueraman, 2012) It is the most important foreign language. In this country, English education started during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) by an American missionary. Further progress was made by his successors. King Rama VI (1910-1925) founded the country’s first University and made English as a compulsory subject after grade 4. With the change in the political system of the country from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932, education was to be provided equally to all citizens (Thai TESOL Assn., cited in Pornapit, 2007). By 1937, state schools started teaching English officially (Rattna, 2011 cited in Noom-ura, 2013). During 1950’s foreign aids came from United Kingdom, United States and Canada. The National Scheme of Education was set up in 1977 and changes were suggested in the curricula with main emphasis on practical communication and learner-centred approach. English is one of the compulsory subjects in the National Education Entrance Examination. The National Education Act (1999) led to changes in ELT at secondary and tertiary levels with inclusion of local culture and encouraging CLT methods at the same time. The main aim of this reform is to
prepare the students cope with the 21st century. However, the communication based teaching cannot be fulfilled in the classroom. One of the reasons is the National University Entrance Examination which focuses on grammatical rules and reading for comprehension. So, the teachers need to give intensive tutorials in these topics.

Under the initiative of Commission on Higher Education (CHE), the Consortium for English compulsory courses was established in 2000 to develop an English language curriculum. According to it, students are required to take 12 credits or 4 subjects of English which comprises 2 English foundation courses and 2 English for specific purpose to complete their degree (Thai TESOL Assn. ibid). It again set up goals for the various courses. Thus, the aim of English foundations I and II is development in terms of social language and academic language. To develop social language, the students should be able to have both speaking and writing skills to communicate in English inside and outside the universities and also consider the cultural differences. To achieve academic language development requires the learner to be able to use the language to access and process information and use that knowledge in developing critical skills (Drafted English Curriculum June, 2002; cited in Pornapit, 2007). Thus, a new curriculum was enforced in 2002 to equip the Thai students for the new economy. At the primary level, English language is one of the core subjects and language skill is emphasised in secondary education. Although, serious initiatives are taken for the
development of English Language Teaching and learning, the quality of English education varies in Thailand. In Bangkok, expensive private schools with competent teachers are teaching English at the primary level producing students who are fluent speakers of English. But this is not the case in rural areas where there is lack of competent teachers (Smith, 2002).

In Thailand, as already mentioned, English is one of the most important foreign languages. With globalisation, the need for learning English has been accelerated as English is the means for taking part in international activities. The World Bank has recently ranked Thailand as second amongst the ASEAN countries that attracts businesses internationally and Thailand aims to attract more foreign investors through exemption of corporate income tax for 15 years from June, 2010 (“Huge tax exemption”, 2010). This indeed calls for the urgent need for upgrading the citizens’ proficiency in English. English is now a compulsory subject in Thai schools. The increasing importance of English is also felt in the rapidly expanding tourism industry in this country. There are advertisements in both Thai and English newspaper for applicants who have good command in English (Foley, 2005).

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is a Buddhist University that was established by King Chulalongkorn, Rama V. M.C.U provide four main faculties for students: Buddhism, Education, Sociology and Humanities. The course syllabus of English for undergraduate consists of Basic English and Advanced English. The syllabus is given below:
Course Syllabus of Basic English (MCU Lecturers, 2012: 143-147)

**BASIC ENGLISH**

(i) Introduction to English in Thailand
(ii) Parts of Speech
(iii) Articles
(iv) Tenses
(v) Sentences
(vi) The four-skill practice

Course Syllabus of Advanced English (MCU Lecturers, 2013:143-149)

**ADVANCED ENGLISH**

(i) Sentence Structure
(ii) Punctuation
(iii) Phrases
(iv) Clauses
(v) Transformation of Phrases and Clauses
(vi) Listening and Speaking Proficiencies
(vii) Reading Proficiencies
(viii) Writing Essays and Summaries

There is no separate mark for each chapter. Marks are given in terms of credit.
1.3 Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

The acquisition or learning of a second language or a foreign language is normally conducted in an institution. Several approaches and methods of language teaching have come up so far which range from Grammar Translation method to Direct method and then to Communicative Language Teaching. These approaches or methods have its merits as well as demerits. A brief review of some of the various language teaching methods and approaches is done in the following.

1.3.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

The Grammar Translation Method is one of the oldest and traditional methods of language teaching. It dominated language teaching in Europe from the 1840s to 1940s. It was originally used in the teaching of Latin and Greek languages over the centuries. In it, grammar and translation equally dominate. The learners have to learn and memorised the various rules of grammar in details. The memorisation of large number of vocabulary is encouraged. The test under this method is done through translation in which the learners have to translate passages (Chastain, 1976).

This method was highly appreciated by the scholars who wanted to acquire the knowledge of foreign languages to read the literature of that language. Understanding the rules of grammar and its exceptions is needed to
learn a language. Again, the students should be studious and hardworking as lots of memorisation of rules and vocabulary is required. The aim of this method is to equip the learners with the grammar of the language so that they can write with accuracy. Accuracy and correct grammatical use are highly recommended. Reading and writing skills are given utmost importance.

The characteristics of the Grammar Translation Method according to Richards & Rodgers (2001) are:

(i) The aim of studying the foreign or second language is to use it in reading its literature to get the mental discipline and intellectual development of the language. Detailed study of grammatical rules is encouraged so that it can lead to translation of works in the language in terms of sentences and text.

(ii) The main focus of this method is on reading and writing with little attention to speaking and listening.

(iii) The learning of vocabulary is mostly done through memorisation of word lists that are given in bilinguals. The memorisation of grammar rules and vocabulary are mainly done in this method.

(iv) Translation of the target language to L1 is mostly performed in the sentence level. The sentence translation is a distinctive feature of this method.
(v) There is much emphasis on accuracy and high standard in translation is expected from the students.

(vi) The deductive teaching of grammar is employed here. The rules are first presented with explanation and then the exercises where the rules are to be used are practised. There is organised and systematic way in teaching grammar.

(vii) The medium of instruction is the native language (L1) of the students. The L1 is used to explain the text so that the students can compare it with their native language.

**Drawbacks of Grammar Translation Method:**

This method has its own merits but it is not devoid of demerits. Although, it focuses on reading and writing skills, the other two skills-listening and speaking are neglected. Again, it is also inadequate in terms of communication skills. Thus, the drawbacks are:

1) Too much emphasis on grammar led to the learning about the language and not learning it to use it (Finocchiaro et al., 1983).

2) The use of translation as a means to teach is not useful as two different countries have different cultures, thoughts, feelings and ways of expression which is difficult to bridge in translation. Only literal translation can lead to the loss of meaning or the context.
3) Courses, lessons and exercise are burdensome to the students. The memorisation of rules and long lists of vocabulary are tasking.

4) The method ignores pronunciation, intonation and any speech act.

5) Mistakes are not encouraged as it is considered that mistakes will lead to the habits of inaccuracy.

6) The use of the target language in the classroom is not encouraged. The class is conducted in the mother tongue or the first language.

7) Pronunciation is not given importance. It is neglected most of the time. Only a few important words are taught in pronunciation.

Thus, the Grammar Translation Method is theoretical rather than practical. It only emphasises reading, writing, translation and strict adherence to grammatical rules. It is mainly focused on the development of literary mastery in the target language and not in the actual use of the language for communication. This method has been criticised for its too much adherence to written form and negligence to speaking. However, this method is still widely used in many countries where English is learned as a second or foreign language. It is popular in large size classes and among teachers who are less proficient in speaking skill.
1.3.2 The Direct Method (DM)

The Direct Method is based on the belief that second language learning should be more like first language learning. The methods involve lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of language, no translation between first and second languages and little or no analysis of grammatical rules. Here, grammar is given the least importance. Unlike Grammar- Translation Method that focuses more on the written language, Direct Method prioritises oral skills. It follows syllabus of grammar but without elaborate explanation and exercise on this. The learners are supposed to pick up the grammar of the second language in the same way they pick up the grammar of their mother tongue. The learners have to be simply immersed in the language (Thornbury, 1999). The implicit learning of language is encouraged. Although oral skill is given much importance in this method, it is different from oral method. In it, unlike in oral method, reading in the second or foreign language forms an important part in the early stage (Fries, 1964).

This method encourages the use of the word, phrase, idiom and sentences in second or foreign language as it happens in the use of the first language by establishing an immediate association between experience and expression. It shifts its emphasis from literary language to the spoken one and hence, it excludes translation and grammar. This new school of thinking stresses that the teaching of second or foreign language should be done only in
the target language with no emphasis on translation or driving meaning of the language to the mother tongue. The Direct Method became very popular in the first quarter of the 20th century, especially in the private language schools of Europe. There, the highly motivated students could study and apply the new languages communicatively without travelling far to try them. However, it was not welcomed in public schools where due to constraints of budget, classroom size, time and background of teacher, it was not applicable.

The step followed in this method is that teaching of receptive skills (listening and reading) comes first then the productive skills (speaking and writing). Contrastive analysis of the target language with the first language (L1) is also done. Teachers need to have sound knowledge of phonetics so that they can teach pronunciation well. They should begin with limited number of items that should be repeated so that the students absorb it. Memorisation is not encouraged. Grammar teaching should be introduced only in the sentence level (Nagaraj, 1996). Mackey (1965) listed the salient features of this method as: emphasis on the use of everyday vocabulary and structure, using many new items in the same lesson, oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary, teaching grammar through situation and visual presentation and lastly the extension of listening and imitation until forms become authentic. The principles and procedures of Direct Method can be summarised as:-

(i) The classroom teaching is exclusively conducted in the target language.
(ii) The vocabulary and sentences used in the method are from everyday uses.

(iii) The skills of oral communication are processed carefully through question-and-answer exchanges between the teachers and the students in a small classroom.

(iv) The inductive approach to grammar teaching is followed.

(v) Demonstrations, objects and pictures are used to teach concrete vocabulary.

(vi) Speaking and listening skills are taught simultaneously.

(vii) Emphasis is on correct pronunciation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Direct Method prepares the students to think in the target language so that they become able to express their thoughts and feeling directly without the interference of the mother tongue. It encourages the acquisition of the target language like the mother tongue so that the students can grasp what they are reading as much as their mother tongues. According to Chiders (1964), language is made up of sounds and not letters and so, speaking skill should be done at first. The training of ear and tongue should begin before that of eyes. Connected discourse should be used as this gives full meaning. The natural way of learning the target language like that of the mother tongue is emphasised. The inductive learning of grammar should be there.
However, this method has also its demerits. Although it is successful in private schools, it is not applicable in public schools. It is suitable for small classes but not practical for large size classes. Again, it has no linguistic theory to back. It also needs teachers who are as fluent as the native speakers. It mostly depends on the teachers’ skills and not on the syllabus or the text. But not all teachers are competent or highly skilled which is required for this method. The overuse of the target language is not helpful to the students (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

1.3.3 The Audio- Lingual Method (ALM)

The need for a new approach to language teaching methodology arose during World War II, when America realised the need to equip Americans with the skill to communicate orally in a foreign language very quickly as they had to use it to integrate into the component of the scientific world (Ibid). So, they developed the “Army Method” to produce communicatively competent translators through intensive training courses that focused only on oral skills. This method when combined with new ideas from descriptive linguistics and behavioural psychology later became the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM).

According to Thornbury (1999), audio- lingualism comes from the theory of behaviourist psychology. Behaviourists believe that language is a form of behaviour and it is learned by forming correct habits. Drills of
patterns of language are vital parts in this approach. Brown (1980) adds that this method is firmly based on linguistic and psychological theory. It is not like the Direct Method. The learners are encouraged to overcome the habits of their native language and form new habits in the target language so that they can use it like their native language. Speech is the primary concern while writing is secondary and because of this, writing is introduced considerably late. As the structure is the most important in language, this method involves the early practice to master phonological and grammatical structures instead of the vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Although this approach is considered to be based on strong theoretical foundations, it failed to come up to the expectations. The reasons for this are that the theoretical foundations whether in terms of language theory or the learning theory are criticised for being unsound and the results are found to be lacking. The skills acquired through the Audio-Lingual method by the students are found to lag behind the expectations. Again, the students found the audio-lingual class boring and unsatisfying (Ibid).

1.3.4 The Communicative Approach (CA)

The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching has flourished since the early 1970s. Due to the shift of educational situation of Europe from teachers-centred classes to learners-centred ones, a new method of teaching was attempted. Thus, the attempts led to the development of a language course
on a unit credit system. In this system, tasks are divided into portions and each portion corresponds to a component of a learner’s needs and is also systematically related to the other portions (Ibid). This approach is based on the theory of language as communication. It comes from Hymes (1972) who coined the term ‘communicative competence’ in which Chomsky’s linguistic competence is rejected. He holds that a learner needs to acquire not only the knowledge of the language but also the ability to use it with respect to possibility, availability, appropriateness and performance. Thus, the new approach shifts language teaching method’s focus from grammar to communicative properties of language (Allen & Widdowson, 1987). They think that the difficulties that students encounter are not because of defective knowledge of the system of the target language but from an unfamiliarity of the use of language.

According to Littlewood (1981), a second or a foreign language learner should acquire linguistic competence as well as communicative competence. The three corresponding aspects of communicative skill involved in understanding meanings are “the ability of understand linguistic structures and vocabulary; knowledge of the potential communicative functions of linguistic forms; the ability to relate the linguistic forms to appropriate non-linguistic knowledge, in order to interpret the specific functional meaning intended by the speaker” (3). Thus, the communicative approach of language teaching rejects the notion that competence in a language can be achieved by only
memorising grammatical rules, sentence patterns and vocabulary. It realised the need for form and functions of a language.

Littlewood (1981) came up with a methodological framework of communicative approach in which he distinguished pre-communicative activities in which the teachers fill the students with linguistic skills and the communicative activities in which the learners use the acquired linguistic skill for communication of meaning. He summarised the distinction as follows:

(i) In the pre-communicative activities, the teacher classifies the specific components of knowledge or skills that compose the communicative ability and makes sure that the learners practise them separately. Here, the learners are trained for each skill in separation rather than being trained in total. The aim of these activities is to equip the learners of the linguistic skills and makes them to have a fluent command on it while they do not actually require it to use.

(ii) While in communicative activities, the learners are required to use their acquired linguistic knowledge and integrate them for the communication of meaning. The learners can engage in communication using all the skills acquired in total. The communication of meaning is done through the transfer of social as well as functional meaning. In the functional communicative
activities, the learner has to perform a task of communication in which he has to communicate as much as he can by using whatever resources available to him. The success of it depends on how he effectively performs the task. While, in the social interaction activities, the learner has to keep the social context in mind while communicating. Here, simply getting across the meaning will not do. The learner has to “develop greater social acceptability in the language he uses” (86).

The Communicative approach considers teachers not as an instructor but as a facilitator. The teachers are assigned two main roles under this approach as a facilitator as well as an independent participant (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The teacher first facilitates the communication process in which the participants are communicated with the text and the resources and then with the other participants in the classroom. Then, the teacher participates in the communication activity of the learners as an organiser of resources and as a resource. Littlewood (1981) highlights the role of teacher as a facilitator as a general overseer, classroom manager, language instructor and as a silent participant.

Thus, the Communicative approach is considered rather as an approach than as a method. It can be applied in classroom teaching to help the learners in acquiring it as well as using it for communication. It focuses on the
integration of different language skills and considers language learning as process of trails and errors. It emphasises fluency of speech and the use of authentic and meaningful communication as the goal of language classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

1.4 Competence and Performance

Definitions of competence are manifold according to their use in various contexts. In the context of language, competence is the knowledge of the language and the ability to use that knowledge to interpret and produce meaningful texts appropriate to the situation in which they are used. The synonym of competence is ability. In Widdowson’s (1988) opinion, the ability that a learner of a language needs to acquire is not only the knowledge of how to understand, speak, read and write sentences but also how to use the sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose and an understanding of which sentences or parts of sentences are appropriate in a particular context. There is no clear distinction between competence and performance. What is included in performance according to one linguist may again be included in competence by another linguist. For instance, what Chomsky (1980) had associated with performance i.e. appropriateness and acceptability are according to Dell Hymes (1987) included in competence. Widdowson (1988) maintained that the distinction between ‘usage’ and ‘use’ is related to Saussure’s langue and parole and Chomsky’s similar distinction
between competence and performance. Indeed, Chomsky associates his views of competence and performance with Saussure’s langue and parole. Here, Dell Hymes (1987) contends that though Chomsky associates his views with that of Saussure’s yet he considers his own conception as superior and closer to the Humboldtian conception of underlying processes.

According to Noam Chomsky in *A Theory of Competence* (1980), competence is “the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language” while performance is “the actual use of language in concrete situations”. He claims that a grammar of a language when supported by a universal grammar describes the ideal speaker-hearer’s intrinsic competence. According to him, a grammar describes the intrinsic competence of an idealised native speaker when the structural descriptions correspond to the linguistic intuition of the native speaker. Here ‘idealisation’ refers to the absence of many factors like memory limitations, distractions, changes of intention in the course of speaking that interact with competence to produce performance. Chomsky justifies generative grammar in two respects

(i) On external grounds – The grammar correctly describes the linguistic intuition-the tacit competence-of the native speaker. It is thus justified in correspondence to linguist fact.

(ii) On internal grounds – The grammar is justified in relation to a linguistic theory.
One aspect of linguistic competence is ‘creativity of language’ i.e. the ability to create new sentences that can be understood by the other speakers although the new sentences thus formed are not similar to the already ‘familiar sentences’. Thus a generative grammar “is a system of rules that relate signals to semantic interpretations of these signals” (Allen & Paul, 1972). According to Chomsky, a grammar consists of three components: syntactic component, semantic component and phonological component.

In his well known article, On Communicative Competence (1987), Dell Hymes introduced ‘communicative competence’. He repudiated Chomsky’s generative grammar as this theory failed to recognise children as communicating being and had not included socio-cultural factors. He defines competence as the use of language in the communicative interaction and social context and situation appropriately. He divides competence into competence for use i.e. communicative competence and competence for grammar i.e. linguistic competence. He opines that rules of grammar would be useless without rules of use. He lists four sectors of communicative competence which are possibility, feasibility, appropriateness to context and accepted usage.

Later on several researchers attempted to define the specific components of Dell Hymes’ conceptualisation of communicative competence. Oshtein (1994) holds a similar view with Canale and Swain (1980) that a
communicatively competent person is the one who possesses knowledge of grammar, socio-cultural norms of appropriateness, discourse rules and strategies that ensure that communication is taking place successfully. Thus, the components of communicative competence are:

(a) Grammatical competence is the ability to use the forms of the language- sounds, words and sentence structure.

(b) Discourse competence is the ability to understand and create forms of the language that is longer than sentences such as stories, conversation or business letters in a meaningful logical sequence. It requires mastery of cohesion and coherence. For instance, it is the skill to use appropriate conjunctions, adverbs etc.

(c) Socio-linguistic competence is the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts for example, the topic of discussion, the status of the participants and the purpose of the discourse.

(d) Strategic competence is ability to compensate for lack of ability in any of the other areas i.e. to avoid breakdown in communication and to improve the effectiveness of the discourse (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Uso-Juan and Martiner-Flor, 2008).

Another approach to competence is the analytic competence which was put forth by Bruner. Bruner (1975 cited in Llurda, 2000) distinguishes
‘analytic competence’ from ‘communicative competence’. According to him communicative competence is the ability to make and use a language appropriate to the context and situation, analytic competence “involves the prolonged operation of thought processes exclusively on linguistic representations” (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 147). He opines that analytic competence includes both the possession of communicative competence and formal schooling. However, his formulation had its shortcomings which are that “it identifies analytic competence as a manifestation of a higher cognitive level than communicative competence” (Ibid) and the dichotomies between these two formulations would oversimplify the reality.

According to Littlewood (1998), the four domains of skill which make up a person’s communicative competence are:-

(a) A learner must develop his/her skill to use the linguistic system spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.

(b) A learner must develop items as part of linguistic system to and to be understood as a part of communicative system.

(c) A learner should develop the ability to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations.

(d) A learner should inculcate the ability to use generally accepted forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.
Widdowson (1988) maintains, “linguistic performance involves the simultaneous manifestation of the language system as usage and its realisation as use.” Here, ‘usage’ indicates language used to show knowledge of linguistic rules while ‘use’ denotes language use to demonstrate ability to use knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication. To be competent in a language both the knowledge of ‘usage’ and instances of ‘use’ is required. A discourse should be cohesive and coherent as meanings are to be worked out from it on the basis of linguistic clues to what propositions (i.e. what it is about) are expressed and what illocutionary acts (what the speaker or writer is doing) are performed. Coherence is measured by the extent a particular utterance corresponds to the conventions of the language and how the speaker’s acts relate to form the discourse of different kinds. Out of all the cohesive utterances or sentences or text, the most acceptable as a unit of discourse is the one that is most coherent. Cohesion is about the ways several units of a language are joined together through different ‘structural operations’ to form a text or a discourse while coherence is about how the several units are arranged to create different kinds of discourse.

Widdowson (1988) classifies language skills in three ways in reference to (i) medium (aural and visual): speaking, composing, comprehending and hearing; (ii) mode (receptive and productive): saying, listening, writing and reading; (iii) manner: talking, corresponding and interpreting. The skills that
are defined with reference to medium are linguistic skills while those with reference to the manner and mode are communicative abilities.

Thus, learning a language comprises of four skills which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Listening and speaking are expressed through the aural medium while reading and writing are expressed through the visual medium. Again listening and reading are said to be passive or receptive skills while speaking and writing are said to be active or productive skills. These four skills are explained further in the following:

(i) **Listening:** Listening is not just recording what is said like a tape-recorder but processing, reforming and revising what is spoken to have a meaningful communication (Tickoo, 2003). It involves recognition of the function of the sentences and the communicative value of the utterance (Widdowson, 1988). Listening skill requires proficiency in three areas viz. ‘discrimination, retention and comprehension’. A learner should have the ability to discriminate phonemes of English and to recognise stress and intonation pattern and again to retain what is being heard (Vallette, 1967). Again, acts of listening can be viewed under two broad heads based on whether it serves an interactional functions or transitional functions (Tickoo, 2003).

(ii) **Speaking:** Speaking involves production of correct vowel and consonant sounds stress and intonation, knowledge of weak or
reduced forms of words, use of linkers/cohesive devices and adequate knowledge of words that are needed in everyday speech (Tickoo, 2003). Again, at the functional level, “it is making oneself understood” and it also includes “correct and idiomatic use of the target language” (Vallette, 1967:80). For this skill, a learner needs to have the ability to control a discourse like taking short turns in primarily interactive ‘chat’ and longer turns in transactional turns (Brown & Yule, 1997).

(iii) **Reading:** Reading is the ability to recognise sentences and their meaning as linguistic elements and to recognise how they function as a part of a discourse. It is a matter of discrimination as well as assimilation (Widdowson, 1988). The two distinctive kinds of reading processing are bottom-up and top-down processes. Bottom up processes are those that take in stimuli from the outside world-letters and words, for reading and deal with that information with little recourse to higher level knowledge. With top down processes, on the other hand, the uptake of information is guided by an individual's prior knowledge and expectations (Tickoo, 2003).

(iv) **Writing:** Writing is the process of creating correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium. It involves a great deal of time to think what has already been written and how to
develop an effective discourse from it. (Widdowson, 1988) Thus, according to Tickoo (2003) a proficient or competent writer need to know the subject matter, rich stock of vocabulary, a feel for the readers, rules and conventions of what the text or genre is, organisational skills, writing purposes and unhindered flow of ideas. According to Bell and Burnaby (1984), writing skill involves control of content, format, structure of sentence, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and also the ability to organise and present information with coherence and cohesion.

Although the four skills LSRW are discussed above, the researcher would be concentrating on only one skill which is writing skill. Thus, the thesis will concentrate only on writing competence which the researcher tries to develop after a detailed analysis of competence in a language starting from Chomsky’s linguistic/grammatical competence through Hymes’ Communicative competence, Halliday’s concept of meaningful potential and Canale & Swain’s theory and the various studies conducted till date. Here, the researcher will focus more on grammatical and discourse competence in writing skill and the problems they face while writing in ESL or EFL.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

English education started in Manipur decades later from other parts of India. It is the medium of instruction in higher education. In most of the
schools in Manipur especially in Imphal, students start their formal education in English. They first learn English alphabet and then the alphabets of their mother tongue or first language (L1). All subjects, except the first language paper, are printed in English and taught in English. Even though English is the language or the means for education for more than a decade, yet students in Manipur commit error while they write in English and they lack cohesion and coherence in their writing. Sujeta (2010) finds in her study that most of the Manipuri students commit grammatical errors when they write in English. The errors are in the use of personal pronouns, articles and preposition. They still show inadequate knowledge of English. So far, there has been limited research on the competence of Manipuri learners particularly writing skills. Thus, the need arises to study the level of writing competence of these learners and what are the rooms for improvement. However, in the context of Chiangmai, Thailand, the language does not have a colonial background and it is a foreign language which is learned as a subject and not as a means to learn other subjects. So, there will be difference in the level of competence between them.

Thai students have studied English between eight and twelve years in schools. Yet, after learning English for almost a decade, Thai students’ performance in English is not satisfactory. This is shown by most of the studies conducted on Thai students. Prapphal (2001) used Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) to conduct a research on
the competence of Thai learners. This competency test is taken as the standardised test for the undergraduate learners at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. It was found that the majority of the students’ performance could not meet the required score at the graduate level at the said university. Wiriyachitra (2002) in her studies found that Thais’ level of English proficiency in the international test level like TOEFL is low when compared with the other countries in Asia. According to Pawaputcharaudom (2007), the most difficult skill in English for the Thai students in Mahidol University is the writing skill and their mean score is low. Most of them are not able to write an essay within limited time and their grammatical knowledge is poor. Even while writing assignments, many students first write in Thai and then they translate it into English. Although the Thai educational reform made changes in the curriculum related to English language teaching and learning, yet it includes little on writing skills. In addition to this, even at tertiary level of education, the students are prepared to write at postgraduate level (Glass, 2009, cited in Dueraman, 2012). Thus, there is no improvement for the students in the writing skill. Hence, a study is required to assess knowledge of English and the writing competence and the major problems that they face, so that they can be helped in improving their writing skill.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

As English is taught as a second language in Manipur, India and as a foreign language in Chiangmai, Thailand, the learners’ level of competence is
different. Again, undergraduate students in Manipur, India and Chiangmai, Thailand lack competence in English in terms of their writing skill and they still commit errors in terms of grammar, syntax, coherence and cohesion. They still show mother tongue interference, lack of vocabulary knowledge, inability to form intended meaning and inappropriate use of phrase.

1.7 Objectives:

(i) To study the learners’ problems in writing skill and how they try to cope up with it in ESL and EFL context.

(ii) To analyse the learners’ competence in writing skill using grammatical accuracy, syntax, coherence and cohesion in writing as the parameters.

(iii) To analyse the learners’ problems from the teachers’ point of view.

(iv) To study the impact of native English on the students of ESL and EFL.

(v) To come up with recommendations for improving writing competence in English.

1.8 Hypothesis

(i) The learners’ writing competence in English in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, Chiangmai, and the selected three colleges under Manipur University, Manipur is low.
(ii) The learners commit more mistakes in grammar than in organising the ideas with cohesion.

1.9 Methodology

It is a qualitative and quantitative research in which the case study covers three selected colleges in Imphal-West district in Manipur under Manipur University and Mahachulalongkornrajyavidyalaya University (MCU), Chaingmai province, Thailand. The selection of colleges is done on random basis. Tools to be employed are questionnaires and writing test for the students and interviews for the teachers. The topic for the written test is chosen taking in account the background of the students. The student’s questionnaire consists of personal information, purpose for studying English and problems faced while writing in English and also the ways adopted by students while writing or coping their lack of knowledge. It has ten open-ended questions to measure their grammatical accuracy and ability to examine an English sentence. The English teachers in the selected colleges/universities are interviewed to understand the problems of teaching writing skill and their students’ competence in writing skill. The students are again asked to write a descriptive essay on a particular topic and their writings are analysed based on grammatical accuracy, syntax, coherence and cohesion of ideas. The analysis is then compared with the feedback of the students in their questionnaire to drive out the reasons for their lack in competence or for their competence in writing skill.
1.10 Delimitations of the Study

The study is carried out only in the first semester undergraduate students of the three selected colleges under Manipur University, Manipur: Manipur College, G.P. Women’s College and D.M. College of Arts and Mahachulalongkornrajyavidyalaya University, Chiangmai, Thailand. Although, the term competence in a language involves many skills and sub-skills, the researcher only concentrates on written skill. The undergraduate students are the first semester students of the year 2016-2017.

1.11 Plan of the Study

The study is presented in the following chapters:-

(i) **Introduction**: This chapter begins with an introduction of English as a global language followed by English Education in India, Manipur and Thailand and Language Teaching Methods and Approaches. A brief discussion on theories and approaches in competence of a language with special reference to English are given. It also contains purpose of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis and plan of the study.

(ii) **Theoretical Framework: Competence in Second or Foreign Language and Literature Review**: This chapter contains theoretical background on competence ranging from linguistic
competence, communicative competence to intercultural competence. It also discusses the applicability of the theories in ESL and EFL context and a literature review of works regarding ELT, competence of English, problems in learning and teaching of English as a second language or as a foreign language focusing on writing skill.

(iii) **Research Methodology**: This chapter is about the research methodology applied in the study. It consists of research design, data collection procedure, research tools and data analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed to get the required data. The qualitative method consists of teachers’ interview and collection of written text by the students. The quantitative method is applied in the students’ questionnaire where their response is interpreted in terms of percentage. For the analysis of the essay (descriptive test), two rubrics are formulated and the major issues in the essay are discussed separately.

(iv) **Interpretation of Data from the Selected Three Colleges under Manipur University (M.U.), Manipur, India**: In this chapter, the data collected from the selected colleges under Manipur University are interpreted and analysed. The chapter starts with the interpretation of students’ questionnaires and its
analysis followed by assessment of the collected written texts of the students and finally the discussion of the teachers’ interview. A discussion on the errors encountered in the essays is also written.

(v) Interpretation of Data from Mahachulalongkornrajyavidyalaya University (M.C.U.), Chiangmai, Thailand: In this chapter, the data collected from the selected universities under Mahachulalongkornrajyavidyalaya University are interpreted and analysed. The chapter starts with the interpretation of students’ questionnaires and its analysis followed by assessment of the collected written texts of the students and finally the discussion of the teachers’ interview. A discussion on the errors committed by the students in the essay is also presented.

(vi) Findings and Conclusion: The findings of the analysis of the collected data are discussed in this chapter by comparing the data collected from the two universities. This is followed by testing of hypothesis, recommendations on how to improve their writing skill and suggestions are given for further studies. Conclusion is given discussing the major issues of the study in the Thai and the Manipuri context.