Chapter – II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:
COMPETENCE IN SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
Chapter – II

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: COMPETENCE IN SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter comprises of theoretical framework of competence in second or foreign language where the theories on competence which have come up so far are discussed, the applicability of these theories for ESL and EFL and the concept of International English (IE) and Worlds Englishes (WEs). It also includes literature review of studies on the problems of teaching and learning English, theories of EFL/ ESL writing, problems in writing in English as a second language and writing assessment.

On competence various theories have been put forth by many applied linguists. While some theories are based on first language (L1), some are also based on second or foreign language (L2). Chomsky’s theory of competence and Halliday’s theory of ‘meaningful potential’ is for first language (L1) while Corder and Canale & Swain based their theory on second or foreign language (L2). Then there is inter-cultural communicative competence for communication across different cultures. A detailed study on these theories has been done and is discussed in the following.
2.1 Competence

The term ‘competence’ has been used by many linguists. It covers all possibilities “ranging from linguistic and communicative to pragmatic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic or transitional” (Llurda, 2000: 85). But a theory in it has been initiated by Chomsky (1965) who defines competence as that the speaker of a language knows implicitly and focuses only on the grammatical aspects of the language. His theory of competence is the starting point of many other approaches to it. However, his theory does not consider socio-cultural impact. Thus, Hymes (1987) refutes Chomsky’s theories and contends that rules of grammar would be useless without rules of use.

From this comes the notion of ‘communicative competence’. This term stems from Hymes when he challenges Chomsky’s ‘linguistic competence’ and it includes the socio-cultural aspects which are missing in Chomsky’s. There are various studies on the components of ‘communicative competence’. Edmonson (1981) opines that communicative competence includes the mastery of the linguistic code i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and the function of the language i.e. speech act. Again, social competence plays an important role in the use of this communicative competence (cited in Llurda, 2000). According to Canale & Swain (1980), what comprises a ‘communicative competence’ are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Canale (1983) again subdivides socio-cultural competence into socio-cultural and discourse competence.
Burner (1973) equates ‘competence’ with ‘skill’ which can be learned. Corder (1982) also defines ‘competence’ as a skill which can be taught and opines that Chomsky’s notion of competence cannot be taught unless that competence incorporates skill. Although he seems to be against Chomsky yet he borrows Chomsky’s notion of ‘competence’ in his description of ‘transitional competence’. According to Taylor (1988), Stern (1983) equates ‘competence’ with ‘proficiency’ who defines ‘proficiency’ as “the actual performance of given individual learners or groups of learners” (341) while Savignon (1983) takes competence as dynamic which is in contrast to Chomsky’s static view of competence excluding any notion of ‘capacity’ and ‘ability’ (cited in Celce-Murcia, 1995). Widdowson (1988) defines competence as the “language user’s knowledge of abstract linguistic rules” (3). Bachman (1996) classifies the components of communicative competence into organisational competence and pragmatic competence. For 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.

2.1.1 Chomsky’s Theory of Competence

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” (4). He rejects Sausurre’s concept of langue “as merely a systematic inventory of items” (213). He prefers Humboldtian conception of underlying competence as a system of generative processes. 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. A child who has learned a language has developed an innate grammar i.e. a genetic blue print of language which he uses to construct sentences, to differentiate correct and incorrect sentences, to detect ambiguity and errors. 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. It is descriptively adequate to the extent that this pairing corresponds to the competence of the idealised speaker-hearer” (Allen & Paul, 1972: 10). A generative grammar should have three basic components: a syntactic component that generates SD’s (Syntactic Description), consisting of both deep and surface structure; a semantic component that deals with the semantic interpretation of deep structure and a phonological component that is based on phonetic interpretation of surface structure. Thus, according to Chomsky, a grammar consists of three components- syntactic component, semantic component and phonological component.
2.1.2 Competence and Performance

Chomsky’s theory has been put under question by many applied linguists mostly on his distinction of competence and performance. Brumfit (1984) points out that the problem with Chomsky’s distinction of competence and performance is that Chomsky has specified competence with some precision while performance includes many more for instance the lapses in performance due to interference by fatigue or inattention, stylistic variation and acceptability. On competence and performance, Chomsky (1965) made two claims- one weak and the other stronger claim. His weaker claim defines competence as knowledge of grammar and other aspects while performance means the actual use of that knowledge. In the stronger claim Chomsky indicates that competence is the grammar that has been internalised by the native speaker of that language while performance comprises of memory limitations, perceptual passing strategies and many more which are psychological factors involved in speech. Both the theory of competence and performance is required to determine whether a given phrase, clause or a sentence is ungrammatical, grammatical but unacceptable and grammatical and acceptable.

However, Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) indicate that Chomsky’s stronger version of the competence-performance distinction does not consider “the appropriateness of socio cultural significance of an utterance
in the situational and verbal context in which it is used.” (cited in Canale & Swain, 1980: 4). Although Chomsky (1965) viewed competence as knowledge of rules of grammar, Hymes (1972) and Campbell & Wales (1970) contends competence includes contextual or socio linguistic competence (Ibid). Campbell & Wales (1970) points out that Chomsky had not mentioned anything about the ability of production of utterances in accordance to the context and to understand them (cited in Llurda, 2000). In addition to this, Llurda (2000) argues that Chomsky’s formulation of competence as something innate system equates it to other innate human system which could only be fully achieved in an ideal monolingual system and according to his formulation, competence is static and permanent.

While some applied linguists accept the distinction of competence and performance, some do not see the need for such distinction. Halliday (1970) denies the usefulness of the concepts of distinction between competence and performance in his words:

Such a dichotomy runs the risk of being either unnecessary or misleading: unnecessary if it is just another name for the distinction between what we have been able to describe in the grammar and what we have not, and misleading in any other interpretation (145).

On the other hand, 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, it can be mentioned that Dell Hymes (1972) 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.

As Chomsky’s theory of competence falls short in some of the aspects of language learning and acquisition, there arise the need for ‘communicative competence’ that embraces all rule-systems which explains the rules and its use. Hymes (1972) introduces ‘communicative competence’ which is later on studied in details by many applied linguists- Halliday (1978), Canale & Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Widdowson (1988), Bachman (1990) and Celce-Murcia (2007). The models of communicative competence and communicative performance that are put forth by these applied linguists are discussed below.

2.1.3 Hymes’ model of Communicative Competence

In his well known article, *On Communicative Competence* (1972), Dell Hymes introduces ‘communicative competence’. He repudiates Chomsky’s generative grammar as this theory fails to recognise children as communicating being and has 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.

Hymes points out the demerits of transformational grammar of Chomsky as:

(i) This grammar treats the acquisition of competence as independent of socio-cultural impact.

(ii) Performance deals with psychological factors and not with social interaction.

(iii) Performance can directly reflect competence which is not feasible in actual situation.

Hymes opined that the nature and evaluation of linguistic ability i.e. language competence vary cross-cultural and depends upon socio-cultural features and performance is an imperfect manifestation of competence. He opines that rules of grammar would be useless without rules of use. Hymes rejects Chomsky’s concept of equating ‘grammaticality’ with competence and ‘acceptability’ with performance. His includes the concepts of appropriateness and acceptability in competence which Chomsky associates with performance. Thus, Hymes takes account of other socio-cultural features as attitude,
motivation in competence. He lists four sectors of communicative competence which are:

(i) Possibility: A structure is possible when it is grammatical.

(ii) Feasibility: A sentence should be feasible and within the restricted powers of processing.

(iii) Appropriateness to context: A sentence should be appropriate to context.

(iv) Accepted usage: The sentence should occur in the normal conversation i.e. something which is in fact done.

In short, a theory of competence must “show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour.”(23-24). Thus, according to Hymes, the acquisition of language competence is fed by social experience, needs and motives and experience. Competence consists of competence for use and competence for grammar. In his redefinition, Hymes contrasts performance and competence as actual and underlying. His definition of performance in the least comes close to Chomsky’s actual use of language. He contends that generative grammar extends only a little way into the realm of the use of language. Generative grammar equates grammaticality with competence and acceptability with performance.
2.1.4 Halliday’s Concept of “Meaningful Potential”

Like Hymes, Halliday (1978) based his theory of language acquisition and learning on the socio-cultural aspects of language. He argues that nobody acquires a language but what is acquired is the function of the language. So, he prefers the term ‘language development’ as the term ‘language acquisition’ can be misleading. He studies language from functional point of view and so to him, learning a language is learning the ‘meaningful potential’ of that language.

According to Halliday (1978), learning and acquiring the function of a language involves social and semantic factors as the learner constructs a picture of reality of his surrounding i.e. his experience and then construct the semantic system. Thus, he asserts that social reality or culture is itself an edifice of meaning which he terms as ‘social semiotic’. For him ‘language and social man’ is a unified concept as there can be no social man without language and vice versa.

The similarity of Halliday’s notion of a socially constrained meaning potential with Hymes’ notion of communicative competence comes from the fact that Halliday viewed the process of language production involves the determination of behavioural options in the social system (cited in Canale & Swain, 1980). However, there are also some differences. Halliday (1978) views Hymes’s concept of ‘communicative competence’ as something like
‘psychosociolinguistics’. Although Hymes considers language (langue) as pure and speech (speech) as a contaminated form of langue, Halliday finds no such place for ‘knowledge of language’ i.e. competence in his functional theory. Here, Halliday discards the distinction of langue and parole, language and speech and competence and performance.

Halliday (1978) views that language as a tri-stratal system which consists of three branches: semantics, grammar and phonology. Again, he puts forth his theory of ‘meaningful potential’ in three levels which are grammatical option, semantic option and behavioural option. The grammatical option is the realisation of the semantic option which is the realisation of the behavioural option. However, Canale & Swain (1980) do not agree with this interrelation though they accept the three levels. The social behaviour does not seem to sufficiently account for the available semantic options. According to them, behavioural option is a result of the realisation of semantic options i.e. the meaningful potential which is again the realisation of sets of grammatical options.

2.1.5 Stern’s Notion of Proficiency

For Stern (1983), ‘proficiency’ is an alternative or rather a preferred term for ‘competence’. He has incorporated different concepts of proficiency from Chomsky to Hymes and also the notion of ‘language use’. He defines proficiency as “the actual performance of given individual learners or groups
of learners” (1983: 341). It involves the intuitive mastery of the language forms, linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural meanings. It also consists of ability to use the language giving more attention to communication than to form and the creativity of language.

2.1.6 Widdowson’s Views on Communicative Competence

According to Widdowson (1987), communication involves not only the composition of sentences but the sentences should be made to do different functions of social nature. The composed sentences should account as a means of communication by making different statements, describing, recording, classifying and even putting questions. Hence, linguistic forms cannot imply the different communicative functions. For instance, affirmative sentence does not always mean a mere statement but it can also be put as a question. In Widdowson’s words, “One linguistic form can fulfil a variety of communicative functions, and one function can be fulfilled by a variety of linguistic forms” (1987:119). In Widdowson’s words:

Communicative competence is not a matter of knowledge of rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partiality pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and
a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual standards. (1987, 135)

Thus, the ability or competence that a learner needs to acquire is not only the knowledge of how to understand, speak, read and write sentences but also how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose and an understanding of which sentences or parts of sentences are appropriate in a particular context. Again, Widdowson’s (1988) distinction of ‘usage’ and ‘use’ is related to Saussure’s distinction of ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ and Chomsky’s ‘competence’ and ‘performance’. For him competence is the “language user’s knowledge of abstract linguistic rules” (3) while performance is the revelation or manifestation of this abstract knowledge.

Usage and Use are both aspects of performance. What is meant by usage is the extent of demonstration of the user’s linguistic rules and use is the extent of the user’s ability to apply the mentioned linguistic knowledge for effective communication. Thus, according to Widdowson (1988), linguistic performance “involves the simultaneous manifestation of the language system as usage and its realisation as use” (3). Again, the realization of language as use comprises of the ability to select appropriate form of sentences and to recognize the function of sentence for communication. He 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.

2.1.7 Canale and Swain’s theory of Communicative Competence

Canale & Swain (1980) differ from Hymes and Halliday in their models of communicative competence as they are basically concerned with preparing and applying models to second language teaching and testing contexts. They discussed various theories on competence by many applied linguists: its merits and demerits. They presented an integrative and elaborate model of communicative competence. An integrative theory of communicative competence is the one where there is synthesis of grammar of the language, its use in the social context and the combination of utterances and its communicative functions under the principles of discourse. In short, this integrative theory covers four basic skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). Their model seems to be the accepted model which is further elaborated by other theorists.

Unlike Hymes (1972), Canale & Swain (1980) give equal emphasis to both ‘Grammatical Competence’ and ‘Socio-cultural Competence’ when they
say, “Just as Hymes (1972) was able to say that there are rules of grammar that would be useless without rules of language use, so we feel that there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar” (1980:5). For them, grammatical competence is a part of communicative competence. Minimal level of competence in grammar is also required for effective communication.

Canale & Swain (1980) make a distinction between competence and performance. According to them it is not possible to measure competence directly, what can be measured is only performance. The user’s knowledge of grammar and use can be assumed to be abstracted from their actual realization in performance and performance includes psycholinguistic competence. In their words, “Communicative competence is to be distinguished from communicative performance, which is the realisation of these competencies and their interaction in the actual production and comprehension of utterances.” (1980: 6). They again try to distinguish between the ‘theories of basic communication skills’, and the ‘sociolinguistic perspectives on Communicative Competence’. Most of the communication skills or communicative approaches put not much emphasis on socio cultural context and on grammatical accuracy.

According to Canale & Swain (1980), five guiding principles for the development of a communicative approach of second language teaching are:
(i) It should try to facilitate the integration of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence where there is no overemphasis on one form of competence over another.

(ii) The learner’s communicative needs should be the one where a communicative approach must be based on and respond to. According to Widdowson, there are two types of communicative needs which are the fixed one and the transitional one according to age and stage of the learners.

(iii) The approach should enable the language learner to have real communicative interaction with ‘highly competent speaker’ and that situation or opportunity should be provided to the language learners.

(iv) In the early stage of language learning, optimal use of the communicative competence acquired by the language learner must be made.

(v) The language learners should be provided information, made to practice and gather experience to get the minimum communicative needs in the second language. Therefore, the items that should be incorporated are grammatical categories, communicative functions, appropriate conditions, rules of discourse and registers, socio-cultural knowledge of the second language through teaching about the second language culture.
Thus, Canale & Swain come up with their theory of communicative competence which comprises of three components. These three components are discussed below

(i) Grammatical competence: It includes knowledge of lexical items, of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology. The aim for gaining grammatical competence is to enable the learner to write/express and to determine/interpret the literal meaning of an utterance accurately.

(ii) Sociolinguistic competence: It consists of “socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse” (30). By socio-cultural rules of use what is meant is the rules or ways for producing and understanding utterances appropriately taking into account the contextual factors such as topic, role of participants, setting and norms of interaction and again with appropriate register, attitude and style based on a particular grammatical form within any given socio-cultural situation. Rules of discourse comprises of cohesion and coherence of the utterances.

(iii) Strategic competence: In Canale & Swain’s words, strategic competence are “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance varieties or to insufficient
competence” (30). These are the strategies to compensate two types of performance or insufficient competence which are grammatical insufficiency and sociolinguistic lack of information. According to Stern (1978), this strategy changes with age and level of proficiency and it is more likely to develop outside the classroom which is in real life communication.

About testing communicative competence of a learner, Canale and Swain say:

… communicative testing must be devoted not only to what the learner know about the second language and about how to use it (competence) but also to what extent the learner is able to actually demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation (performance). (1980: 34)

Lastly, things to be considered or taken into account while conducting a study on communicative approach and competence are:

(i) The communication needs of the group of learners under study should be described based on the learners’ bio-data (age, background knowledge), the speech community where the learners would be using the second language (with native speaker, or within their community or other non-native speakers etc.)
(ii) The grammatical rules, socio-cultural rules, discourse rules and communication strategies should be relevant to the learner’s communicative needs.

Certain questions are also put forth by them on whether to adopt communicative approach or not which are

(i) Whether the manner and extent of communication needs is focussed on the different levels of second language learning.

(ii) Whether the communicative approach is more effective than grammatical approach in enabling the learners gain ‘flexibility’ in handling communicative functions and interactions.

(iii) To determine whether a communicative approach facilitates/enhances learners’ motivation to learn and teachers to teach the second language and to what extent are they successful.

In his adaptation, Canale (1983) tries to create a theory of Communicative Performance which he prefers to term as ‘actual performance’. For him, “Communicative Competence refers to both knowledge and skill in using this knowledge when interacting in actual communication.” (1983: 5) Thus, Canale considers ‘actual communication’ to be different from ‘communicative competence’. In addition to the three components, he comes up with a fourth component i.e. Discourse competence.
Discourse competence is already there in Canale & Swain’s (1980) model but later on Canale (1983) allots it a separate category thereby giving it greater importance. Discourse competence is simply the ability to create a cohesive (form) and a coherent (meaning) spoken or written text. He does not make any changes in grammatical competence, but he does so in sociolinguistic and strategic competence. He no longer includes the knowledge of discourse in sociolinguistic competence and so this competence only includes appropriateness of meaning and form. As for strategic competence, he elaborates it including the strategies like changing the speed or pitch of delivery for rhetorical effects so that the effectiveness of communication is enhanced.

2.1.8 Bachman’s (1990) Communicative Language Ability (CLA)

According to Bachman (1990), “communicative language ability can be described as consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use.” (84). Bachman’s model is different from the previous models in that he clearly distinguishes ‘knowledge’ from ‘skills’ and tries to explain the process of interaction of the various components not only with each other but with context in which the language use occurs. According to him, ‘strategic competence’ pertains to all the language competencies. In his model he also discusses about the
mechanisms which enable the user in getting the actual execution of the language and also the importance of the world knowledge of the language user. The four components of Communicative Language Ability are:

(i) Language Competence

(ii) Strategic Competence

(iii) Psycho-physiological Mechanisms

(iv) World Knowledge

Language Competence

Language competence consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence is concerned with the relationship among signs and their referents. It comprises of different abilities required for the production and comprehension of formal structures of language considering the grammaticality, the propositional context and ordering into the text.

Bachman classifies organizational competence into grammatical and textual competence. Grammatical competence includes the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology/graphology, choice of words for specific expressions, forms and arrangement of words and its realization in speech or written symbols. Textual competence comprises of the knowledge
of the conventions for arranging and joining utterances to form a spoken or written text. Rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization govern a text. Cohesion consists of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Convention of rhetorical organization organisation involves narration, description, comparison, classification and process analysis.

**Pragmatic Competence**

According to Bachman, pragmatic competence considers the relationship between what the user of the language intends to express through his utterance which is ‘illocutionary competence’ and how the social norms determine whether the utterance is acceptable or appropriate in the social context which is sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence is the ability to choose from the different utterances available that suits the context. It consists of four functions which are idealistic, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative.

**Strategic Competence**

Strategic competence can be defined in two ways, one from interactional view and the other from psycholinguistic view. Unlike Canale& Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), Bachman considers the psycholinguistic view to visualize the operation of this competence and this competence consists of three components- assessment component, planning component and execution component.

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) try to develop a pedagogically relevant and an assessment relevant model of communicative competence. This model is different from Canale & Swain’s (1980) and Canale’s (1983) model in that Celce-Murcia et al relabelled Sociolinguistic competence as Socio-cultural competence and introduced Actional competence. In 1980, Canale & Swain divided communicative competence into grammatical competence, strategic competence and socio-cultural competence. This division was further extended by Canale in 1983 in which socio-cultural competence is subdivided into socio-cultural and discourse competence. What Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) proposed is a model consisting of five components which are linguistic competence, strategic competence, socio-cultural competence, actional competence and discourse competence. They used ‘linguistic competence’ instead of ‘grammatical competence’ as this includes lexis, phonology, morphology and syntax.

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), language knowledge can be divided into organisational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Organisational knowledge comprises of grammatical and textual knowledge to form grammatical sentences with correct order to form texts. Pragmatic knowledge consists of lexical knowledge, functional knowledge and
sociolinguistic knowledge. Again, what shapes discourse competence are lexical and grammatical constituents, organisational skills for communication and socio-cultural context. This, in turn, shapes the three components—socio-cultural, linguistic and actional competences. The strategic competent speaker tries to negotiate messages and resolve problems or to compensate deficiency in other components of competence.

**Discourse Competence**

It consists in selecting, sequencing and arranging words, phrase, sentences and utterances to form a unified spoken or written text. What comprises a discourse competence are cohesion, deixis, coherence, generic structure and the conversational structure in conversation. These sub-areas can be further divided into various components. The components of discourse competence are discussed below.

Cohesion is closely associated to linguistic competence by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1989). It deals with the bottom elements that form a text ranging from markers like pronouns, articles, demonstrative and others (reference-anaphora and cataphora) that give textual co-reference to conventions of ellipsis and substitution to avoid unnecessary repletion. The conventions of the use of conjunctions to link propositions, lexical chains, lexical repetitions and the use of parallel structure are all under cohesion.
Deixis connect the situational context with discourse context through various references such as personal pronouns, (I, you), spatial reference (here, there), temporal reference (now, then) and some textual reference.

Coherence deals with arrangements of sentences or utterances in a discourse sequence which are inter-related and this arrangement is based on the theme of the speaker or the writer. Its focus is “the expression of content and purpose in terms of top-down organisation of propositions” (1995: 15). This should take in account of social relationships, shared knowledge and genre. The arrangement again can be of preferred organizational patterns, temporal or chronological ordering, spatial organisation, cause-effect ordering and condition-result and many more. Thus, coherence relates to a listener or speaker’s attempt to infer an oral or written discourse as he uses his linguistic knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge and situational clues. Hence, Grice (1975) has opined that discourse is coherent only when it is possible to infer a function and generate a possible interpretation of it (cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 1995)

Generic structure: Every language has its own formal schemata (Carrel, 1984; cited in Celce-Murcia et al, 1995) leading to the development of various genres for different written forms and spoken genres. Writing a research report would be different from that of a personal essay as each writing genre follows different structure and patterns of language. Similarly, a sermon tends to be highly structured compared to any oral narrative.
Conversational structure: This structure is based on the turn taking system in oral conversation which extends to narratives, interviews or lectures. This system deals with how they start their conversation or restarts it, give short verbal or non-verbal feedback i.e. how a conversation is performed. It also includes correction of the speaker’s and others’ conversation, initiation and response of speech act where response can either be preferred or not preferred.

Linguistic Competence

It consists of different patterns and forms of sentences, constituent structure, morphological inflections, lexical resources, and phonological as well as orthographic systems. These components are the basic elements that can make a communicative speech and writing. Lexical knowledge and phrases belong to both discourse and linguistic competence.

The suggested components of linguistic competence are:

(i) **Syntax:** It consists of sentence or phrase structure, ordering of words or phrases, types of sentences (assertive, exclamatory, interrogative and negative etc.), special construction like existential, cleft or question tags etc., modifiers or intensifiers (determiners or adjectives) coordination or correlation, subordination or embedding (noun clauses, reported speech etc.)
(ii) **Morphology:** It consists of parts of speech, inflections (subject-verb agreement or concord), compounding, affixation and conversion or incorporation.

(iii) **Lexicon:** It is either receptive or productive. Lexicon means words which can be content words (noun, verbs, adjective) or functional words (pronouns, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries). It also contains fixed phrase for instance- *of course, all of a sudden* and collocations like verb-object, idioms etc.

(iv) **Phonology:** It consists of segmental and supra-segmental. Segmental includes vowels, consonants, syllable types and sandhi variation while supra-segmental includes prominence, intonations and rhythm.

(v) **Orthography:** It means spelling which includes letters, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, rules of spelling and conventions of mechanisms and punctuation.

**Actional Competence**

It is the competence that enables a speaker or the writer to convey and understand the intentions in communication. It consists of speech acts or sets of speech acts. For written communication it includes the analysis of what lexis would be used or how to arrange according to the genre of writing.
Celce-Murcia et al.’s (1995) reason for addition of actional competence as one of the components to the model of Canale & Swain (1980) due to the inability to include the “functional taxonomies developed by CLT theoreticians logically under any of the four traditional constituent competencies” (19).

Though speech act was traditionally associated with socio-linguistic competence, many linguists felt that it would be useful to separate actional intent from the broader socio-cultural context. The frequent use of a language in real life situation has resulted in the formations of variety of conventionalised forms, sentences, formulaic expressions and different strategies for different communication. Thus, a speaker or writer with actional competence is in command of wide repertoire of knowledge of that language on what and how to use, combine and sequence these for successful communication even in complex situation. This linguistic knowledge is different from the social or cultural norms of the language. One of the main components of actional competence is the knowledge of speech act sets and how to pattern and arrange the various speech acts and language functions in real life situation.

Here, the problem is the descriptive data of speech acts are elicited rather than naturalistic and so the interactions of these speech act sets has not been adequately examined and described. In short the components of actional competence are knowledge of language functions and knowledge of speech
act sets. By the knowledge of language functions what are included are interpersonal exchanges like greetings, leave greetings, leave taking, introductions, invitations, showing gratitude, compliments, congratulations and many more; information like reporting, remembering and discussing; opinions like attitudes, agreeing, disagreeing, approving, disapproving, satisfied or dissatisfied; feelings like love, happiness, sadness, pleasure, relief, annoyance; suasion like suggesting, requesting, advising, persuading, warning, granting or withholding and many more; problems like complaining, accusing, blaming, regretting and apologising; future scenarios like wishes, hope, goals, intentions, predicting, speculations and possibilities. The knowledge of speech acts includes the use of this knowledge of language functions in actual scenario.

**Socio-cultural Competence**

It is the knowledge of the speaker of how to express or pass messages within the social and cultural context and also in accordance to the practical factors that can be found in various variations in pragmatic situation. Language is not simply a coding system for communication. It is an integral part of the speaker’s identity and as it is embedded in the culture of the communities, it is the most important way for a social organisation within that cultural context. This is supported by Nunan (1992) as he said, “Only by studying language in its social and cultural contexts, will we come to
appreciate the apparent paradox of language acquisition: that it is at once a deeply personal and yet highly social process.” (23)

Many learners after completing L2 course, still, find themselves unable to apply what they have learned in real-life communication. Thus, most of the L2 teaching does not prepare the learners to cope up with the complex real life language use efficiently. Their use of inappropriate language in a different context or committing social or cultural blunder may lead to communication breakdown. To come over this situation we need to raise a socio-cultural awareness which again has not been adequately analysed or described (Savignon, 1983; Wolfson, 1989: cited in Celce-Murcia et al, 1995). Even if this awareness is made and analysed in detail, still, the learners have already used to their social norms and rules that they would find it difficult to change behaviour in accordance to the new socio-cultural context.

The suggested components of socio-cultural competence are:

(i) Social contextual factors include participant and situational variables. The participant variables are age, gender, office and status, social distance, relations while the situational variables are time, place and social situation.

(ii) Stylistic appropriateness factors are conventions and strategies of politeness and stylistic politeness like degree of formality and field-specific registers.
(iii) Cultural factors comprise of socio-cultural background knowledge of the target language community, awareness of major dialect or regional differences and cross-cultural awareness i.e. the similarities and differences between or among the different cultures and strategies for cross-cultural communication. By socio-cultural background we mean living conditions and standards, social and institutional structure, values and taboos, historical background and cultural aspects.

(iv) Non-verbal communicative factors play an important role in communication as some miscommunication in L2 occurs because of inappropriate non-verbal signals. The factors are kinesic factors (body language), proxemic factors (use of space), haptic factors, paralinguistic factors like acoustical sounds, non vocal noises and silence.

Thus, regarding socio-cultural aspects the teacher should not present the target norms and rules as the absolute but should keep rooms for changes according to the need and attitudes of the teachers.

**Strategic Competence**

It is the knowledge of communicative strategies which has three functions from three different perspectives. They are psycholinguistic
perspective, interactional strategy and communicative continuity/maintenance perspective. Based on these, strategic competence consists of five main components which are avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling/ time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies and interactional strategies. Avoidance includes replacing messages, avoiding topics and abandoning one’s message altogether. Achievement involves manipulating available language to compensate linguistic deficiencies. Stalling includes fillers, hesitation devices, gambits and repetitions. Self-monitoring means self-repair and rephrasing a message to get it through. Interactional strategies are appeals for help whether direct or indirect, negotiation of meaning, responses and comprehension checks. The mentioned components consists knowledge, rules, skills, abilities, conditions, conventions, maxims, strategies, lexical items, etc. Again, the application of any theoretical model of communicative competence is relative rather than absolute.

2.1.10 Intercultural Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is not sufficient when applied in cross-cultural communication and interaction. Thus, it remains incomplete without intercultural competence. The idea of intercultural learning came to light in the 1990s and Zarate (1994) developed the concept of ‘intercultural speaker’ who does not attempt to acquire the native speaker’s competence but who tries
to mediate a number of cultural perceptions between the target language and the first language (Risager, 2007). From this arise the concept of inter-cultural communicative competence which involves the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures (Wiseman, 2002).

Actually, inter-cultural communication is not new according to Bakic as quoted by Knapp as people from different cultures have been encountering one another for a long time (Ibad, 2012). Many researchers have studied and developed different dimensions of inter-cultural communicative competence. Yet, there is still no clear and distinct definition of inter-cultural communicative competence. According to Korhonen (2003), the components of inter-cultural communicative competence are cognition i.e. knowledge, affect i.e. attitude and emotion and behaviour and skills (Ibid). Ruben (1976) identified seven dimensions of inter-cultural competence which are display of respect for other culture, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, self oriented role behaviour, interaction management and tolerance of ambiguity (Norris et al., 2007). Zarate (1994) developed the concept of ‘inter-cultural speaker’ who does not attempt to acquire the native speaker’s competence but who tries to mediate a number of cultural perceptions between the target language and the first language (cited in Risager, 2007). Byram (1997) presented a five factor mode of inter-cultural competence which are attitude i.e. the ability to suspend disbelief about other cultures
while believing one’s own; knowledge of social interaction both in one’s own culture and the target language one; skill of interpreting and relating the two cultures; skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness (Norris et al., 2007). Risager (2007) again proposed a model of inter-cultural competence that must include the wide resources that an individual holds and the narrow competence that can be assessed.

2.2 Applicability of the Theories on Competence for ESL and EFL Speakers

Learning a second language or a foreign language and to attain a level of competence or proficiency in that language is not easy. Again, to attain the competence of that of a native speaker is very difficult and only a few could achieve it to a certain level. However, in today’s world where English is no longer confined to its native speakers and the number of people using it as a second or foreign language far exceeds the native ones, a question can be raised on the level of competence to be achieved in this language. Is it really necessary that the learners’ competence should be measured with the native competence as the absolute scale? The question arises because English is a language that connects different people from different countries, cultures and tradition and the interactions are not only with native speakers. There are constant interactions of non-native speakers where the medium of interaction is English and there no native like competence is required to communicate.
So, though the native like competence is the most favoured one yet it is not mandatory to achieve. In addition to these, English is learned in such a vast scale all over the world that this is taught mostly by non-native teachers and the interaction of these learners with the native ones is most of the time out of the context. They don’t need it to attain the pronunciation of the British R.P. or the American standard. They only need it to communicate fluently with speakers of other languages and to write with minimal error.

The theories that are discussed so far are mostly based on speakers’ competence from the native speakers’ point of view. Again, their studies are on speakers of other languages residing in or studying in countries where English is the first language. So, it is not clear whether the theories on competence will be applicable for ESL and EFL speakers for whom English is introduced as a subject, as a skill or as a medium of instruction. The level of competence required to be achieved in the Inner Circle may not be the same in the Outer and Expanding circle. Thus, the assumption that English proficiency tests should be based solely on native-speaker is no longer valid in the Outer and Expanding circles where it is used as a second or a foreign language. Due to widespread nativized innovations in English’s forms and functions, many local norms for English proficiency testing have come up (Lowenberg, 2002).

Davies, Hamp-Lyons & Kemp (2003) raise questions on bias in International English tests that have been conducted so far and also on the
difference between an error and a token of a new type. The proficiency tests like TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS are claimed to be bias towards IE (International English) as IE is argued to represent the old colonial Standard English of the UK, USA, etc. On the other hand, the speakers in New English societies such as Singapore, Malaysia and India have adopted local variety of English. Lowenberg (2002) mentions the book *The Other Tongue* (1982) by Charles Ferguson which discusses the emergence of ‘continental’ features of English among the speakers of the Expanding Circle. One of the features of nativized innovations is conversion of countable into uncountable nouns.

The notion of undue adherence to Standard English is no longer valid in today’s world of globalisation. English is found almost everywhere and is still spreading which is in Widdowson’s (2003) words “a luxuriant growth from imperial seed” (34). The importance attributed to the native speakers of English and attaining native like competence has been put in question in recent years. To the issue of nativeness, there is also this distinction between the native speakers of English, that is, British or American people and the ‘first language English’ speakers i.e. minorities of Indians or Sri Lankans who grew up speaking English but do not qualify as native speakers. Kachru (1971) distinguishes these as ‘genetic nativeness’ and ‘functional nativeness’. Again, according to Widdowson (2003), the custodians of Standard English are very much concerned with correct spelling and grammatical conformity. If anyone does not conform to this, i.e. has bad spelling and ungrammatical
usage, he is not taken seriously or even treated as non-member of their community. However, Standard English is no longer the property of a country or countries where English is the native language. This is an international language and so it serves different purposes to different communities and their institutional purposes and Standard English specially the written form become their language. They are now free to come up and practice it with their own custom, thought process and in short their own culture. They have their own standard which the native speakers do not need to dictate.

2.3 International English (IE) and World Englishes (WES)

As objections are raised against the consideration of the Standard English as the only valid form, the notion of New Englishes comes up. However, there seems to be a tendency where British or ENL is considered as the centre while the New Englishes are in the periphery. This ‘emerging new variety of English’ in Schneider’s words (2003) “consists of elements of both ‘diffusion’ from the (typically non standard) English input and ‘selection’ from an indigenous language form” (239). There is also this distinction between International English (IE) and World Englishes (WEs). IE stands for Inner Circle native English competence while WEs stands for plurality of English which are the English of India, of Malaysia, of Nigeria and so on. IE stands with the view that there is only one English language and other varieties should conform to it. While WEs struggle for the view that English
has many – lects and there is no standard form. These two extreme views have its supporters and opponents. (Davies, Hamp-Lyons & Kemp, 2003). But this fact should also be considered that many EFL learners need to pass the examinations or test based on IE for certification, university entry, employment or immigration (Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008).

The assumption that English proficiency tests should be based solely on native-speaker is no longer valid in Kachru’s (1985) Outer circle countries where it is used as a second language or a foreign language. Due to widespread nativized innovations in English’s forms and functions, many local norms for English proficiency testing have come up. However, in the Expanding circle consisting of countries like Bolivia, Chile, Thailand, Indonesia and China, due to little nativization the inner circle’s norms for English learning, use and testing remain (Lowenberg, 2002, cited in Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008).

Language is learnt not to conform to the fixed rules but to adapt the resources to make their own meaning. One can be said to be proficient in a language when one can use it at one’s will, possess it, bend it and assert oneself through it instead of submitting to the dictates of its form. Widdowson (2003) asserts this concept by quoting Chinua Achebe’s (1975: 62) famous line on English Language:
I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience … But it will have to be a new English, still in communication with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

In support of this, Jenkins (2006) argues that the concept of native like English as the standard one is a result of a monolingual bias which does not include bilingual concept and experience. The norms of the native speakers or those belonging to the inner circle are not relevant in the sociolinguistic context of the outer circle. So, their attempts to label the Englishes of the outer circle as deficient fossilized are unjustifiable as this label “ignore the local Englishes’ sociohistorical development and sociocultural context” (167). Again, Brutt-Griffler (2002) contends that the traditional SLA is focussed on individual acquisition and IL error but not on the acquisition by entire speech communities and new varieties (cited in Jenkins, 2006).

Bolton (2004) points out three possible interpretations of this term “World Englishes”. First, it can be taken as an ‘umbrella label’ covering all varieties of English and the different approaches. Secondly, on a narrower version it can refer to the new Englishes in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean or nativised, indigenised or institutionalised English. Lastly, it can include the study of English by Kachru and his colleagues – a pluricentric approach although the version overlaps the second one. After the introduction of World
Englishes (WEs), which are different for different nations or even states, there arise a debate on World Standard (Spoken) English (W(S)SE) which is supposedly different from that of the native standard English.

This ‘hypothetical monolithic form of English’ has been pointed by many applied linguists such as Crystal in 2003, Gorlach in 1990 and McArthur in 1987 and 1998 and many more. However, this standard form of World Englishes (WE s) has been criticized to be based on the native speakers English for the native speakers irrespective of their communicative context. So, the concept of a monolithic English for the entire world has been questioned. Hence, EFL researchers highly valued accommodation in the sense that in international communication what is needed is not a single standard English but the acceptance of pluricentric nature of new Englishes. Thus, the linguistic repertoire used in such communication among non-native speakers of different cultural and linguistic background need certain forms (phonological, lexicogrammatical, etc.) that are widely used and intelligible and again appropriate.

The difference in the attitude towards WEs and IE comes from the social perspective and not from linguistic one (Davies, Hamp-Lyons & Kemp, 2003). According to Selinker (1972, 1992), any differences between the output of the second language speakers and the standard British or American English are to be considered as errors and it is due to L1 interference or
transfer and if this error become fixed then it is attributed to a phenomenon known as fossilization. This theory has been challenged by a group of WEs scholars such as Kachru, Nelson and Sridhar. They contend this theory with their arguments that the English speakers of the Outer Circle do not attempt to identify with Inner Circle speakers to imitate and produce norms that there in the inner circle experience i.e. its variety like American English, New English. So, the norms of the native speakers or those belonging to the Inner Circle are not relevant in the sociolinguistic context of the Outer Circle (Jenkins, 2006).

Kachru (1986, 1992) argues that IE in practice is equal to Standard British English or American English. The proficiency tests like TOEFL, TOEIC and IELTS and so on are based on this Standard dialect and so are claimed to be bias towards IE. TOEFL is an American Proficiency Test run by Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. This test is conducted in more than 180 countries. It consists of test on listening, reading and structure using a multiple choice format but a thirty minute short essay writing. Scores are given on a five point scale. IELTS is a British or Australian proficiency test originally developed by the British Council, but later or run by both the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and IDP Australia with the British Council. It is conducted annually for immigration and professional purposes and also for university admissions. The written test consists of two essays within sixty minutes (Hyland, 2003). The assumption that the people who took English Proficiency Tests were the
only educated elite is all in the past. Nelson (1995) argues against the monocentric view of English i.e. to consider a particular form of English as ‘correct’ and other forms ‘wrong’ and Davidson (1994) also condemns the major international tests of English saying it to favour only the native ones (Davies, Hamp-Lyons & Kemp, 2003).

From the above situation, there arises the need for an English proficiency test which may not be localized but should be common to all the varieties of English. Davies, Hamp-Lyons and Kemp (2003) do a survey of tests like the above said and their findings are discussed. Hill (1996) conducted a study in Indonesian teachers of English to come up with an English Proficiency Test for them. In that, instead of applying Standard English norms, Indonesian variety of English is taken as an appropriate model for the test. The reason for this is that majority of the learners need English to communicate with other non-native speakers within South-East Asia and not with the natives. So, Indonesian English model seems more practical. Brown and Lumley (1998) maintain that in the development of the Indonesian English Test they set several aims which are actually fulfilled. Some of them are the judicious selection of task and culturally appropriate content and the use of local raters and not nativeness.

On the other hand, Lukman (2002) supports the standardization of English and opines that tests and examinations of English at school level show features of Indian English because of lack of knowledge of Standard English.
She contends that there are no models of Indian English to be based on. She reports that 50% Indians want to aim for Standard (British) English while the other 50% go for Indian English with only 1-2% recognizing Standard English. There is no all India test for English Proficiency both in national and international level although a good command of English is preferred in employment. Many universities and service commissions have their own English competence test and criteria.

2.4 Literature Review

A Literature Review is carried out on studies on theories of ESL and EFL writing, competence, problems and processes of learning English. This section starts with a general review on works relating to problems in learning and teaching ESL and EFL and competence in ESL and EFL and with theories of EFL/ESL writing, followed by discussion on problems in writing in English as a Second or a Foreign Language.

2.4.1 Problems in Learning and Teaching ESL and EFL and Competence

A survey on works on problems in learning and teaching ESL and EFL and competence in it is made. The literature reviews of the studies are discussed as follows:

Nanda (1982) investigates the causes of poor English comprehension among the pupils of secondary schools and their remedial measures. The study
is also carried out to detect weaknesses of comprehension skills and the causes of poor performance in simple comprehension, vocabulary items, structural items and critical thinking. It is conducted in 26 secondary schools of Cuttack city. Tools employed are questionnaire and interview of teachers and students. The main findings are the students’ lack of knowledge in structural usage and vocabulary items taught in previous classes, lack of basic foundation from elementary level, absence of students’ dedication, lack of reading practice and negative attitude to reading.

The difficulties that the teachers are facing are lack of teaching aids, library, reading facilities and less interest of teachers, poor salary, hectic time schedule and so lack of preparation due to shortage of time. The other factors that hinder the effectiveness in teaching are lack of study atmosphere and favourable environment, apathy of teachers, lack of effective supervision and administrative control and poor financial conditions of schools.

Syalath (1995) conducts a study on the factors that lead to low achievement in English by the students of English medium high schools of the old city of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. It mainly focuses on whether the language learning situation at the old city English medium schools of Hyderabad is conducive for learning English and the important factors that lead to language proficiency of learners. The researcher finds out that the major factors responsible for the low achievement of students in English are
inadequate exposure of the students, lack of proficiency among the teachers and negative attitude of teachers towards the learners’ capabilities. Again, the teachers’ understanding of the teaching-learning objectives is incomplete and many of them are not trained. They also have no understanding of students’ contribution to learning. The problems found here are all universal problems. It can also be said that the universal problems of language learning remain the same for English medium as well as vernacular medium schools.

Hazarika (2004), in her study aims to find out the main problems of the students of the secondary schools of Jagiroad Revenue Town in learning English and the major lapses in the English teaching methods. The study also investigates if teachers are responsible for the failure of the students to learn English. It also studies the availability of necessary infrastructure for teaching and learning English. The data is collected through questionnaires. The researcher, in the study, concludes that the major problems faced by the students are dearth of competent teachers, the over dependence on the Grammar-Translation Method, inadequate infrastructure, paucity of resources, lack of proper guidance at home and insincerity of the students. The suggestions are arrangement of teacher training at regular intervals, use of Direct Method in place of Grammar-Translation Method, improvement of infrastructural facilities, improvement of teaching and learning resources and also increasing guardians’ awareness of their wards.
Prapphal (2001) in his study reveals that the English language ability status of Thai graduates is eighth among ASEAN member countries according to the CU- TEP (Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency). A research is conducted on the English proficiency of Thai learners by using CU- TEP which is regarded as the standardised test for undergraduates who study at the graduate level at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. The findings reveal that the majority of the students could not meet the standard required to study at the graduate level at Chulalongkorn University. The most serious problem reported is in writing skill as the mean score of the students in this skill is low. They are unable to write an essay within limited time. The inability to write an academic paper; to use grammatical rules and to develop suitable structure for the content of the written text are also found.

Ntombela (2008) investigates communicative competence in English as a second language among rural African high school learners in the Eshowe circuit by conducting a survey in selected five high schools. The learners exhibit poor competence and performance in the language. Thus, it is found that although a communicative approach is adopted in the classroom, yet there is little or no input from the side of the teachers. Despite the students’ need to maximum exposure to the target language in the classroom, the use of code switching by teachers put the students in disadvantage. Again, there is no exposure to the native speaking English by the use of audio-visual equipments
like television and radio within the school. Thus, the learners do not have enough time to practise in English inside the class.

Citing that communicative competence is often perceived by EFL teachers to be comprised of only grammatical and socio-linguistic competence, Jaroszek (2008) drives home the need of discourse competence in learning a second language. Lack of discourse competence led to a situation in which many advanced learners of L2 in Poland are accurate in grammar but it is somewhat unnatural in terms or sentence wording. Jaroszek examines the development of discourse competence over a specific period of language instruction and the factors involved in it. The factors under study are modality, teacher talk, exposure to authentic material, L1 interference, use of conjunctions and ellipsis and substitution. The students’ modality did not statistically change over the period of three years. There is development in the use of conjunction; however, L1 interference has a negative impact. Improvement is still required in terms of ellipsis and substitution.

Suratchawadu (2010) investigated the pragmatic competence of Thai English teachers in terms of making, accepting and declining requests and the factors influencing their pragmatic competence. It also probed the impact of the social status and social distance of the interlocutors in their pragmatic competence. It has been conducted on 29 Thai English teachers using three sets of instrument: an oral discourse completion test, a questionnaire and an
interview. The overall pragmatic competence of the Thai English teachers in making, accepting and declining requests was at an average level of 36.24 (67%). There is no difference in the participants’ pragmatic ability among the three aspects of requesting.

The factors that can influence the pragmatic competence are linguistic competence, English exposure and pragmatic awareness. The teachers with high linguistic competence are likely to possess higher pragmatic competence in the three aspects of requests in questions. The insufficient linguistic ability, grammatically incorrect utterances and lack of knowledge of linguistic pattern appropriate for a given context affect pragmatic competence. Hence, linguistic competence is a pre-requisite for pragmatic competence. Insufficiency of exposure to authentic input and opportunity to use English in real life might have resulted in their lack of success in pragmatic competence. Pragmatic awareness is the awareness of the pragmatic difference between their language and the target language. It has been found that high level of the participants’ awareness did not guarantee a corresponding level of pragmatic competence when it came to making, accepting and declining requests. The reasons for this are lack of both pragmatic and linguistic ability on the parts of the participants. Again, the social status and social distance of the interlocutors did not have influence on the utterances made by the participants.

Sing V.D. (1984), in his study, investigates the linguistic and communicative abilities of high schools teachers of English in relation to their
classroom functions. The study aims to ascertain the adequacy of the speaking ability and the writing ability, the grammatical and stylistic competence, the norm and concept of correctness, the syntactic control and fluency. It also studies if there is any significant difference between speaking ability and writing ability of the teachers teaching English as a second language at the Secondary school and higher secondary school levels. The sample is collected from 15 central schools from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and the union territory of Delhi. Test measures and questionnaire are employed as research tools. It is found that speaking ability of three-fourths of the teachers was adequate though they lack fluency. The writing ability of most of them was not adequate. The teachers have enough grammatical competence to correct pupils’ errors in sentence level but not enough in discourse level.

Sujeta (2010), in her study of communicative and linguistic problems faced by Meiteiron speakers in learning English language, finds out the phonological, grammatical and cultural problems by the students of private schools and government schools of Manipur, India. In the phonological competence, the private school students are more competent than the government school students. There are some particular sounds in English which are difficult for the Manipuri ESL learners to pronounce. The students of both public and private schools commit similar grammatical errors when they write in English. The errors are in terms of personal pronouns, articles and prepositions. They get confuse between masculine and feminine forms of
English personal pronouns. Again, the difference in word order between Manipuri and English is reflected in their writings. It is concluded that the errors are due to over-generalisation, L1 interference and also due to the lack of the fundamental ideas of English usage. The study further highlights the difficulties faced by the Manipuri ESL learners due to cultural differences from English.

2.4.2 Theories of EFL/ESL Writing

Kaplan (1966) claimed that the discourse pattern of every language is different and in it culture has an important role. He informed that the rhetoric and sequence of the thought process of ESL writers violate the expectation of the native reader. What he meant is that the discourse pattern and culture of ESL writers and the native is different. So, learning to write in L2 is not just memorising grammatical rules and some chunks of written discourse of the target. It requires the familiarisation of the values and culture of the target language. Earlier, the focus of writing skill is on the written product. But, it shifted to the writing process in the 1970s. After that several theories of writing process have come up. The two main approaches are the cognitivist approach and the social constructional approach.

2.4.2.1 The Cognitivist Approach

According to cognitivists, writing is a “thinking and problem solving process” (Reid, 1993: 260). They are more interested in a model of process of
writing. The two cognitive researchers, Flower and Hayes (1997) have studied how writers approach writing tasks. The models that these researchers have come up explain the process of writing by problem-solving. According to this model, the three main parts of composition are planning, translation and review. The teachers should also provide a variety of pre-writing techniques which are brainstorming, free writing, outlining and mapping. In this approach, the students are trained to consider the audience in mind, the situation and the goal of writing (cited in Reid, 1993).

In it, the students are encourage to define the rhetorical problem, explore the parts with solution and come up with a conclusion and then writing down their ideas as a text. Under this approach, the students should be provided instructional materials, illustrative examples and corrective feedbacks. Learners need both linguistic and strategic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge comprises of vocabulary, words, sentence structure and genre of English. Strategic knowledge is the way or effort made by the students to overcome their writing difficulties. However, the cognitivist approach is not devoid of shortcomings. It overlooks the social nature of language. Vygotsky (1978) claims that the approach is more focused on knowing sets of rules and conceptions rather than learning to use those rules in social context. Hence, the knowledge gathered through this approach is not enough for learners to determine how and when the concepts should be used in a complex social environment.
2.4.2.2 The Social Constructional Approach

According to this approach, writing is a social act taking place in a social context for a specific purpose. Vygotsky (1978) opines that writing process is beyond cognitive and individual levels. It comes through internalisation and transformation of social interaction. He further explains that all cognitive functions come into the learners’ mind by integrating into a knowledge community. It does not come simply by assimilation of new knowledge. So, learners need to go beyond their own mental process and also know the social context. In this approach, learners are active knowledge constructors within their contexts. This approach has also its short comings as it fail to identify the types of contexts and skills appropriate for social interaction.

Under cognitive approach, writing is taken as a process which involves three stages: pre-writing, drafting and revising, editing or proof editing to present and publish.

Pre-writing

It is the most important stage as in this stage the writer thinks of the topic and draws a rough plan on how he shapes the topic into a whole draft. The teacher can help the students in identifying and developing the ideas by encouraging them to recollect their prior memories, experiences, observations and interactions. They can make the students form groups and do
brainstorming exercises so that the ideas flow into the writers’ mind. There are a number of pre-writing techniques that can nurture the writing skills in students and develop them to good writers. The techniques are:

(i) **Free Writing:** It is a technique in which the ideas are written down freely without pausing to correct mistakes or errors. The writer has only to write for himself without concerning any other thing. Chastain (1988) thinks that the writer should only concentrate on his creative process without bothering to criticism that can hinder his flow of ideas. For him, free writing should not be interrupted (cited in Baroudy, 1997).

(ii) **Brainstorming:** Brainstorming can generate many ideas within a short time. The teacher brainstorms with students to come up with lots of ideas and these ideas will be used by the students in their drafts. Raimes (1983) informs that it can be done aloud in group or individually on a paper. The students can be stimulated by the teachers by throwing some questions about the concerned topic. Here, grammar correction and organisation of the ideas are not considered. The students can gather many ideas through this technique.

(iii) **Bubbling:** In it, the topic or a certain idea is introduced in a circle and soon related ideas will be generated by drawing
multiple circles with the new ideas written inside these. These bubble maps are not only helpful for generating ideas but also for organising ideas. The ideas can be organised by linking the bubble maps.

(iv) **Clustering:** It is similar to bubbling. In it, a related word is written on the centre of the page and the ideas associated with it are arranged around it.

(v) **Looping:** It resembles free writing. Like free writing, the students can write on a given topic for some minutes with no consideration of grammar or accuracy. After that, they are asked to read what they have written and underlined the important points. A similar process will continue in which the important points i.e. the loops will be formed. From it, the main ideas will be formed with the elaborations.

**Drafting**

The students have gathered sufficient ideas in the pre-writing stage. After this, the writer writes the first draft. The first draft is about jotting down the ideas on paper without worrying much about spelling and grammatical accuracy. This draft is not the final and the students can edit, refine, add new ideas, change the order of the ideas and rearranging it to make it coherent. The main course for this stage is to see if the writing is meaningful and its content
is not ambiguous. Clarity of ideas is checked. It also checks if the ideas are coherent and there are appropriate cohesive links.

**Revising Editing and Proof Reading**

Revising Editing and Proof reading is the final draft and its main concern is to check the quality of the finished work. In the final draft, students make sure that there is logical unity, coherence and organisation, introduction of the idea and convincing conclusion. They also conduct proof reading to check mistakes in spelling, punctuation, grammar, congruence of style and structure.

We know that writing is not done randomly. It has a purpose and depending on the purpose there are different writing genres. Davies & Widdowson (1979) come up with two types of writing which are: institutional writing and personal writing. Institutional writing is for professional writings while personal writing is for family and friends. Writing depending on purpose can be divided into five types which are: descriptive, narrative, persuasive, expository and argumentative. Each type has a different purpose and different model of writing and students should be well aware of the type of writing involved.

**2.4.3 Problems of Writing in English as a Second or a Foreign Language**

According to Nunan (1999), the most difficult task in second language learning is to produce “a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing” (36). The
generalised assumption that written language is the graphic representation of a spoken language does not hold true. The competencies required for writing skill are much different from that of a speaking skill. Written form follows a unique rhetorical convention. According to Nunan:

... at the sentences level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence level, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts. (1999, 36)

Writing skill is required to generate ideas, to arrange those ideas coherently and to form a cohesive discourse using discourse marks, rhetorical conventions and appropriate grammar etc. (Brown, 2004). To make writing effective what are required are a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no room for ambiguity of meaning; a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers (Hedge, 1988). Many studies have been conducted to assess writing skill and the problems related to it. Before we have a brief review of related literature on writing skill and the problems, we need to be aware of the various writing assessment carried out by the researchers of language, its types, advantages and disadvantages.
2.4.4 Writing Assessment

The standardised and prevailing formats in writing assessment are the multiple-choice test, writing samples or a combination of the two types of test (Camp, 1993). Writing assessment can be divided into indirect writing assessment and direct writing assessment. Indirect writing assessment is mainly carried out through multiple-choice test. According to Camp (1993), this test format provides advantages of more coverage of content, efficient and economical scoring and easy access for statistical comparison of one test against another. Multiple-choice test consists of testing of subset of skills which are vocabulary, sentence grammars and points of writing usage. However, this format of assessment came under criticism with Kaplan (1987) contending that knowledge of sentence grammar needs not necessarily lead to the ability to write, and Yancey & Huott (1997) arguing that writing is not a set of discrete skills that can be examined through multiple-choice tests. (cited in Liu, 2003) Thus, assessing writing skill cannot be done by just filling in the blanks with appropriate answers, pointing out the errors in a provided text but by analysing the text created by the students in which they can demonstrate their knowledge and skills (Camp, 1993; Hamp-Lyons, 2001).

On the other hand, direct writing assessment relies on impromptu writing samples in which sub skills based on grammar and vocabulary are tested. Again, higher-order skills involved in writing are also assessed (Camp,
The writing assessment based on student writing samples began in the 1970s. Here, mention can be made of Test of Written English (TWE) developed by Educational Testing service as part of the TOEFL test. This test is conducted by a single-topic essay which is to be completed within thirty minutes. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of Britain examined writing samples of two essays employing holistic scoring (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). The disadvantages of these types of texts are that the students are given artificial topics that might not be significant in their lives and to add to that they have to write within a limited time. They are not given enough time and space. The rigid time frame for writing assessment can be disadvantageous to minority students and ESL students (Liu, 2003). It has been found that a given students’ scores on such kind of tests varied according to the topic, writer’s state of mind and situations and many other factors (Belenoff, 1994, cited in Liu, 2003). So, there are multiple factors that affect a piece of writing.

Several studies are carried out on the problems of writing in ESL and EFL context. A case study has been carried out by Pongsiriwet (2001) on 155 university freshman majoring in agriculture, education, engineering, English and Science who enrolled in Foundation English at Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus in Thailand. The purposes of the study are to identify and analyse the frequent types of grammatical errors in student writing, to investigate whether there is a relationship between scores on
grammatical accuracy and discourse features of student writing and to examine the effects of grammatical accuracy and discourse features on the evaluation of writing quality. It has been found that grammatical errors occurred most frequently in the use of subject and verb agreement followed by verb formation and tense respectively. There is a significant relationship between grammatical accuracy and coherence but no significant relationship between grammatical accuracy and cohesion.

Barnett (1989) deals with the common frustrations of both teachers and students regarding the frequency of errors and the lack of improvement in students’ writing. She emphasises students’ participation in editing their own work and less correction from the part of the teachers. In that way, students will be more motivated. She suggests that teachers should consider writing as a process, a series of drafts that include pre-writing, writing and rewriting. She calls for less attention to correction of grammatical errors and more attention on content. This will lead to better student compositions.

Nyasimi (2014) probes into the challenges students face in learning English essay writing in secondary schools in Manga District, Nyamira County, Kenya and the methods adopted in teaching this skill. It also investigates the strategies students employ in learning essay writing skill. The study is based on the process genre approach theoretical model for teaching writing skill of Badger and White (2000). The common methods involved in
teaching are lecture, question and answer and teacher demonstration. However, group work, peer teaching and role play are the least employed. Inadequate mastery of content, incorrect use of grammar, first language L1 interference, limited vocabulary and inadequate teaching and learning resources are the challenges in learning essay writing in English. Again, the students do not employ the strategies adopted in writing.

Younes & Albalanei (2015), in their study to identify the most common types of writing problems among English Language and Translation Major Sophomore Female students at Tabut University find that the students commit errors in tense (29%) the most when compared to other grammatical errors and in terms of syntactic error, wrong word form (38.4%) is the most prevalent error. The reasons in the students’ writing according to their perspective are that the teachers use Arabic (L1) to simplify the rules and facilitate instruction and they teach grammar in isolation and so its application in writing is ignored. Again, their grammar practice is limited. The suggestions given by them are that the teachers should increase the amount of writing assignments for the students inside and outside the class. They should explain the writing rules for easy and the classroom should be more student-centred.

Alfaki (2015) conducted a descriptive research on twenty students of the Teachers’ College and the College of Education, Nile Valley University,
North Sudan to find out their writing problems and come up with diagnosis and remedy. In the survey, the students were asked to write a composition of about 250-300 words on a given topic and their writings are examined twice by ten English language instructors. The finding suggests that the writing problems are at the levels of morphology and syntax, usage errors and mechanical mistakes (spelling, punctuation and capitalisation). They lack several writing skills and they faced cognitive and graphomotor problems. The recommendations are to form reading habits, practice writing, to encourage notes taking and to be less panic.

Boonyarattanasoontorn (2017) investigates Thai students’ English language writing difficulties and their use of writing strategies. It is a case study of 157 undergraduate students of Bangkok University taking intermediate English course by using a five-point rating scale questionnaire. It has been found that the students have high level of writing difficulties mostly on grammatical elements because the students feel anxious while writing. So, they have inadequate grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. Even the limited proficient learners do not have strong vocabulary. The students find it necessary to use a dictionary to check words and in composing. Again, they are not introduced to the wide variety of writing strategies. They also do not pay much attention to idea organisation as the teachers have already assisted them in organising the ideas.
As students of ESL and EFL face many problems in their writing skills, studies were conducted to find out the reason for their problem whether the teaching methods are appropriate or helpful and also whether the existing assessment methods are productive or not or if there is a gap between teaching and assessment. Baleghizadeh & Gordani (2012) opine that the incongruity between teaching and assessment practice might be one of the reasons behind students’ failure in academic writing. Again, in assessment the examiner has a tendency to be more concerned with the linguistic errors rather than the rhetorical and discourse features of texts. They make an attempt to analyse different feedback types which are direct feedback, student-teacher conference, no correction feedback and its effect on an EFL academic writing context. For this, three written tests are carried in three phase: pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test. The forty five students are also divided into three groups in which the three different feedback methods are applied. The students-teacher conference feedback group was found to be significantly better than the other two. This feedback helps students in recognising and correcting their error with each session and in coming in terms with the structures that their teachers suggest.

Albesher (2012) investigates the effectiveness of using collaborative learning among the students of ESL in improving their writing skill. Collaborative learning in writing skill involves working together of two or more people to produce and complete a text by practising and participating in
collecting, planning and organising ideas, drafting, editing and revising (Rice & Huguley, 1994, cited in Albesher, 2012). Two groups of students are formed with one following collaborative learning while the other following individual learning. It has been found that students who are involved in collaborative learning produce better written texts than the others and this has a positive effect on their attitudes and perceptions towards writing in English. Although the students have improved in terms of the quality of their writing but there is still room for improvement in terms of accuracy.

Puengpipattrakul (2013) in the study of assessment of Thai EFL undergraduates’ writing competence through integrated feedback analyses the effect in Teacher Integrated Feedback (TIF) on the students’ writing competence. The underdeveloped writing skill of the Thai undergraduates is emphasised in this study. The factors affecting the writing process of the students are socio-psychological and educational variations and also the learners’ interlingual transfer. The causes attributed by the students for committing error repeatedly are carelessness, laziness, dislike for English, lack of knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules and L1 interference. The study employed direct and indirect corrective feedback through TIF on three writing genres for improvement of learners’ writing competence. Two tests are conducted, one pre-test and the other post-test after the corrective feedback from the teachers. Improvement is there in accuracy but not in fluency. The study brings home the need for implementation of process-
oriented pedagogies in academic writing along with the product-oriented approach as it alone is not enough. The provision for teacher corrective feedback is also emphasised.

Nyvoll Bo (2014) in a case study of feedback to written English in a Norwegian upper secondary school probes into the experiences and attitudes of the students and teachers to English writing and how feedback is received and provided respectively. The writing skill is one of the five basic skills in the Norwegian LK06 English subject curriculum. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed using questionnaires and interviews as tools. The findings are that the teachers provided feedback in a rather similar way as they gave feedback along with grades. They gave both written and oral feedback but they could not practise enough because of lack of time. The students claimed that they received written feedback most of the time but as they get that feedback along with grade they don’t get much room for improvement.

Pawapatcharaudom (2007) in an investigation of Thai students found that their writing problem can be classified into four major issues which are the inability to write an essay within limited time, to write an academic paper in English, to use grammatical rules perfectly in writing any paper and to develop a suitable structure for a context. According to Baker and Boonkit (2004), the strategies mostly used by Thai students in writing are use of
background knowledge as an idea, dictionary and to learn from feedback. Poonyapat (2017) conducted a case study of 157 students of Bangkok University undergoing an intermediate English course found out that the students had high level of writing difficulties mostly on grammatical elements as they felt anxious while writing. Again, the students had inadequate grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. They find it necessary to use a dictionary to check words and also to compose. They were not aware of variety of writing strategies and the organization of ideas is mostly done by their teachers.

Gomez (2014) explored the perception of students and supervisors on the students’ development of general writing skills and academic writing through the completion of the master’s thesis in teacher education programs in Colombian universities. The study is conducted through in-depth interviews and online surveys. It also assesses the process of writing the thesis by analysing drafts from three graduates. The finding of the study is that students go through a process of accommodation to the writing task through interaction by deploying the already acquired general writing and academic skills. They also implement new learned process according to their initial level and following different development paths.