

**Second Language Acquisition for Mizo Learners at the
Elementary Level**

**Mary Anne Lalbiakhlui Zadeng
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Supervisor

Dr. Lalrindiki T. Fanai



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “*Second Language Acquisition for Mizo Learners at the Elementary Level*” by Mary Anne Lalbiakhlui Zadeng has been written under my supervision. She has fulfilled all the required norms as laid down within the UGC Ph. D Regulations, 2009. This thesis is a result of her own study. Neither the thesis as a whole, nor any part of it was ever submitted to any other University/Institutions for any research degree.

The thesis is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

Date.....

Dr. Lalrindiki T. Fanai
Associate Professor / Supervisor
Department of English
Mizoram University

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

AIZAWL

DECLARATION

I, Mary Anne Lalbiakhlui Zadeng, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis entitled “*Second Language Acquisition for Mizo Learners at the Elementary Level*” is the record of work done by me, and that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis for the award of any previous degree to me or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institution.

This thesis is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

Dr. Lalrindiki T. Fanai
(Supervisor)

Mary Anne Lalbiakhlui Zadeng
(Candidate)

Dr. Sarangadhar Baral
(Head)

September 2015

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Date.

(MARY ANNE LALBIAKHLUI ZADENG)

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“English is our major window on the modern world”. – (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)

“English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age”.

– (John Adams 1780)

1.1. Brief overview of the Origin of the Mizo.

Like many other tribes in the seven states of India's North-East, the origin of the Mizo, the inhabitants of Mizoram, is shrouded in mystery. There are suggestions that the Mizo are the descendents of the Chinese of the Chin dynasty because they are called 'Chin' by the Burmese, while at the other end of the spectrum, there are some Mizo who believe that they are one of the lost tribes of Israel. Many among the Mizo fondly cling to a legend which traces their origin to a cave covered by a rock known as 'Chhinlung' which means 'covering stone'. Chhinlung has been given different locations by different clans but it is generally believed to be situated somewhere east of Shan state in erstwhile Burma close to the Chinese border. Scholars at Yunan University too have not been able to point out the exact location of Chhinlung but believe that it could be 'Qinglong' (Chi'nglong) in Ghuizhou Province in China, the meaning of which is 'clear and rich'- according to Prof. Wang Zhusheng (Zamawia 1).

All the writers on the subject and the traditional history of the Mizos verbally handed down through several decades agree that the term 'Chhinlung', whether a place or a person's name, originated from China and that the Mizos and all the related tribes claim to have originated from this. From this account, even though a conjectural one, we can surmise that the original home of the Mizos is to be somewhere in the east (Nunthara 39).

Another legend that older Mizo people often relate, says that the Mizo were once involved in building a long and thick wall in China. As they found the work very tiring, so the legend goes, they decided to leave the area and search for a place where life would be easier. This legend suggests that the Mizo forefathers could have once been part of the workforce that built the Great Wall of China. “The legend further says that before they settled in the Mizo Hills, the tribesmen had to wage many a battle with the other tribes living in the Burmese Territory” (Baveja1). Though it is commonly believed that the Mizo were forced to lead a nomadic life due to their helplessness before their enemies, it can also be safely surmised that they often moved in search of fertile land to grow their crops. The Mizo were physically isolated and had very little contact with their neighbours, and though there are no written documents, it is commonly believed that the Mizo are a part of the great wave of the Mongolian race from China spilling over into eastern India around the beginning of the 15th century A.D (Pachua 2). Their sojourn into Western Burma, into which they finally arrived around the 7th century is estimated to have lasted about two centuries. Some believe that the Mizo came from *Shinlung* or *Chhinlungsan* located on the banks of the river Yalung in China. It is supposed that they first settled in the Shan state and moved on to Kabaw Valley to Khampat and then to the Chin Hills in the middle of the 16th Century. L.B Thanga, in his book on the racial personality of the Mizo writes:

That the Mizos belong to the Mongoloid stock is not disputed. That their original home was in Mekong Valley and that they once lived in the Hukawng valley was further corroborated by many, including an old Burmese priest at Mandalay, to Mizo historians who had visited Mandalay to trace the history of their origin and migration. According to him, the ancestors of the Mizo came from Shanghai, possibly in the tenth century. By which route they came and

how long they took to reach Hukawng valley in Burma is now lost in
obscurity. (L.B.Thanga 3)

In his introduction to the Dictionary of the Lushai Language, J.H Lorrain, one of the first missionaries who came to the Lushai Hills has expressed a view which is accepted by most scholars today - "Their ancestral home would appear to have been somewhere in the neighborhood of South-East Tibet and Western China, whence, by slow degrees, through the centuries, they have pressed southward and westward to their present habitat (1940 v). Though some believe that their actual entry into the area which is now known as Mizoram from Burma to be sometime between 1650 and 1750 (Thansanga 94).

The Mizo ancestors seem to have first settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, now in Bangladesh, before reaching their final destination. Laldova (2014) believes that they moved to the Hill Tracts via Tripura and then moved on to the erstwhile Lushai Hills, and dates all these movements between 1800 and 1900 (231). However, the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong is said to have written about a certain Mizo chief '*King Khawlige*' an obvious corruption of the name '*King Khamlaia*', in the Gazetteer of Eastern Bengal Dated 24th November 1784 (Chawngkunga 25). This suggests that the Mizo or their ancestors had settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by the latter half of the eighteenth century. In this regard, Keihawla Sailo (2010) has this to say:

I was in the Chittagong Hill Tracts 3 years from 1969 to 1971 and spent most of my time in the dense forests called 'Kasalong Forest Reserve'... I found that this vast Forest Reserve was apparently under occupation of Lushai or Kuki. Names of rivers, hills, villages, places etc. are still in Lushai language viz.,
Maikhawr tlang, Tuisenlui, Sihropui, Mausahlui, Vaihmitetlang, Sentlang,... etc. Some stones erected apparently by our forefathers were found by me in these forests (Sailo 10-11).

The first Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, Col. J.Shakespear has made the following observation with regard to the genealogy of the Mizo:

The existing Lushei chiefs all claim descent from a certain Thangura who is sometimes said to have sprung from the union of a Burman with a Paite woman... From Thangura the pedigree of all the living chiefs is fairly accurately established... Given at an interval of many years, and by persons living far apart, they have been found to agree in a wonderful manner. From comparison of these genealogies and from careful enquiries lasting over many years, I estimate that Thangura must have lived early in the eighteenth century (Shakespear 3).

The Mizo were once known as ‘Kuki’ by some of their neighbours, but it is interesting to note that “none of the tribes in Mizoram ever used the name Kuki... it carried with it a certain amount of contempt” (C.L Hminga 12). They were also known as ‘Chin’ by the Burmese and ‘Lushai’ by others. Their closest neighbours, the Bengalis of Cacharis called them Chin-Kuki-Lushai and therefore, the land which they inhabited became known as the Chin-Kuki-Lushai Hills or The Lushai Hills. The word ‘*Lushai*’ here is said to be an anglicized version of the word ‘*Lusei*’, as the people generally claim to be the descendants of a man by the name of Luseia, whose name means ‘long head’. According to another interpretation, ‘*lu*’ means head and ‘*sha*’ means cut, therefore the term ‘Lushai’ signifies a decapitator, and it was once the custom of the Mizo to carry off as trophies the heads of enemies slain in battle (Lewin 3). However, the people of the Lushai Hills did not accept the names given to them by outsiders, “... they are prepared to suffer the consequences of not having a generic name of their own rather than accepting the names given by others” (Kipgen 16).

The first mention of “Zo” as the name of a people is found in the writing of Fan-ch’o, a diplomat of the Tang dynasty of China who, in 862 A.D., described the inhabitants of the Chindwin valley, whose princes and chiefs were called ‘Zo’ (Kipgen 17-18). Lewin stated that the generic name of the whole nation is “Dzo” (Lewin 246). The early Mizos who had settled in the Hill Tracts of Chittagong in about the year 1600 A.D called themselves “Zo” (Chawngkunga 25). John Shakespeare was perhaps the first to remark that “... the general population of the (Lushai) hills is spoken of as Mizos” (Kipgen 19).

The use of the term ‘Mizo’ become popular among the Mizo, as it gives them a sense of unity as well as identity. The word ‘Mizo’ itself has two components, ‘*mi*’ meaning ‘person’ and ‘*zo*’ which means ‘highland’, therefore ‘*mizo*’ can roughly be translated as ‘highlanders’ (L.B Thanga xi). In 1945, H.W. Carter a missionary in Southern Lushai Hills wrote, “Like the people of Scotland who called themselves highlanders, so also the people of Mizoram who live in high hills called themselves Mizo, which means highlanders” (Kipgen19). Recently however, writers like L.B Thanga believe that while the translation of the word ‘*mi*’ as a person is correct, the translation of the word ‘*zo*’ as a hill or mountain is not quite satisfactory because this word carries with it the conception of health and pleasantness. And very often, the word ‘*tlang*’ meaning a hill or a mountain, is used jointly with *zo*. For example, expressions like – “village x is *zo*” or “our *zo tlang*” convey more about the health and pleasantness of the village or the hill rather than the mere fact of the village being located atop a hill” (L.B.Thanga xii).

The widespread use of the many variants of ‘*zo*’ in various regions of South-East Asia, e.g., *dzo*, *jo*, *jau*, *jou*, *yau*, *you*, *zhau*, and *zhou*, has led R.Vanlawma to believe that the Mizo are ethnically connected to many communities in South-East Asia. He has also mentioned that there was once a ‘*Zo*’ Kingdom which flourished on the banks of the Chindwin river, long before it was occupied by the Burmese (Vanlawma 2).

The Lushais lived in splendid isolation before they came in contact with the English. Their political intercourse was limited to the Tipparas, Kukies and Nagas only. Very rarely they came in contact with the people of the plains. They were happy and content with their own social and political organizations. Shortage of jhuming land frequently led to inter-tribal rivalries but there were no evidence of external interference in their political life... They used to swoop upon the neighbouring territories for plunder. The Lushai Chiefs indulged in raids because they were profitable (Chatterjee 181).

First known to the outside world only as a tribe of head-hunters, The Mizo are now the inhabitants of Mizoram, the 23rd state of the Indian Union. Having attained statehood on 20th February 1986, Mizoram was one of the districts of Assam till 1972 when it became a Union Territory by the implementation of the North-Eastern Reorganization Act in 1972. It had earlier been formally declared a part of British India by a proclamation in 1895. North and South Hills were united into Lushai Hills district in 1898 with Aizawl as its headquarters. Mizoram occupies an area of great strategic importance in the North-Eastern corner of India. It shares a 585 km long international border with Myanmar and Bangladesh. It lies between the parallels of Latitude 21^o 45' N and 24^o 31' N and between the longitudes 92^o 16' E and 93^o 26' E (Pachau 23). Mizoram is bordered by Myanmar in the East and South, Bangladesh and Tripura in the West, and by Assam and Manipur in the North. It covers an area of 21,081 square kilometres and has a population of 10,91,014 according to the 2011 census.

1.2. Human Language.

“Language or speech is a system of stimulus-response interaction” says Leonard Bloomfield and he points out the difference between human language and animal language, - ‘Human speech differs from the signal-like actions of animals, even of those which use the

voice, by its great differentiation...Dogs, for instance, make only two or three kinds of noise – say, barking, growling, and whining...Parrots can make a great many kinds of noise, but apparently do not make different responses to different sounds...In human speech, different sounds have different meanings. To study this co-ordination of certain sounds with certain meanings is to study language' (27).

Ronald Langacker is of the opinion that, "Language is everywhere. It permeates our thoughts, mediates our relations with others, and even creeps into our dreams. The overwhelming bulk of human knowledge is stored and transmitted in language. Language is so ubiquitous that we take it for granted, but without it, society as we know it would be impossible" (3).

F.T Wood has remarked that speech or language is the distinguishing characteristic of man as such and is one of the chief attributes which differentiate him from the other animal species (1). Although some insects like bees and ants seem to have a system of communicating with each other, and though chimpanzees have been taught human language with remarkable but limited success, no animal has yet mastered a human form of communication. Wood presents four possible theories as to the origin of language namely:

(a) *The bow-wow theory*, (b) *The ding-dong theory* (c) *The pooh-pooh theory* and (d) *The gesture theory* (Wood 3).

Jespersen (1) on the other hand feels that human language originated by accident while humans were actually enjoying themselves. The Bible says that God created Adam and "whatsoever Adam called any living creature, that was the name thereof" (Genesis 2:19). Hindus generally believe that language came from Goddess Sarasvati, wife of Brahma, creator of the Universe (Yule 1). Whatever its origin may be, every tribe or race of human beings on earth speaks a language of some kind. Man is a social animal and he needs to communicate with others through language.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1989: 699), language is a "system of sounds, words, patterns, etc. used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings. The learning of one language in childhood is an inevitable process for all normal human beings. Language is a human and social activity without which humans cannot normally function in the society. Language is said to be the expression of human personality in words, it is the universal medium alike for conveying the common facts of everyday life, the philosopher's search for truth and everything that lies in between (Wrenn1). Pit Corder in *Introducing Applied Linguistics* says:

The first way we can approach language is as a phenomenon of the individual person. It is concerned with describing and explaining language as a matter of human behavior...Language is thus seen as a part of human psychology, a particular sort of behavior, the behavior which has as its principal function, that of communication (19).

From the various definitions of language, we can come to the conclusion that:

- (i) Language is speech.
- (ii) Language is a system.
- (iii) Language is structured.
- (iv) Language is patterned.
- (v) Language is a code.
- (vi) Language is arbitrary.
- (vii) Language is a social as well as an individual phenomenon.
- (viii) Language is behaviour.
- (ix) Language must be learnt.

(Baruah 20)

Language has often been called a system of systems because there are several inter-dependent sub-systems operating at different levels to form the language system. These include the system of organizing sounds, the system of making words, the system of arranging words, the system of organizing meaning and the system of visual symbols for writing. As the items in a language are composed of smaller items arranged in a number of ways, language is said to be structured at different levels namely:

- (i) Phonological Structure
- (ii) Morphological Structure
- (iii) Syntactic Structure
- (iv) Semantic Structure
- (v) Graphic Structure

Mizo as a language is similarly structured at different levels but the structure of the Mizo language is, as Ramhmingthangi Ralte (1995) in an unpublished essay has put it - “remarkably different from that of most Indian languages and hence, it often becomes difficult to learn the language or assimilate its system.” The main reason that Mizo is so different from other Indian languages is that while a majority of Indian languages have been descended from the Eastern branch of the Indo-European group of languages, Mizo is descended from the Tibeto-Burman group of languages.

1.3. Mizo : A Tibeto-Burman Language.

The Tibeto-Burman group of languages is one of the largest groups of languages in the world and it is one of the most wide-spread group of languages. It is spoken in various central and Asian countries, including Myanmar, Tibet, Northern Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, parts of central China and northern parts of Nepal. Tibeto-Burman languages are “spoken from North-East Pakistan and Himachal Pradesh in the west to North Western Vietnam in the East, and from Qinghai province of China in the North to the Southern end of the Thai-

Burma border in the South” (DeLancey10). The Tibeto-Burman group of languages is in turn one of the two branches of the Sino-Tibetan languages, the other branch being the Chinese languages. However there are some scholars like George van Driem who believe that, “Chinese does not represent a distinct branch of Sino-Tibetan, but rather a Tibeto-Burman language that has changed radically under the influence of Tai and other languages in Central and South China” (DeLancey 11).

The Tibeto-Burman languages can be divided into three large groups, Western, Eastern, and Central. The Western branch, also called the “Bodic” branch of the family is spoken in the Himalayas, from Western Himalaya to Himachal and Baltistan in Pakistan (DeLancey 2010). The three easternmost units of the Tibeto-Burman group of languages have been grouped together to form the Eastern branch, which include the languages of South-eastern Burma and Southwestern Thailand and the languages spoken in Sichuan and Yunan provinces of China. The languages of North-East India, Western and Northern Burma and adjacent areas of China can be classified under the Central branch of Tibeto-Burman languages (Bradley 14-16).

Mizo has been classified as a Tibeto-Burman language because of its close resemblance to the reconstructed forms of proto-Tibeto-Burman and as well as Sino-Tibetan, the origin of the Chinese languages. Mizo grammar has many similarities with Tibetan and other Tibeto-Burman languages (Chhangte 41). The fact that many words including the following have the same meaning in Burmese and Mizo provides ample proof that the two languages do belong to the same family - *na* (pain), *huan* (garden), *thau* (fat), *lian* (big), *puan* (cloth), *piang* (born), *bial* (round), *hmelchhia* (ugly), *ropui* (great) *kun* (to bend), *kam* (bank of a river), *kha* (bitter), *sam* (hair), *mei* (fire), *that* (to kill), *ni* (sun), *hnih* (two), *li* (four) .

The following table contains sufficient data to prove that Mizo, Tibeto-Burman and its counter-part Sino-Tibetan do indeed belong to the same language family : -

English	Sino-Tibetan	Tibeto-Burman	Mizo
Bone	Rus	Ruh	Ruh
Hair	Tsam	sam/tsam	Sam
Legume	Be	Be	Be
Mouth	m-ka	Ka	Ka
fat/grease	Ryak	r(y)ak	Hriak
Snake	b-ruul	Ruul	Rul
Warm	Lum	lim/lum	Lum
Smoke	Kuw	Kew	Khu
Otter	s-ram	Sram	Ashram
Five	l-nga	Nga	Nga
Ill	Na	Na	Na
Shoot	Gaap	gaap/ap	Kap

(Chhangte 43)

There are several sub-tribes or linguistic groups among the Mizo people, these include the 'Lusei' who form the majority, the 'Lai', 'Mara', 'Paihte', 'Hmar' communities and other smaller linguistic groups such as 'Ralte', 'Hrangkhawl', 'Biate', 'Bawm'. Laldova has enumerated 90 linguistic groups among what he calls '*Mizo chhungkuate*' which means 'Mizo families' (131). Although each sub-tribe in Mizoram has its own dialect, '*Duhlian Tawng*' or '*Lusei tawng*' which is now commonly known as '*Mizo Tawng*' is spoken by more than 80% of the people of Mizoram. It is used by the Mizo in Mizoram as well as those living in neighbouring parts of Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Nearly each separate clan has peculiarities of diction proper to itself; but the speech of the whole is in truth but one language, the differences being those merely of local pronunciation,

of special terms of provincialisms, affected by the different clans in the same way that our English language is spoken differently by the country folk north and south in England (Lewin 3).

L.B. Thanga (1978) credits the creation of a common speech to Lallula one of the chiefs of the Sailo clan who ruled around 1740 A.D. “Lallula was a far-sighted ruler, who perceived the advantage of having one language in his village, and spreading the same language in the neighbouring villages also. He knew that language could break many barriers” (L.B Thanga 90). The extensive and exclusive use of the Mizo language by the Christian missionaries has enabled it to become the lingua-franca of the state. The fact that the people throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram use a common language has been a very important factor in unifying the people and in bringing about uniform development in the state.

The Mizo language, which was formerly known as the Lushai language has no script of its own. According to legend, a dog ate up the only piece of animal skin on which the letters of the Mizo language were written down. It was the Welsh missionaries, the Reverends F.W Savidge and J.H Lorrain, who came to the Hills in 1894 A.D and gave the Mizo their first alphabets. When they came to Mizoram, the two missionaries found that before their arrival, the Mizo people had been taught the Bengali alphabets using the Devnagiri script which they found very difficult to acquire (Sangkhuma 93). “When we first came into contact with the Lushais at Kassalong in the Chittagong Hills Tracts in 1892, and settled amongst them at Fort Aijal in January, 1894, the tribe had no written language” (J.H Lorrain v). Rev.F.J Sandy, in the introduction of his *Elements of Lushai Grammar* in 1920 wrote:

Before very recent times the Lushais had no written language. When, for instance, they desired to commemorate the prowess of the dead they resorted to symbols : on the memorial pillar of a man who had killed an enemy in

battle, they carved a human figure : if he had killed a tiger they cut out a representation of that animal (Lorrain vii-viii).

The missionaries, after closely studying the Mizo language for three months, “chose the simple Roman script, with a phonetic form of spelling based on the well-known Hunterian system, and this, with a few slight amendments adopted since, is still used throughout the tribe with eminently satisfactory results” (Lorrain v). Thus the Mizo people were given their first set of alphabets. The 25 letters used for writing in Mizo language are:

<i>A</i>	<i>AW</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>CH</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T̄</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Z</i>

1.4. Mizo: A Tone Language.

The Mizo language is a tone language, in which differences in pitch and pitch contour can change the meanings of words. This is one characteristic of the language that has made it very difficult for non-Mizos to acquire native like proficiency in the language. Even after learning the Mizo vocabulary, they have to master the subtle nuances in tone to add meaning to their words. K.L Pike (1961) defines a tone language as a language in which a pitch of a syllable determines the lexical meaning of words, different pitch levels are distinctive and help bring about a change in meaning. Pike also says that tone languages may use different tonal systems to distinguish the meaning of words.

Most scholars studying the Mizo language have classified the different pitch levels in the language into four basic tonal melodies. Bright (1957) has named these tones (i) High (level) (ii) Falling (high to low) (iii) Rising and allophonic Mid-level and (iv) Mid to low (falling). Weidert (1975) has classified these tones as (i) High level (ii) High-falling (iii) Low-rising and (iv) Low level. Chhangte (1986) has named them – (i) High (ii) Rising (iii)

Falling and (iv) Mid-low. Lalrindiki T.Fanai in an unpublished PhD thesis (1994) has illustrated the four tones of Mizo in the following manner:

A.	(i)	/ lei / (slanting)	-	High tone
	(ii)	/ lei / (to buy)	-	Rising tone
	(iii)	/ lei / (a bridge)	-	Low tone
B.	(i)	/ pa: / (father)	-	Falling tone
	(ii)	/ pa: / (male)	-	Low tone
	(iii)	/ pa: / (mushroom)	-	Rising tone
C.	(i)	/ sam / (easy)	-	High tone
	(ii)	/ sam / (hair)	-	Rising tone
D.	(i)	/ man / (to arrest)	-	High tone
	(ii)	/ man / (cost of)	-	Low tone

From the data above, Lalrindiki T. Fanai (1989, 1992) has arrived at the inventory of tones for Mizo and has illustrated it thus:

(i)	/ lei / (slanting)	-	High (H)
(ii)	/ lei / (a bridge)	-	Low (L)
(iii)	/ pa: / (mushroom)	-	Rising (LH)
(iv)	/ pa: / (father)	-	Falling(HL)

1.5. Grammar of the Mizo Language.

The Mizo language has six vowels, *a, aw, e, i, o, u*, while English has five. In order to differentiate long vowel sounds from the shorter vowel sound in writing, there have been attempts to add the circumflex $\hat{\ }$ to indicate long vowels in this manner – “*â, ê, î, ô, û*” which, of course are not sufficient to express the various tones that exist. ‘Vanglaini’, a leading newspaper in Mizoram, and ‘Kristian Thalai’, a monthly magazine and several other publishers have started using *á, à, é, è, í, ì, ó, ò, ú, ù* to indicate the long tone ending in high

tone and low tone respectively. Two dots above a vowel indicate a high tone, an inverted ‘v’ above a vowel denotes a descending tone, a small dash slanting upwards above a vowel indicates an ascending tone and that a small dash slanting downwards above a vowel indicates a low tone (Ngurchhawna x). The Mizo language “...is full of soft sounds and lingual euphonies, and it is difficult to denote the various gradations in the expression of sound by the limited range prescribed in the Jonesian system” (Lewin 3). The Jonesian system here refers to the transliteration system of Sir W.M Jones as adopted by the Indian Government which Lewin had used in reducing the Mizo language to writing.

The vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs of the Mizo language have been presented in the following manner by Alfons Weidert(1975) :

	Front	Central	Back
Close	I		U
Mid	E		Aw
Open	A		

Diphthongs :

Starting with <i>a</i>	Starting with <i>e</i>	Starting with <i>i</i>	Starting with <i>u</i>
<i>Ai</i>	<i>Ei</i>	<i>Ia</i>	<i>Ua</i>
<i>Au</i>	<i>Eu</i>	<i>Iu</i>	<i>Ui</i>

Triphthongs :

1. *iai* as in piai, liai luai
2. *iau* as in riau ruau, tiau tuau
3. *uai* as in zuai, tuai, vuai
4. *uau* as in tiau tuau, suau suau

There are very few books written on Mizo Grammar. The few that do exist are still rudimentary in nature and include those written by K. Zawla (1974), R. Buchhawna (1975), Remkunga (1977, 1988) and Weidert (1975).

In Mizo, as in most languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, all adjectives can function as verbs (Ghosh 1992). These adjectives have been called ‘adjectival verbs’ in order to distinguish them from other verbs that do not have adjectival function (Lalrindiki T. Fanai, 1992). All verbs in Mizo have two forms namely **Form I** and **Form II** wherein **Form II** verbs are derived from **Form I** verbs by undergoing a morphological change called ‘Verb Conversion’ (Lalrindiki T. Fanai 1989). There is no tense in Mizo, adverbials like ‘yesterday, today,’ etc. are used to indicate time reference, in other words, tense is not marked in the verbs but are marked by such aspect markers. With regard to gender:

Gender is only distinguished in the case of animate beings. Names of animals, unless distinguished by suffixes, and all inanimate objects are neuter. The same word often denotes beings of different gender when no ambiguity ensues. Thus *fa*, child; *u*, elder brother or sister; *nao*, younger brother or sister (Grierson 131).

In Mizo there are manner adverbs, adverbs of time and adverbs of place and they generally precede the main verb. Adverbial particles have often been called ‘double adverbs’, because they function as adverbs by modifying the verb, and because they are usually reduplicated (hence the term double adverbs) e.g., *chhur chhur*, *par par*, *liam liam* etc. Adverbial particles convey a significant amount of information which includes speaker attitude, size and shape of subject/object, and speed of action. Although adverbial particles are indispensable in narrative discourse as they are used to dramatize and highlight significant events, they have no lexical meaning by themselves and therefore cannot be

counted as independent words. All proper names in Mizo have a gender suffix: all female names end with ‘*i*’ and all male names with ‘*a*’ (Chhangte 1989).

1.6. Status of English in the world.

English was a relatively ‘pure’ language when the Anglo-Saxons first conquered England in the fifth and sixth centuries. But down through the ages, English has taken to itself material from almost every other major language in the world and has incorporated these new elements into the language with ease. This extra-ordinary receptiveness and adaptability has made English a ‘world language’, having copious vocabulary and amazing variety, which make it the most suitable vehicle for communication worldwide (Wrenn 7). English is no longer one language and it does not belong to England alone. Different kinds of ‘Englishes’ have come to existence all over the world, it is no longer the cultural property of the British or the Americans. Patterson (1977) has aptly stated that:

English is no longer an Anglo-Saxon language. It is a child that no longer knows its mother, and cares even less to know her. It has been adapted in a thousand ways to meet special feelings, moods, and experiences of a thousand groups, all alien, alien to the experiences of the culture group that first spoke of the language (149).

English is the mother tongue of roughly more than 320 million people in the world which includes the people of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as the Anglo-Indian community in India. In addition to this, another 200 million use it as their second language, making it the most widely spoken language in the world. Thus English continues to occupy the status of a world language since, “... it is one of the major vehicles of the culture of modern world. By ignoring English, no nation, western or eastern will prosper. In the present world there is no

wider means of communication than English” (Sharma53). People from different countries use it to communicate with each other:

When we turn on the news to find out what is happening in Iraq, inhabitants of Baghdad and Basra tell us about it in English... The same holds true of Beijing, Manila, Sarajevo, Sao Paolo, Jerusalem, even Paris. From Bangkok to Budapest, from Caracas to Casablanca, from Rotterdam to Rio, English is the language if people want to reach out... English is the language that allows news to cross linguistic and national boundaries, a powerful testimony that we live in one world. We can share valuable information more easily and know about each other more readily than ever before...” (Coulmas 220).

Developments in information technology, faster modes of transportation and the rapid expansion of mass media have also contributed to making English a global language. There has been a great increase in the number of users of English all over the world especially after the political deconstruction of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The English-speaking population in Kachru’s (1992) “outer and expanding circles”, i.e., people using English as a second language and those using it as a foreign language has outnumbered that of the “inner circle”, i.e., the native speakers (Crystal 1997). Proficiency in English has become indispensable for a large majority of Indians as well. Oral and written communication in English have become very important for many professionals like bank officers, doctors, engineers and journalists in every part of the country (Rao13). This holds true even for the people of remote and far-flung areas like Mizoram. Therefore, Raman Akbari’s (2008) remarks about the status of English in the world today is very apt-

“English has now turned into an international language and due to the scope of its application both geographically and communicatively, it has developed certain features which are not part of any specific national character. In other

words, English has become de-nationalized and re-nationalized as a result of its spread as the world lingua franca” (278).

The status of English in India and Mizoram is briefly discussed below.

1.6.1. English in India.

English was introduced in India by the East India Company, a British trade company which was established on 31st December 1600. The company became involved in politics which led to India becoming a British colony in from the middle of the 18th Century up to the middle of the 20th Century. In the beginning, the East India Company was not concerned with imparting education to the Indians, however in 1813, when the Company’s charter was renewed the following clause was inserted : “...that a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India” (Aslam 3).

Thus English education was made available to native Indians and given impetus by the Christian missionaries who helped to spread education throughout the land. Lord Macaulay, believed that, “...whoever knows that language (English) has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations” (Aslam 4). Macaulay was also the author of the famous *Minutes of 1835* which decreed-

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to redefine the vernacular dialects in the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from Western

nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

English was thus introduced at all stages of education and it became the medium of instruction for all subjects at school from the secondary level onwards. It became an integral part of the Educational system. Although in the beginning, Lord Macaulay and the British Government might have introduced English in India due to purely selfish reasons, with the aim of ‘turning out vast armies of pen-pushers’ in order to ‘produce cheap clerks for their colonial administration’ (Baruah 1), it proved beneficial for Indian people in more ways than one. For a start, it nurtured the roots of Indian nationalism which was later responsible for freeing the country from foreign rule. Educated Indians were able to read books by writers like Ruskin, Carlyle, Lincoln and other great thinkers and this sowed in them the seeds of patriotism. Furthermore, India being a country where hundreds of languages are spoken, English served as a great unifying force in the Indian struggle for Independence. Freedom fighters from all parts of the country were able to communicate with each other and formulate their plans of resistance.

At the dawn of Indian Independence however, the place of English in Indian society came to be questioned. Many who saw it as an instrument of colonial exploitation and oppression wanted to do away with the language all together but the framers of the Constitution of India adopted in 1950 wisely recommended that Hindi would be the official language and English was to be used for 15 years from the date the Constitution was adopted. Even after the passage of fifteen years, it was not easy to do away with English as the official language in India as most of the Southern states did not speak or understand Hindi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India clearly pointed out the importance of English in the following manner :

If you push out English, does Hindi fully take its place ? I hope it will. I am sure it will. But I wish to avoid the danger of one unifying factor being pushed out without another unifying factor fully taking its place. In that event there will be a hiatus. The creation of any such gap or hiatus must be avoided at all costs. It is very vital to do so in the interest of the unity of the country. It is this that leads me to the conclusion that English is likely to have an important place in the foreseeable future (Baruah 3).

Mr. Morarjee Desai another former Prime Minister of India is put on record as having said to his British counterpart, Mr. Callaghan - "We will not deny to ourselves the practical as well as cultural benefits of familiarity with English, the most eloquent and popular of languages (*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, May 2, 1978).

The Indian Education Commission of 1964-66, also known as the Kothari Commission had recommended the use of English as a library language. This was a wise decision on the part of the commission as English holds the key to a vast store-house of knowledge. Books on all branches of knowledge are available in English and it has been estimated that more than 60% of the world's technical journals, newspapers, periodicals, etc. are published in English. In order to keep themselves abreast with the latest developments in science and technology, as well as other disciplines, for that matter, Indian scholars have to acquire a reasonable amount of proficiency in English (Baruah 5). The Radhakrishnan Commission has expressed the importance of English as follows:

English however must continue to be studied. It is the language which is rich in literature- humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, we would cut ourselves from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. Unable to have access to this knowledge, our standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and our participation in the

world movements of thought would become negligible. Its effects would be disastrous for our political life, for living nations must move with the times and must respond quickly to the challenges of their surroundings. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance.

The National Integration Commission of 1962 and the Indian Education Commission of 1964-66 recommended that English should be studied either as a second language or as a third language for a duration of six years or three years respectively in non-Hindi speaking areas, and as a second language of six years' duration in Hindi-speaking areas. The regional language or the first language is to be taught from Class I to Class X and the second and third languages are to be introduced in Class V and Class VIII respectively. Indian schools have thus been teaching English as a language of comprehension and have aimed at the development of reading comprehension.

1.6.2. English in India today.

English has been playing an important role in the Indian educational and national life for many years now. According to the 1971 census, nearly two hundred thousand Indians use English as their mother tongue. It serves as the link language for all manner of communication, both private and official, between the different states of the Indian Union. English is also the only language that is understood by educated people all over India. For this reason we find that "English has been the official language of the country for more than two hundred years. It has been declared as the Associate Official Language of the Union for an indefinite period by an Act of Parliament in 1963. As such, it dominates the administrative work done in English throughout the country" (Y.K Singh 2). On speaking about the importance of English in India today, I.K Meera Rao (2004) has said :

English is no longer considered an alien language in India and in fact, the term 'education' has come to mean 'a knowledge of English' and 'a knowledge of English' in turn, has come to mean access to power, global knowledge, global information and a passport for employment. In the changing global scenario, English is today, one of the eighteen 'recognized' languages in India. It is no longer considered the language of the British (115).

Indian languages and literature have been deeply enriched by the study of English language and literature, almost all the Indian languages have freely borrowed words from English and have thereby enriched their vocabulary. The knowledge of English has also contributed immensely in other fields like science and technology, new developments in every part of the world are easily accessed by Indians through English. In other words, the collective knowledge of the world has been brought to the doorsteps of Indians through the English language.

The objectives of teaching English at the school stage in India today have been summed up by Baruah (10) as the development of the following skills in students :

- (i) To understand English with ease when spoken at normal conversational speed.
- (ii) To speak English correctly and fluently.
- (iii) To read English with comprehension and at a reasonable speed so as to use it as a library language for gathering information and for enjoying reading.
- (iv) To write neatly and correctly at a reasonable speed.
- (v) To enjoy simple poems in English.
- (vi) To acquire knowledge of the elements of English for practical command of the language.
- (vii) To translate common English words, phrases and sentences into their functional equivalents in mother tongue and vice versa

(viii) To develop interest in English.

1.6.3. Introduction of English In Mizoram.

Christianity and formal education were brought simultaneously to Mizoram by the Welsh Missionaries, Rev. J.H Lorrain and Rev. F.W Savidge, the first missionaries arrived in Aijal (as Aizawl was previously known) on 11th January 1894. They started a school on April 2, 1894 and this became the foundation and origin of all formal education in Mizoram. As a result of the inspection of the missionary school by the Chief Commissioner of Assam in February 1904, education in Mizoram was handed over to the missionaries. Thus “ From that year onwards, till the taking over of the schools by the Government of Assam and subsequently by the District Council, Christian missionaries were the official agencies of education among the Lushais for about 50 years.” (Education Reforms Commission 2010: 22). The first text book of English that was used by the Welsh missionaries in Mizoram was P.C. Sarkar’s ‘First Book’ and the earliest Mizo students had to use it while facing the first Lower Primary Examination which commenced on June 25, 1903 (Lianzuala 21).

1.7. Problems faced by Mizo Learners.

The most obvious source of problems a Mizo learner faces in learning English lies in the fact that English and Mizo are two languages which are totally different from each other in many respects. English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages and is closely related to German and other European languages. It also shares its roots with some of the languages of Central India. Mizo on the other hand belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages as we have seen earlier. Most of the learners’ problems of any language can be traced to the interference of the mother tongue. The contrastive theory claims that the acquisition of a second language is largely determined by the structure of an earlier acquired language (Klein 25). The structures of the first language pose many problems in the learning of the second language. The features in the second language which are similar to the first

language are easier to learn while the features which are dissimilar are more difficult to acquire. Since there are hardly any similarities between the English and Mizo language systems, it is not easy for Mizo learners to acquire the English language.

The grammatical structure of Mizo is very different from English as illustrated below:

1. To begin with, the most obvious and glaring difference is that Mizo has the SOV arrangement in sentences while English uses the SVO arrangement.
2. In Mizo, tense is not marked in the verbs but is indicated by aspect markers. In English, verbs are marked for tense.
3. As already mentioned, Mizo is a tone language and stress rules have no relevance in the language unlike English.
4. Unlike English, in Mizo, all adjectives can function as verbs; these adjectives have been called ‘adjectival verbs’ in order to distinguish them from other verbs.
5. All verbs in Mizo have two forms **Form I** and **Form II** wherein **Form II** verbs are derived from **Form I** verbs by undergoing a change called ‘Verb Conversion’. This is not to be found in English.
6. Mizo learners are bound to face problems in learning English where singular and plural are concerned as they are treated very differently in the two languages.
7. Masculine and feminine genders found in the English language are also bound to create problems for Mizo learners as gender in Mizo is only distinguished in the case of animate beings.
8. In Mizo there are manner adverbs, adverbs of time and adverbs of place and they generally precede the main verb. Adverbial particles called ‘double adverbs’ which are not to be found in English abound in the Mizo language.
9. All proper names in Mizo have a gender suffix: all female names end with ‘i’ and all male names with ‘a’. This again is not found in English names.

10. A very prominent problem that Mizo learners face in learning English, and which is worth elaborating, is in the area of Phonology. The letters of the English alphabet are not always the same as the name of the letter would indicate, and the real sound can only be learnt from a teacher. This is because the English alphabet "... does not give the accurate information at the surface level as to the sound order required by the students of spoken English" (Ralte 152). Many English sounds are spelt in a large number of different ways and "such inconsistencies often put the language learner at a loss and is continually making errors" (Jones 6-7). It is for this reason that Bolinger and Sears have said, 'No other spelling system in the world has been the occasion of so much amazement, frustration, irritation, sarcasm, and cold fury as that of English' (196). George Bernard Shaw, in the preface to his famous play *Pygmalion* has remarked that, "The English cannot spell their language because they have nothing to spell it with but an old foreign alphabet of which only the consonants - and not all of them - have any agreed speech value". Shaw is also reputed to have said that the English word 'fish' might as well be spelt 'ghoti' because in English /f/ may be represented by *gh* (e.g., laugh), /i/ by *o* (e.g., women) and /sh/ by *ti* (e.g., nation) (Baruah 145). The irregularities in spelling and pronunciation in English makes it one of the most difficult languages to learn. This is very different from the Mizo language where words are spelt exactly as they are to be pronounced, as they are in Hindi. Mizo learners are bound to face many problems due to the silent letters in certain English spellings, in the absence of elementary English sounds in Mizo, and in the difference in the environment of phoneme occurrence as there is not a single phoneme in Mizo, which can be said to occur in free variation.

It can thus be seen that though the acquisition of English as a Second language is crucial in almost every walk of life among the Mizo youth, it continues to be an uphill task

for the majority of the population. Finding a trustworthy solution to ensure a smoother sailing for young Mizo learners in the acquisition of English is the need of the hour and the problem stated and attempted to be solved in this thesis. The root of many of the problems faced by Mizo learners of English seems to be the vast difference between the English and Mizo languages. Various efforts have been made to understand the intricacies of the Mizo language and to bridge the gap between the Mizo people and the English language, some of which have been discussed below.

1.8. Literature Review.

It was the *The Linguistic Survey of India*, a huge body of data compiled and edited by G.A Grierson and published in 1904 that classified 'Lushei or Dulien', as the Mizo language was previously known as, under the Central Chin sub-group of the Kuki-Chin group, which in turn, is a branch of the Tibeto-Burman group of languages. Sten Konow, a Norwegian linguist was responsible for the Tibeto-Burman volumes in the survey (Delancey 9). *The Linguistic Survey of India* is said to have been compiled from questionnaires completed by British Colonial Officers who were stationed around the country. All the Officers could not have been expected to have had a lot of knowledge about linguistics or experience in linguistic research, moreover, they were all schooled in the grammatical system of Indo-European languages which is very different from Tibeto-Burman languages. For these reasons, their work is said to have been very difficult and unproductive.

Recently, scholars from India and abroad have approached the Tibeto-Burman languages from a modern perspective and we are beginning to have more reliable descriptions of the grammar of the languages including Mizo. Various attempts have been made by scholars to study the Mizo language and its grammar. However, most of these studies have dwelt on the phonological aspects of the language. Lt. Col. Thomas Herbert Lewin, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was one of the first persons to

study the Mizo language, he published a book entitled, *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect* in 1874. “The ‘dzo’ language has hitherto existed only in the form of speech; it has never been reduced to writing” and he believes that this lack is due to “... the confusing and infinite petty variations of speech among these people (Lewin 3). However, Lewin made no pretensions about trying to construct the grammar of the language: “I play the part here of a simple pioneer going forward into an unknown forest and blazing a path ; it is for those who come after me to expand the track into a fair and well-engineered roadway for the good of all” (Lewin 3). His book contains ninety exercises having English translations of Mizo sentences, three stories, and an exhaustive alphabetically arranged vocabulary list with word for word translations, both from Mizo to English and from English to Mizo. Later in 1884, Assistant Surgeon Brojo Nath Shaha, the Civil Medical Officer also of Chittagong Hill Tracts published *Grammar of the Lushai Language*. In 1898, the two missionaries, J.H Lorrain and F.W Savidge published *Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. This work is said to be the most exhaustive and reliable work of this era on the Mizo language or the Lushai language, as it was known in the earlier days. Rev. F.J Sandy, a missionary who worked in the area had also wrote a book, ‘*Elements of Lushai Grammar*’ in 1920. In the year 1933 two Welsh missionaries Edwin Rowlands and David E. Jones wrote a primer named ‘*Hma Bu*’ which roughly translated means “Early book” obviously meaning that it was meant to be studied at the initial stages. It had two parts in the preface of which they wrote –

This primer has been prepared mainly for the assistance of Lushais learning English. It is felt that rather than take up a series of readers containing difficult and little used words all in a foreign tongue from the first, in a book of this kind, using to a great extent homely words, giving examples of constructions and emphasizing words and constructions with repetition is needed. This does not shut out the use of readers; but rather, we would suggest that a Reader,

mainly for reading, be used conjointly, and that dictation be not overlooked. While prepared mainly for the assistance of Lushais learning English, it may also prove helpful to others desirous of learning Lushai. (Rowlands and Jones Preface)

Several articles on Mizo Grammar have been written and several papers presented by F.K Lehman between 1975 and 1985. These include a paper – *On certain aspects of Mizo (Lushai) grammar*- a paper presented to the Eighth International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics at Berkeley, University of California. Other scholars who have pioneered in studying the Lushai language include Eugenie J.A Henderson –*Notes on the syllable structure of Lushai* in 1948 (BSO AS 12, 713-725), Robbins Burling, *Lushai Phonemics* in 1957 (IL 17, 148-55), William Bright - *Alternations in Lushai* in 1957 (IL 18 101-110). Alfons Weidert was the author of *Componential Analysis of Lushai Phonology* in 1975. Pedagogical grammars have also been written by Khiangte (1964) and Remkunga (1977). There have also been scholars like Lalrindiki T. Fanai (1989, 1992) and Lalnunthangi Chhangte (1986, 1989) and Ralluiai (2001) who have done comprehensive research on the Mizo language.

Since the main aim of this thesis is find out ways to make it easier for Mizo learners to successfully acquire the English language at the elementary level, it is important, first of all to be aware of the problems that the young Mizo learner might face in trying to acquire the English language up to certain degree of fluency. It would also important to find out what efforts have been made in the past to address this problem.

An exhaustive study of the Mizo language has been attempted by Ralluiai in her book, '*Mizo Tawng Chikna*' which means 'a close study of the Mizo language', published in 2001 and revised in 2010. She has attempted to describe the Mizo Language from the linguistic

point of view and has clearly pointed out the myriad differences between the English and Mizo languages.

Alfons Weidert who also authored '*Tibeto-Burman Tonology* (1987)' and has made an in-depth study of the Mizo language in the book, '*Componential Analysis of Lushai Phonology* (1975).' In her thesis entitled "*The Problems of the Learners of English in Mizoram*", Ramhmingthangi Ralte (1995) has attempted to observe and analyse the problems of Mizo learners of English in the colleges of Mizoram, in order to suggest proper remedial measures. She begins with the hypothesis that "the low proficiency level of Mizo learners in English may be partly attributed to the influence of the mother tongue, and partly to other factors like methods and strategies of teaching, lack of exposure to the language etc". She believes that the little English that Mizo learners acquire is "very often coloured by their mother tongue" and that "a major problem which confronts Mizo learners of English may be attributed to the differences existing between the two languages, Mizo and English."

Ralte makes use of Contrastive Analysis to study the structures of English and Mizo and feels that this is very useful to "... pin-point the specific areas of similarities and differences between the two languages". She finds out that "... there are more differences than similarities between English and Mizo" and believes that the analysis "... holds the key to the problems faced by Mizo learners of English". In order to study the error patterns of the Mizo learners of English, Ralte conducted a test in 5 colleges of Aizawl among 300 Pre-University students, by making them write a free-hand essay. The errors committed by the learners are classified by Ralte in the following manner:

1. Errors in Verb Form and Pattern
2. Errors in Tense
3. Errors in Preposition
4. Errors in use of Articles

5. Errors in Syntax
6. Errors in Lexis
7. Errors in Spelling
8. Miscellaneous Errors

Ralte concludes that "... most of the problems were caused by interference of the mother tongue, faulty methods of teaching and inappropriate internalization of the rules of language operation". She feels that the syllabus should ensure that the language items are properly graded and introduced in a phased manner and that "curriculum planners and syllabus designers have to take into account the real situations that exist in the class-room. She goes on to design a model syllabus keeping in mind the needs and interests of the learners as well as their socio-cultural backgrounds. Ralte also feels that teachers should be trained in ELT (English Language Teaching) and be provided with proper facilities.

Lalthangliana who devised "A course in Spoken English" for the State Council of Educational Research and Training has concluded that it is very difficult for Mizo learners to learn English because of the following reasons:

1. Lack of practice or lack of exposure.
2. Wrong attitude: Having too much respect for the English language creates a learning problem for them.
3. Making fun of students' mistakes: Making fun of students when they make mistakes in English greatly hinders their learning.
4. Inappropriate method of teaching: Most teachers in Mizoram adopt the translation or traditional method of teaching which is unsuitable as no two languages in the world can be translated perfectly into each other.
5. Too much grammar: There is too much stress on grammar while English is being taught in Mizo schools.

(Lalthangliana 16 - 19)

C. Sangluaii who has studied the problem of Mizo learners of English at the Higher Secondary level from a Socio-linguistic point of view has pointed out that the geographical remoteness of Mizoram has denied the Mizo the chance to have direct contact with native speakers of English and to have good teachers of the language – “ Most of the teachers themselves are educated without any direct contact with native speakers of English and also have not attended courses in spoken English (Sangluaii 2). She has pointed out the various problems faced by the learners as well as teachers in the teaching-learning of English as a second language in Mizoram as follows :

The various problems like the remoteness of Mizoram, lack of exposure to the use of English in Mizoram, inappropriate method of teaching, unsuitable syllabuses and text-books, lack of adequate ELT training on the part of the teachers, social background, social practice, culture and society, environment, lack of motivation, our wrong attitude towards the person who speaks English, and above all, the difference between the two languages in matters of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon etc., create a teaching- learning problem” (Sangluaii 139).

Lalbiaksangi Chawngthu, in her M.Phil Dissertation ‘*Introducing the Communicative Approach to English Language Teaching at the Pre-University Level in Mizoram*’ (1992) has found out that there is a mismatch between classroom teaching and the needs of the students in the real world. There are problems with class sizes, varying abilities, students’ motivation, teaching materials, the teachers, the examination system and the teaching methods employed in Mizoram.

Mr. D. Eliyas in *Error Analysis of English language: A study of Mara Students of Class X* (2009) studied the English of Class X students of Maraland in South Mizoram. He

found out that even after eight to ten years of learning, they are unable to communicate effectively in English. He has made the following suggestions:

- i. The teaching of the communicative approach be employed in English language teaching in schools.
- ii. The medium of instruction should be changed from Mizo to English.
- iii. Intensive bridge courses for students and Orientation and Refresher courses in ELT for teachers should be conducted from time to time.
- iv. Only competent teachers should be selected for language teachers.
- v. Every school should have a Library.
- vi. Students of English should be offered incentives.
- vii. English must have two papers and grammar should be taught in context.
- viii. Teaching aids should include mass media.
- ix. Double promotion should be stopped.
- x. The government should establish a residential school in the area.

1.9. Statement of the Problem.

Before the advent of the British, the Mizo people led a relatively isolated existence. Although they were surrounded by people practicing all the great religions of Asia, namely Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, they hardly had any contact with them. “Civilization runs almost to the foot of the hills, but then it comes to a sudden stop, as if the world must end there” (Savidge 205). This isolation resulted in the development of a unique culture unaffected by their surroundings (Kipgen 47).

The Lushais lived in splendid isolation before they came in contact with the English. Their political intercourse was limited to the Tipparas, Kukies and Nagas only. Very rarely they came in contact with the people of the plains.

They were happy and content with their own social and political organizations (Chatterjee 181).

For a very long time, Mizo people lived in a basically monolingual society, and a person with the knowledge of Mizo alone could survive for a lifetime throughout the length and breadth of Mizoram without feeling any need for learning a second language. The geographical location of Mizoram, which is rather isolated from the rest of the country, and the lack of cross-cultural exchange with neighboring states had made the learning of other languages rather redundant up until recently. Even when English started to be taught and used at the formal level, there was very little scope for Mizo people to use the language in their day to day lives. While a few years ago, a person who could speak in Mizo could survive without having to know a word in any other language, now with the spread of modernization and the liberalization of the Indian economy, there are many pressing reasons for Mizo learners to learn English. With Mizoram getting more and more integrated into the Indian main stream in particular and the global society in general, the knowledge of English has also become increasingly important for interaction with non-Mizos both within and outside the state. Hundreds of Mizo students go for further studies to other states, many go in search of employment, this is impossible without basic knowledge of English. The knowledge of English is also considered to be an important advantage in the job market both within and outside the state. The Mizo people also have to increasingly interact in English with businessmen, tourists and religious counterparts from other parts of the country and beyond. Mizo youth now have the opportunity to work in call centres, multinational companies, and medical transcription centres, where efficient translators and reporters are required. Moreover those desirous of immigration to the west need to acquire a certain level of fluency in English in order to clear tests like the IELTS and TOEFL. English is also the official language of Mizoram, the language of all government correspondence. Apart from these more practical

reasons for the acquisition of English, fluency in English continues to be a kind of status symbol for a large number of people in Mizo society.

Mizoram, like all the states in India, has also adopted the three language formula, adapting it to suit its local requirements. English is introduced as one of the subjects from the primary school level, and it is the medium of instruction from the secondary level onwards in government schools. In private English Medium schools, it is medium of instruction right from Kindergarten. The acquisition of the language at the elementary level is considered to be the key, as it were, to all higher learning. English is also the official language of Mizoram. Although English is thus taught and used at the formal level, there is very little scope for using the language in day to day transactions by the Mizo society at large. To cater to the need for the acquisition of the English language, English Medium schools have sprung up in every corner of Mizoram and Spoken English classes which have been opened in various places are very well attended. Thus the acquisition of Spoken English has assumed great importance and has generated a lot of business for many people. Even parents who can barely afford it, including daily wage labourers and vegetable vendors try their best to send their children to English medium schools to make them learn English, or '*saptawng*', as the language is called in Mizo. However, in spite of such a high regard for the language in Mizoram, the standard of Spoken English, as well as written English in the state, leaves much to be desired. The majority of college graduates who have studied solely within the state, find it difficult to write a grammatically correct essay or hold a meaningful conversation. However this problem is not peculiar to Mizo learners of English alone, English teachers all over India feel that "In spite of teaching English to our students for quite some time now (since Independence), we still find that they lack the ability, both to communicate and to express their ideas in English" (Mubeena Fazili⁷⁹). Some blame the syllabus and the

classroom procedures used, others blame the choice of materials used while there are yet others who blame the teachers. However, such problems are not peculiar to India alone:

The problem is that students, and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in the spoken or the written mode. (Widdowson15).

Keeping all the problems stated above in mind, it is the endeavour of this study to uncover a language theory or a method whereby the acquisition of English as a second language will no longer require Herculean efforts from Mizo learners, or viewed as a goal which only a few fortunate ones can attain. This study will focus on the manner in which English is being taught in the Elementary schools in Aizawl. It will also include the interviews of Mizo speakers of English who have completed their school education solely within Mizoram and yet have acquired the language relatively more successfully than their peers. Theories and methods of second language acquisition will also be examined to see if they can be used more effectively in the Mizo context.

1.10. Objectives of the study.

This study is based on the fact that the acquisition of English as a second language is in great demand in elementary schools as well as subsequent levels across Mizoram, but that it is not as successful as it ought to be. Many steps have been taken by government and private agencies to make the process of English language learning effective but these have met with very limited success. The aim of this thesis is to find out a reliable way through which Mizo learners can acquire English more effectively in the elementary level so that it ceases to be a problem as they enter High school and pursue further studies. The elementary stage has been the focus of this study, because, as Palmer (17) said,

“Language study is essentially a habit-forming process, and the important stage in habit-forming is the elementary stage. If we do not secure habits of accurate observation, reproduction, and imitation during the first stage, it is doubtful whether we shall ever secure them subsequently”

The objectives of this study will include the following:

1. Investigating and identifying the challenges lying in the path of Mizo learners in the smooth acquisition of English.
2. Observing the manner in which English is being taught in English medium schools across Aizawl through questionnaires for students and teachers.
3. Interviewing successful Mizo speakers of English from varying backgrounds, who have completed their schooling in Mizoram, to find out how they have acquired English.
4. Examining different methods of teaching English as a second language especially the Reading method advocated by Stephen Krashen and Michael West to see if it could be practised in Mizoram.

The present study acknowledges that there are other ongoing studies on the problems encountered in the teaching - learning situation of English in Mizoram at various levels. It is hoped that the joint efforts of all those involved in the field will together bring about a positive change in the way that English is taught, learnt and used in Mizoram. This will help future generations of Mizoram to stand on equal par with their contemporaries in other parts of the country where the usage of English is concerned. This in turn will open the door for Mizo youth to pursue their dreams and their careers beyond the boundaries of Mizoram, without any linguistic barriers or inhibitions.

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CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

'You live a new life for every new language you speak.

If you know only one language, you live only once'. - Czech proverb

'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world'.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889-1951, Austrian philosopher)

2.1. Introduction.

The amusing tale of a mother mouse and her little ones who are suddenly confronted by a cat simply but clearly demonstrates the advantage of learning a second language: The mother mouse braces herself and in her deepest voice imitates a dog's bark, "Bow wow!" The cat flees from the scene, thinking that the mouse is a dog. The mother mouse then turns to the baby mice and says, - "Now, children, you now know how important it is to know a second language". The necessity of being able to speak in a second language may not always be as dramatic or as dire as this life and death situation faced by the mice. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be ignored. More than one billion people in the world speak more than one language fluently and throughout much of the world, being able to speak at least two languages is necessary to function in society. In the Philippines for example, people have to speak three languages if they are to engage fully in their community's social affairs (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 9). The need for learning a second language has often been necessary for reasons of trade and commerce, for political and religious reasons as well as for educational and social reasons. "Some sixty percent of today's world population is multilingual. Both from a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multi-lingualism is the norm rather than the exception. "Five hundred years ago, Latin was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and government in the Western world. It was gradually

displaced by French, Italian and English, and today; English has become the most widely studied foreign language” (Richards and Rodgers 1).

2.2. Definition of Second Language.

The term ‘second language’ is generally used to refer to any language other than the first language. Mitchell and Myles believe that ‘second languages’ are any languages other than the learner’s ‘native language’ or ‘mother tongue’. Second languages encompass both languages of wider communication encountered within the local region or community (e.g. at the work-place, or in the media), and truly foreign languages, which have no immediately local users or speakers (1).

2.3. Definition of Second Language Acquisition.

Second language acquisition is a complex process. Complexity here means that there are so many separate but interrelated factors within one intricate entity that it is exceedingly difficult to bring order and simplicity to that “chaos” (Larsen-Freeman 6). Mitchell and Myles have attempted to define second language acquisition “...broadly to include the learning of any language to any level, provided only that the learning of the ‘second’ language takes place sometime later than the acquisition of the first language.” (1) Second language acquisition stands in contrast to first language acquisition because, “it is the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother-tongue. Second Language Acquisition refers to “the subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting” (Ellis 5- 6). Dulay, Burt and Krashen believe that Second Language Acquisition is “the process of learning another language after the basics of the first have been acquired” (10).

2.4. Difference between First and second Language Acquisition.

Language acquisition is in some sense the simultaneous development of the faculty of language as well as of the structure of a particular language, and it is apparently a natural and automatic product of the process of socialization with adult human beings. Adults often wonder at the way in which small children acquire the language or languages of their parents, their grandparents or their friends with great ease, and with remarkably great speed. All normal children regardless of culture develop language at around the same time and along the same schedule. By the time a child enters school, he is able to use language quite efficiently and with substantial control. This language that the child acquires with much ease, the language spoken in his immediate environment is known as the First language. First language acquisition has been often been compared with the painfully slow and discouraging acquisition of second or third languages, and this problem and its solution will form the focus of this study.

Second language acquisition stands in contrast to first language acquisition because it is the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue. Learning a second language differs in many respects from the acquisition of the mother tongue. Firstly, the conditions are different, the first language or the mother tongue is learnt in childhood while the child is growing physically and mentally, while second language is learnt after the mother tongue has been mastered. Secondly, first language learning takes place naturally while second language acquisition takes place, as Pit Corder says, “as a result of the discovery of its practical utility” (3). Thirdly, the data of first language acquisition is unorganized while that of second language is logical and carefully planned. Finally, first language acquisition is informal but second language learning is deliberately learnt in a formal setting like a school. Most people never acquire a second language to a high level of proficiency. This has led to the institutionalization of second

language learning to a much greater extent than with the first language. David Block in *The Social Turn in Second Language Acquisition* says,

According to Krashen, acquisition is a subconscious process taking place in a naturalistic context where there is a focus on meaningful communication. Acquisition is seen to be akin to the process followed by children in first language acquisition. By contrast, learning is a conscious process, taking place in a formal context (such as a classroom) where there is a focus on formal aspects of the language (such as grammatical rules). Learning is the process followed by language learners around the world who are attending lessons (Block 93-94).

2.5. Difficulties in learning a Second Language.

There is a general feeling that second language learning is rather unsuccessful in comparison with first language acquisition and Elisabeth Ingram in a paper entitled *Psychology and Language Learning* has stated her belief that “ this is due to the different conditions under which first and second language learning take place” (Ingram 286). She has classified these conditions in the following manner :

- (a) Exposure
- (b) Drive
- (c) Context
- (d) Reinforcement

The differences between the first language and the second language are the main cause of the difficulties in second language learning . It has been generally accepted that most of the difficulties facing the Second Language (L2) learner are imposed by his or her First Language (L1). In order to identify the areas of difficulty, a procedure called Contrastive

Analysis was developed . “The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them”(Lado 2).

Pit Corder however, finds no reason why learning a second language should be any more difficult than the acquisition of the first language. He states that, “learning a second language after we have acquired verbal behaviour is a matter of adaptation or extension of existing skills and knowledge rather than the relearning of a completely new set of skills from scratch”(5). Indeed there ought to be some ease in learning a second language because of the fact that there are some ‘fundamental properties’ or ‘linguistic universals’ which are found in all languages and ‘when these fundamental properties have once been learned, (through their mother tongue manifestations) the learning of a second language is a relatively smaller task. In simpler words, learning a second language should be made much easier by the knowledge of the fundamental properties of language acquired with first language acquisition.

However, for most people, the ability to use their first language is rarely matched, even after years of study, by a comparable ability in the second language, and Yule points out that “there is apparently no other system of knowledge which one can learn better at two or three years old than at fifteen or twenty-five.”(Yule 3) This could be due to the fact that most people attempt to learn another language during their teenage or adult years, in a few hours each week, with a lot of other occupations and with an already known language available for their communicative requirements. Pit Corder suggests that the language learner is a different sort of person from the infant and that there has been some qualitative change in his physiology and psychology at some point in his maturation process, and that these changes in some way inhibit him from using the same learning strategies that he used as an infant. It has also been humorously remarked that adults’ tongues ‘get stiff’ from pronouncing one language and just cannot cope with the sounds of another language. In many cases, adult

inhibitions do seem to pose a threat to second language acquisition as was observed in a study in which a group of adult learners performed much better, up to a point, in the pronunciation of a second language when they were administered a certain dose of alcohol (14).

2.6. Studies in Second Language Acquisition.

Interest in second language acquisition began in the 1940s and 1950s when three different phenomena coincided. The first of these was the sudden increase in interest in foreign language teaching and learning during and after World War II. This interest “was brought about by the need for effective language skills both for communication with allies and for intelligence and counterintelligence work against enemies” (Allwright 26). Prominent linguists such as Leonard Bloomfield and Charles Fries were requested by US government officials to develop specialized language courses. The second phenomenon according to Block was “... the development of a strong theory of language, which has come to be known as American Structuralist Linguistics”(Block 13). The third phenomenon was the development of Behaviorism . The result of these three phenomena coming together laid the foundations of Second Language Acquisition as we know it today.

The first international journal to publish articles on Second Language Acquisition theory, *Language Learning* was founded in 1941 and four books which were to become the foundations of Second Language Acquisition were published in the following years. *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* was written by Charles Fries in 1945. In this book, Fries attempts to chalk out a research program consisting of the detailed description of the morphology, phonology and syntax of languages and the comparison of languages to make predictions about language learning behaviour. *Languages in Contact* by Uriel Weinreich (1953) deals with a discussion of how two language systems develop and are maintained by bilinguals. Weinreich’s importance lies first of all in the way that he

provided a pillar for the first elaborated theory of SLA that language learners might be seen, for all intents and purposes, as bilinguals, and second, in his formulation of the concepts of transfer and interference (Selinker 1992). In *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957) Robert Lado “... brought together structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology in the development of Contrastive Analysis (CA) as a rigorous means of deciding what to teach, when to teach it and how to teach it” (Block 14).

2.7 Second Language Acquisition Theories:

Second Language Acquisition theory has been deeply influenced by the two distinct approaches to first language acquisition, the ‘Empirical’ or ‘Behaviourist’ approach and the ‘Rationalistic’ or the ‘Mentalistic’ approaches. Such fundamental issues in human learning, sometimes known as the nature-nurture debate, have greatly influenced discussions about processes of second language learning. B.F. Skinner, the well known behaviourist published *Verbal Behaviour* in 1957. Many believed this book to be the definitive Behaviourist statement on language and how it is acquired (Block 15). Skinner and other Behaviorists believe that language in all its essentials is taught to the child by the same mechanisms which accounted for other types of learning (Skinner 1961). The Behaviorists are of the opinion that children come into the world with a ‘tabula rasa’ i.e., without any pre-conceived notions about language. From the Behaviourist point of view, language is not a ‘mental phenomenon’, it is ‘behaviour’, like other forms of human behaviour, it is learnt by a process of habit formation, They believe that a child acquires language by imitating the sounds and patterns of the language which he hears around him.

Behaviorism gave birth to research on Contrastive Analysis, especially Error analysis which focused on interference of one’s first language in the target language. Inter-Language studies were also an important reaction to Behaviourism, as the simple comparison between

first and second language neither explained nor described the language produced by second language learners. In the same year Noam Chomsky (1957) published *Syntactic Structures* which went on to become a classic of theoretical linguistics. Noam Chomsky played down the role of the environment in language learning, and together with Eric Lenneberg, Chomsky argued for the hypothesis that children have innate, language-specific capacities, often described as Universal Grammar. Chomsky claims that children are born with a hard-wired Language Acquisition Device in their brains because he feels that language is far too complex a phenomenon to be accounted for in terms of external features. Chomsky went further to review Skinner's book in 1959 and which has been summed up by Ellis in the following manner :

Chomsky's review of Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour* set in motion a re-evaluation of many of the central claims. The dangers of extrapolating from laboratory studies of animal behaviour to the language behaviour of humans were pointed out. The terms 'stimulus' and 'response' were exposed as vacuous where language behaviour was concerned. 'Analogy' could not account for the language user's ability to generate totally novel utterances. Furthermore, studies of children acquiring their L1 showed that parents rarely corrected their children's linguistic errors, thus casting doubt on the importance of 'reinforcement' in language learning... the demise of behaviourist accounts of language learning led to a reconsideration of the role of the L1 in L2 learning (300).

Second Language Acquisition Research began as an inter-disciplinary field. Second Language Acquisition is closely related to several disciplines including linguistics, socio-linguistics, psychology, neuroscience and education. Most theories of second language acquisition therefore can be identified as having roots in one of them. There are scholars of Second Language learning like Vivian Cook (1971) and Tripp Ervin (1974) who suggest that

there is essentially no basic difference in the processes of acquiring a first language and a second language. A person learning a second language does not necessarily transfer the syntactic patterns or vocabulary of the first language on to the second language. The general principles of reconstructing primary linguistic data used in first language acquisition are re-employed during the process of second language acquisition. Learning strategies formed and perfected during first language acquisition are drawn upon to face the challenges of second language learning. Environmental circumstances for learning a second language however, differ systematically from the circumstances surrounding the learning of the first language. Language theorists therefore have to take this view into consideration while forming any theory of second language acquisition (Dulay and Burt 82).

Second Language Acquisition research has presented different views on theories of language learning. Larsen-Freeman and Long maintain that “at least forty ‘theories’ of SLA have been proposed” (227), but none seem to have a universally accepted explanation for the phenomenon. It appears that various Second language acquisition theories have been formed with the help of knowledge about first language acquisition:

Often, our increased knowledge of first language acquisition has served as a backcloth for perceiving and understanding new facts about second language learning. In addition, many researchers see their long-term goal as to produce a single ‘theory of language acquisition’, which would account for first and second language learning within one framework. After all, the two experiences are both manifestations of the general human capacity to learn and use language (Littlewood 4).

The more important theories of Second Language Acquisition may briefly be summed up in the following manner :

- A. Acculturation: Schumman, in 1978 proposed an environment-oriented theory called the Acculturation theory. He made a longitudinal investigation with six learners: 2 children 2 adolescents and 2 adults and studied them for ten months. In Schumman's view, Second Language Acquisition is the result of acculturation, which he defines as "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group" (29). Schumman found out that "the subject who acquired the least amount of English was the one who was the most socially and psychologically distant from the TL group" (Schumman 34).
- B. Universal Grammar Hypothesis : Noam Chomsky (1957) believes that human beings have some innate predisposition, a Language Acquisition Device which helps us acquire language, an innate core of abstract knowledge about language form, also known as Universal Grammar. Although Chomsky's Cognitive theory was concerned with language acquisition in general, his work has influenced second language acquisition and his followers have tried to understand Second Language Acquisition(SLA) in the light of his Universal Grammar.
- C. Stephen Krashen Monitor Model : Krashen's Monitor model which he developed in the late 1970's, is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. It is an 'overall' theory which consists of five underlying central hypotheses -
- (i) *The Acquisition vs Learning Hypothesis*: Krashen makes a distinction between acquiring language and learning a language; he says that the language that is learned is not the language that is really spoken. Krashen also believed that 'acquisition' is a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of the language and suggested that we 'acquire' the language just like we pick up our first language. On the other hand, he believed that learning is a process in which learners attend to form,

figure out the rules and are aware of their own process. He differentiates between Acquisition and learning in the following manner :

ACQUISITION	LEARNING
Unconscious and informal process	Conscious learning via a formal process
Picking up language through real meaningful activities and interaction with other people	Knowing about a language

(ii) *The Natural Order Hypothesis-*

Krashen suggests two ideas in this Hypothesis :

- a) That the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order which is predictable and mimics that of first language acquisition.
- b) That there is a natural progression in the process of acquiring a second language. Krashen claims that second languages are acquired through 4 stages in the same way that first languages are acquired :
 - a. The Pre-production Stage, or The Silent Period.
 - b. The Early Production Stage
 - c. The Speech Emergence Stage.
 - d. The Intermediate Fluency Stage

(iii) *The Monitor Hypothesis –*

Krashen was led by Chomsky's assumptions on language as an innate faculty to propose the Monitor Model (Krashen 26). He believed that human beings have an internal monitor which edits the utterances produced through the acquisition process (Krashen 15). He states that when people talk or write in their second languages, they produce only the language they have acquired, not the language they have learned.

(iv) The Input Hypothesis –

Krashen argues that the input received by the learner must not only be comprehensible but also slightly beyond the learner's current level of competency. This concept is represented as 'i+1', with the 'i' standing for "comprehensible input". He believed that comprehensible input is the only true cause of second language acquisition and that speech will emerge once the learner has built up enough comprehensible input.

(v) The Affective Filter Hypothesis –

'Affect' refers to the feelings, motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states and 'Affective filter' is a metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language even when the appropriate input is available. Krashen claimed that the best acquisition will occur in an environment where anxiety is low and defensiveness absent. A learner who is tense or anxious may 'filter out' the input, making it unavailable for acquisition. Krashen concludes that the most important affective variables favoring second language acquisition are a low-anxiety learning environment, student motivation to learn the language, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

(vi) More recently Krashen has put forward the Comprehension hypothesis emphasizing the mental process as responsible for acquisition :

The Comprehension Hypothesis is closely related to other hypotheses. The Comprehension Hypothesis refers to subconscious acquisition, not conscious learning. The result of providing acquirers with comprehensible input is the emergence of grammatical structure in a predictable order. A strong affective filter (e.g. high anxiety) will prevent input from reaching those parts of the brain that promote language acquisition (1).

- D. Information Processing : Cognitive psychologists working on the Information processing model of second language acquisition believe that language acquisition involves building up knowledge that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. Gradually through experience and practice, learners become able to use their knowledge so quickly and automatically that they are not even aware that they are doing it. This frees them to focus on other aspects of the language which, in turn, gradually become automatic (McLaughlin 19).
- E. The Interaction Hypothesis : There are other linguists like Michael Long (1983), Evelyn Hatch (1992) and Teresa Pica (1994) who believe that conversational interaction plays a vital role in second language acquisition and that modified interaction is necessary for language acquisition. The Interaction hypothesis maintains that language learning takes place during the process of interaction and that input alone is not sufficient to explain second language acquisition. (Wells 76). Interactionists believe that when an adult interacts with the child, he/she modifies his language (known as baby talk or motherese). This kind of modification promotes second language acquisition (75).
- F. The Output Hypothesis : Merrill Swain, a Canadian scholar is of the opinion that meaningful output is as necessary to language learning as meaningful input and goes against Krashen's radical position toward the role of input. She claims that practicing the language helps learners observe their own production. In her opinion, "... output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production" (128).

- G. The Noticing Hypothesis: Linguists like Richard Schmidt (14) believe that “Nothing is learned unless it has been noticed. Noticing does not itself result in acquisition but it is the essential starting point.”
- H. The Sociocultural Perspective : In the 1990s, there was an attempt by linguists to explain second-language acquisition in terms of the social environment of the learner (VanPatten and Benati5). The term ‘Sociocultural Theory’ was originally coined by Wertsch in 1985 and derived from the work of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky and other linguists believe that language development arises as a result of social interaction or in other words, that language learning is a socially mediated process. Learning is thought to occur when an individual interacts with an interlocutor within his or her zone of proximal development, i.e., in a situation in which the learner is capable of performing at a higher level because there is support from an interlocutor. This process is known as ‘scaffolding’ and it refers to the assistance a learner gets from another person (e.g. teachers, relatives, classmates) and which enables him or her to perform a learning task. Thus according to Vygotskian theory, all cognitive development, including language development, arises as a result of social interactions between individuals. Extending Vygotskian theory to second language acquisition, Jim Lantolf and others claim that second language learners advance to higher levels of linguistic knowledge when they collaborate and interact with speakers of the second language who are more knowledgeable than they are, for example, a teacher or a more advanced learner.
- I. Connectionism: Connectionism rejects the innate endowment hypothesis and seeks to explain second language acquisition in terms of mental representations and information processing. Like most cognitive psychologists, connectionists

attribute greater importance to the role of the environment than to any innate knowledge in the learner, arguing that what is innate is simply the ability to learn, not any specific linguistic structure. Connectionists have found out that a learning mechanism, simulated by a computer program, can not only ‘learn’ what it hears but can also generalize, even to the point of making overgeneralization errors.

- J. Competition Model: Some of the major cognitive theories of how learners organize language knowledge are based on analyses of how speakers of various languages analyze sentences for meaning. English speakers relied heavily on word order; German speakers used morphological agreement, the animacy status of noun referents, and stress; and speakers of Italian relied on agreement and stress. MacWhinney et al. (1984) interpreted these results as supporting the Competition Model, which states that individuals use linguistic cues to get meaning from language, rather than relying on linguistic universals (MacWhinney, Bates and Kliegl 127-150).
- K. Processability theory: Processability theory states that learners restructure their L2 knowledge systems in an order of which they are capable at their stage of development. (Pienemann¹⁰) For instance, In order to acquire the correct morphological and syntactic forms for English questions, learners must transform declarative English sentences. They do so by a series of stages, consistent across learners. Clahsen proposed that certain processing principles determine this order of restructuring (Clahsen 220-225).

2.8. Second Language Teaching Methods:

Teaching methods are said to be the application of theoretical findings and positions and are thought to be “theories in practice” (Brown 11). Albert Marckwardt observed that new paradigms of teaching methods emerged about every quarter of a century, with each new

method breaking from the old but at the same time taking with it some of the positive aspects of the previous paradigm (Marckwardt 5). Some of the more important Second Language Teaching methods have been enumerated below:

A. Grammar Translation Method: Five hundred years ago, Latin was the most widely studied foreign language, it was the language of education, commerce, religion and government in the western world. In the sixteenth century, however, the status of Latin diminished while French, Italian and English gained importance due to political changes in Europe. The study of Latin then took on a different function, from a living language it became a subject to be studied in the class-rooms. Thus the study of classical Latin and an analysis of its grammar and rhetoric became the model for foreign language study from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Latin was said to develop intellectual abilities, and the study of Latin grammar became an end in itself. Children in schools were initially given a rigorous introduction to Latin Grammar through the rote learning of grammar rules, study of declensions and conjugations, translation, and practice in writing samples, sometimes with the use of parallel bilingual texts and dialogue. They were then introduced to the advanced study of grammar and rhetoric (Richards & Rodgers¹). This method became known as the Grammar-Translation method. Textbooks consisted of statements of abstract grammar rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentences for translation. Students were taught in their native language and were not expected to learn how to speak the language, they were often made to translate sentences which were grammatically correct but totally useless for real communication like the following:

The philosopher pulled the lower jaw of the hen

The cat of my aunt is more treacherous than the dog of your uncle

My sons have bought the mirrors of the Duke (Titone 28).

The Grammar-Translation method also became the most traditional method of teaching the English Language. Learners of English too were made to consciously learn the rules of English grammar, memorize its rules and apply them for translating literary texts from English into their mother tongue and vice versa. Till today, this method is present in one form or the other in many parts of the world. The Grammar-Translation Method was found to be inadequate and ineffective in achieving oral proficiency, it gave no opportunity to the learner to speak or listen to the second language. It has also been said that the chief drawback of the Grammar Translation method was that it led to a “a total loss of genuine feeling for living language” (A. Howatt 135).

B. The Reform Movement : The Grammar-Translation Method gradually fell out of favour in several European countries in the later part of the nineteenth century. The pressing need for communication between different countries due to the expansion of railways in Europe during this period highlighted the need for oral proficiency in the second language acquisition scenario. A number of scholars like C.Marcel, T.Prendergast and F.Gouin came forward with various innovative methods during this period. Marcel was a Frenchman who emphasized the importance of meaning in learning a language and who proposed that reading be taught before any other skill. Prendergast introduced the first structural ‘structural syllabus’ and advocated that learners be taught the most basic structures occurring in the language. F.Gouin(1896) observed children’s use of language and developed an approach to teaching of language which used situations and themes as ways of organizing and presenting oral language. He introduced the famous Gouin “series” in which sequences of sentences related to everyday activities like the following would be taught through gestures and actions:

I walk toward the door. I walk.

I draw near to the door. I draw near.

I get to the door. I get to.

I stop at the door. I stop.

I stretch out my arm. I stretch out.

I take hold of the handle. I take hold.

I turn the handle. I turn.

I open the door. I open.

I pull the door. I pull.

The door moves. It moves.

I open the door wide. I open.

I let go of the handle. I let go (Titone 35).

Later in the 1880s, other linguists like Henry Sweet of England, Paul Passy of France and Wilhelm Viëtor of Germany started a concerted effort which became known as the Reform Movement. Henry Sweet believed in the scientific analysis of language and a study of psychology, he developed a teaching method which included:

1. A careful selection of what is taught ;
2. Imposing limits on what is to be taught ;
3. Arranging what is to be taught in terms of the four skills;
4. Grading materials from simple to complex. (Richards and Rodgers 7)

In Germany too, Wilhelm Viëtor advocated the use of phonetics to help teachers in pronunciation. These scholars wrote pamphlets, books, speeches and articles in which they expressed their ideas on second language acquisition methods. Henry Sweet wrote *The*

Practical Study of Languages in 1899 while Vietor published *Language Teaching Must Start Afresh* in 1882 and their joint efforts led to the founding of the International Phonetic Association in 1886. The aim of the association was to provide a standard of pronunciation for languages all over the world and as such, it established the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)- a notional standard for the phonetic representation of all languages. The association believed :

1. The spoken language is primary and that this should be reflected in an oral-based methodology;
2. The findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training;
3. Learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written form;
4. Words should be presented in sentences, and sentences should be practiced in meaningful contexts and not be taught as isolated, disconnected elements;
5. The rules of grammar be taught only after the students have practiced the grammar points in context-that is, grammar should be taught inductively;
6. Translation should be avoided, although the mother tongue could be used in order to explain new words or check comprehension (Richards and Rodgers 8).

C. The Direct Method: Interest in the Reform movement gave birth to the Direct method which arose out of a need for learning foreign languages to facilitate trade, commerce and travel, etc., between the European countries. As its name implies, the Direct method was a method which practiced the using of the second language directly without any reference to the mother tongue. The Direct Method was in many ways very different from the Grammar Translation Method, it employed the usage of everyday vocabulary and sentences, the teaching of oral communication skills, the teaching of grammar through inductive methods, as well as the teaching of vocabulary through association and demonstration. Reading and writing skills were taught after the student had mastered listening and speaking skills. Direct

methods are therefore based on the chronological development of the four skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. But it has been pointed out that “although this chronology does reflect the first language acquisition process ... there is no reason to believe that it has any psychological validity in a second language learning context” (Titone & Danesi 109). The method was given a lot of impetus by the developments in linguistic scholarship, introduction of phonetics in language pedagogy and an emphasis on the use of the spoken language (Aslam 39) .

The Direct Method was practiced by using the following principles and procedures:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized. (Richards & Rodgers 10)

These principles were put into practice through different guidelines like the following (which were used for teaching oral language) :

Never translate: demonstrate

Never explain: act

Never make a speech: ask questions

Never imitate mistakes: correct

Never speak with single words: use sentences

Never speak too much: make students speak much

Never use the book: use your lesson plan

Never jump around: follow your plan

Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student

Never speak too slowly: speak normally

Never speak too quickly: speak naturally

Never speak too loudly: speak naturally

Never be impatient: take it easy (Titone 100-1).

Although the Direct method was quite successful in private language schools where paying clients had high motivation, it was difficult to implement it in public schools. The method required native fluency on the part of the teacher but not all teachers were proficient enough for this. Another disadvantage of the method was that it was largely dependent on the teacher's skill rather than the text-book. A lot of time and energy was wasted by teachers on explaining terms which could have been taught much faster using the native tongue. Roger Brown, a psychologist has put on record his frustration in observing a teacher having to try very to teach Japanese words directly when translation would have been much faster and much more effective (Brown 5). The method "overemphasized and distorted the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom language learning, and failed to

consider the practical realities of the classroom” (Richards and Rogers¹⁰). Therefore, not everyone embraced the Direct method enthusiastically although it enjoyed popularity in Europe.

D. The Structural/Situational Approach: The Direct Method gave way to the Structural/Situational Approach or the Oral Approach as it was also known in the 1920’s due to the need felt for a more effective method of language teaching, it aimed to develop oral proficiency. Two British applied linguists, Harold Palmer and A.S.Hornby together with Otto Jespersen a Swiss linguist attempted to develop a more scientific approach to the teaching of English than the Direct method. They discovered that a core of about 2000 words occurred frequently in written texts and that knowledge of these core words would greatly assist learners in reading a foreign language. A guide to the English vocabulary needed for teaching English as a foreign language, *The Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* was thus produced by Harold Palmer, Michael West and other linguists (Faucett et. al.1936). In 1953, Michael West published *A General Service List of English Words*, and this book became a standard reference in developing teaching materials. Although very few people are familiar with this method of teaching, its impact has been long lasting and traces of it can still be seen in many ESL/ESL textbooks and courses being used till today (Richards & Rodgers 31).

E. The Audio-lingual Method: Audio-lingualism was the most popular method of language teaching in 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. It has its origins in the explicit and rigorous descriptions of language put forward by American linguists like Bloomfield and Fries.(Ellis 19) Audio-lingualism draws heavily on behaviourist psychology as a means of justifying its methods. It originated out of the need to develop oral fluency in a second language by army personnel during the Second World War. There were many versions of this method and in most of the versions, only the second language was allowed and translation was forbidden. Audio and

visual stimuli which included audio-visual devices such as language tapes and slides were important features of this method:

The hallmark of audio-lingual teaching is emphasis on presentation of the language in its spoken form first. Students are presented with a graphic representation of what they have been learning only after practice in the aural-oral mode (first listening, then producing utterances). They then read before they write (Wilga Rivers 4).

The techniques of the audio-lingual method of teaching the English language became very popular due to its success in the army training programs. However, Audio-lingualism was an American method and not very popular in Britain and Europe.

F. Bilingual Method: In order to improve upon the audio-visual method which was popular in the 1960's, C.J. Dodson developed the Bilingual method. In this method, the first language or mother tongue is freely used in the classroom not for translating whole sentences but to help students understand difficult words in the second language. Once the students develop a sufficient command of the target language, the mother tongue is completely withdrawn and the exercise becomes monolingual. One obvious disadvantage of the Bilingual method was that it required teachers who were highly proficient in both the mother tongue and the second language (Aslam 60).

G. Reading Method: This method resulted from an attempt to reform and unify language teaching methodology in the early 20th century. A study known as the Modern Foreign Language Study published in the United States reported the findings of a poll in which, of the generally recognized four skills- listening, speaking, reading, and writing- only the skill of reading was recognized as acceptable as the primary skill by all members of the foreign language profession. The report recommended that the amount of reading in foreign language classes be drastically increased, it also stated that:

...experience and statistical evidence in teaching the vernacular indicate that the amount of reading that the pupils do is directly related to achievement both in rate of silent reading and in comprehension. Furthermore, experiments show conclusively that increasing the amount of reading that is required results in rapid progress in rate and comprehension (Krashen& Terrel 11).

H. Communicative Language Teaching: An important development that contributed to the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching was the fast changing educational scenario in Europe. The European Common Market brought about the interdependence of European countries and the need to learn each other's languages and this laid the foundation for a different approach to foreign language teaching (Aslam 51). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) considers language both as communication and for communication. Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication and lays stress on the development of 'communicative competence', which is the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in social contexts and situations.

I. Total Physical Response: James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San Jose State University developed this language teaching method after observing the language development of young children. Asher found that children spend a lot of time listening to a language before ever attempting to speak, and that they can understand and react to utterances that are much more complex than those they can produce by themselves (74). Total Physical Response or TPR involves an overt physical response by learners to the instructions given by a language teacher. For example, the teacher would say 'Stand Up' and the student would stand up, the commands would then become more complicated as the class progresses (117).

J. The Silent way: Caleb Gattegno introduced a new method of language teaching named 'The Silent Way' in his book *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way*, published in 1963. According to this method, students are encouraged to play an active role in the language learning process and do 90% or more of the talking while the teacher's role is to monitor the student's efforts (Stevick 305-315). Silence, in this method, is used to focus the students' attention and to elicit student responses. The teacher uses hand gestures and mouths words to help children pronounce words as pronunciation is seen as fundamental in this method. The teacher also makes use of different teaching aids like the Cuisenaire rods, sound – colour chart and word-charts in this method. The Silent Way was not a widely practiced method of language teaching.

K. Community Language Learning: This method is based on the recognition of the affective and interpersonal nature of all learning. According to this approach, all communication at the early stages takes place in the native language. This approach consists of five stages:

- 1) The students are grouped together in the classroom. Initially they will be totally dependent on the teacher-counselor. The students are encouraged to establish an interpersonal relationship with the teacher-counselor and among themselves in their native language.
- 2) As the students start to gain courage and to know each other better, they will make some attempts to speak in the target language. During this stage the teacher-counselor continues to provide information and direct translation.
- 3) As the students progress further, they will become less dependent on the translations of the teacher-counselor who now becomes a source for error- correction.
- 4) When the students become very familiar with the target language, they will need the counselor only for subtle points of grammar and vocabulary.

- 5) During the last stage of the learning process, the students become totally independent, and free communication in the target language emerges ...Thus through careful attention to the student's needs, the teacher-counselor aids the student in moving from total dependence to independence and self-assurance (Titone and Danesi 117-118).

The non-threatening affective factor in such a situation is a major advantage of this method. However this method has not proved to be very effective because of the teachers' role being too passive and the method's extreme dependence on an inductive strategy of learning (Husain 59).

L. Suggestopaedia : This method was first developed by the Bulgarian physician and psychotherapist Dr. Georgie Lozanov and is used extensively in Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, East Germany and Hungary. It is another approach to language learning which laid stress on free use of the mother tongue and the importance of creating an inter-personal learning environment. The teacher here reads the text in the L2 while the students follow the lesson by using texts in the L1. According to the Suggestopaedia method, courses are given to small groups of children, around 12 at a time, who meet for four hours per day for one month. Krashen re-produces three elements which are considered necessary for the success of this method:

- 1) An attractive classroom (with soft lighting) and a pleasant classroom atmosphere;
- 2) A teacher with a dynamic personality who is able to act out the materials and motivate the students to learn;
- 3) A state of relaxed alertness in the students. (Krashen 143-144)

M. Eclectic Approach: A method of language teaching where the language teacher does not use any one particular method but includes a mixture of different methods to suit the

requirements of his class is known as Eclecticism. It is based on the fact that no method is exclusive in itself and that no method is sufficient by itself in bringing about satisfactory second language learning.

N. The Natural Approach: The Natural Approach is based on Direct Method principles and was advocated by Tracy Terrell and Stephen D. Krashen who introduced it in their book, *The Natural Approach* published in 1983. The Natural Approach is based on the belief that a second language can be acquired naturally without the help of formal classroom instruction like grammatical drills or exercises. According to this method, there is a focus on “acquisition in the classroom while learning exercises are restricted to outside the classroom” (Titone and Danesi 117).

O. Krashen’s Free Voluntary Reading: Krashen’s most recent contribution in the field of Second Language Acquisition is his promotion of free voluntary reading which he says “is the most powerful tool we have in language education, first and second” In the introduction to a paper entitled Free Voluntary Reading: New Research, Applications, and Controversies he presented at the RELC conference, Singapore on April 2004, Krashen has put forward the importance of reading in the following words:

Evidence for the value of free voluntary reading, or recreational reading, continues to accumulate. In the last few decades, evidence from several areas continues to show that those who do more recreational reading show better development in reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. These results hold for first and second language acquisition, and for children and adults.

“My conclusions are simple.” said Krashen, “When children read for pleasure, when they get hooked on books, they acquire involuntarily and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so called language skills many people are so concerned about: They will become

adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style and become good (but not necessarily perfect) spellers (Krashen 2004).

P. Dr. West's Reading Method: Although Dr. Michael Philip West was in India almost a hundred years ago (1912-1932), his methods are still relevant today especially in a state like Mizoram where exposure to the language is very limited. His methods of teaching English was too far advanced for his age and were not popular because he opposed the dominant beliefs and practices of his day (Tickoo 295). After making a careful study of the problems of teaching English in India and carrying out extensive experiments in this field, West tried to re-think the undue emphasis on the teaching of speech which has been a feature of foreign language teaching for some time (Jain and Sharma 107). His claim is supported by the psychological principle that a child first listens and understands, and then speaks. For emphasizing the reading ability and not the abilities of speaking and writing, he gives the following reasons:

First, the need of the Indian child is to read in order that he may enter the vast repertory of knowledge which is contained in the richest of all languages. Secondly, he says that the bilingual child does not so much need to speak his second language (English) but rather to read it. If it were possible to teach the child to read sufficiently fluently, to make him enjoy reading a reasonably large amount before permitting him to attempt any speech at all, this child would, when he came to the speech lesson, have senses of the language and a feeling of what is idiomatic which would greatly accelerate his progress. Thirdly, students have more chances of hearing incorrect English spoken than correct English, children, therefore according to Dr. West, should better be entrusted to the guidance of books rather than unsatisfactory environment. Fourthly, reading ability can be easily acquired by children. Dr. West believes that the ability to read can actually be acquired at the initial stage in the

study of a foreign language without preliminary work in speech and writing. Lastly, Dr. West claims that learning to read a language is by far the shortest road to learning to speak and write it and he says that through reading we get acquainted with the vocabulary used by the writers of English and gain an insight into the structure of the language, which is very necessary for its active use (Jain and Sharma 108).

Main features of Dr. West's method:

1. It aims at the development of reading which is an essential aspect of language learning.
2. Its chief emphasis in reading lies on silent reading. It develops comprehension and self-activity.
3. Reading is free from phonetic difficulties and thus becomes easy.
4. It serves as a basis for active work in writing and speaking.
5. Facility in reading leads to the 'feeling' and comprehension of the language.
6. It cultivates a taste for the study of short stories.
7. It is free from incorrect forms of speech of teachers in the lower classes.
8. It develops the habit of independent reading with understanding

This chapter presents a review of the main SLA hypothesis and theories that have influenced the Second language acquisition field over the years. The theories thus enumerated, ranging from the highly structured Grammar Translation Method to the more flexible methods like the Reading methods above represent different aspects of the same phenomenon. It will be one of the objectives of this study to find out how far the theories and methods of second language acquisition have been incorporated in the text books used in the Elementary schools, as well as in the teaching-learning process. It will also be seen if any section of the Mizo community have benefitted from any of the theories and methods that we have enumerated earlier in this chapter. This study will also attempt to find out if reading, as

prescribed by Krashen and West is being given importance by syllabus designers, language teachers and the students themselves for the acquisition of English.

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CHAPTER III: DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. Introduction.

This study is aimed at finding out the process of acquiring English as a second language by Mizo learners at the Elementary level and the difficulties faced therein. To accomplish this task, data was collected through the use of two sets of questionnaires – one for teachers of English Medium schools at the Elementary level, and the other for High School students who have passed out of Elementary school. The reason that the second questionnaire has been directed at High School students is because High School students are the end products of Elementary school teaching and are in a comparatively better and a more mature position than middle school students to give coherent and reliable responses. Both the questionnaires were divided into two parts, with the first part seeking personal background information of the respondents and the second part containing their responses. Most of the teachers who were asked to fill up the questionnaires for the data collection were helpful and co-operative. Although there were some teachers who left some questions unanswered, the input from the teachers is tremendous and should be able to help future educators in many ways in making decisions. While there were a few students who did not seem to understand what some of the questions required, they too were helpful and informative.

Taking into account the generally accepted fact that the acquisition of English by Mizo students is not satisfactory, this study has attempted to find out the common methods of teaching English prevalent in English medium schools in Mizoram at the Elementary level, which is considered to be the most important stage as far as language acquisition is concerned, and to find out the weak links in the teaching- learning of English. It will then attempt to suggest remedies to the problems encountered. In order to accomplish this, 71 teachers teaching English at the Elementary level in 13 English Medium schools within the

capital city of Aizawl were requested to respond to a questionnaire, a copy of which is attached in the appendix. Elementary teachers of English medium schools were selected, as the medium of instruction in these schools is supposed to be English and it is expected that the true scenario of the teaching and learning of English in Mizoram can be better observed in these schools. The performance of students in the acquisition of English too, is generally expected to be better in these schools than government run Mizo medium schools. High School students from 10 schools were chosen from all over Aizawl, the capital city, as Aizawl has the maximum number of English medium schools in Mizoram. Moreover, English medium schools in rural areas all over the state tend, as is so often the case in other matters too, to follow the trends being practiced in schools in the capital city. The data collected here can thus give us a true picture of the teaching- learning of English by Mizo students at the elementary level.

3.2. Questionnaire for English Teachers at the Elementary level.

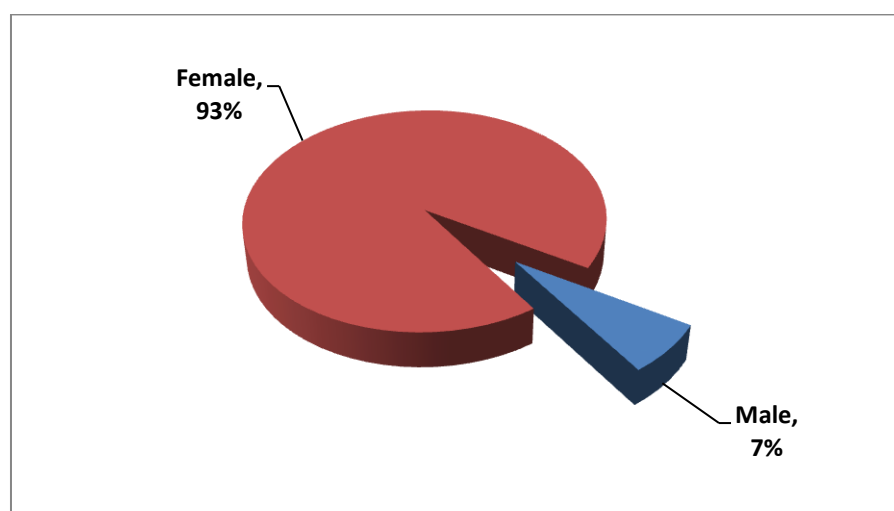
The 71 teachers who responded to the questionnaire belong to the following English Medium Elementary Schools within Aizawl city:

1. Mary Mount School, Tlangnuam
2. Carolyn Elementary School, Thakthing Veng
3. Gospel Centenary School, Mission Veng
4. English Congregation School, Mission Veng
5. Living Waters School, Mission Vengthlang
6. Graceland School, Khatla
7. Holy Heart School, Republic
8. Centenary School, Dawrpui Church
9. Home Missions School, McDonald Hill

10. Pioneer Mission School, Zarkawt
11. Rosebud School, Ramhlun Venglai
12. Holy Child School, Ramhlun North
13. Mount Carmel School, Chaltlang.

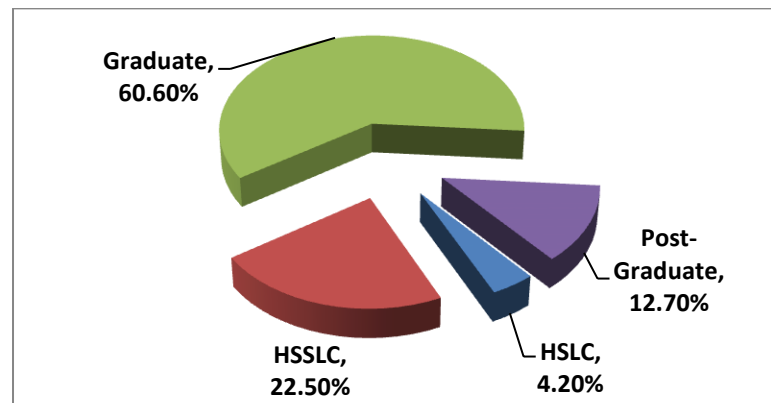
3.2.1. Part – A : Teachers' Profile.

1. Sex of the respondents:



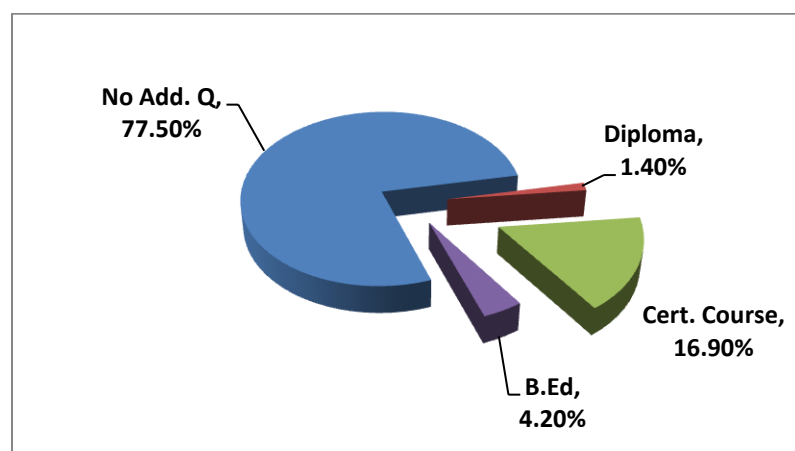
Only 7% of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire were male, this reflects the fact that there are very few male teachers teaching English in English Medium schools at the elementary level. It was also observed that on the whole; whether they teach English or other subjects, female teachers always outnumber the male teachers in all the elementary schools visited. In fact, this seems to be the case all over Mizoram and in other parts of the world. This could be due to the fact that female teachers are more suitable for working with younger children and because not many male teachers are interested in working with smaller children. It could also be because the school authorities too prefer female teachers to work with younger children as the students still need a lot of motherly care especially at the primary level.

2. Educational Qualifications of Respondents:



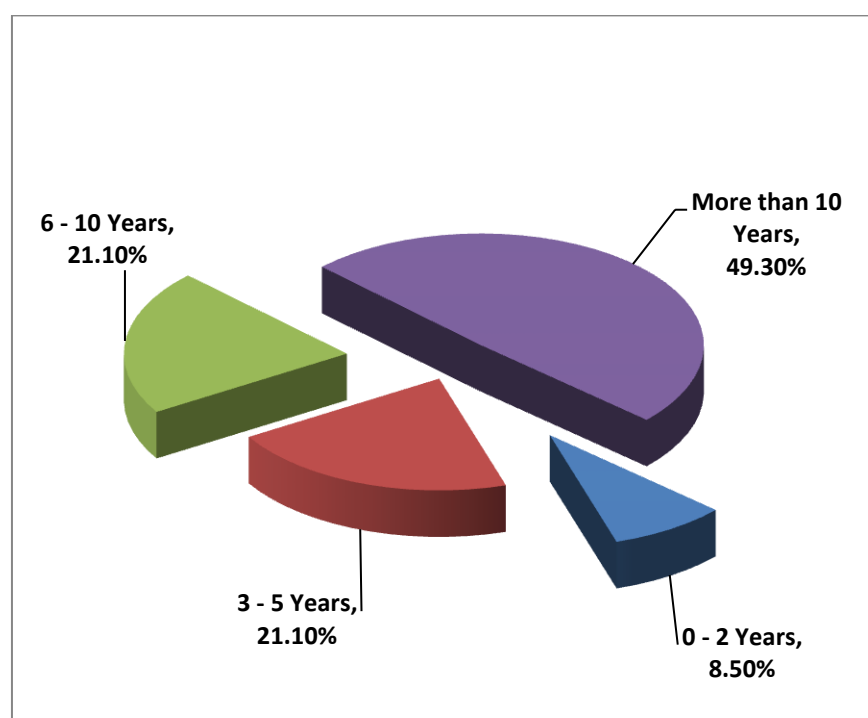
The Elementary level in Mizoram includes the Primary level -Classes I to IV and the Middle School level -Classes V to VIII. The minimum qualification to teach at the primary level is HSSLC while at the middle school level it is BA. It can be seen that there is a very high percentage of teachers (60.60%) who are graduates working in the schools selected and even a sizeable number of post-graduates (12.70%) working in these Elementary schools. It is interesting to note that there are only 4.20% teachers with HSLC qualifications working in the schools selected. But overall, as far as educational qualification is concerned, English medium schools in Mizoram have enough qualified staff to teach English to the students.

3. Additional qualifications in teaching if any:



With regard to educational qualifications, the majority of teachers who responded- 77.50% have no additional qualification in teaching which leaves much to be desired in the teaching – learning scenario in English medium schools in Mizoram. This also reflects the fact that additional qualifications in teaching are not mandatory for the appointment of English teachers in English medium schools at the Elementary level. Only 4.20% of the teachers have a B.Ed degree. 1.40% of the teachers have a diploma in teaching and 16.90% of them have a certificate in teaching.

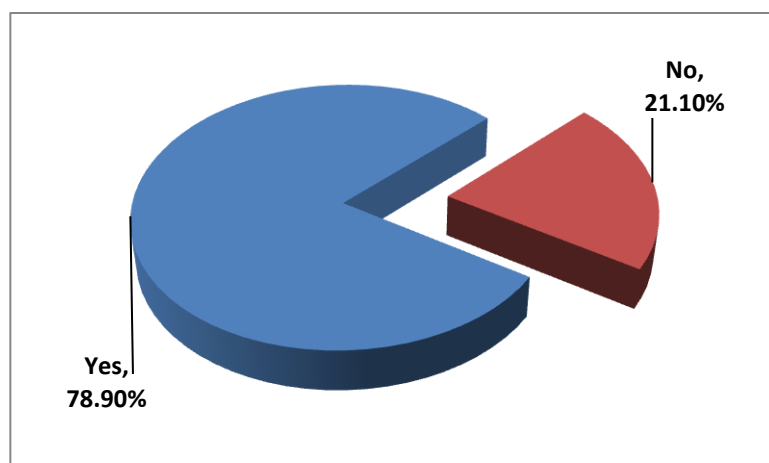
4. Teaching Experience:



A majority of teachers (49.30%) who responded to the questionnaires have had more than ten years' experience in teaching, while a total of 42.20% have 3 to 10 years' teaching experience. Only 8.50% of the teachers have less than two years' experience in teaching, therefore lack of experienced teachers in English would not be a contributing factor even if the acquisition of English is found to be unsatisfactory in elementary schools in Mizoram.

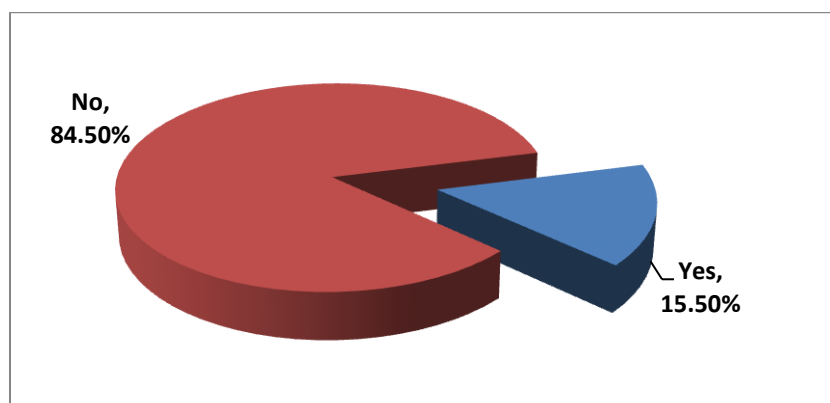
3.2.2. Part – B. Questions:

1. Were you appointed to be an English teacher?



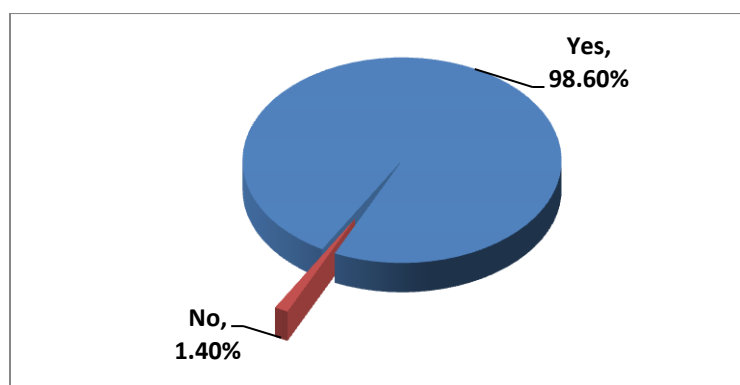
Among the 71 respondents, 78.90% were appointed as English teachers while only 21.10% were not. This shows that a majority of the teachers were appointed with the school authorities finding them qualified enough to teach English. It also shows that teachers who are not specifically appointed as English teachers are often made to teach the subject in the schools. This in turn, seems to prove that the teaching of English is not considered as being any different from the teaching of other subjects and that it is not considered to require any special qualification or expertise.

2. Were you trained to be an English teacher?



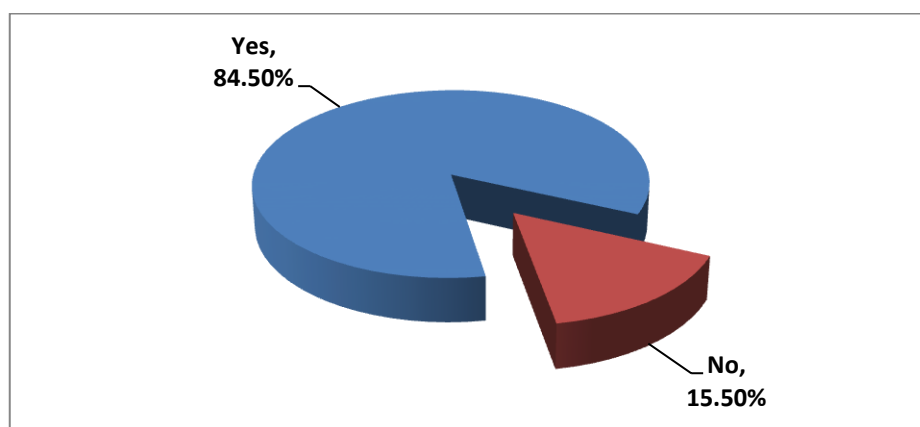
Only 15.50% of the 71 respondents were trained as English teachers while 84% had never gone through any kind of training for the teaching of English. Considering the fact that most of what is called ‘training’ here mostly refers to one or two days’ workshop or certificate courses which are held about once every two or three years, some kind of comprehensive training for all English teachers, held at least once a year seems to be the need of the hour in all schools in Mizoram today. This would go a long way in improving the English teaching-learning scenario in the state.

3. Do you enjoy teaching English?



A majority of the respondents (98.60%) seem to be enjoying the teaching of English, while a negligible number (1.40%) are honest enough to admit that they did not enjoy it.

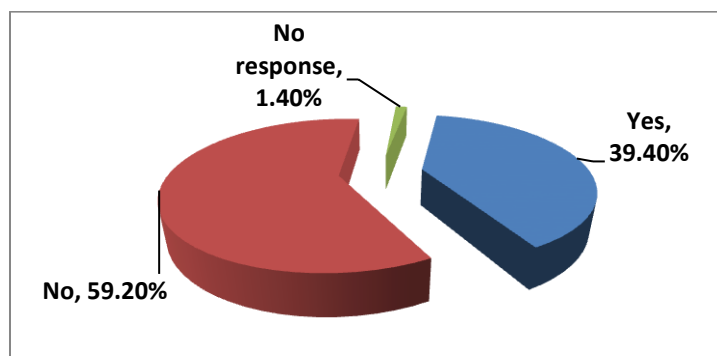
4. Do you teach subjects other than English?



Maybe it is because there is shortage of staff in most privately run English medium schools, or maybe because there are a number of teachers of English who are not specifically

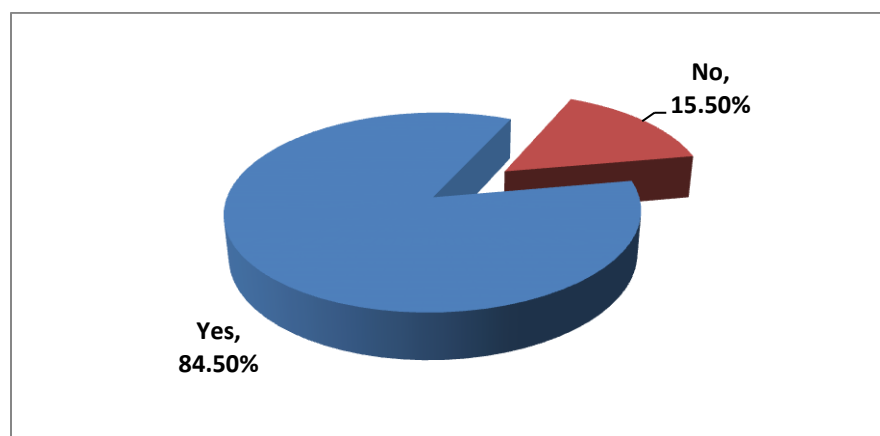
appointed as English teachers, we find that there are more than 15% of English teachers teaching other subjects besides English.

5. If you had the choice, would you prefer to teach other subjects?



Almost 40% of the respondents showed their preference for teaching subjects other than English, which shows that they may not be the best people to fill up the posts of English teachers. The teaching of English would be much more effective if only suitable and interested teachers were appointed as English teachers. 1.40% did not respond to this particular question which implies that they too might prefer to teach other subjects.

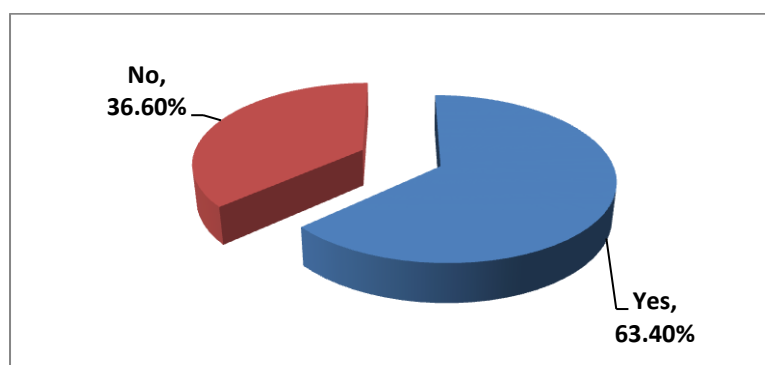
6. Do you think you need some training/refresher course in English Language Teaching?



A vast majority of the respondents (84%) felt that they were in need of some training or refresher course in English Language Teaching, while only 15.50% of them did not feel the need. This shows that teachers teaching English in English medium schools have very few

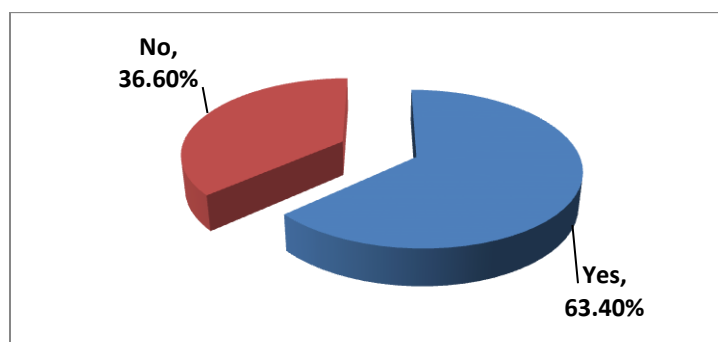
opportunities for attending any kind of training. However, this statistic can be viewed in a positive light: English teachers themselves feel their need for training, and any kind of training in English language teaching organized in future like refresher courses, orientations, and workshops could be expected to be well attended and hopefully beneficial for the trainees as well as the students in the schools they are working in.

7. Do you think that the English text-books prescribed in Elementary Schools in Mizoram are suitable for the acquisition/learning of English?



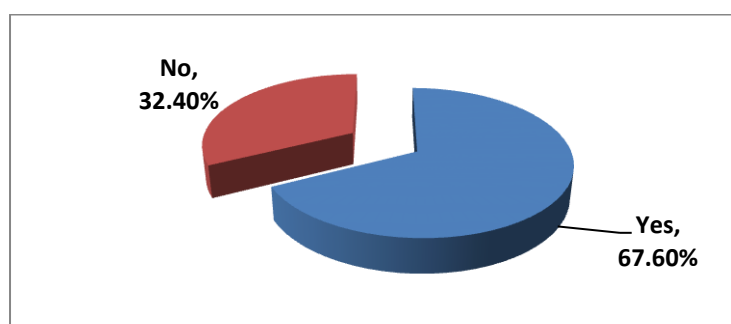
63.40% of the teachers questioned found the present English text-books prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School Education suitable for the students while a considerable number of the teachers (36.60%) found the text-books unsuitable.

8. Do you think that the English text-books prescribed in Elementary Schools in Mizoram are sufficient for the acquisition/learning of English?



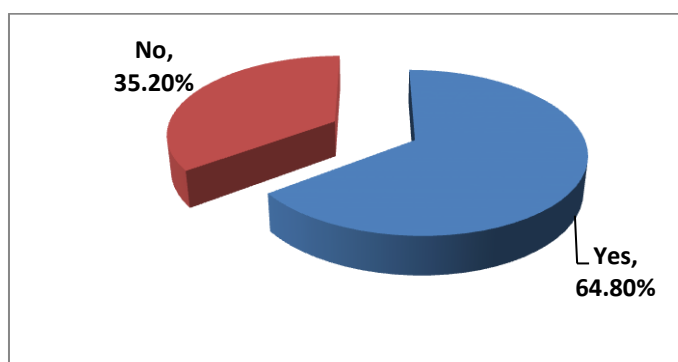
More than 63% of the teachers who responded feel that the English text-books prescribed in English medium schools are sufficient, but a sizeable percentage- 36.60% believes that their English text-books are not sufficient for the acquisition of English.

9. Is the language used and introduced in the English text-books relevant for everyday usage of the students of Mizoram?



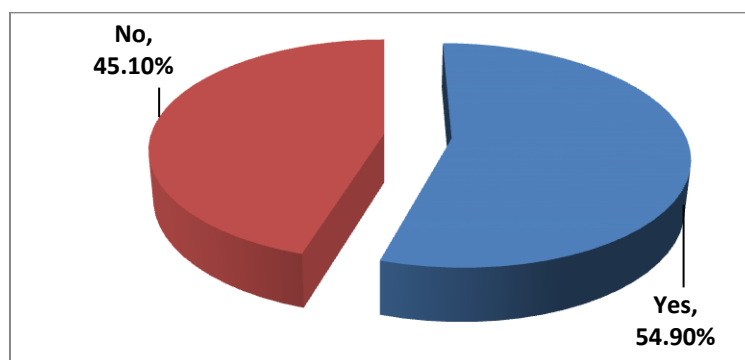
67.60% of the respondents find that the language used and introduced in the text-books used in English medium schools are suitable for the elementary level, while 32.40% do not agree.

10. Do you think that Mizo cultural components should be introduced in the syllabus?



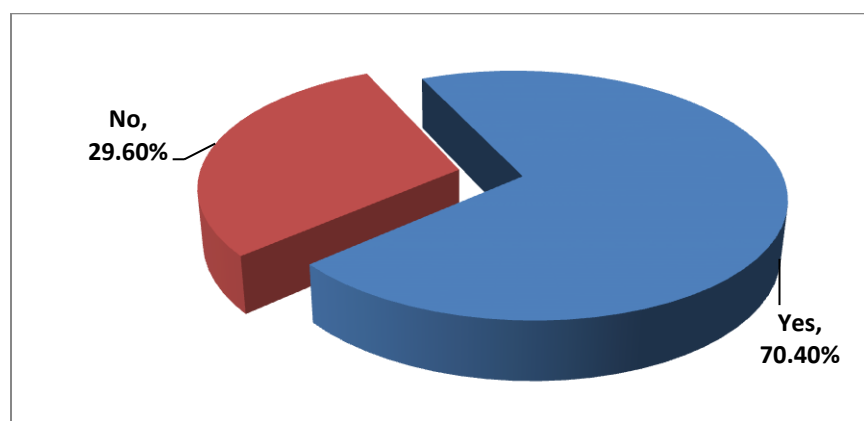
64.80% of the respondents feel that introducing Mizo cultural components in the syllabus would be helpful in the acquisition of English. This would enable the students to relate to their lessons and feel more at home in their English classes. There seems to be nothing that refers to Mizoram or the Mizo people in the present syllabus. However, 35.20% of the teachers questioned do not seem to feel the need to take such steps.

11. Does the syllabus contain clear guidance for the teacher on how to teach the lesson?



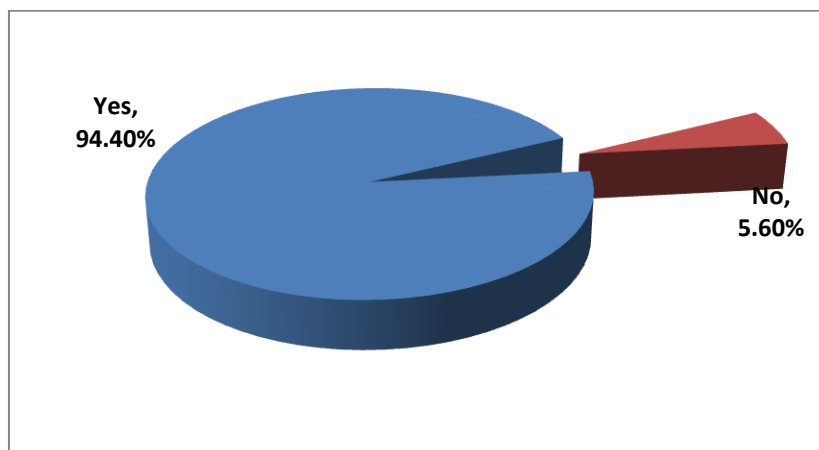
54.90% of the teachers feel that the syllabus contains clear guidance for the teacher on how to teach the lesson while an alarming 41.10% feel that it does not. This could mean that a large number of English teachers go about their daily task of teaching, using their own methods which could widely vary from teacher to teacher, hence any kind of uniformity cannot be expected in the teaching of English among Mizo students.

12. Do you find time to teach correct pronunciation or have conversation classes?



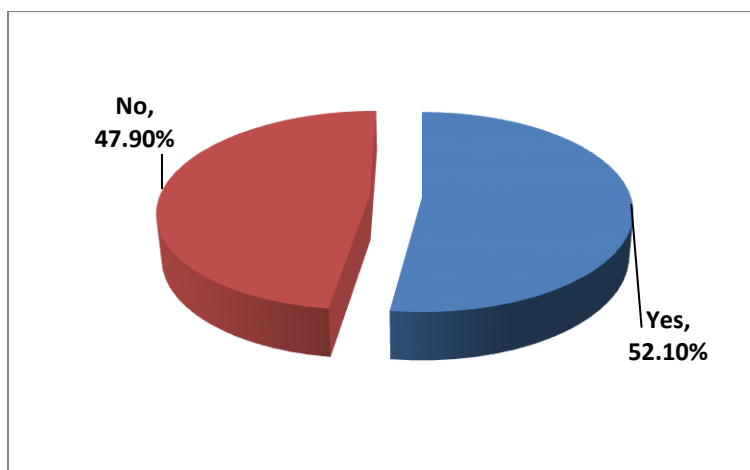
More than 70.40% of the respondents say that they have enough time to teach correct pronunciation and have conversation classes, but this does not mean that they actually do so. And even if they do so, it does not seem to be very successful. The pronunciation and conversation skills of Mizo students at present still leaves much to be desired and will still need a lot of time and practice to attain an acceptable standard.

13. Do you make a lesson plan and follow it while teaching English?



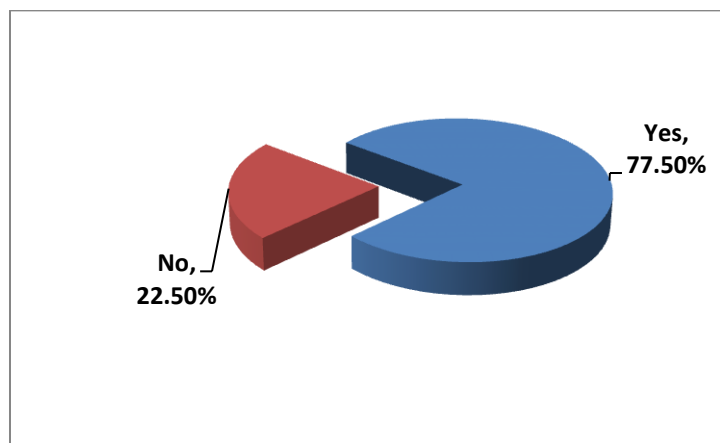
Almost 95% of the teachers make lesson plans for their students, which is a good sign. If they are actually able to follow the lesson plans, it would ensure that they complete the prescribed courses in a systematic manner and do full justice to the syllabus within the stipulated time frame.

14. Do you use any teaching aids while teaching English?



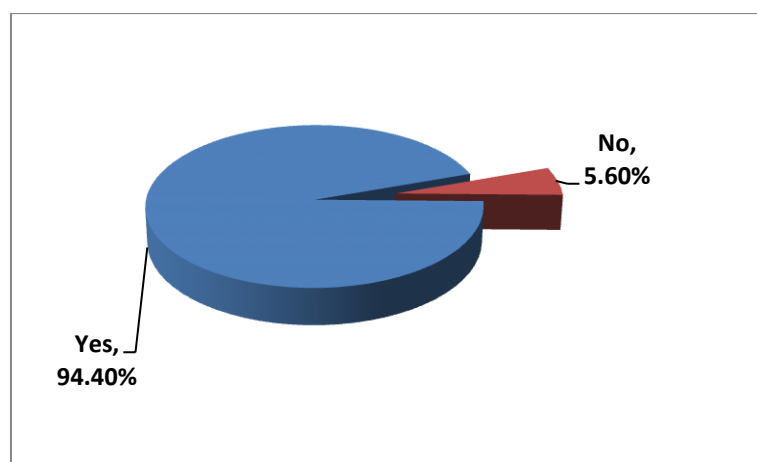
52% of the teachers in the study use teaching aids while 47.90% do not do so. Considering the fact that English is a language paper and that there cannot be too much scope for using teaching aids like other subjects like science or geography, it is interesting to note that 52% of the English teachers manage to use teaching aids in some way or the other.

15. Do you have separate classes for teaching English Grammar?



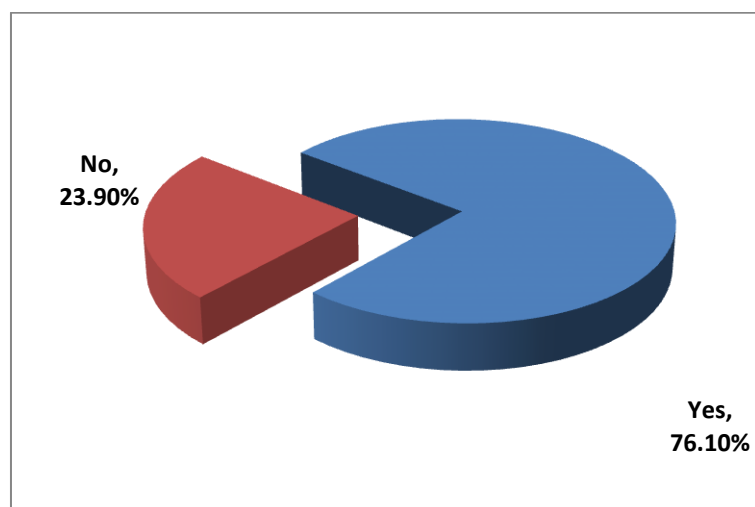
More than 77% of the teachers have separate grammar classes. There has been a lot of debate on whether the teaching of grammar per se is helpful in the acquisition of English. If such a large percentage of teachers have separate classes for teaching grammar, it ought to be reflected in the performance of the students, but this is not the case, as will be seen in the analyses of the output of the students later in this Chapter.

16. Do you think Grammar should be taught separately?



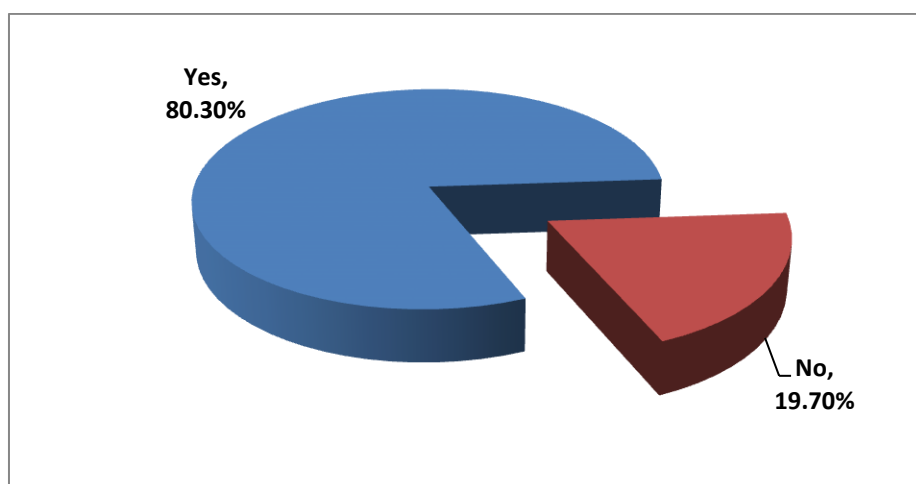
94.40% of the teachers believe that grammar should be taught separately and this is an opinion which needs to be addressed as there might be a need for a paradigm shift in the whole state, where the teaching of grammar is concerned.

17. Do you think the number of English classes you have per week is sufficient?



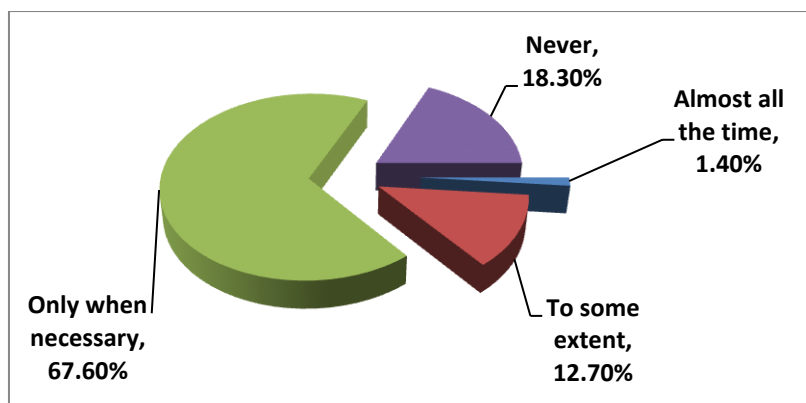
76.10% of the teachers feel that the number of English classes which they have at present is sufficient for the teaching of English which shows that shortage of time would not be a major factor in most cases even if the acquisition of English is not satisfactory. However, 23.90% feel that the number of English classes is insufficient.

18. Do you consider it important for the teacher to speak only in English in the class?



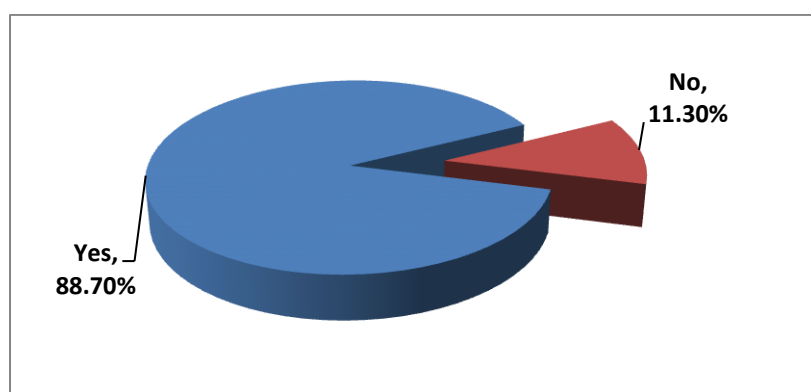
80.30% of the teachers feel the importance of using only English in the class. Interestingly, out of the 71 teachers questioned, almost 20% do not consider it important for the teacher to speak only in English. This is a topic which can be debated upon to a great extent.

19. To what extent do you use Mizo in the class?



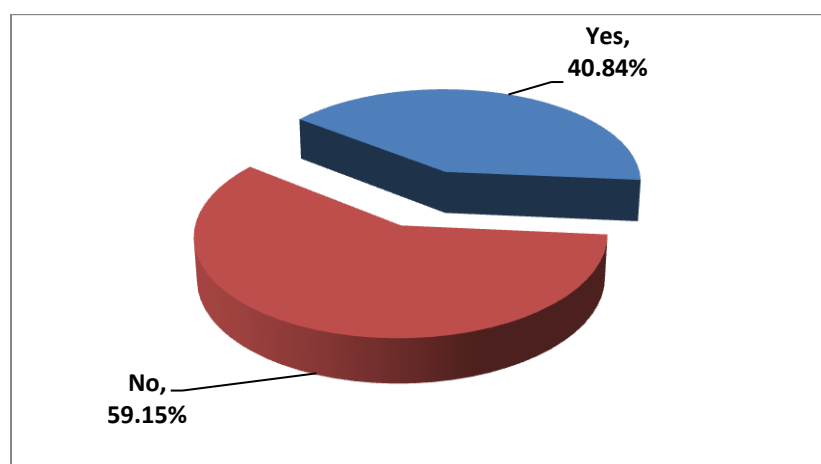
Although in response to the previous question, 80.30% of the teachers believe that only English should be used in the classroom, in actual practice only 18.30% of the teachers report that they never use the Mizo language in the class, which is the ideal situation if the students can understand everything that the teacher says. This will go a long way in paving the way for the acquisition of English by the students. 67.60% of the respondents use English only when necessary, which is somewhat quite reasonable. There are often words or concepts, the translation of which makes it much easier and faster for the students to understand the term and teachers can be justified for using Mizo in such instances. 12.70% say that they use Mizo to some extent while 1.40% say admit to using it most of the time. This is surprising, considering the fact that these are English teachers teaching in an English Medium school.

20. Do you speak to your students in English outside the classroom?



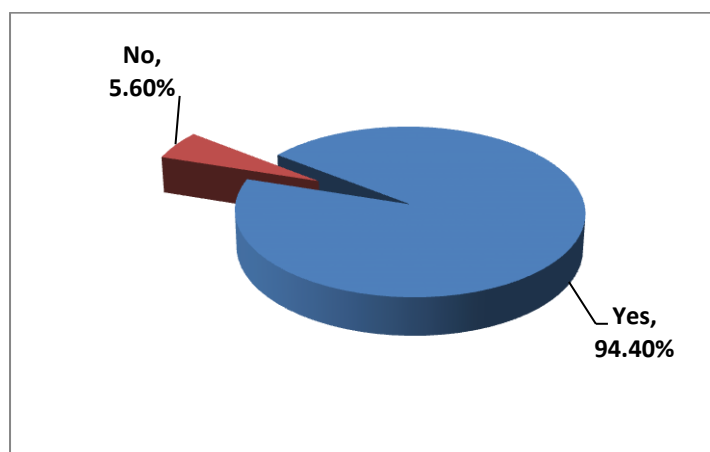
88.70% of the teachers speak to their students in English outside the school which is a good practice and should go a long way in developing communicative competency in the children. 11.30% admit that they do not speak to their students in English out of the classroom.

21. Do you think your students are always exposed to good Standard English in the school?



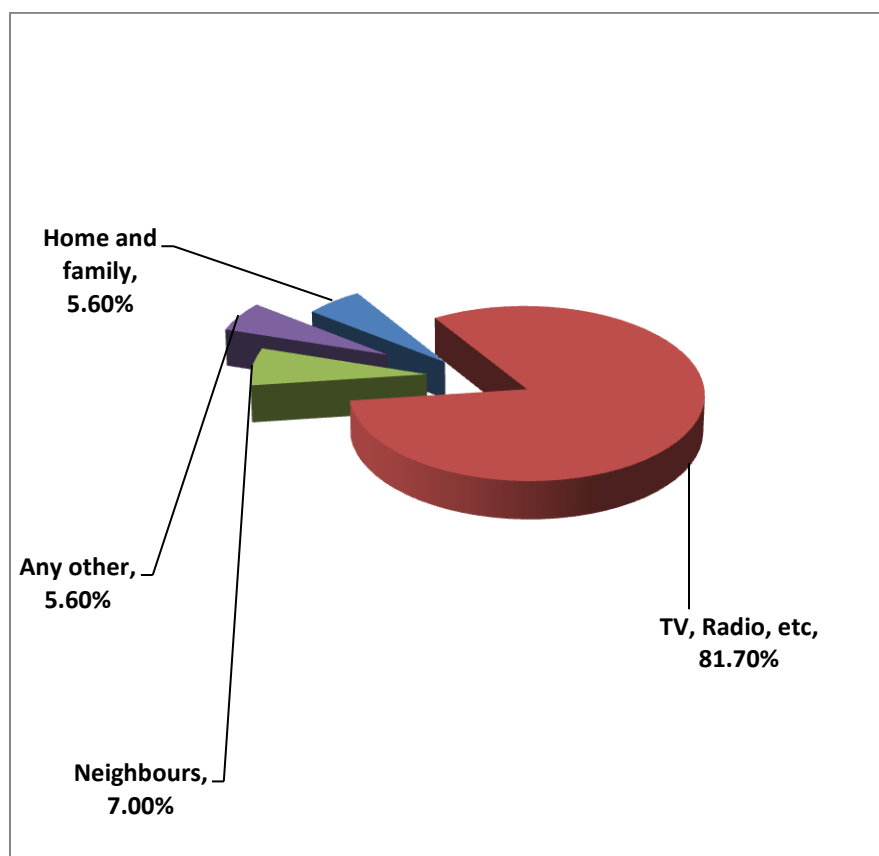
Only 40,84% can claim that their students are always exposed to good Standard English in their schools, the remaining 59.15% are aware that the English that their students are daily exposed to, is not up to the mark.

22. Do your students have opportunities to hear English spoken outside the class-room?



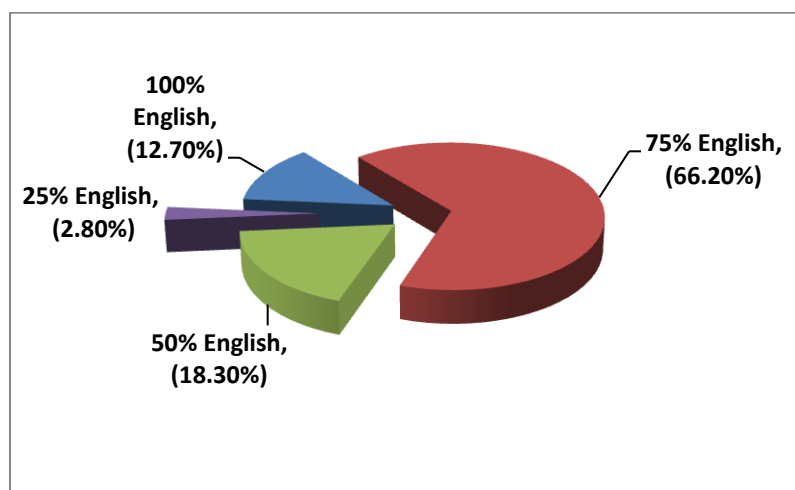
Children today are fortunate in the sense that they have very good opportunities to hear English outside the classroom. Being exposed to the language being spoken in practical real-life situations proves very effective in helping learners acquire a new language. 94.40% of the teachers believe that their students are exposed to spoken English outside the classroom.

23. If so, what are the sources?



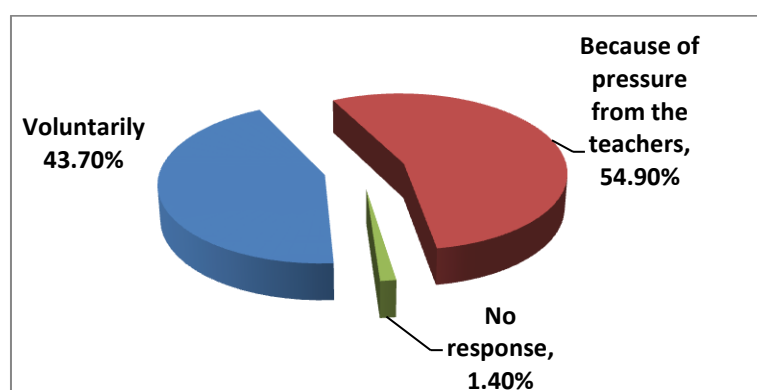
TV and Radio has reached all classes of people and this has made it possible for all sections of the student community to hear English being spoken outside the classroom. 81% of the teachers feel that outside the classroom, their students hear English being spoken on TV and Radio. Computers, internet and other media would surely contribute to this number. The rest of the teachers believe that their students hear English being spoken at home, by their neighbors and other people.

24. Approximately what percentage of the speech of your students in school is English?



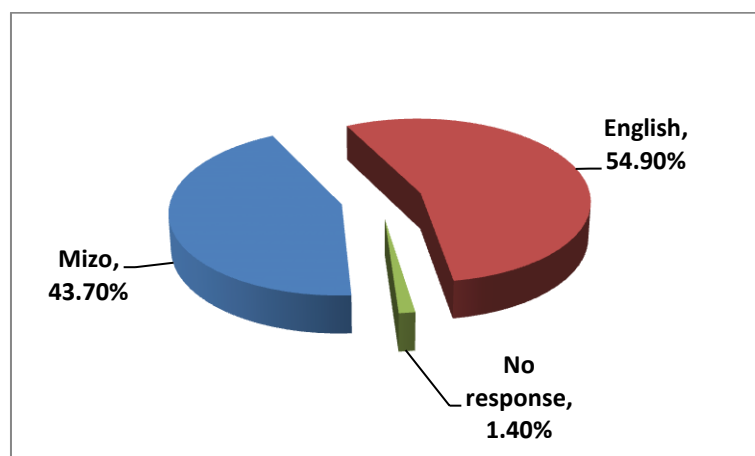
66.20% of the teachers interviewed, which is the majority, believe that 75% of the speech of their students is in English while only 12.70% of the teachers could claim that 100% of the speech of their students is in English. 18.30% say that 50% of the speech of their students is in English while a small segment (2.80%) are honest enough to report that only 25% of the speech of their students is in English.

25. When your students speak in English, it is spoken:



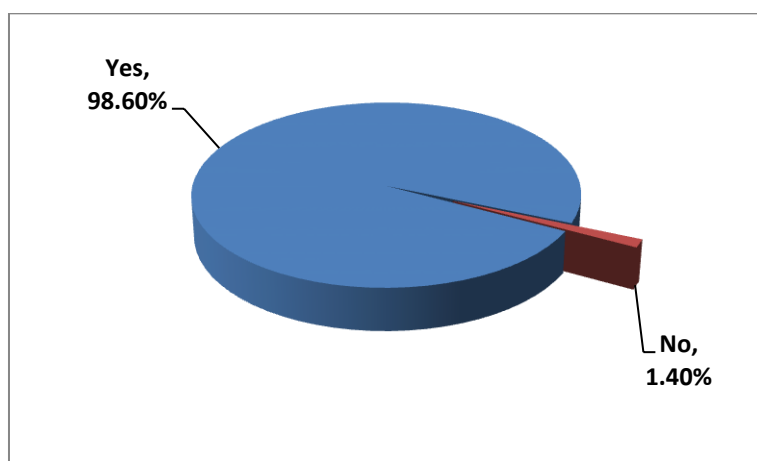
More than half of the teachers (54.90%) believe that their students use English because of pressure from their teachers, while 43.70% says that their students speak in English voluntarily. 1.40% are not very sure whether students speak voluntarily or due to pressure from teachers.

26. What is the dominant language used in co-curricular activities in your school?



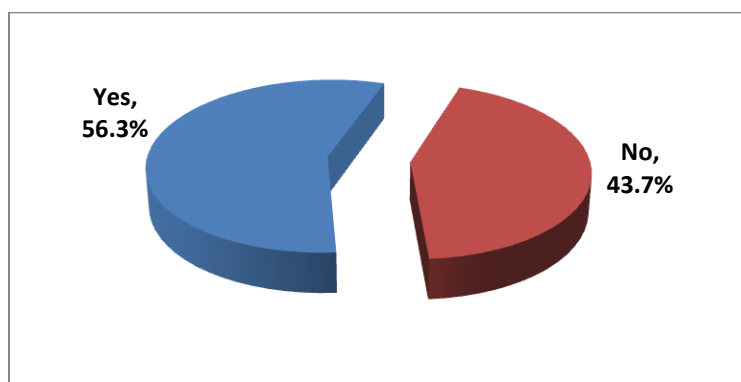
54.90% of the teachers say that English is the dominant language used in co-curricular activities in the school while a large percentage (43.70%) says that Mizo is the dominant language used in co-curricular activities in the school. If only English could be used in all such activities, it would go a long way in developing communicative competence in the students.

27. Do you think it is important to engage students in activities outside the class-room which may help in English language learning?



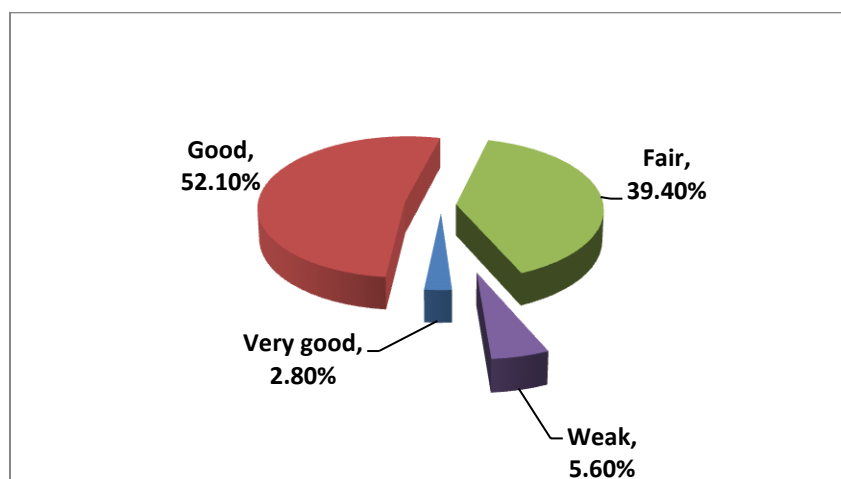
Almost 99% of the respondents agree that it is important to engage students in activities outside the classroom, like having games, handicraft classes, social work etc., during which they have to use English. Strangely, some 1.40% of the teachers do not seem to think so.

28. Is it possible to have such language learning activities outside the classroom in your school?



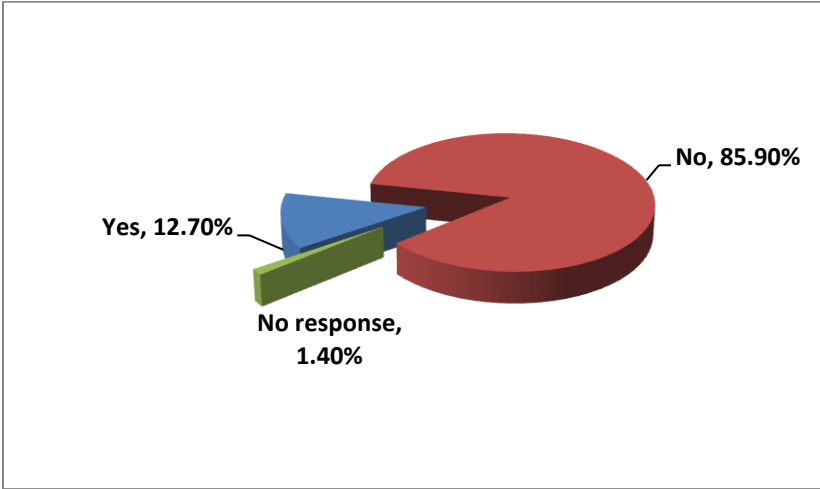
While 56.30% feel that it is possible to have language learning activities outside the classrooms in their schools, 43.70% say that it is not possible to do so. This could largely be due to the fact that Aizawl city is situated on a hilly area and very few private English Medium schools have any space beyond the four walls of the classrooms to hold any kind of activity.

29. How would you rate the English proficiency level of your students?



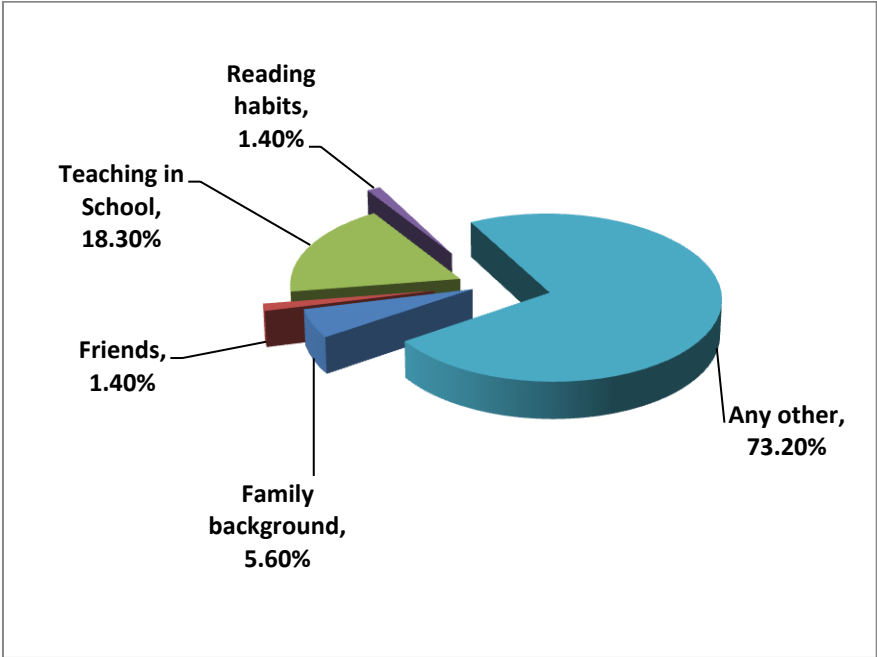
Only 2.80% of the teachers can say that the English of their students is very good. A little more than half (52.10%) of the them report that they are good, 39.40% say that they are fair while 5.60% admit that they are very weak.

30. Are you satisfied with the English of your students?



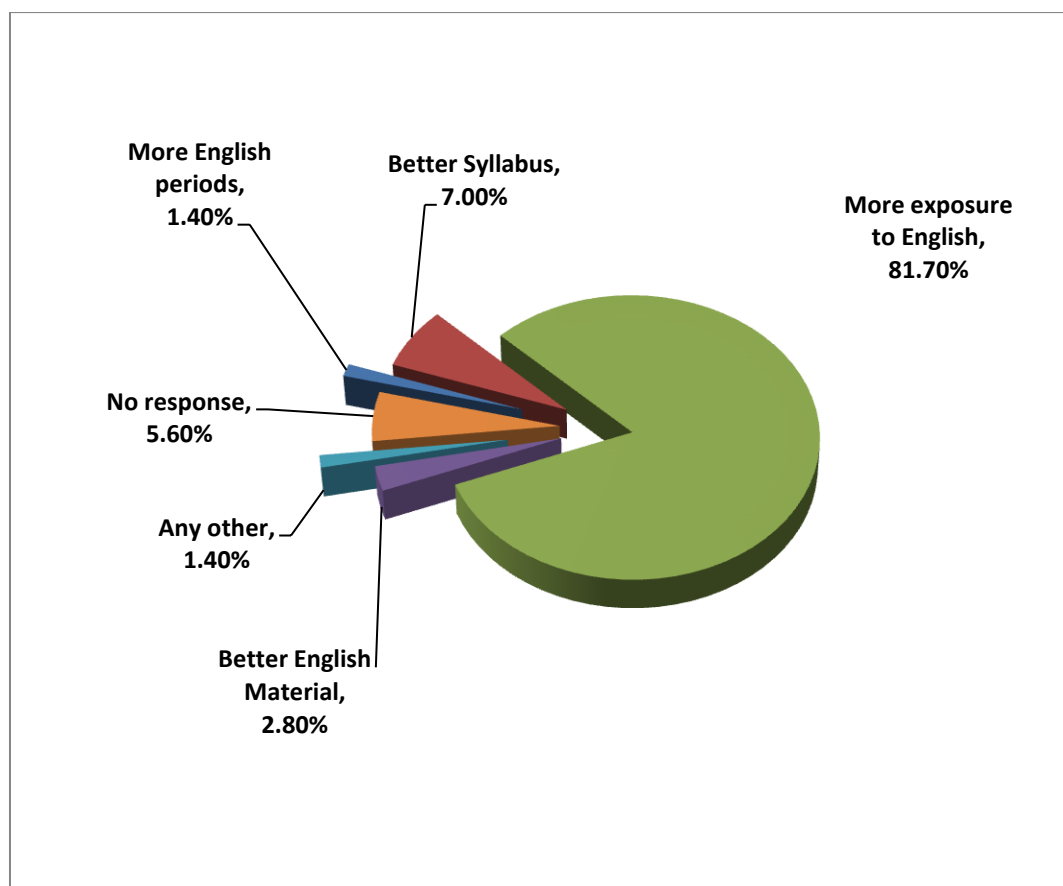
Although in response to the previous question, 52.10% of the teachers report that the English of their students is good, an alarming 85.90% of the teachers say that they are not satisfied with the English of their students. Only 12.70% of the teachers are satisfied with the English used by their students.

31. If you are satisfied, whom do you give credit to?



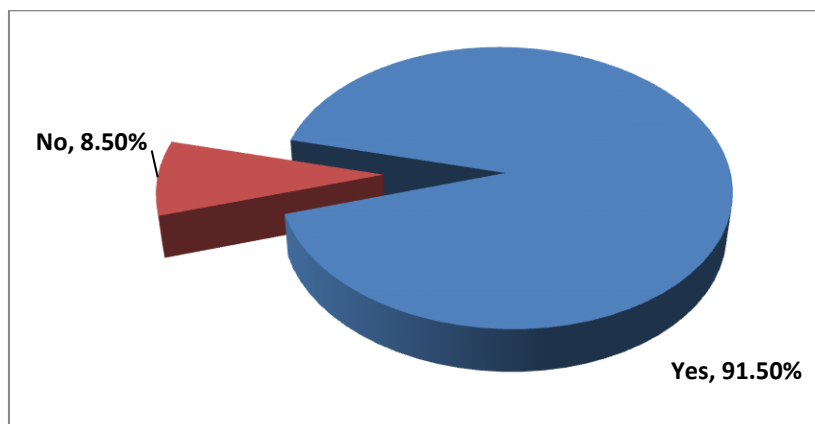
Among the teachers who are satisfied with the English of their students, 18.30% of them give the credit to the teaching in school, 5.60% believe that it is due to their family background, 1.40% each give credit to their friends and their reading habits. 73.20% of the teachers believe that their students are satisfactory in English because of pressure from teachers.

32. If you are not satisfied with the English of your students, what do you feel would be most helpful for their improvement?



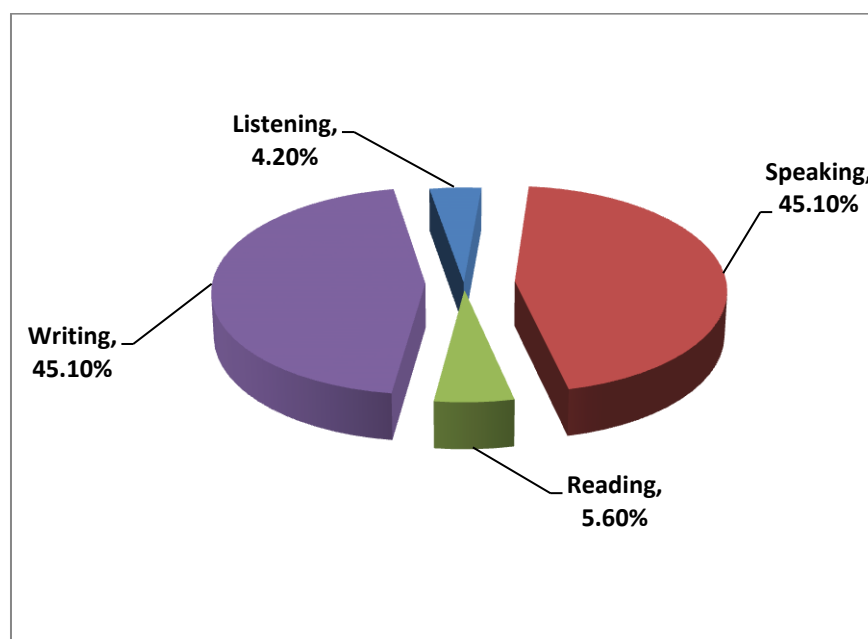
81.70% of the teachers recommend more exposure to English for their students in order to improve their language acquisition. 7.00% want a better syllabus, 2.80% want better material for the teaching of English while 1.40% each are in favour of more English periods and other methods which they are unable to specify.

33. Do you think family and social background of students affects acquisition of English?



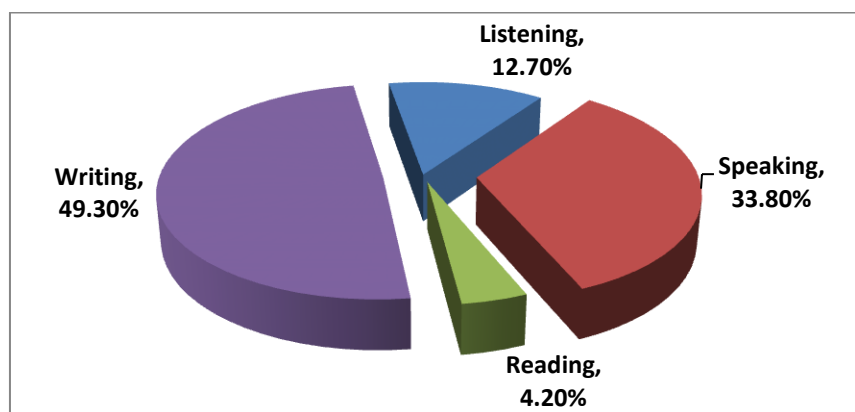
A very high percentage of teachers (91.50%) believe that the social and family background of the students affects their acquisition of English. It is generally assumed that children coming from affluent families usually get more exposure to spoken English from different sources and thereby have better opportunities to acquire English. Moreover, children whose parents are educated and can speak in English have better opportunities to pick-up, use and improve in English.

34. In which aspect of English learning do you find your students to be the weakest?



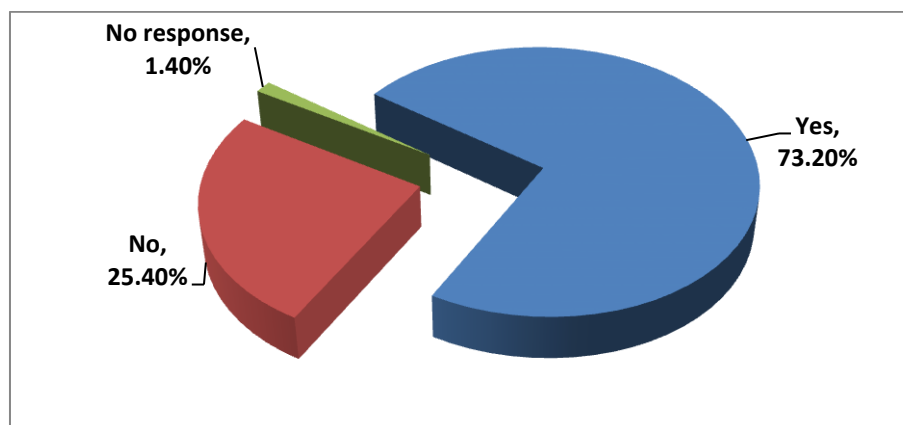
An equal number of teachers, 45.10% each, find their students to be weakest in speaking and writing. Since speaking and writing are both active skills, the weakness of children in these two skills may be more obvious than in the skills of reading and writing. Moreover, since there are very few opportunities for measuring the skill of the students in reading or listening, it can be suspected that the students are equally weak in these two areas.

35. Which aspects of English do you find most difficult to teach?



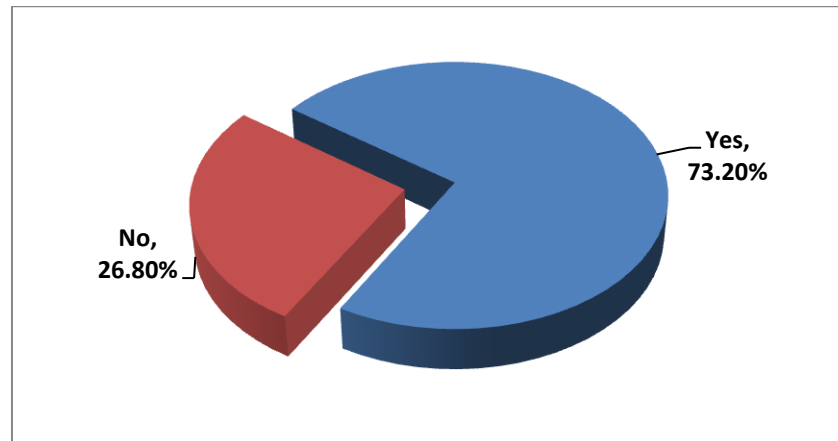
49.30% of the teachers find the teaching of writing most difficult while a little less than that (33.80%) find it most difficult to teach spoken English. As mentioned earlier, the skills of listening and reading are comparatively difficult to observe and evaluate therefore a smaller percentage of the respondents mention these skills as being the most difficult to teach.

36. Do you feel that there is enough scope for the **development of reading** in the present syllabus for English?



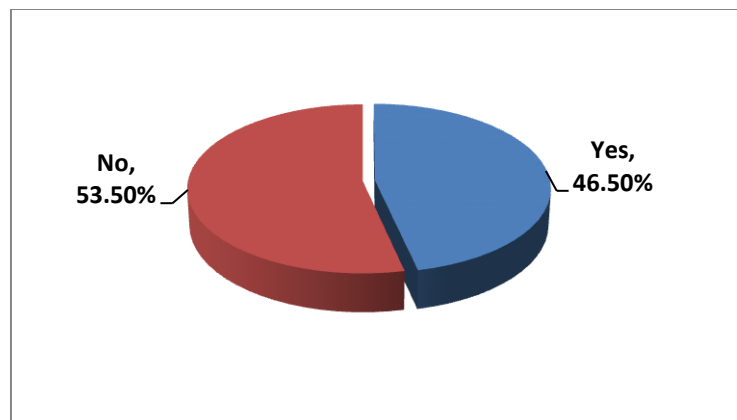
A large number of teachers (73.20%) of the teachers feel that there is enough scope for the development of reading in the present syllabus while 25.40% of them do not.

37. Do you feel that there is enough scope for the **development of writing** in the present syllabus for English?



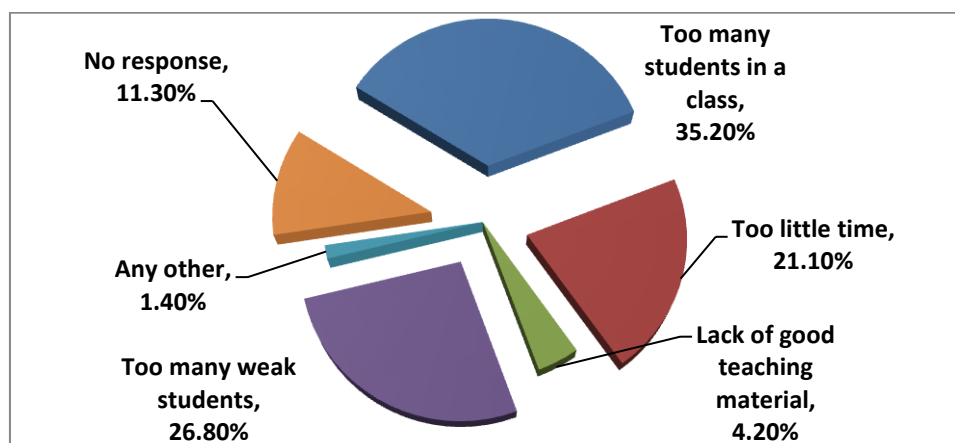
73.20% of the teachers feel that there is enough scope for the development of writing in the present syllabus while the rest (26.80%) feel that there is not enough scope for it.

38. Do you feel that there is enough scope for the **development of speaking** in the present syllabus for English?



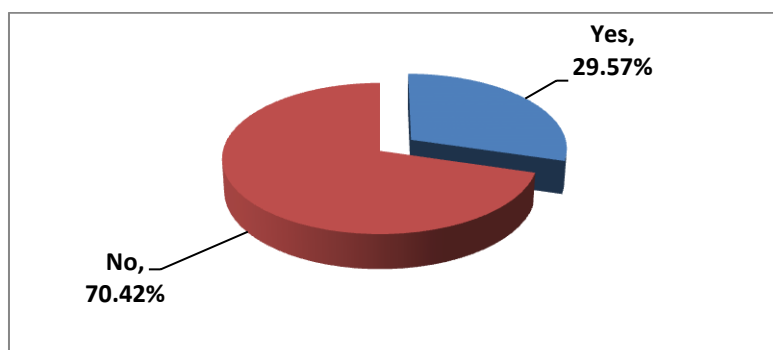
53.50% of the teachers believe that there is no scope for the development of speaking in the present syllabus. This could be due to shortage of time or due to the structure of the syllabus which gives the students no opportunity to develop speaking skills.

39. Do you face any of the following difficulties while teaching English?



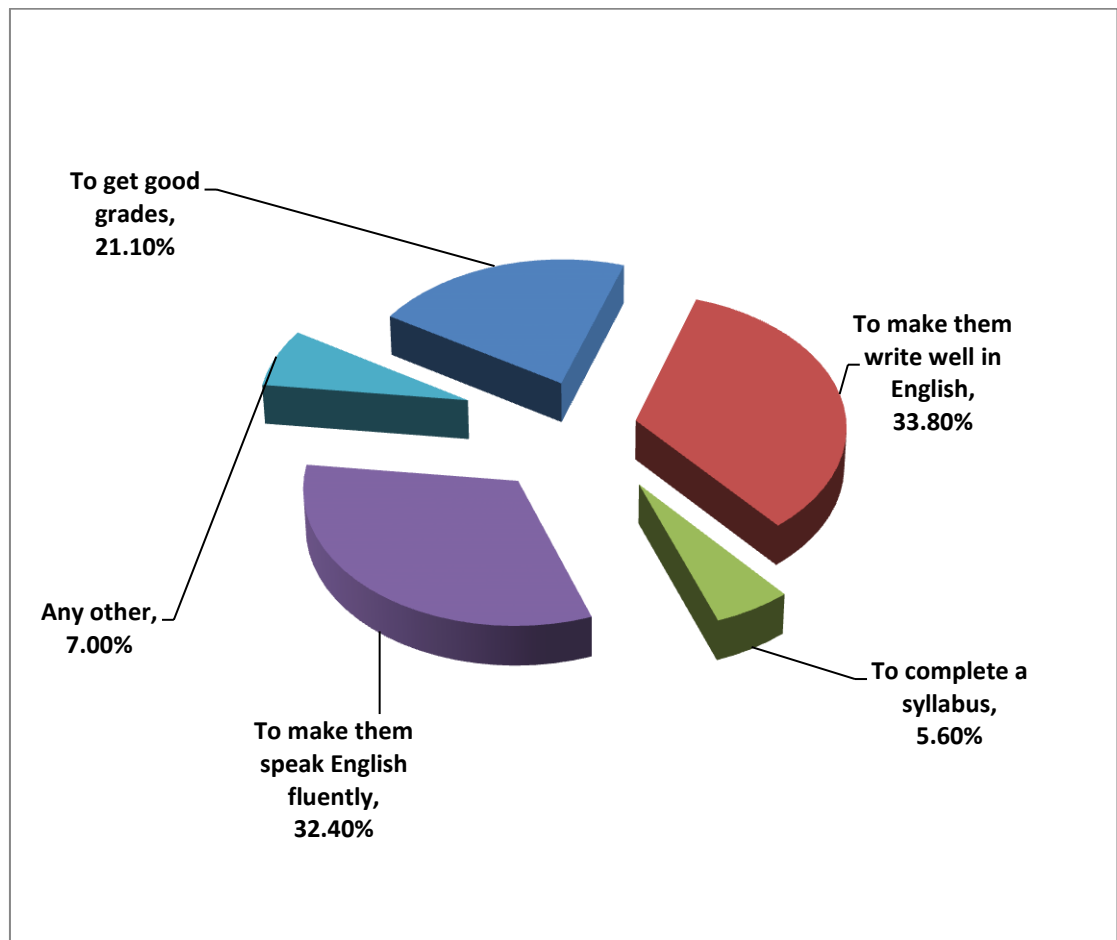
The difficulty faced by most teachers while teaching English is a problem which is common to all other teachers as well, which is over-crowded class-rooms, 35.20% state this as their main difficulty. Having a large number of weak students is another difficulty faced by many teachers (26.80%). Shortage of time (21.10%) is another problem faced by a considerable number of teachers. Lack of good teaching material is reported by 4.20%, while 1.30% faces problems which are not mentioned. Interestingly, 11.30% of the teachers have not responded to this question, it could be that they do not face any kind of difficulty while teaching English.

40. Are you familiar with any of the Second Language Acquisition theories and Methods practiced outside Mizoram?



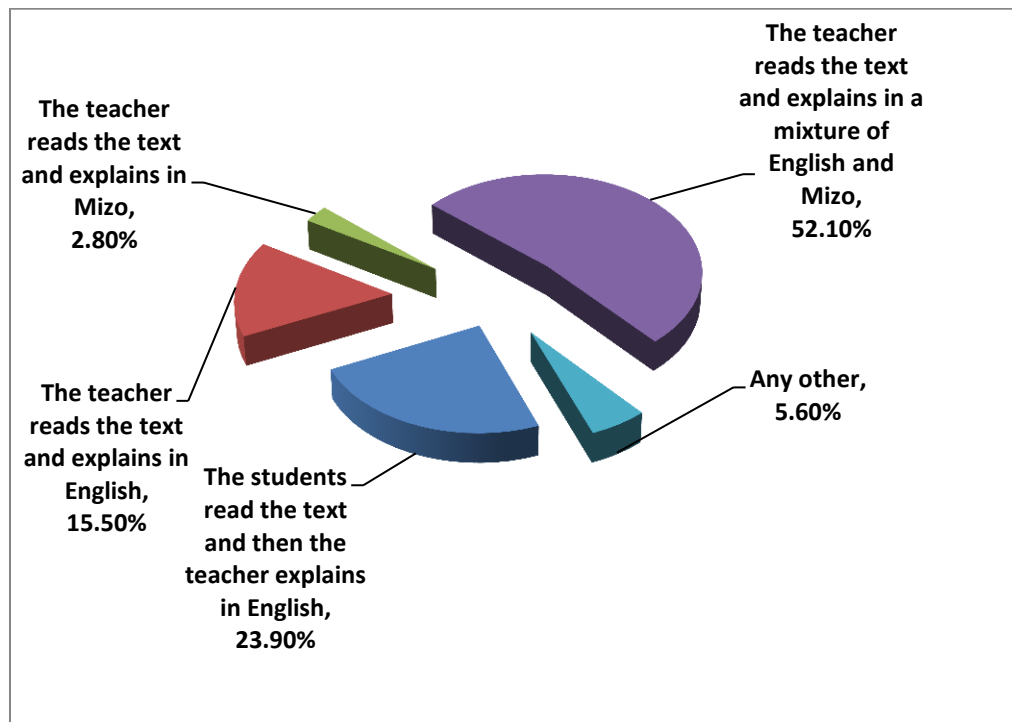
Only 29.57% of the teachers are aware of the Second Language Acquisition theories or methods. The rest perhaps use their own methods of teaching.

41. What do you think is the main aim of teaching English in schools in Mizoram?



33.80% of the teachers seem to think that making the students write well in English seems to be the main aim of teaching English while almost the same number, 32.40% of them feel that making them speak English fluently is the main aim. However, when these two skills, speaking and writing are closely studied, it can be seen that they are almost like two sides of the same coin. 21.10% want them to get good grades, 5.60% teach to complete the syllabus while 7% state that the aim of teaching English is a combination of making them read and write well and to speak in English fluently.

42. What do you think is the most common method of teaching English in Mizoram?

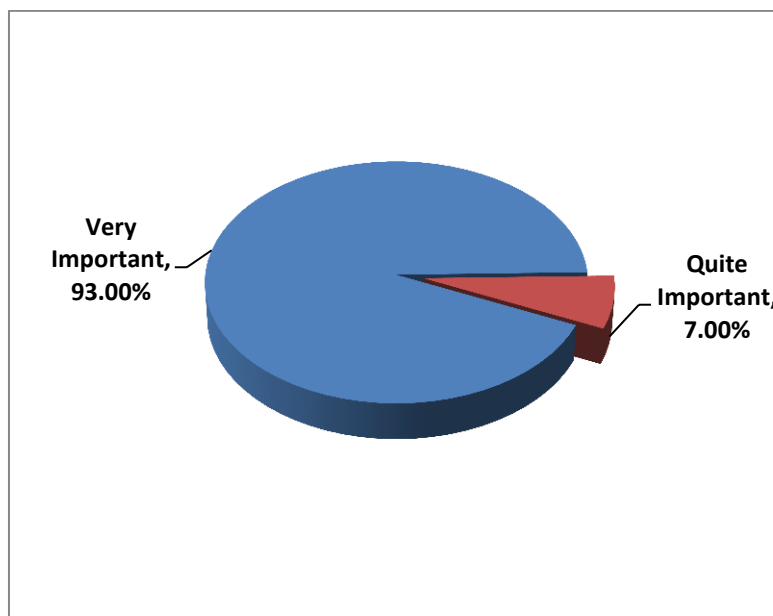


The most common method of teaching reported by 52.10% of the teachers is the teacher reading the text and explaining in a mixture of English and Mizo. Another often used method seems to be the teacher making the students read the text and the teacher explaining the text in English (23.90%). There are also 15.50% of the teachers who believe that the most common method is the teacher reading the text and explaining it in English, while 2.80% believe that most teachers read the text and explain it in Mizo. 5.60% believe that the most common method of teaching is both the teacher and the students reading the text, followed by the teacher explaining the text.

43. What do you feel is the best method of teaching English?

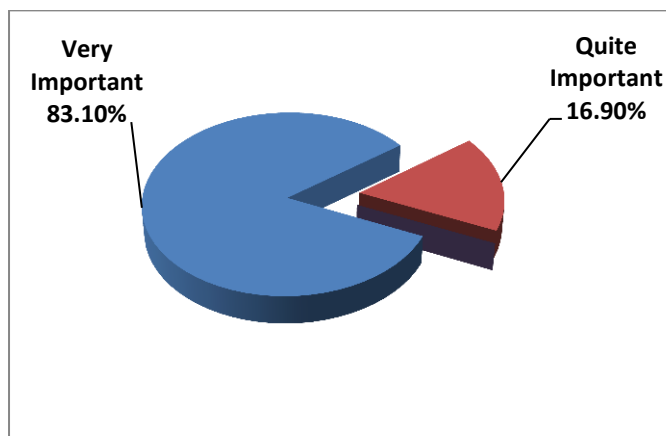
The answers to this question which have been listed below are almost as numerous as the number of teachers who responded to the questionnaire, the responses can be summed up under the following heads:

- a) Having more time for the practice of speaking, reading, writing and listening in the class.
 - b) Having more time for interaction between students and teachers by having conversation classes, group discussions, debates, presentations, role-playing.
 - c) Having extempore speech and creative writing competitions.
 - d) Providing good reading materials in the library.
 - e) Explaining only in English in the classroom.
 - f) Having separate classes for Grammar and imparting it thoroughly in the students.
 - g) Increasing the vocabulary of students and explaining the difficult words before beginning any lesson so as to make sure that the students understand each lesson thoroughly.
44. How important do you feel the following are in the teaching of English?
- i. Spoken English and communication skills.



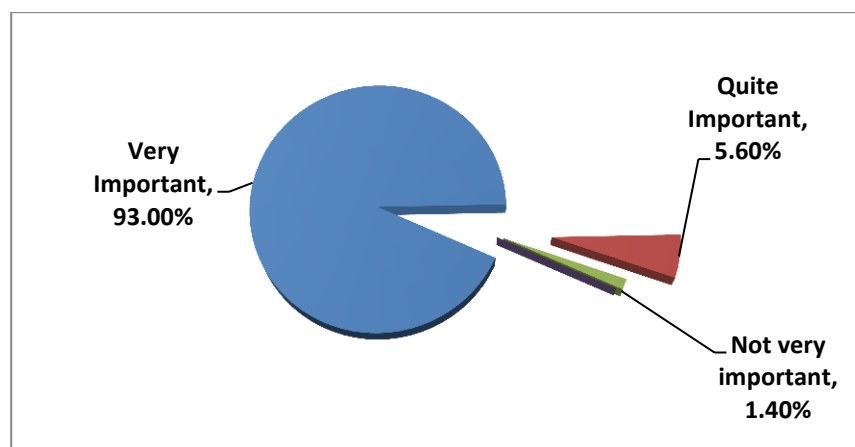
93% of the teachers feel that Spoken English and communication skills are very important in the teaching of English while all the remaining 7% of the teachers too feel that it is quite important.

ii. Written English.



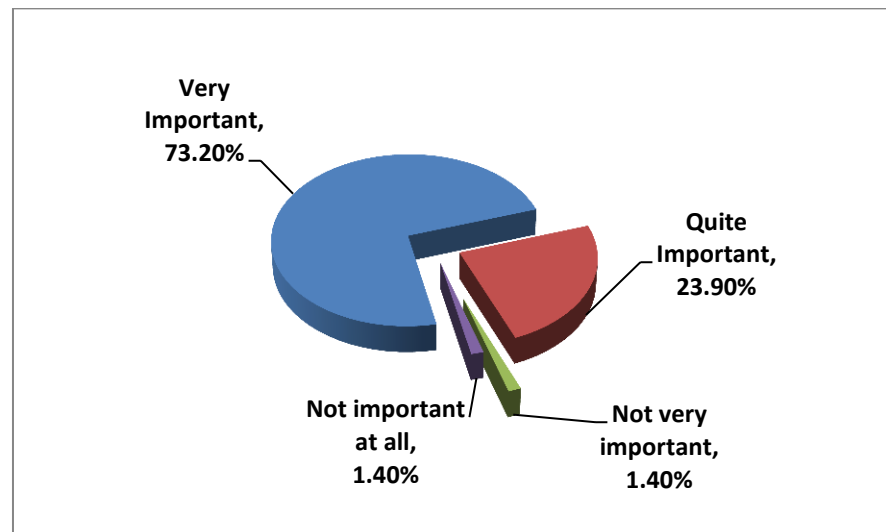
With regard to written English, 83.10% of the teachers find it very important, while the remaining 16.90% find it quite important.

iii. Grammar.



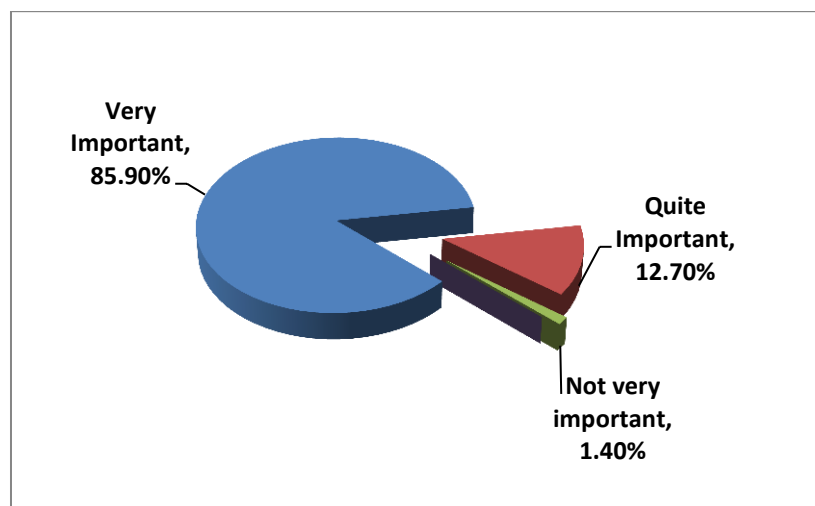
93% of the teachers find that the teaching of grammar is very important, 5.60% find it quite important while 1.40% do not find it very important. It is interesting to note that despite such high regard for the teaching of grammar by elementary teachers in Mizoram, the work of their students abound in grammatical mistakes. This can be clearly observed in the work produced by high school students in the last part of the questionnaire, a sample of which is attached in the appendix.

iv. Comprehension.



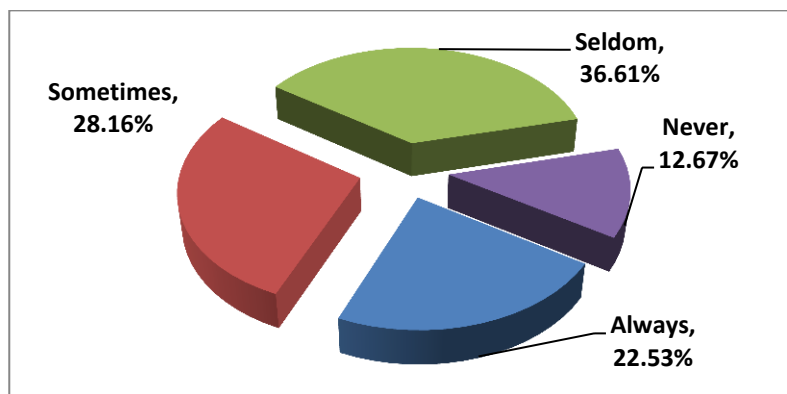
It is very surprising that only 73.20% of the teachers find it important to teach comprehension, 23.90% find it quite important, while there are 1.40% of the teachers who do not find it very important and another 1.40% who feel that it is not important at all.

v. Reading skill.



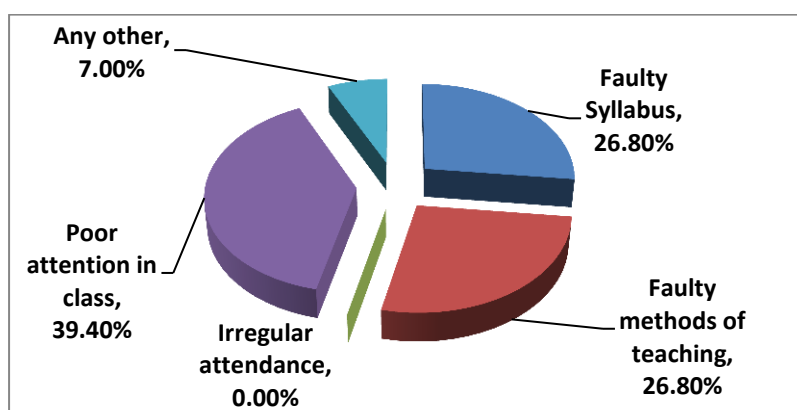
Reading is considered to be very important by 85.90% of the teachers and 12.70% consider it quite important, but there does not seem to be any scope for the development or encouragement of reading in the present syllabus. Only 1.40% do not find it very important.

45. Do you find time to make students read out their lessons in the class?



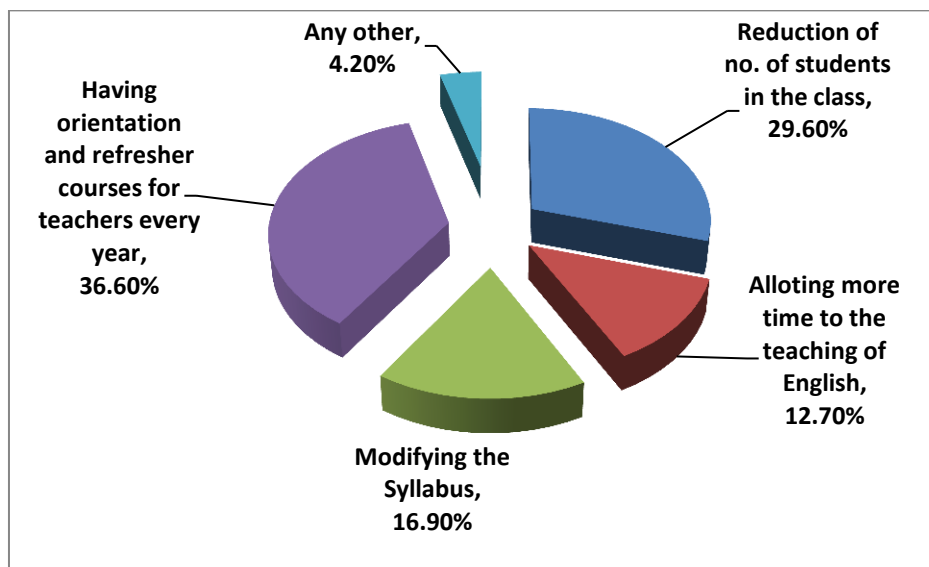
Only 22.53% of the teachers find time to make their students read out their lessons in the class 28.16% do it sometimes, the rest either seldom (36.61%) or never (12.67%) make their students read out their lessons in the class.

46. What do you think are the main problems faced by teachers of English in Mizoram?



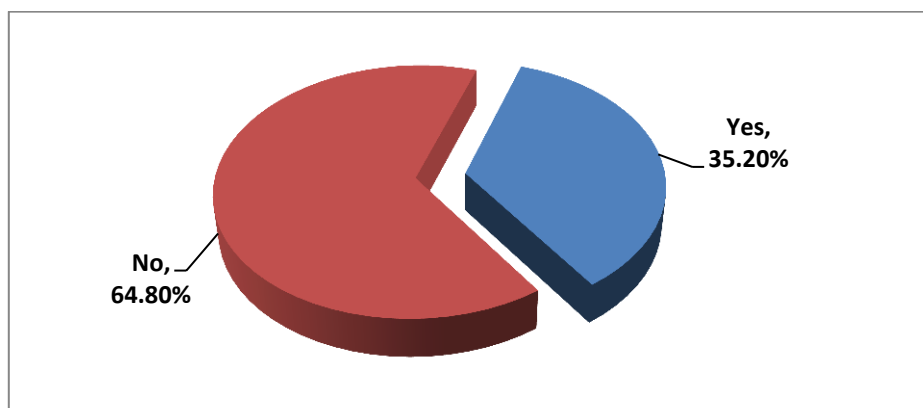
While citing the problems faced by the teachers of English in Mizoram, 39.40% believe that poor attention in class is the main problem faced by teachers. 26.80% believe the problem to be with the syllabus and an equal number of teachers believe that the problem lies with the methods employed by the teacher. 7% of the teachers have cited various problems like shortage of time, the unequal potential of students and lack of confidence among students.

47. What do you think are the remedial measures for these problems?



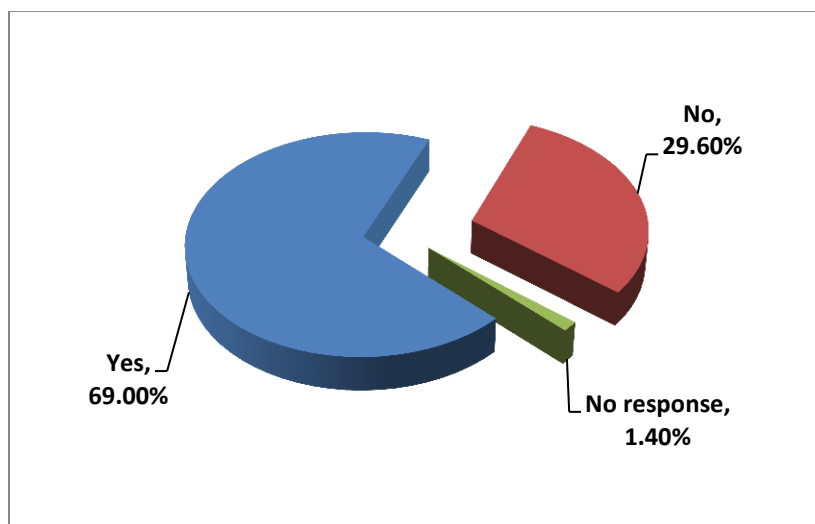
In order to solve the problems faced by all the teachers of English in Mizoram today, a majority of the respondents have suggested having orientation and refresher courses for teachers every year. 29.60% have suggested the reduction of the no. of students in a class, 16.90% want a modification of the syllabus while 12.70% feel that allotting more time to the teaching of English would solve the problem. Another 4.20% feel that giving students more opportunities to express themselves and grouping the students according to their learning capacity would solve many of the problems faced by teachers.

48. Is there a library in your school?



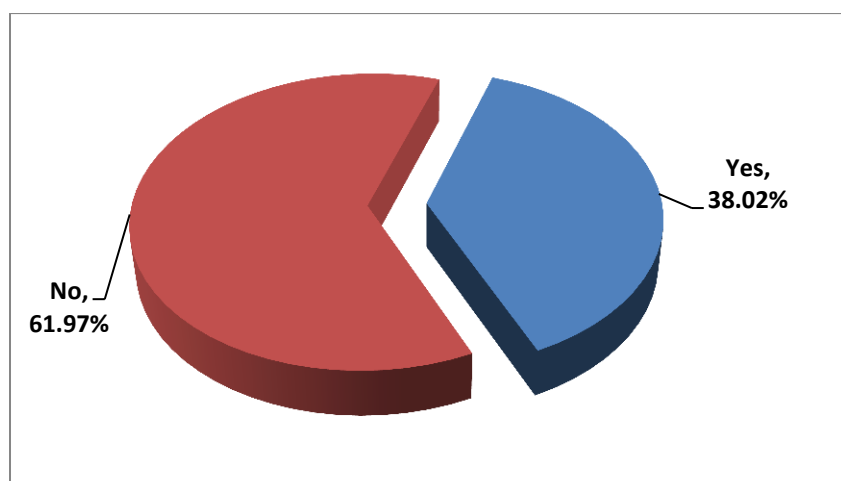
Only 35.20% of the teachers say that there is a library in their schools while the remaining 64.80% say that there are no library facilities in their school. This shows that a majority of schools do not realize the importance of reading in the acquisition of language.

49. Do your students read other English books apart from their text-books?



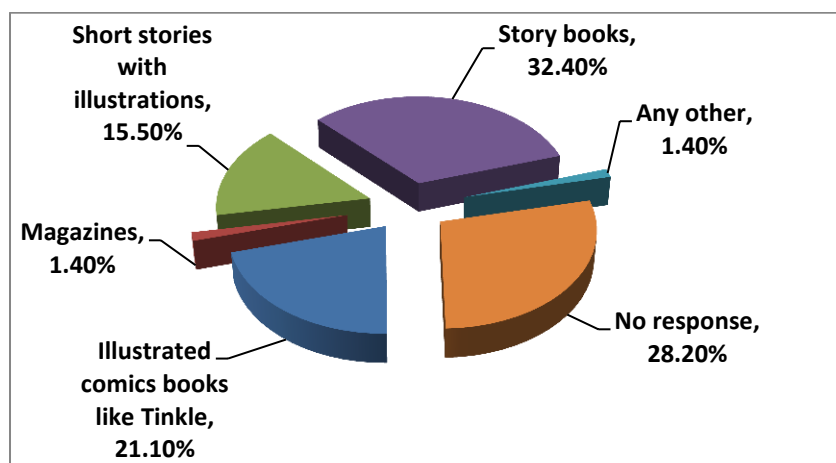
69% of the teachers believe that their students read books in English while 29.60% say that their students do not read books in English.

50. Do you encourage your students to read story books?



Only 38.12% of the teachers encourage their students to read story books while 61.97% do not tell them to read beyond their school text books.

51. If so, what types of books do they mostly read?



Among the teachers who believe that their students read books, a total of 32.40% believe that they read story books, 21.10% believe they read comics, 15.50% believe they read short stories with illustrations while 1.40% believe that they read magazines. It is believed that reading story books in English would be most helpful for students in the acquisition of English as the English they encounter in story books is more formal, more accurate and contains sentences with complete grammatical structures. 28.20% of the teachers are not sure about the type of books their students read.

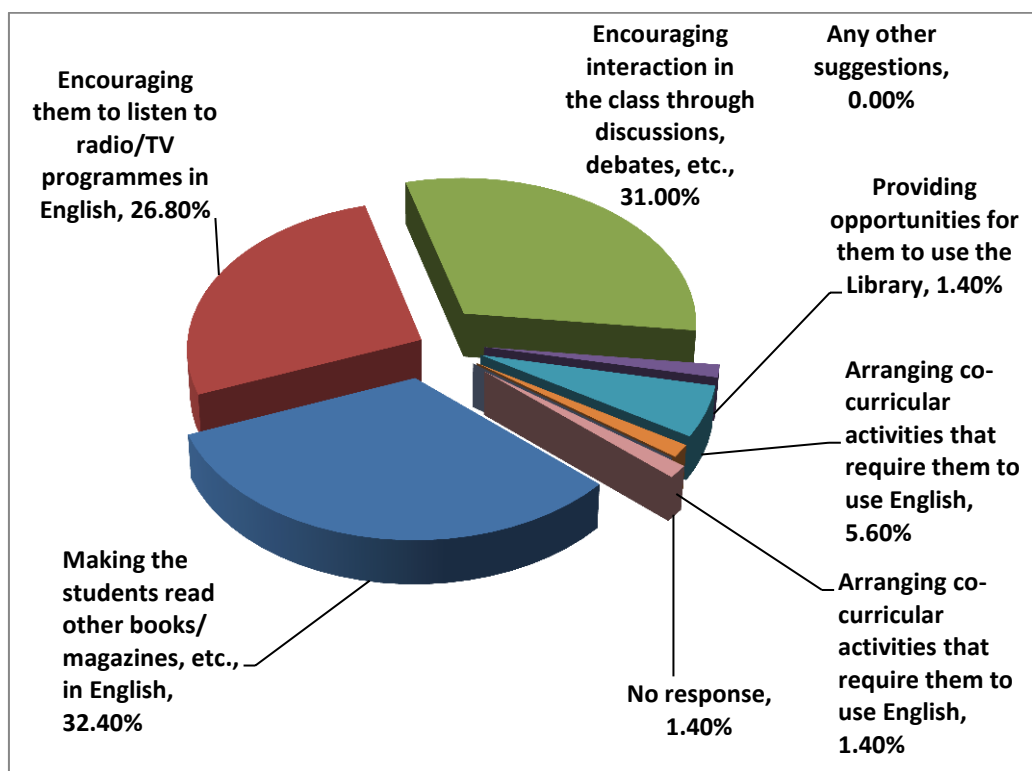
52. Do you think there is anything different in the Mizo society or the Mizo language which makes it difficult for Mizo learners to acquire the English language? If you think so, please mention it below.

A number of teachers who responded to the questionnaire find that the following peculiarities in the Mizo language and society which make it more difficult for Mizo learners to acquire the English language:

- a) Limited vocabulary of the Mizo language.
- b) Certain English sounds like 'sh' are not found in Mizo. Moreover intonation and stress create difficulties for Mizo learners.

- c) The difference in the speed in Mizo and English create difficulties for Mizo learners.
- d) Speaking in English in public is subject to ridicule and mockery in Mizo society.
- e) Inhibition and lack of confidence among Mizo people to use other languages.
- f) Reluctance to mix with those outside the community.
- g) Societal pressure to communicate only in Mizo.
- h) Lack of fluency in English due to lack of practice.
- i) Unlike other states, the Mizo language is used in the market, in homes, church, neighborhood etc. and it is difficult to switch over to English in the school.
- j) The English lessons are often not relevant to the lifestyle of Mizo learners.
- k) As a community Mizo people enjoy each other's company and are hostile to outsiders.
- l) They are too insecure to leave their comfort zones and mingle with Non-Mizo people
- m) Too much esteem for the English language.

53. What activities do you feel would be most helpful in the acquisition of English?



A slight majority of the teachers who responded (32.40%) feel that making the students read books and magazines would be most helpful in the acquisition of English, but it is surprising that only 1.40% of them recommend providing opportunities for them to use the library. 31% feel that encouraging interaction in the class through discussions, debates etc. would be beneficial while 26.80% feel that encouraging them to listen to radio and TV programs in English. Arranging co-curricular activities that require them to use English is recommended by 5.60% while 1.40% do not think any of these would help much.

3.2.3. Cross Tabulations of Questionnaire for teachers.

1. Sex of the respondents vrs Educational Qualifications of Respondents:

Sex	Educational Qualifications of Respondents				Total
	HSLC	HSSLC	Graduate	Post-Graduate	
<i>Male</i>	0	0	4	1	5
<i>Female</i>	3	16	39	8	66
Total	3	16	43	9	71

It can be seen from the cross tabulation of the sex of the respondents vrs their educational qualification that the male teachers teaching English in English Medium schools are more qualified than their female counterparts, 1 is a post graduate while the rest are graduates.

2. Sex of the respondents vrs Teaching Experience:

Sex	Teaching Experience				Total
	0 – 2 Years	3 – 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	More than 10 Years	
<i>Male</i>	1	0	1	3	5
<i>Female</i>	5	15	14	32	66
Total	6	15	15	35	71

The majority of teachers, both male and female, have more than 10 years experience which is surprising, considering the fact that the teacher respondents all work in non-government English medium schools which pay much less than government run institutions. This reflects the fact that Government jobs are hard to come by even for experienced teachers.

3. Sex of the respondents vrs Classes Taught:

Sex	Classes Taught				Total
	I – II	III – IV	V – VI	VII - VIII	
<i>Male</i>	0	1	1	3	5
<i>Female</i>	21	19	11	15	66
Total	21	20	12	18	71

A majority of the male teachers working in English medium schools are found teaching Classes VII and VIII, because as mentioned earlier, female teachers are better suited to teach the lower classes. It can also be seen that there are no male teachers teaching Class I and II.

4. Sex of the respondents vrs training received.

Sex	Training Received		Total
	Yes	No	
<i>Male</i>	0	5	5
<i>Female</i>	0	66	66
Total	0	71	71

None of the male teachers who responded were trained to be English teachers; this suggests that male teachers would not voluntarily choose to teach English at the Elementary level and train for it, and that those who do teach it are doing it unintentionally.

5. Sex of the respondents vrs Do you speak to your students in English outside the classroom?

Sex	Speak in English outside the classroom to students		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	5	0	5
Female	58	8	66
Total	63	8	71

Male teachers on the whole, seem to find it easier to speak in English to their students outside the classroom. All of them claim that they speak to their students in English outside the classroom, while there are a number of female teachers who do not speak to their students in English outside the classroom.

6. Classes Taught vrs Do you find time to teach correct pronunciation or have conversation classes?

Class Taught	Teach correct pronunciation /conduct conversation classes		Total
	Yes	No	
Class I – II	17	4	21
Class III – IV	16	4	20
Class V – VI	9	3	12
Class VII – VIII	8	10	18
Total	50	21	71

The majority of teachers in the lower classes find time to teach correct pronunciation and have conversation classes while the majority of teachers teaching Class VII and Class VIII do not find time to do so. This could be because students in the higher classes have a wider variety of subjects to study and therefore have less time to study anything more than their text-books.

7. Classes taught vrs Do you use any teaching aids while teaching English?

Class Taught	Use teaching aids in teaching English		Total
	Yes	No	
Class I – II	9	12	21
Class III – IV	11	9	20
Class V – VI	7	5	12
Class VII – VIII	10	8	18
Total	37	34	71

More teachers teaching Classes I and II do not use teaching aids in the class while there are more teachers in all the higher classes who use teaching aids while teaching English.

8. Classes Taught vrs Do you think Grammar should be taught separately?

Class Taught	Grammar should be taught separately		Total
	Yes	No	
Class I – II	18	3	21
Class III – IV	19	1	20
Class V – VI	12	0	12
Class VII – VIII	18	0	18
Total	67	4	71

All the teachers teaching in the middle school section i.e., Classes V to VIII think that Grammar should be taught separately and so do all the teachers teaching Classes III-IV except for one. Even among the 21 teachers teaching Classes I and II, 18 teachers think that grammar should be taught separately while 3 teachers do not think so.

9. Classes Taught Vrs Do you consider it important for the teacher to speak only in English in the class?

Class Taught	It important for the teacher to speak only in English in the class		Total
	Yes	No	
Class I – II	20	1	21
Class III – IV	14	6	20
Class V – VI	11	1	12
Class VII – VIII	12	6	18
Total	57	14	71

The teachers of the lower classes(Classes I and II) all seem to find it more important for the teacher to speak only in English in the class while the need for it seems to be less felt in the higher classes (Classes VII and VIII) where one-third of the teachers questioned do not find it important.

10. Classes taught vrs When your students speak in English, it is spoken:

Class Taught	Students Speak in English ...			Total
	Voluntarily	Pressure from teacher	No response	
Class I – II	10	11	0	21
Class III – IV	11	8	1	20
Class V – VI	4	8	0	12
Class VII – VIII	6	12	0	18
Total	31	39	1	71

It is interesting to note that about half of the teachers teaching in Classes I to IV believe that their students speak in English voluntarily while only one-third of the teachers teaching Classes V to VIII believe that their students speak English voluntarily, the rest use English because of pressure from teachers.

11. Appointment as English Teacher vrs Do you enjoy teaching English?

		Enjoys teaching English		Total
		Yes	No	
Appointed as English Teacher	Yes	56	0	56
	No	14	1	15
Total		70	1	71

All the teachers who were appointed as English teachers seem to enjoy teaching English. Even among the teachers who were not specifically appointed as English teachers, all of them except for one seem to enjoy teaching English.

12. Appointment as English Teacher vrs Do you teach subjects other than English?

		Teach other subjects		Total
		Yes	No	
Appointed as English Teacher	Yes	46	10	56
	No	14	1	15
Total		60	11	71

Most of the teachers who have been appointed as English teachers are also involved in teaching other subjects as well

13. Appointment as English Teacher vrs If you had the choice, would you prefer to teach other subjects?

		Prefer to teach other subjects			Total
		Yes	No	No response	
Appointed as English Teacher	Yes	21	35	0	56
	No	7	7	1	15
Total		28	42	1	71

Almost half of the teachers who have been appointed as English teachers show their preference for teaching other subjects. And among those who were not appointed as English teachers too, 50% would prefer to teach other subjects if they had the choice.

14. Appointment as English Teacher vrs Do you think you need some training/refresher course in English Language Teaching?

		Need training / refresher course in ELT		Total
		Yes	No	
Appointed as English Teacher	Yes	48	8	56
	No	12	3	15
Total		60	11	71

A majority of teachers who have been appointed as English teachers feel their need for attending some training or refresher course in English Language Teaching.

15. Appointment as English Teacher vrs importance of Spoken English and communication skills:

		Importance of Spoken and communication skills		Total
		Very important	Quite important	
Appointed as English Teacher	Yes	51	5	56
	No	15	0	15
Total		66	5	71

All the teachers who have not been appointed as English teachers but who are teaching English nevertheless, feel that the teaching of spoken English and communication skills are very important.

3.3. Questionnaire for High School Students.

High school students were asked to respond to this questionnaire as they are the products of ten years of elementary school teaching during which they have been taught the English language. They have also been selected as they are more mature than elementary school students and expected to answer the questions more coherently.

3.3.1. Part A: Students' Profiles.

I. Sex:

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	220	54.2	54.2	54.2
Female	186	45.8	45.8	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 406 High School students questioned, 220 are male and 186 female.

II. Age:

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
13 Yrs	2	0.5	0.5	0.5
14 Yrs	59	14.5	14.5	15.0
15 Yrs	229	56.4	56.4	71.4
16 Yrs	87	21.4	21.4	92.9
17 Yrs	23	5.7	5.7	98.5
18 Yrs	4	1.0	1.0	99.5
19 Yrs	1	0.2	0.2	99.8
20 Yrs	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Out of 406 students, the majority - 229 are 15 years old, 87 are 16 years old, 59 are 14 years old and 23 are 17 years old. There are four 18 year -olds, two 13 year-olds, and one 19 year old and one 20 year old.

III. Mother Tongue:

Mother Tongue	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mizo	382	94.1	94.1	94.1
Hindi	24	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

382 students have Mizo as their mother tongue while 24 have Hindi and other languages as their mother tongue.

IV. Medium of instruction in the primary school:

Medium of Instruction	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mizo	23	5.7	5.7	5.7
English	382	94.1	94.1	99.8
Hindi	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 406 students who answered the questionnaire, 382 or 94.1% cite English as the medium of instruction at the primary level, 23 or 5.7% say they studied in Mizo medium primary schools while 1 student studied in a Hindi medium school.

V. Medium of instruction in the Middle school:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mizo	29	7.1	7.1	7.1
English	376	92.6	92.6	99.8
Hindi	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

At the middle school stage, 376 or 92.6% studied in English Medium schools, 29 or 7.1% studied in Mizo medium schools while 1 student studied in a Hindi medium school.

3.3.2. Part B: Questions.

1. Do you like to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	379	93.3	93.3	93.3
No	27	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

93.3% of the students said that they liked to speak in English, while 6.7% said that they did not like to do so.

2. Do you find it difficult to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	138	34.0	34.0	34.0
No	267	65.8	65.8	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

65.8% of the students say that they do not find it difficult to speak in English while 34% admit that they find it difficult.

3. Do you admire people who speak English fluently?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	367	90.39	90.39	90.39
No	39	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

90.39% of the student respondents declared they admire people who speak English fluently while only 9.60% stated they do not admire people who are fluent in English.

4. With whom do you find it easier to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mizo People	170	41.9	41.9	41.9
Non-Mizo People	236	58.1	58.1	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 406 students questioned, 58.1% find it easier to speak in English with non-Mizo people. Since there are not many opportunities to speak with non-Mizo people within Mizoram, this could be a factor which has hindered the popularity of using English by Mizo people.

5. Why do you find it difficult to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not confident enough	279	68.7	68.7	68.7
Understand but cannot speak in English	34	8.1	8.1	76.8
Do not understand English well enough	32	7.9	7.9	84.7
Afraid people will laugh at them	30	7.6	7.6	92.3
No Response	31	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

A majority of students- 68.7% of the 406 students find it difficult to speak in English because though they can speak the language, they are not confident enough. 8.1% understand English but cannot speak in English. 7.9% do not understand the language enough to speak it while 7.6% find it difficult to speak in English because they are afraid other people will laugh at them.

6. Do you ask your teacher questions in English in the class?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sometimes	386	95.1	95.1	95.1
Never	19	4.7	4.7	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

95.1% of the students questioned sometimes dare to ask their teachers questions in the class while 4.7% admit that they never do so.

7. Do your parents encourage you to learn English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	387	95.3	95.3	95.3
No	19	4.7	4.7	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Parents of 387 students apparently encourage their children to learn English while 19 students claim that they never get encouragement from their parents with regard to the learning of English.

8. What in your opinion is most helpful for learning English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Parents' encouragement	14	3.4	3.4	3.4
Good teachers	152	37.4	37.4	40.9
Books that you read	125	30.8	30.8	71.7
TV, radio and other media	113	27.8	27.8	99.5
No response	2	0.5	0.5	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

152 (37.4%) students believe that good teachers are most helpful for learning English while 125 (30.8%) believe that the reading of English books would be most helpful for learning

English. 113 (27.8%) of the students believe that T.V., radio and other media have helped them in their acquisition of English while 3.4% believe that the encouragement of their parents are most helpful for learning English.

9. If you feel that your English is not good, what do you think is responsible for this?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of good teaching	38	9.4	9.4	9.4
Lack of motivation and encouragement	38	9.4	9.4	18.7
Lack of opportunities to use English	180	44.3	44.3	63.1
Lack of correct environment/ atmosphere	80	19.7	19.7	82.8
No response	70	17.2	17.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

180 or 44.3% of the students feel that they are not good in English because they lack the opportunities to practice the use of English. 80 or 19.7 % think that they have problems in English because they lack the correct environment or atmosphere to use the language. An equal number of students – 38 each, blame their weakness in English on the lack of good teaching and the lack of motivation and encouragement.

10. At which stage did you first learn to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
KG	247	60.8	60.8	60.8
Primary school	126	31.0	31.0	91.9
Middle school	17	4.2	4.2	96.1
High school	15	3.7	3.7	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

60.8% of the students who answered the questionnaire claim that they first learnt how to speak in English at the Kindergarten level. 31% say that did so at the primary level while 4.2% and 3.7% say that they learnt to speak in English at the Middle school and High school levels respectively. It is surprising to find that while a good majority- 60.8% of the students have been made to speak in English for more than 10 years, a total of 82.8% still feel that they are not good enough in English.

11. Which aspect of English do you find the easiest?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Listening	123	30.3	30.3	30.5
Speaking	70	17.2	17.2	47.8
Reading	165	40.6	40.6	88.4
Writing	47	11.6	11.6	100.0
No response	1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Reading in English seems to be the easiest among the skills of language for the highest number of students – 40.6%. Listening comes next with 30.3% finding it easy. Only 17.2% find speaking the easiest while 11.6% find writing the easiest.

12. Which aspect of English do you find the most difficult?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Listening	83	20.4	20.4	20.4
Speaking	175	43.1	43.1	63.5
Reading	31	7.6	7.6	71.2
Writing	106	26.1	26.1	97.3
No response	11	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Speaking in English is found to be the most difficult language skill by the most number of students – 43.1%. Meanwhile, 26.1% find writing to be the most difficult and while 20.4%

find it difficult to listen. Most of the students seem to find reading in English relatively easier as only 7.6% find it difficult.

13. Do you use English to speak with your friends in the school?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	33	8.1	8.1	8.1
Most of the time	76	18.7	18.7	26.8
Sometimes	278	68.5	68.5	95.3
Never	18	4.4	4.4	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

The majority of students – 68.5% of them say that they sometimes use English to speak with their friends in the school while a small percentage- 8.1% say that they use it all the time. 18.7% claim that they use it most of the time while 4.4% admit that they never use it.

14. Do you ever use English outside the school, with friends or at home?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	9	2.2	2.2	2.2
Most of the time	19	4.7	4.7	6.9
Sometimes	279	68.7	68.7	75.6
Never	98	24.1	24.1	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Only 2.2% of the students questioned say that they always use English outside the school either with friends or at home, 4.7% say they use English most of the time, while 24.1% claim they never use English outside the school. The majority of the students, 68.7%, say that they sometimes use English outside, with friends or family members.

15. Do you understand the English spoken by your teachers?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	156	38.4	38.4	38.4
Most of the time	164	40.4	40.4	78.8
Sometimes	82	20.2	20.2	99.0
Never	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

There are only 38.4% of the students who always understand the English spoken by their teachers, 40.4% understand it most of the time and 20.2% sometimes understand it. 1.0% claimed they never understand it.

16. Do you understand your English text-book?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	108	26.6	26.6	26.6
Most of the time	196	48.3	48.3	74.9
Sometimes	97	23.9	23.9	98.8
Never	4	1.0	1.0	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

There are only 26.6% of the 406 students who can say that they understand their English text-books thoroughly. 48.3% say that they understand it most of the time while 23.9% say that they understand their text-books only sometimes. 1.0% claim that they never understand it at all.

17. Did your teachers in **Primary school** use Mizo for explanations in the class?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	51	12.6	12.6	12.6
Most of the time	101	24.9	24.9	37.4
Sometimes	227	55.9	55.9	93.3
Never	26	6.4	6.4	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

When quizzed about the use of Mizo for explanations by their primary school teachers, 55.9% claimed that their teachers sometimes used Mizo. 24.9% said that they used it most of the time while 12.6% said that Mizo was always used for explanations. Only 6.4% said that Mizo was never used in the class for explanations during their primary school years.

18. Did your teachers in **Middle school** use Mizo for explanations in the class?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	45	11.1	11.1	11.1
Most of the time	85	20.9	20.9	32.0
Sometimes	254	62.6	62.6	94.6
Never	21	5.2	5.2	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

When the 406 high school students were asked about the use of Mizo by their middle school teachers for explanations in the class, 62.6% admitted that their teachers sometimes used Mizo. 20.9% said that their teachers used Mizo most of the time while 11.1% claimed that Mizo was always used in the class for explanations. Only 5.2% could say that their teachers in middle school never used English for explanations in the class.

19. Do your teachers in **High School** ever have to use Mizo for explanations?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	29	7.1	7.1	7.1
Most of the time	82	20.2	20.2	27.3
Sometimes	288	70.9	70.9	98.3
Never	6	1.5	1.5	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Although the medium of instruction in High Schools in Mizoram is English, 70.9% students claim that sometimes their teachers use Mizo for explanations in the class while 20.2% say that they use it most of the time. 7.1% say that their teachers use it all the time and only 1.5% say that their teachers never use Mizo for explanations.

20. Do you like it when your teachers use Mizo for explanations in the class?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	370	91.1	91.1	91.1
No	36	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

91.1% of the 406 students say that they like it when their teachers use Mizo for explanations in the class while 8.9 % say that they do not like it.

21. Do you like to read English books?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, always	343	84.5	84.5	84.5
No	62	15.3	15.3	99.8
No response	1	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

84.5% of the students say that they like to read books while 15.3% are honest enough to admit that they do not like to do so.

22. If so, what type of books do you like to read?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Comic books	120	29.6	29.6	29.6
Magazines	75	18.5	18.5	48.0
Short stories	155	38.2	38.2	86.2
Novels	43	10.6	10.6	96.8
No response	13	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

The majority of students who read books claim that they read short stories while 29.6% say that they read comic books. There are 18.5% who read magazines and only 10.6% who read novels. If more students read a little more seriously than this, their English would certainly improve.

23. If you read books, where do you get them from?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
You buy them	236	58.1	58.1	58.1
You borrow them from friends	57	14.0	14.0	72.2
You borrow them from libraries	76	18.7	18.7	90.9
You get them as gifts	17	4.2	4.2	95.1
Any other	1	0.2	0.2	95.3
No response	19	4.7	4.7	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

58.1% of the students who read books claim that they buy the books they read. 18.7% borrow them from libraries while 14% borrow them from friends and 4.2% get them as gifts.

24. From where/whom did you learn English most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Your teachers	210	51.7	51.7	51.7
Your friends	17	4.2	4.2	55.9
Your family	5	1.2	1.2	57.1
TV, Internet,etc.	96	23.6	23.6	80.8
Books	64	15.8	15.8	96.6
Other sources	10	2.5	2.5	99.0
No response	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

210 of the 406 students i.e., 51.7% students say that they learnt English mostly from their teachers while 23.6% believe that they have learnt it from watching TV and through the internet. Only 15.8% say that they have learnt it from books which mean very few of them do any serious reading. 4.2% have learnt it from their friends, while 1.2% say that they have learnt it from their family.

25. Write a few lines about your hobby/hobbies.

It can be seen from the responses to this question that the vocabulary of the selected High School students is very limited. This shows that all the vocabulary that they have been introduced to during their years in Elementary School have not been effectively absorbed by them. There are very few responses to this question which are totally acceptable. Out of 150 responses selected at random, only 26 or 17.3% contained no mistakes but these too were only two or three sentences long at the most. The remaining 124 or 82.6% abounded in grammatical mistakes in many forms ranging from spelling mistakes to mistakes in tense, punctuation and construction. The following are the most common mistakes with examples:

A. Spelling mistakes -

- i. Football can create unity *among*s our friends
- ii. I like reading text books, newspaper, *megazines* and novels.

- iii. I have many *hobbies* like watching TV
 - iv. My hobbies are so *weird*.
 - v. My hobbies are *chating* with friends etc.
 - vi. I like listening to music and rome around.
- B. Mistakes in tense -
- i. Reading books also *helped* us in many ways.
 - ii. Watching TV *was* my favourite hobby.
 - iii. I like to play basketball the most because it *helped* me build stamina.
 - iv. I always learn some things from the books I read and I *enjoyed* it.
 - v. My hobbies *is* singing, dancing and reading.
- C. Mistakes in the use of articles -
- i. My hobby is to play a music.
 - ii. My hobby is watching *the* TV.
 - iii. I have *a* many hobbies.
 - iv. I like to play *an* outdoor games.
 - v. I like to read books like *the* novel and *the* comics.
- D. Senseless sentences -
- i. Hobby is something we like to do but not everything in our lives.
 - ii. Football is also good for our health and facilities and have fun.
 - iii. The moves of these dance express me.
 - iv. I prefer being alone than somebody else.
 - v. As we go out of our state we are always priviledge to use English.
 - vi. Music gives me impression.
 - vii. If I have a freetime, I usually have a lots of freetime.
- E. Mistakes in the use of singulars and plurals -

- i. I like to play with all my *friend*.
 - ii. I like to paint *picture*.
 - iii. I like to spend *times* with TV or computers.
 - iv. I have many hobby.
 - v. I also like to read book.
- F. Mistakes in punctuation -
- i. So that *Mizo 's* could have professional dancers
 - ii. I love watching *TV's*
 - iii. When *i 'm* in times of trouble.
 - iv. I like to watch *real madrid* games.
 - v. I like reading, *i* am very fond of singing also.
- G. Mistakes in vocabulary -
- i. Healthyness
 - ii. Onlining
 - iii. Instagraming
 - iv. Houseworks
- H. Miscellaneous mistakes -
- i. I offently read books in order to test myself whether my English are good.
 - ii. TV and diary helps me a lot in my English both grammer and pronouciation.
 - iii. In TV I watched like Discovery, Animal planet etc.
 - iv. I also likes learning lesson but only in sometimes.
 - v. My hobbies is listening country musics.
 - vi. At my free time, I would grap my guitar and play my feelings.
 - vii. I play with my friends at evening before study.

- viii. I like badminton I play it for most of time.
- ix. I used to play on evening or morning.
- x. It helps me a lot on speaking in English.

3.3.3. Cross tabulation of Questionnaire for High School students.

1. Sex vrs Do you like to speak in English?

		Like to speak in English		Total
		Yes	No	
Sex	Male	200	20	220
	Female	179	7	186
Total		379	27	406

Speaking in English is held in high esteem by all students across High Schools in Aizawl. But it can be seen that female students are more eager to use the language. 90.9% of the male students indicate that they like to speak in English while 96.23% of the female students show their fondness of speaking in English.

2. Sex vrs Do you find it difficult to speak in English?

		Speaking in English difficult			Total
		Yes	No	No response	
Sex	Male	72	147	1	220
	Female	66	120	0	186
Total		138	267	1	406

32.72% of the male students find it difficult to speak in English while 35.48% of female students claim that they find it difficult to speak in English. This indicates that female students are a little more self-conscious and hesitant where Spoken English is concerned.

3. Sex vrs Do you use English to speak with your friends in the school?

		Speaks in English with friends					Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	No response	
Sex	Male	25	34	154	7	0	220
	Female	8	42	124	11	1	186
Total		33	76	278	18	1	406

These statistics show that there are more male students who speak only in English in the school while more female students claim that they use it most of the time though not always. It can also be seen that there are comparatively more female students who say that they never use English to speak with their friends.

4. Do you like to speak in English? vrs At which stage did you first learn to speak in English?

		Beginning Stage of Learning English					Total
		K.G	Primary School	Middle School	High School	No Response	
Like to speak in English	Yes	230	117	17	14	1	379
	No	17	9	0	1	0	27
Total		247	126	17	15	1	406

The majority of students who like to speak in English are the ones who started learning English at the K.G. and Primary school level. This shows that the earlier they start learning English, the more the students like to speak in English.

5. Do you like to speak in English? vrs Do you use English to speak with your friends in the school?

		Speaks in English with friends					Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	No response	
Likes to speak in English	Yes	28	73	263	14	1	379
	No	5	3	15	4	0	27
Total		33	76	278	18	1	406

Surprisingly, among the 379 students who like to speak in English, a large proportion – 263 or 62.26% say that they speak only sometimes in English with their friends. This strongly indicates that an English speaking environment is not to be found in most educational institutions in Mizoram.

6. Do you like to speak in English? Vrs Do you ever use English outside the school, with friends or at home?

		Uses English outside the Classroom					Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	No response	
Likes to speak in English	Yes	9	18	272	79	1	379
	No	0	1	7	19	0	27
Total		9	19	279	98	1	406

Among the 379 students who like to speak in English, a large majority (272) of them sometimes use English outside the classroom, but there are very few (18) who use it most of the time and fewer still (9) who use it all the time. As mentioned earlier, an English speaking environment seems to be absent in educational institutions. Even among those who like to speak in English, 79 never use it outside the classroom. All this is due to the fact that Mizo is

spoken in most homes and there are very few opportunities to use it outside as shopkeepers and everyone with whom they come into contact with outside their houses speak in Mizo.

7. Do you like to speak in English? vrs Do you like to read English books?

		Likes to Read English Books			Total
		Yes	No	No Response	
Like to speak in English	Yes	327	51	1	379
	No	16	11	0	27
Total		343	62	1	406

Among the 379 students who like to speak in English, 327 students like to read English books. This could mean that the reading of English books encourages them to speak in English or vice versa.

8. Do you like to speak in English? vrs From where/whom did you learn English most?

		Source of Learning English					Total	
		Teachers	Friends	Family	Tv, Internet, etc.	Books		No Response
Like to speak in English	Yes	224	51	71	15	1	17	379
	No	12	6	5	2	0	2	27
Total		236	57	76	17	1	19	406

Among the 379 students who like to speak in English, 224 of them cite their teachers as their source of learning English, 72 cite their family while 51 cite their friends. This shows the importance of teachers where speaking in English is concerned.

9. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? vrs With whom do you find it easier to speak in English?

		Easier to speak English with...		Total
		Mizo People	Non-Mizo People	
Finds speaking English difficult	Yes	76	62	138
	No	94	173	267
	No Response	0	1	1
Total		170	236	406

Of the 267 students who did not find speaking in English difficult, a large percentage-173 of them found it easier to speak with Non-Mizo people. Since Mizo students do not get too many opportunities to speak in English with Non- Mizo people, this could be a factor that has hindered the learning and speaking of English by Mizo students.

10. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? Vrs If you find it difficult to speak in English, is it because...

		Reason of Difficulty in English					Total
		Understand	could not speak it	English, but not with confidence	laughed at	No response	
Found speaking English Difficult	Yes	14	18	94	10	2	138
	No	17	15	184	22	29	267
	No Response	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		31	33	279	32	31	406

Of the 138 students who found speaking in English difficult, the majority-94 said that they did not have enough confidence. This is also true of those who did not find speaking in English difficult. Lack of practice and lack of opportunities in speaking could be the cause of this.

11. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? vrs If you feel that your English is not good, what do you think is responsible for this?

		Reason of Weakness in English					Total
		Lack of good teaching	Lack of motivation and encouragement	Lack of opportunities to use English	Lack of correct environment/ atmosphere	No Response	
Found speaking English Difficult	Yes	14	14	69	31	10	138
	No	24	23	111	49	60	267
	No Response	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		38	38	180	80	70	406

Among the 138 students who found speaking in English difficult, 69 of them, the majority felt that lack of opportunities to use English is to blame for their weakness in English while 31 of them feel that they lack the correct environment or atmosphere for speaking in English.

12. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? vrs Which aspect of English do you find the most difficult?

		Most difficult aspect of English					Total
		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	No Response	
Found speaking English Difficult	Yes	21	76	9	30	2	138
	No	62	98	22	76	9	267
	No Response	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		83	175	31	106	11	406

Speaking seems to be by far the most difficult skill for 76 of the 138 students who find it difficult to speak in English as well as by 98 of those who do not find it too difficult while reading seems to be the easiest skill for both groups.

13. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? Vrs Do you like it when your teachers use Mizo for explanations in the class?

		Favours explanation in Mizo		Total
		Yes	No	
Found speaking English Difficult	Yes	130	8	138
	No	239	28	267
	No Response	1	0	1
Total		370	36	406

Almost all the 138 students who found it difficult to speak in English, favoured Mizo for explanations in the class. This could be one of the reasons why they cannot improve in English.

14. Do you find it difficult to speak in English? vrs From where/whom did you learn English most?

		Sources of Learning English						Total
		Teachers	Friends	Family	Tv, Internet, etc.	Books	No Response	
Found speaking English difficult	Yes	70	23	29	6	1	9	138
	No	165	34	47	11	0	10	267
	No Response	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total			57	76	17	1	19	406

Among the 138 students who found speaking in English difficult, only 1 cited books as his source of learning while 70 students said they learnt it from their teachers. This implies that learning English from teachers does not guarantee ease in speaking English. If the students

had turned to reading as their source of learning English, they might have enlarged their vocabulary and understanding of the language, and this would have greatly helped them in Spoken English. Among the same segment of students, only 6 named the TV, internet etc., as their source of learning. As in the case of the reading, the same students might have found speaking in English easier had they spent more time with the TV, internet and other electronic media.

15. Do your parents encourage you to learn English? Vrs If you read English books, where do you get them from?

		Source of English books						Total
		Bought	Borrowed from friends	Borrowed from Libraries	Received as Gifts	Other Sources	No Response	
Parents Encouragement received	Yes	228	54	72	15	0	18	387
	No	8	3	4	2	1	1	19
Total			57	76	17	1	19	406

It can be clearly observed that the students whose parents encourage them to use English are the ones who have bought the books that they have read. Parents thus play an important role in laying the foundations of English learning.

16. At which stage did you first learn to speak in English? vrs Do you find it difficult to speak in English?

		Finds speaking in English Difficult			Total
		Yes	No	No Response	
Stage at which English is first spoken	KG	72	175	0	247
	Primary	46	79	1	126
	Middle School	7	10	0	17
	High School	13	2	0	15
	No Response	0	1	0	1
Total		138	267	1	406

The majority of students who do not find speaking in English difficult are the ones who have learnt to speak it right from the KG classes. It seems that the earlier a student starts to speak in English, the easier he finds it to use the language.

17. At which stage did you first learn to speak in English? Vrs Do you understand the English spoken by your teachers?

		Understands the Teachers' English				Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	
Stage at which English is first spoken	KG	103	101	42	1	247
	Primary	46	56	23	1	126
	Middle School	5	5	7	0	17
	High School	2	2	9	2	15
	No Response	0	0	1	0	1
Total		156	164	82	4	406

Students who always understand their teacher's English are the ones who have started speaking in English right from the KG classes. The earlier students start speaking in English, the easier it seems to be for them to use the language.

18. At which stage did you first learn to speak in English? Vrs Do you like to read English books?

		Likes to Read English Books			Total
		Yes	No	No Response	
Stage at which English is first spoken	KG	218	29	0	247
	Primary	99	26	1	126
	Middle School	14	3	0	17
	High School	11	4	0	15
	No Response	1	0	0	1
Total		343	62	1	406

It can be seen that the majority of students who like to read English books are the ones who have started speaking in English at the K.G level. There seems to be a close relationship between reading English books and learning to speak early in English.

19. At which stage did you first learn to speak in English? Vrs From where/whom did you learn English most?

		Source of Learning English							Total
		Teachers	Friends	Family	Tv, Internet, etc.	Books	Others	No Response	
Stage at which English is first spoken	KG	129	9	4	55	42	5	3	247
	Primary	63	5	1	33	19	5	0	126
	Middle School	6	3	0	6	2	0	0	17
	High School	12	0	0	2	0	0	1	15
	No Response	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		210	17	5	96	64	10	4	406

Teachers, TV, Internet and books rank high as sources of learning English by those who learnt to speak English at the KG and Primary levels.

20. Which aspect of English do you find the easiest? vrs Do you like to speak in English?

		Likes to speak in English		Total
		Yes	No	
Easiest Aspect of English	Listening	110	13	123
	Speaking	66	4	70
	Reading	160	5	165
	Writing	42	5	47
	No Response	1	0	1
Total		379	27	406

For those who like to speak in English, reading is by far the easiest aspect of the language while writing seems to be the most difficult.

21. Which aspect of English do you find the easiest? vrs At which stage did you first learn to speak in English?

		Stage at which English was first spoken					Total
		KG	Primary School	Middle School	High School	No Response	
Easiest Aspect of English	Listening	74	34	8	7	0	123
	Speaking	47	20	1	1	1	70
	Reading	92	60	6	7	0	165
	Writing	33	12	2	0	0	47
	No Response	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		247	126	17	15	1	406

It can be seen that the earlier they start to speak in English, the easier they find it to speak in English.

22. Which aspect of English do you find the most difficult? vrs Do you like to speak in English?

		Likes to speak in English		Total
		Yes	No	
Most Difficult aspect of English	Listening	80	3	83
	Speaking	157	18	175
	Reading	31	0	31
	Writing	100	6	106
	No Response	11	0	11
Total		379	27	406

It is ironic that those who like to speak in English find speaking in English to be the most difficult aspect of English.

23. Do you understand the English spoken by your teachers? vrs Do you like to read English books?

		Likes to read English books			Total
		Yes	No	No Response	
Understand Teacher's English	Yes, always	142	14	0	156
	Most of the time	138	25	1	164
	Sometimes	60	22	0	82
	Never	3	1	0	4
Total		343	62	1	406

These statistics reveal that the majority of students who like to read English books (142) always understand their teachers' English, and 138 of them understand it most of the time. Among the students who do not like to read English books, the ones who always understand their teachers English are much fewer than those who understand it only most of the time and those who understand it only sometimes.

24. Do you understand your English text- book? vrs From where/whom did you learn English most?

		Source of Learning English							Total
		Teachers	Friends	Family	TV, Internet, etc.	Books	Others	No Response	
Understand the English Text Books	Yes, always	67	9	3	39	32	3	3	156
	Most of the time	84	4	2	44	23	7	0	164
	Sometimes	56	4	0	13	8	0	1	82
	Never	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	4

Total	210	17	5	96	64	10	4	406
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Apart from their teachers, most of the students who always understand their English text books have cited TV, Internet and books as their main sources of learning English.

25. Do you like it when your teachers use Mizo for explanations in the class? vrs Do you ask your teacher questions in English in the class?

		Asks Teachers Questions in the Class in English			Total
		Yes	No	No Response	
Likes when teachers use Mizo for explanation	Yes	351	18	1	370
	No	35	1	0	36
Total		386	19	1	406

The figures above show that almost all the students who like it when their teacher uses Mizo for explanations in the class are not hesitant about asking questions in the class. This could be because they can ask their questions in the mother tongue.

26. Do you like to read English books? vrs If you feel that your English is good, what do you think is responsible for this?

		Good in English due to					Total
		Parents' Encouragements	Good Teachers	Reading Books	Tv, Radio and other Media	No Response	
Likes to read English Books	Yes	13	125	114	89	2	343
	No	1	26	11	24	0	62
	No Response	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		14	152	125	113	2	406

Reading in English is considered to be a close second to good teachers as the main factor in helping students to become good in English.

27. Do you like to read English books? vrs At which stage did you first learn to speak in English?

		Stage at which English was first spoken					Total
		KG	Primary	Middle	High School	No Response	
Likes to read English Books	Yes	218	99	14	11	1	343
	No	29	26	3	4	0	62
	No Response	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		247	126	17	15	1	406

Most of the students who like to read English books are the ones who have spoken the language right from KG classes. Statistics show that the earlier students start using English, the more they like to read English books.

28. Do you like to read English books? vrs Do you ever use English outside the school, with friends or at home?

		Uses English Outside the Classroom					Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	No response	
Likes to read English Books	Yes	9	16	253	65	0	343
	No	0	3	25	33	1	62
	No Response	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		9	19	279	98	1	406

Students who like to read English books do not necessarily use English outside the classroom, a majority of them – 253 of them say they use it only sometimes while 65 of those

who like to read English books say they never use it outside the classroom. This could also be due to lack of opportunities to speak in English.

29. Do you like to read English books? vrs Do you understand the English spoken by your teachers?

		Understands Teacher's English				Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	
Likes to read English Books	Yes	142	138	60	3	343
	No	14	25	22	1	62
	No Response	0	1	0	0	1
Total		156	164	82	4	406

Students who like to read English books also seem to have no difficulty in understanding their teacher's English.

30. Do you like to read English books? vrs Do you understand your English text- book?

		Understands English Text Books					Total
		Yes, always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	No response	
Likes to read English Books	Yes	96	169	75	2	1	343
	No	12	27	21	2	0	62
	No Response	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		108	196	97	4	1	406

Most of the students who like to read English books seem to have no difficulty in understanding their English text books, 96 of them say that they always understand it and 169 of them say that they understand it most of the time. Cultivating reading habits seems to help in classroom learning as well.

31. What type of books do you like to read? vrs Do you like to speak in English?

		Likes to speak in English		Total
		Yes	No	
Type of English books read	Comics	106	14	120
	Magazines	69	6	75
	Short Stories	149	6	155
	Novels	43	0	43
	No response	12	1	13
Total		379	27	406

It can be seen that students who like to speak in English mostly read comics and short stories, and have not graduated to longer and more comprehensive story books.

3.4. Conclusion.

This chapter includes the data and interpretation of the data acquired from the teachers' as well as the students' questionnaire. Some of the data from both sets of questionnaires have been cross-tabulated to elicit additional information. Some of the data which are relevant to the present study are highlighted below :

A. Findings from the teachers' questionnaire :

The questionnaires for the teachers have unearthed the fact that only 15% of the teachers in Elementary schools in Mizoram are aware of Second Language Acquisition theories and methods. This is not surprising as only 15.50% of them claim that they have received some kind of training to be an English teacher and 84.50% of them feel their need of some kind of training. The 'training' here however, mostly refers to one or two days' workshop or certificate courses which are held once every two or three years. The majority of the teachers therefore go about their daily work using their individual methods, well-meaning no doubt, trying their best to complete the syllabus on time. A majority of the

teachers, 63.40% of the teachers, found the present English text books suitable and sufficient for the acquisition of English.

There seems to be a lot of focus on grammar, more than 77% of the teachers have separate grammar classes while 94.40% believe that grammar should be taught separately. The questionnaire also reveals that Spoken English is considered to be very important by 67.60% of the teachers, and 88.70% of the teachers speak in English with their students outside the school. 94.40% of the teachers believe that their students are exposed to English outside the classroom. 80.30% of the teachers feel that only English should be used in the classroom though 67.60% claim that they use Mizo when necessary. In spite of all these measures, an alarming 85.90% are not satisfied with the English used by their students.

The data collected reveals the fact that though 85.90% of the teachers consider reading to be a very important skill, there is no time for the teachers to promote reading in the class and only 38.02% claim that they encourage their students to read beyond the classroom texts.

B. Findings from the students' questionnaire :

95.35% of the students claim that their parents encourage them to speak in English. 90.39% of them admire people who speak fluently in English and 93.3% of them indicate their own enjoyment of speaking in English, however, 68.7% find it difficult to speak in English because they are not confident enough to do so. 37.4% of the students believe that good teachers are the most helpful factors for learning English, and 30.8% believe that reading is the best way to acquire English while 27.8% believe that TV, radio and other media have helped them in their acquisition of English.

44.3% of the students feel that they are not good in English because they lack the opportunities to use English and 19.7% also claim that they have problems in English because they lack the correct environment. Only 38.4% of the students can say that they

always understand the English spoken by their teachers. It is seen that 84.5% of the students like to read books but the reading that they do is limited to short stories, comics and magazines. This could be due to the lack of good reading material. 64.80% of the schools do not have libraries, and the ones that do have them are reserved for the use of teachers.

The data reveals that the teaching and learning of English is being actively taken up by on a wide scale in Mizoram and that the Mizo society accords great importance to the learning of the English language. The zeal and the aspirations of Mizo students to acquire English as a Second Language is clearly seen in the packed classrooms of English medium schools when compared to the dwindling population of students of students in government run Mizo medium schools. However, there are many factors which are not conducive for the acquisition of English in the environment, and the manner in which the teaching and learning of English is being handled in the schools. It is the duty of the educators to find ways to overcome these problems as far as possible. The acquisition of English in Mizoram deserves serious attention and the data thus obtained from the questionnaires should be helpful in solving many of the problems perceived in the teaching- learning of English in the state in the future.

CHAPTER IV: TEXT BOOK EVALUATION AND INTERVIEWS

4.1. Introduction.

Webster's Dictionary defines a text-book as, "a manual of instruction, a book containing a presentation of the principle of the subject used as a basis of instruction." A text book is a book designed for classroom use, carefully prepared by experts to help students acquire knowledge in a particular field.

Although language is primarily spoken, written language holds an important place in the realm of language teaching and acquisition. In olden days knowledge was passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth and "language and subjects were taught orally through discussion between the Gurus and their disciples" (Govil 165). In most formal educational settings today however, language is taught using text-books which are graded to match the language learner's age and ability. Text-books provide help both to the teacher and the students. Text-books decide what and how much is to be taught within the available time-frame. It also provides a check-list to assess the progress of students at regular intervals and for this reason, it is important to choose text-books wisely and to frequently evaluate their efficacy.

Under the influence of writings and experiments of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, John Dewey and Mahatma Gandhi, there was a revolt against bookish knowledge and conventional methods of education. This led to the attempts, for dispensing with the book, as an instrument and tool for imparting knowledge. Recently in the first half of this century, a thorough testing was undertaken by some thoughtful students of education in the U.S.A. who experimented with a bookless school. They, however, arrived at the conclusion that books

should not be dispensed with completely from the system of education. The consensus of educationists in India, as well as abroad, reveals that the text-book is an integral part of an educational system.

4.2. Importance of text-books.

- (a) According to the report of the Text-book Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education, “A modern educational system without text-book is as difficult to imagine as Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark”.
- (b) The Secondary Education Commission stated, “It is desirable to modify the rigid dependence of education on certain prescribed text-books, and, therefore, we recommended that text-books should not be prescribed for every subject. In case of languages it seems desirable to prescribe definite text-books for each class in order to ensure proper gradation. So far as the other subjects are concerned, the text-book committee should approve a number of suitable books in each subject and leave the choice to the institution concerned.

A text-book is an economical device, as it contains, the intellectual deposit of specific experiences that have been developed into generalizations. A good text-book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit. As the matter given in the book is logical and comprehensive, it sets a standard of minimum essentials to be achieved by pupils of all categories. It gives the beginner a grasp of new matter. It gives the direction and saves time and energy of the teacher and the pupils. The text-book makes self-teaching a possible proposition. It is generally seen that even the impact of the best spoken message is transitory in character and its impression is carried only in fragmentary form (Kochhar 98-99).

The importance of Text-books has been variously described in the following ways –

1. An assistant master in print-in the absence of the teacher.

2. It has a structured frame-work which spells out and interprets the syllabus both for the teacher and the students.
3. An important tool for the teacher- to plan lessons, prepare assignments and organize class activities.
4. A constant companion and guide.
5. Sets standard of minimum essentials to be achieved by the students.

4.3. Characteristics of a good text-book.

The characteristics of a good text book have been enumerated in following way-

1. The language of the book should be free from mistakes.
2. Besides grammatical and idiomatic correctness, the English should be simple, clear and unambiguous.
3. It should incorporate carefully selected and graded vocabulary items and structures.
4. New words and structures should be introduced after sufficient intervals, so that students may assimilate them gradually. The newly introduced vocabulary items should be repeated a number of times in the succeeding chapters so that students may make them a part of their active vocabulary.
5. A good text-book should contain chapters in variety of forms such as story, incident, essay, dialogues, descriptions, biography etc.
6. The form and topic should be in accordance with the age of the students-should suit their interest and comprehension power.
7. It should provide sufficient exercises for practice-arranged in increasing order of difficulty.
8. The illustrations should be clear, relevant and attractive.

9. The size of the book should neither be too small nor too big.
10. The print should be clear-large and bold.
11. The cost should be affordable.
12. The quality of paper should be good.
13. The cover should be attractive and well stitched (Govil 165).

4.4. Criteria for preparation and evaluation of a text-book.

1. Achieving the purpose of teaching- development of the language skills.
2. Child-centered, suitable to the age, ability and interest of the pupil.
3. Well- illustrated, relevant, attractive and useful.
4. Exercises for practice-to focus their attention on the right points of discussion and for testing their comprehension.
5. Free from indoctrination-should be free from all forms of bias.
6. Up-to-date with latest words and usages, should be frequently revised.

4.5. Content Analysis.

Content analysis examines the relevance of the topic to develop the learners' understanding of the language and their ability to apply the knowledge for different purposes.

Content Analysis covers the following points:

1. Name of the publisher.
2. Printing and page no.
3. Number of prose and poetry lesson.
4. Language simple and clear.
5. Exercises-relevant and not too difficult.
6. Illustrations.

7. Arrangement of lessons-variety in theme and forms.
8. Vocabulary and structures-carefully selected and graded.
9. Serves a purpose of language subject-punctuation, grammar, etc.
10. Psychologically sound and child centered-difficulty level.

4.6. Objectives.

1. In modern educational evaluation, objectives are forefront not only while learning but also while testing.
2. Educationists decide upon the objectives first and then frame the content, i.e., curriculum and syllabus.
3. The teacher gets readymade content and is free to select the objective which may suit the content i.e., the teacher carries out the content with the objectives in mind.
4. In teaching language, content analysis involves checking of the introduction of new words and structures, new phrases, figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, etc, for the development of the language skills.

4.7. Structure of School Education in Mizoram.

As per the recommendations of the Mizoram Education Reforms Commission, July 2010, the structure of school education in the state of Mizoram has been re-organized in conformity with the expectations contained in the NPE 1986/1992, and the definition of elementary education as contained in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The re-organized structure is now:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------|------------|
| (a) Elementary Stage | I – VIII | 6-14 years |
| (i) Primary | I – IV | |

- | | | | |
|------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| (ii) | Upper Primary | VI – VIII | |
| (b) | Secondary Stage | IX – XII | 15-18 years |
| (i) | Secondary | IX – X | |
| (ii) | Higher Secondary | XI – XII | |

(Page 40 of ERC Report)

4.8. Review of current text-books of Elementary Classes in English medium Schools.

The English text books that are being used in the 2014-2015 academic session in Mizoram have been prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School Education. For Classes I to VII, the Board has chosen different English text-books for English Medium and Mizo Medium schools. The English text-books prescribed for Mizo medium schools are The Mizoram Reader series published by the Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Meanwhile, the Text-books prescribed for English Medium Schools in the Elementary stages from Class I to VII are the Unicorn series published by Orient Blackswan. For Class VIII students, the Board has chosen its own publication entitled the Let's Enjoy English series consisting of a Course Book, a Literature Reader and a Workbook.

The Unicorn series prescribed for classes I to VII have been compiled by Shanta Rameshwar Rao, Founder and Retired Principal, Vidyaranya School, Hyderabad. The text-books are accompanied by work-books which have been designed by Dr.Sunanda Datta. On first impression, the books in the series are colourful and look attractive, with a picture of a garlanded white unicorn in a playful pose, a rabbit perched on its back and surrounded by butterflies, birds, a squirrel and some flowers. The text-books come in various colours like pink, blue, green and red to attract the interest of young children. The quality of paper is good and the binding also seems to be of good quality. The print is also of a good size, suitable for the students for which it is intended. The text book is also reasonably priced.

In the Preface to the text-books, the editor has promised that the Unicorn Readers, “... take children by the hand into a wide range of encounters” and also help them to “enter realms of fantasy, and experience the thrill of reading stories and poems...” The Preface further states that:

In the classroom process that unfolds with Unicorn, the pupil participates as fully as the teacher does. The design of the books makes it possible for pupils to share what they feel or think, with their teacher and with their friends. There are pre-reading, speaking, role play and discussion tasks which engage pupils actively and make them respond in several ways to what they read. This in turn is certain to make pupils develop an enduring interest in reading. The language work is designed to be comfortable both for the pupil and the teacher. The rules of grammar and usage are taught in context and supported by pupil-correctable practice. Vocabulary learning looks at words, phrases and expressions, at meaning and appropriateness in use, and at word-building. The use of the dictionary is introduced in a planned manner across the series. The workbooks further the reading skill with the help of a variety of themes and ensure that pupils learn to express themselves well both in speech and writing.

In order to attain the objectives stated above, each Unicorn reader contains a Language Syllabus in the form of a table at the beginning of the book. The Language Syllabus contains the name of the text, the Grammar, Vocabulary, Dictionary work, Activity/Discussion and Writing which are to be done in each lesson.

The lessons in the Unicorn Workbooks that accompany the Readers are all linked to the lessons in the Unicorn Text-books. It is the aim of the Workbooks to “cut across the dull

and the mechanical in language learning to present a world where pupils and teachers can come together to enjoy learning-teaching with:

1. Specially created reading texts which relate to children's lives.
2. Grammar, vocabulary, and language practice material aimed at enrichment.
3. Several kinds of opportunities for pupils to share, to discuss and to actively participate in the classroom process.
4. Pupil-friendly Work-books closely linked to the Readers."

4.8.1. Unicorn Reader I –

The Text Book for Class I contains 70 pages but there seems to be a problem with pagination as there are some lessons whose page numbers do not match the page numbers indicated in the Contents. On the first page after the Contents have been presented, the Language Syllabus for Class I has been presented in the form of a table. In this table are shown the names of the 16 lessons in the book, the grammar, vocabulary, activity/discussion and writing for each lesson.

The Reader is divided into 16 units, containing 16 prose pieces and 8 poems. There are ample illustrations which are simple and colourful enough to catch the eye of young children. The first lesson in this Reader meant for Class I students is entitled "Friends" and contains a prose piece nine sentences long which is quite appropriate for this age group. However, the first exercise requires the children to respond 'Yes' or 'No' to sentences like "Gita is Amit's brother." The more appropriate responses required could have been 'Right' or 'Wrong' because the sentences have been presented in the statement form and not in the question form. The aim of this lesson as stated in the syllabus is to teach the students the concepts of 'this' and 'that' but these concepts are not clearly represented in the pictures in the second exercise. The pictures which denote objects which are far away, i.e., requiring 'that' while

being referred to are just smaller in size than the objects requiring ‘this’. There is no sense of perspective in the pictures which could suggest that the objects are either far away or nearby.

The third exercise requires the children to fill in the missing letters in simple words like ‘sister’, ‘school’ ‘friend’ etc. This is simple enough and so is the next exercise which requires the students to tell their teacher the names of their friends and the number of siblings they have. The last exercise in this lesson requires the students to copy down sentences in their notebooks. This is a good idea as it will help the students practice their writing skills while re-enforcing the concepts learnt in the lesson. However, there is no instruction for the teacher on how to inculcate the skill of reading neither is there any content for reading drills.

The second lesson is longer and contains exercises which slightly more difficult than the first lesson. This slight gradation in length and difficulty can be seen progressing throughout the Reader which is logical and appropriate.

4.8.2 Unicorn Workbook I –

The workbook contains 49 pages and it also has a Language Syllabus at the end of the book in the same manner as the Reader. All the lessons are linked with those in the Reader but the aims of the Link lessons in the Workbook with regard to Grammar, Vocabulary, Speech Practice/ Listening and Writing are all different from those of the Reader. It could have been more effective if the workbooks only served to re-iterate what has been attempted in the reader and to re-enforce the concepts introduced in the corresponding lessons in the reader. The first Link Lesson attempts to re-enforce the concepts of “this” and “that”, but like the Reader, it fails to clearly illustrate the difference between the two concepts through the pictures. There is nothing in the pictures to indicate that the objects depicted are either far away or nearby. There are also columns in the tables which are required to be filled up by the students, but there are no lines in these columns on which to write. It is a bit ambitious to

expect 6 year old students to write a number of words in a column in a straight or tidy manner if there are no lines drawn to guide them.

The Workbook introduces words like 'harbour', 'gorilla' and 'sandwich' which are not found in the Reader and which might be a little difficult for Class I students where spelling is concerned and because these are terms which they do not encounter in their daily lives.

4.8.3. Unicorn Reader II –

The reader for Class II contains 82 pages. It also begins with a language syllabus after the page where the contents have been listed down. The reader is divided into 12 Units containing 12 stories and 6 poems. The authors have introduced Dictionary work from the Second Reader onwards which is a good step to enlarge the vocabulary of students and make them used to the habit of using Dictionaries.

4.8.4. Unicorn Workbook II –

The workbook for Class II has twelve lessons all linked to the lessons in the reader. The language syllabus in the workbook is also closely linked to that of the Reader. The author of this textbook has introduced Listening Texts from this stage onwards which will help students to develop their listening skills in English.

4.8.5. Unicorn Reader III and Unicorn Workbook III –

The Unicorn Reader for Class III has 90 pages containing 12 prose lessons and 6 poems and the Workbook consists of 66 pages containing 12 link lessons. The work to be done by the students is slightly more difficult and complicated than that of the previous class.

4.8.6. Unicorn Reader IV and Unicorn Workbook IV –

The Reader has a hundred pages with 12 lessons and 6 poems. The first lesson introduces new words in an interesting way, in the form of a story. The first lesson deals with a historical tale about the Greek hero Ulysses, which is cleverly followed by a poem about Ulysses and his dog. Then comes a story about birds followed by an amusing tale about people who are in the habit of borrowing things without returning them. There is also a poem about birds, a story about monkeys, a lesson on writing poetry, a poem on Skyscrapers, a lesson on Bees, a lesson on pollution, dinosaurs, a touching story about an old man who lived alone, a lesson on a glider possum, a funny story about the people of a remote island and finally a poem entitled 'Shiny Things'. All things considered, the Reader for Class IV is well balanced and touches on a variety of topics to stimulate the imagination of that particular age-group. This is true of all the other Readers in the series. The workbook too has lessons linked with those of the Reader and also requires the students to perform certain tasks, keeping up the same standard and much the same pattern in the higher classes. Workbook IV has 12 link lessons within 62 pages.

4.8.7. Unicorn Reader and Workbook V – VII -

There is not much difference in the style and pattern of the Unicorn text-books in the higher middle classes. Unicorn Reader V has 96 pages and 12 lessons and 6 poems while the Workbook has 63 pages. The Unicorn Reader for Class VI has 98 pages 12 lessons and 6 poems and the Workbook has 71 pages. The Unicorn Reader VII has 107 pages 12 lessons and 6 poems while the Unicorn Workbook VII consists of 72 pages.

4.9. An Overview of The Unicorn Series.

1. Most of the characters in the stories and poems in the Readers have Indian names like Amit, Gita, Chandra, Kumar, Radha, Shyam etc. It could be a bit difficult for Mizo

children to identify with or even correctly pronounce such names which they do not encounter in their daily lives.

2. The Readers contain unfamiliar terms like “cakes of soap”, “tins of jam”, “the deep blue sea”, “clock tower” and “working on a ship” which the children do not encounter in their daily lives, and may not be able to identify with.
3. In the Unicorn Workbooks, the colours used in the illustrations are done in two-colours, red and black and in different shades of the combination of the two. Since the students have to work on the workbooks side by side with the Readers which have multi-coloured illustrations, they might find it less attractive and this could dampen their enthusiasm and interest in working on the work-books.
4. In some instances, the lessons in the Reader fail to deliver what has been stated as objectives in the language syllabus at the beginning of the book.
5. There is no space between certain exercises in which the children are required to do written work in Reader II (e.g., page 71) which could confuse younger children.
6. There are certain areas in Grammar like the Tense, which has been dealt with right from Reader I, where the simple Present tense is presented. But even so, this is an area in which most Mizo students still find a lot of difficulty.
7. With regard to vocabulary too, in which Mizo students are very weak, the Unicorn series has attempted to introduce English Vocabulary in a very phased and organized manner. But this does not seem to have any effect on the language skills.
8. There is not enough emphasis on reading in any of the text-books.

4.10. Review of Class VIII English Text Book.

The Let's Enjoy English Series has been published by the Mizoram Board of School Education in collaboration with Pearson Longman and has been printed in India by Lakshmi

Offset Printers. The cover, the binding, the paper, the print and the illustrations are all suitable for the age group of the students for whom it is intended, the books are also very reasonably priced.

In the foreword to the series, the Chairman of the Board has mentioned that the Board “accords utmost importance to the development of a structured course of study in order to encourage the teaching-learning process in secondary schools.” In order to keep pace with an ever-changing socio-cultural environment, the Board has revised its curriculum and syllabi following the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and has produced the textbooks in strict conformity to it.

The Course book consists of 104 pages and has 10 lessons and 5 poems. Along with the historical tales and usual short stories, the authors have included ‘The Yahoo story’ which deals with the beginning of ‘Yahoo’ on the internet. For this generation, this is a very relevant topic and is sure to catch the interest of young students.

The Workbook has 76 pages and the lessons in the Workbook are all linked to the lessons in the Course book much like the Readers and Workbooks of the Unicorn series used in Classes I to VII. However, the Literature Reader seems to be something the Board has added to foster an interest in English Literature in the students. It contains adaptations from Classic English stories, legends and folktales from different parts of the world including a translation of a Mizo folktale. The Literature Reader has 48 pages, and contains 7 prose lessons and 2 poems. An interesting development at this stage is that a Mizo folk-tale entitled ‘Nuchhimi’ has been included in the text-book. This is a clever decision and it is expected that the students will be able to relate to the story, understand it better and improve their English in the process.

4.11. Overview of the text-books.

The Unicorn series prescribed for Classes I to VII has attempted to bring students to an acceptable standard of English language learning at par with other textbooks used in other parts of the country. In each text book, on the first page after the Contents, the Language Syllabus for each class has been presented in the form of a table. In this table are shown the names of the 16 lessons in the book, the grammar, vocabulary, activity/discussion and writing for each lesson.

The text-books used for Class VIII are also comparable with the text books used in other states and it has to be kept in mind here that there will be very few text-books which are totally fault free in any school in any state or country. Since the text books being used in English medium schools in Mizoram especially those prescribed for Class VIII have been designed especially for Mizo students by experts, it will not be easy to find better replacements. For this reason, it would not be fair to blame the text-books that are currently being used in Mizoram even if the acquisition of English by the students is not satisfactory.

When we look into the text-books thus evaluated in the light the criteria laid down good text book in 4.3, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. The English language being used in the text books of English medium Elementary schools in the 2014-2015 academic session are free from mistakes as far as grammar, spelling or printing are concerned. However, some of the responses required of the students, as mentioned in 4.8.1 could have been more appropriately framed and as mentioned in the same section, there is an error in the page numbering.
2. The English used in the text-books too is simple, clear and unambiguous.

3. The designers of the text books have tried their best to select and grade vocabulary items and have succeeded to do so.
4. As far as the introduction of new words and structures are concerned, the designers of the text books have done well.
5. Variety is seen in the selection of stories from different genre: Fairy tales, fables, Indian mythology, Greek mythology, Animal tales, historical tales and scientific essays etc. Stories are interspersed with poems in the chapters but there are no plays or dialogues to be seen in the texts.
6. The form and topic of the lessons seem to be in accordance with the age, ability and interest of the students.
7. There are plenty of exercises in every chapter, these should be sufficient.
8. The text –books could have come with better illustrations - more colourful and attractive. Moreover, the illustrations seem to lack a sense of perspective as mentioned in 4.8.1.
9. The Unicorn text books and workbooks as well as the English books of Class VIII are of a convenient size, neither too big nor too small.
10. The print of the text-books is fine but the spaces left for students to do the exercises seem to be a little congested.
11. The text-books are very reasonably priced with prices ranging from Rs.28.00 to Rs.70.00.
12. The quality of paper used in the text-books seems to be good enough.
13. The text books in both the series have covers which are bright and attractive. The contents for Class VIII are done in black and white while the workbooks of the Unicorn series are done in two colours.

14. There is no trace of any attempt at indoctrination or any form of bias in all the text-books evaluated.

When all has been said and done regarding the text-books, the present researcher feels the attempt to promote reading skills in the class-room, or the reading habit at home is seriously lacking in the present syllabus. Except for a chapter entitled “The Reading Club” in the Unicorn Reader 3, where reading as a hobby is mentioned, there is hardly any mention of the merits of reading in text-books. The main focus in the text books seems to be on grammar, comprehension, listening and writing skills while speaking and reading skills have been relegated to the background. Mizo students, as mentioned earlier live in a mono-lingual society and the only avenue through which they can get exposed to correct English in a systematic way is through the reading of books in English. If more efforts could be given to the development of reading and speaking in the syllabus, the students of Mizoram should benefit a lot more from their English lessons in the school and this would help them in acquiring the English language more effectively and use it with much greater ease and confidence in their daily lives.

In addition to the questionnaires for teachers and students of Elementary schools and the review of text-books being used in the English medium schools, interviews form an integral part of this study. In order to find out the best method for the acquisition of English for Mizo learners, there could be no better way than to interview Mizo people who have successfully acquired English in spite of all the odds against them and to find out how they managed to do so. As this study focuses on students studying within Mizoram, it is only fair as well as sensible to select interview candidates from among the people who have completed their elementary schooling in Mizoram and yet have acquired English as their second language remarkably well.

4.12. Interviews.

The Interview is another method of collecting data for research purposes. It involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses (Kothari 97). Two main kinds of interviews are conducted, personal interviews and telephone interviews.

A. Personal Interviews: In a personal interview the interviewer and the interviewee come face-to-face and the required information is collected through questions and answers.

The main advantages of the Personal Interview amongst several are as follows :

- (i) A lot of information can be obtained in great depth.
- (ii) There is a lot of flexibility as the interviewer has more opportunities to restructure his questions as required to suit the level of the interviewee.
- (iii) Interviewees are obligated to respond to questions in the face-to-face situation and therefore the no-response rate is very low.
- (iv) Responses are mostly spontaneous and therefore considered more reliable.

The Personal Interview also has certain disadvantages among which are the following:

- (i) It can prove to be very expensive especially if the sample required is large.
- (ii) Some crucial interviewees may not be easily contacted due to distance and shortage of time.
- (iii) This is a time consuming method of data collection.
- (iv) The physical presence of the interviewer could be intimidating and lead to unreliable responses being collected.

B. Telephone Interviews: The Telephone interview is a widely used method especially in developed countries. In this method the interviewer contacts and extracts information from the interviewee through the telephone. This method too has certain advantages and disadvantages, the advantages being :

- (i) It is cheaper than the Personal Interview.
- (ii) It is faster than the Personal Interview.
- (iii) Access can be gained to respondents who otherwise cannot be contacted.
- (iv) Samples can be collected from wider and more representative sources.

Like the Personal Interview, the Telephone Interview has certain disadvantages, the chief of these being:

- (i) The period of interview is usually short and interviewers may forget important questions and respondents too may omit important data.
- (ii) Only respondents who have a telephone can be contacted through this method.
- (iii) It is not suitable for intensive surveys requiring comprehensive answers. Only short, to the point questions and answers can be included.
- (iv) There are more chances for the interviewer to be biased.

Keeping in mind the various advantages and disadvantages of the telephone interview stated above and elsewhere, the telephone interview was used in this study as it was felt that there were just a few vital pieces of information required of the respondents which could be dealt with over the telephone. Telephonic interviews were held with a selection of people having Mizo as their mother tongue yet who speak English fluently and write well in spite of having done all their schooling within Mizoram. The selection of candidates for the interview were based on the fact that Mizo students educated outside Mizoram have many advantages like a conducive environment for learning English, non-Mizo teachers as well as non-Mizo class-mates with whom they have to use English, and they also have many opportunities to use the language outside the school. Since this study is aimed at finding out the best method to acquire English by Mizo learners at the Elementary level, it was felt that interviewing

Mizo speakers of English who have been educated solely within Mizoram would be more helpful for others who are being and are to be educated within Mizoram.

4.12.1. Interview Questions.

The interview questions posed to the candidates are as follows:

1. School attended at the primary level.
2. School attended at the middle school level.
3. Stage in which English was consciously acquired.
4. Single most important factor in his/her acquisition of English.
5. Other factors considered important.
6. If Teachers were influential, what did they do to help them acquire English?
7. Reading of books? At which stage? Source of books? Type of books?
8. Advice to students of Elementary schools today.
9. Advice to teachers of Elementary schools today.

4.12.2. Candidates Interviewed:

Candidate No. 1 ;Mr.Denghnuna IAS (Rtd), Kulikawn, Aizawl.

Mr. Denghnuna completed his elementary education at Serkawn Middle School and completed High School in Lunglei. He was fortunate enough to have come under the influence of the last of the English missionaries serving in Southern Mizoram and was therefore exposed to the English language spoken by native speakers. He remembers the teachers laying a lot of stress on grammar rules while he was in elementary school.

When he was about 6 years of age, Mr. Denghnuna realized that the English way of expressing things and Mizo way of doing so, were completely different. He came to this

realization one day when his father, a school master sent him with a letter to Mr. Carter, one of the English missionaries. On reaching the Mr. Carter's residence, the missionary asked him to state his purpose of visit in English, to which he responded – “This is your letter”. Mr. Carter was impressed by his answer and said he was partly right but told him, - “We English would put it this way – Here's a letter for you”. From then onwards he began to understand the difference in orientation between the two languages, and this he feels, helped him in his acquisition of English. He also feels that an early realization of the vast difference in orientation and expression in the two languages is the first step towards the successful acquisition of English for Mizo learners.

The first time that Mr. Denghnuna actually remembers using English was in 1961 when he met one of the Welsh missionaries Pi Teii (Ms.Gwen Rees Roberts), at an official function in Aizawl, not knowing that she was fluent in Mizo. By doing so, he created a negative buzz among the Mizo officials nearby – that was the kind of attitude people had about Mizo people who attempted to speak in English and this kind of attitude he believes, prevails till today to a certain extent and continues to be a stumbling block for the acquisition of English by Mizo learners. He believes that his exposure to the English people from an early age took care of all his inhibitions in speaking in their language and he could use English naturally with minimum effort. Another big advantage that Mr. Denghnuna had over others in acquiring English was that for about a year during 1961-62, while working in Lunglei High School, he had the opportunity to teach Mizo to three British missionary nurses stationed in Lunglei. In return for his services, they taught him all the nuances of the English language as well as English customs, small talk and table manners over dinner every weekend. This regular interaction with native speakers gave him an opportunity to learn the language under the most ideal circumstances.

Mr. Denghnuna feels that English is a very powerful language and believes that if he had learnt it from the very beginning of his school years, it might have taken the upper hand to make him unstable even in his mother tongue. Mr. Denghnuna says – “I read a lot”, starting at a very early age as the missionaries supplied him with condensed versions of English classics. Till today he continues to be a fast reader and spends all his pocket money on books which include books by Russian writers, Frederick Forsyth, Dominic Lapierre and Amartya Sen to name a few. He is interested in books on politics, current affairs and democratic issues. He would advise young learners not to be afraid to make mistakes while learning to speak in English and teachers to welcome such mistakes, as they are all part of the learning process.

Candidate No. 2 : Mr. Thanhawla IAS (Rtd), Kulikawn, Aizawl.

Although Mr. Thanhawla did all his schooling in Mizo Medium schools within Aizawl, he was fortunate enough to belong to a family which was oriented towards the learning and usage of the English language. His father was a learned man who had translated a number of popular English hymns into Mizo like “Pathian thil rel dan chu”, “Khawvel sum tinreng leh lungflu,” and “Ka hunte nangin i vawng a” amongst others from English into Mizo. His mother too, who had been brought up by the Welsh missionaries greatly encouraged learning in the house. From his early childhood, his mother would tell them English bedtime stories which she had heard from the missionaries. While growing up, his elder brothers Mr. Dengchhuana IAS (L) and Mr. Lalduhawma (L) were also instrumental in his acquisition of English. From as far back as he can remember, his home was the haunt of Mizo intelligentsia like Mr. Laldenga, Mr. K.C. Lalvunga and Mr. J.F. Laldailova which created a very conducive atmosphere for the learning of English. Most of the conversation of these meetings focused on General Knowledge and the usage of English expressions.

Mr. Thanhawla was a sickly child and to keep him entertained in his sick bed, the Welsh missionaries would keep him plied with old English magazines which he began to enjoy from an early age. Till today, he remembers the names of the 1956 World Cup Champion team which he read about in these magazines. Mr. Thanhawla says that he grew up surrounded by books by Shakespeare, Carlyle and other great classics, and belonged to a family that did a lot of reading. He believes that he also learned a lot of English expressions through the study of English folk songs and English literature. He started serious reading with a copy of Reader's Digest while he was in middle school and continues to be a voracious reader of all kinds of books and magazines till today.

To the students of Elementary schools today, who would like to learn English, Mr. Thanhawla says that reading is the key to the acquisition of English and to the teachers of elementary schools Mr. Thanhawla suggests that they should inspire their students to read as much as possible and quoted the famous saying – “An ordinary teacher explains, a good teacher explains and a great teacher inspires”.

Candidate No. 3: Mr. Ronghinglova MCS (Rtd), Republic Veng, Aizawl.

Mr. Ronghinglova studied up to middle school at Bukpui village and completed his High School and Higher Secondary school at Government High School in Aizawl. He never studied in a college but graduated as a private candidate.

Mr. Ronghinglova was taught English by Mr. Zaruma, who was instrumental in teaching him simple English. The first time that he heard English being spoken was in 1955 when his school in Bukpui was visited by a school inspector Mr. F. Biakliana Murray. It was at this instance that he realized that English was a living language which could be used for communication by real people, and not something confined to text books. It filled him with a deep desire to learn the language and to be able to use it.

On joining High School in Aizawl, his English teacher Mrs. Thanchhingi (L) told the class something Mr. Ronghinglova would never forget, - “English is English and Mizo is Mizo, never try to understand English on Mizo terms”. What she meant was that thought processes, sentence structures and utterances are entirely different in the two languages and that they should forget the rules of the Mizo language while reading English. This was a very useful piece of advice for Mr. Ronghinglova and within a short span of time, he took her advice literally and began to ‘think’ in English, all his thought processes were in English, so much so that he had to ‘translate’ himself when he had to speak in Mizo. All this was made possible through the encouragement of the Headmaster, Mr. Sangliana (L) who encouraged them to read books from the library. Mr. Ronghinglova began by reading Graded Readers and simplified versions of Literary Classics, he read all that he could find in their school library. One day, the headmaster called him into his office and spoke to him in English-he was elated. The headmaster advised him to read only good English books, to avoid bazaar notes and to make his own notes for his exams. The Headmaster also lent him condensed books and old issues of Reader’s Digest every Friday. From then onwards, studying became a breeze for him because he could understand everything in his text-books with ease.

In addition to his Headmaster Mr. Sangliana, Mr Ronghinglova credits his English teachers in High School: Pi Thanchhingi (L), Pi Remveli and Pi Zokhumi (L) for having helped him in his acquisition of English.

Mr. Ronghinglova regrets the fact that Mizo learners are afraid to make mistakes and therefore hesitate to speak in English even when they know what needs to be said while they are not afraid to use and even make mistakes in Hindi and other languages. He would therefore advise young learners not to be afraid of speaking in English even if they make mistakes in the beginning. What set apart Mr. Ronghinglova from his contemporaries in the acquisition of English was his reading habit. He would advise students and teachers to invest

more time and energy to reading books of all kinds. Mr. Ronghinglova has not stopped reading till today and of his old Headmaster who fostered his reading habit, he fondly says – “Pu Sangliana gave me English”.

Candidate No.4 : Mr. Lalnghenga(L) Zonuam, Aizawl.

Mr. Lalnghenga completed his elementary education in Ratu and Darlawn, both villages in Eastern Mizoram. He continued his High School Education in Thenzawl, a village in the Mizoram-Manipur border and did his matriculation under the Assam Board of School Education from St. Paul’s High School in the year 1960, coming first among the candidates from Mizoram. Mr.Lalnghenga was interviewed on his sick bed and he unfortunately passed away before this thesis could be completed.

Proof of Mr. Lalnghenga’s excellent command of English can be seen in the two facts below:

1. While he was amongst the ranks of the Mizo National Front during the insurgency, he along with the former Chief Minister of Mizoram Mr. Zoramthanga was chosen to work in close quarters with their leader Mr.Laldenga (L) who was in exile in Dacca, Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan. The reason he was chosen among a number of learned underground insurgents was that he was good in English and this was very important in the peace talks that were often held with the Central Indian Government. In this capacity as a spokesman for the Mizo National Front, he often went to Shillong to hold peace talks with the representatives of the Prime Minister.
2. While teaching in Aizawl West College, Mr.Lalnghenga was always in charge of writing down the minutes of Staff meetings and drafting all manner of official communication.

Mr. Lalnghenga said that he picked up an interest in learning English while he was studying in Class VI, under the influence of his English teacher, Mr. L. Pahlira. He concentrated his efforts on learning the English language and began by reading the King James Version of the New Testament. Since Mr. Lalnghenga was already familiar with the Mizo Bible, it was a delight for him to find out that he could understand what the English Bible said. This reading and understanding of the English Bible, he said, was the turning point in his acquisition of English. When he passed Class VIII, he was able to give a speech in English.

Mr. Lalnghenga also picked up an interest in English Grammar from his High School Headmaster in Thenzawl who was very good in Grammar. He would read and study all his text-books thoroughly and maintained a deep interest in English, especially grammar, throughout his student days. Mr. Lalnghenga found the present English syllabus for Elementary schools a bit too difficult and suggests that educators try to make the syllabus easier so that learning of English will be more effective. His advice to young learners is to keep on practising their speaking and writing skills in English so as to improve in their acquisition of the language.

Candidate No.5 :Vanchhingpuii, Head of English Deptt. Govt. Aizawl West College.

Miss Vanchhingpuii was among the first batch of students in one of the first English Medium Schools in Mizoram , Mary Mount School at Tlangnuam run by the Bethany sisters. She completed her primary and middle school education in Mary Mount School and continued High School in St.Paul's School, also in Tlangnuam, run by the Montfort Brothers. She says that she acquired English in Primary school around the age of 6 or 7 when she was forced to speak in English in school as fines were imposed on students who spoke in Mizo.

She therefore feels that her teachers were the most influential factors in her acquisition of English.

She says that at this stage she was greatly encouraged by the nuns in learning and speaking in English. Apart from encouraging them to speak in English, the nuns also encouraged the students to read storybooks from the school library. In addition to the books she read in school, Chhingpuii also says that her parents always bought a lot of story books for her and her siblings. She began reading from a very young age, starting with the Ladybird series for young readers, moving on to Fairy Tales, adventure stories and then novels. She feels that she was greatly helped in unconsciously acquiring English grammar rules and increasing her vocabulary through reading.

Ms. Chhingpuii's advice to young Mizo learners of English would be to read and try to understand English books, starting from English Text books of Class II or III, even if they do not have other English books to read, and then proceed to the Text books of the next higher level. She suggests reading aloud so that students will simultaneously learn how to pronounce English words while they learn new words and ideas. Ms. Chhingpuii also believes that practicing language skills like speaking and writing, on a regular basis greatly helps in the acquisition of English.

Candidate No.6 : Dr.P.L.Ramlana, Associate Professor, Govt.Aizawl West College.

Dr. Rama did all his schooling upto High School in Thenzawl. He credits his acquisition of English to two important factors, one being his Headmaster cum English teacher in High School, Mr. Gilbert Chalthianga and the other being his habit of reading books from a very early age. Dr. Rama says that he and his classmates were fortunate enough to have an English teacher who was not only good in English, but who was also a good teacher who encouraged them to learn English and to speak in English without any

inhibitions. Dr. Rama and his friends therefore started to speak in English around the time they were in Class VII and would often practice their spoken English skills on the Non-Mizo army officers stationed in Thenzawl.

Dr. Rama began reading English books by the time he was around 12 or 13 years of age. He says he started by reading illustrated comic books which featured superheroes like Phantom and Mandrake, moving on to magazines like Soviet Land and then to Competition Success Review which were subscribed by his elder brother. He feels that his reading habit greatly increased his vocabulary and grammar while widening his knowledge about the world.

Dr. Rama's advice to young learners of English today is to read as much books in English as they can because he believes that reading is one of the most helpful factors for the acquisition of English. He feels that watching TV and making use of software specially designed for English language learning could also help students to acquire English. To the teachers of English in Elementary schools today, Dr. Rama suggests that they should keep speaking to their students in English and give them enough opportunities to speak in English.

Candidate No.7 :Ms. Jamie Zodinsangi, Assistant Professor, Deptt of English, PUC.

Ms. Jamie began and completed all her elementary schooling within Lunglei town and she believes that she began her acquisition of English while she was a boarder at LKM School in Lunglei where she studied from Class IV to class VI. When she was asked about the factors in the school which helped her in this area she enumerated several:-

1. While in Middle School, they had good Anglo-Indian teachers who spoke good English.
2. Their teachers forced them to speak in English, whether right or wrong.

3. Every night in the boarding, their teachers would distribute books for the children to read before going to bed. Starting from illustrated comics, she read Enid Blyton, Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series while in the school.
4. At home too, in the absence of other forms of entertainment, she continued to read books like those of Sherlock Holmes that her father bought for her, cowboy stories and any book she could lay her hands upon.

Ms. Jamie's advice to elementary school students today is to keep practicing Spoken English and to read a lot of English books which will help them in acquiring the language. To Elementary school teachers, she suggests that they maintain an atmosphere in which students are forced to use English. She also suggests that they keep speaking to them in English even if they do not understand it at once, because she believes that young minds are quick to learn, and in due course of time they will be able to understand all that their teachers say to them.

Candidate No.8 : Ms. Vanlalveni Pachuau Assistant Professor of English, PUC.

Ms. Vanlalveni began her primary education in a boarding school in Aizawl and completed her middle school studies in Lunglei, and Mary Mount in Aizawl. She remembers starting to read illustrated comic books while she was in a boarding school at the primary level, and reading story books like the Hardy Boys series and the ones written by Enid Blyton from Class III.

As a young child, Ms. Vanlalveni fostered a deep desire to be able to speak in English after watching her cousins who had studied outside Mizoram using the language with ease. Having picked up her reading habit early, she believes that this is one factor that has helped her acquire English. To the teachers of Elementary School students today, Ms. Vanlalveni would suggest that they encourage their students to read books and to students too, she would advise reading as many good English books as they can in order to acquire the language.

Candidate No.9: Dr. Christine Lalneihkimi Chhakchhuak, MD, Cincinnati, USA.

Dr. Christine began her education in a Green fields English Medium School at Selesih, a school run by her mother Lalnguri (L). When her family moved to Aizawl, she studied in another school opened by her mother, Merryland English School. From an early age, she could understand English and the rules of English Grammar from the teachings of her mother who was their English teacher. Christine also remembers reading condensed versions of Classics like *David Copperfield* and *The Last of the Mohicans* while she was in Middle School, and she also read the popular *Archie Comics* and *Sputnik*, an English monthly magazine from the erstwhile USSR. Having caught the basics of English early, she enjoyed her lessons and even managed to secure a berth in the top ten merit list of the Class VII Board Exams of Mizoram in 1993.

Although Christine could understand written English and grammar from an early age, almost getting full marks in every test and examination, it took longer for her to speak in English voluntarily. From classes I and II onwards, they were not allowed to speak in Mizo in the school, but she remembers that they spoke in English only when the teachers were around and that the English they spoke at that stage was very limited and broken. Christine went to St. Paul's school from Class VIII and there she improved in English as the teachers were mostly Non-Mizo. At that stage she feels she could speak freely in English although she sometimes felt inhibited to speak in English in front of other people.

Christine feels that the biggest hurdle that Mizo people face in learning English is that we are either afraid or embarrassed to speak in English for fear of making mistakes. She believes that having good English teachers and reading books are important for learning English. She would advise young learners of English to read as many good English books as possible and would also like to advise English teachers in Elementary schools to create an atmosphere in which students are not afraid to speak in English.

Candidate No.10 : Ms. M. Vanlalhumi Teacher, Govt. Hrangchhuana High School.

Ms. Vanlalhumi, a senior language teacher at Govt. Hrangchhuana High School completed her primary and middle school at R.B. School, and continued her High School at Mamawii Girls' High School, both in Aizawl. What is different about Ms. Vanlalhumi is that she never spoke in English during her school years except when she had to answer questions based on her lessons in the class-room. This was because it was not required of the students to speak in English and anyone who attempted to do so was considered a show-off.

Although Ms. Vanlalhumi had no opportunity to speak in English, she started reading story books from a very early age. She starting her reading habits with illustrated comic books for children with the likes of "Richie Richie, Little Lotta, Cowboy stories, and then moved on to Mills and Boons, Denise Robins, Danielle Steele and Sydney Sheldon, to name a few. Ms. Vanlalhumi not only speaks good English today, she also writes poetry in English and all this has been made possible by her knowledge of English which she has acquired almost entirely through reading English books.

Ms. Vanlalhumi would advise young learners to read as much English books as they can and to Elementary English teachers, she suggests that they force their students to speak only in English in the school premises so that they will lose their inhibitions and acquire English in the process.

4.13. Overview of the Interviews.

The respondents to the interviews come from varied backgrounds and belong to different age-groups and social circles. All of them have been handpicked for their remarkable skills in different aspects of English like speaking or writing, interviewed candidates range from young professionals who have just entered service to retired government officials. Some were brought up in villages while some did their schooling in Aizawl and Lunglei. Some write beautiful poetry in English while some have been speech

writers for the likes of chief ministers of Mizoram while others teach English in schools and colleges. However, in spite of the great diversity in their ages, backgrounds and talents, the responses to the interviews prove that self-study in the acquisition of English is possible even if the circumstances and the environment may not be ideal. Only two of the candidates interviewed, Mr. Denghnuna and Mr. Thanhawla have the good fortune of having had a regular interaction with native speakers at certain periods in their lives; the rest did not have any interaction with native speakers of English. Four candidates mention good teachers as the secret behind their acquisition of English. One common factor that we see running through the experiences of all the professionals interviewed, the factor they all claim to be most helpful in their acquisition of English is their reading habit.

4.14. Conclusion.

The English text-books prescribed by the Mizoram Board of School Education for Classes I to VIII in the 2014-15 academic session namely the Unicorn series for Classes I to VII and the Let's Enjoy English series for Class VIII appear to be good text books on the whole, and have been developed by experts in the field. The text-books have tried to incorporate many of the theories and methods that have been enumerated in Chapter II. Since the text-books, particularly the Unicorn series have not been designed with Mizo students and their peculiar disadvantages in mind, the text-books lack in certain areas as have been mentioned in 4.9., this is quite understandable. The only serious flaw that this researcher finds in the text-books is that there is very little encouragement of the reading habit in the text books either in the form of lessons or exercises. The encouragement of the reading habit seems to have been ignored by the designers of the syllabus. Except for a chapter entitled "The Reading Club" in the Unicorn Reader 3, where reading as a hobby is mentioned, there is hardly any mention of the merits of reading in text-books. The main focus in the text books

seems to be on grammar, comprehension, listening and writing skills while speaking and reading skills have been relegated to the background. Having said all that however, there can be no concept of a 'perfect text-book' and the textbooks being used in Mizoram appear to be as good as those used in other parts of the country. Since this is the case, the text-books cannot be put to blame even if the acquisition of English is not satisfactory in schools in Mizoram.

As far as the interviews are concerned, although the interviewed candidates range from young professionals who have just joined their services to retired government officials, and although they come from different backgrounds, one thing they all have in common is the reading habit. Only two of the candidates have the good fortune of having had a regular interaction with native speakers at certain periods in their lives, the rest have come into contact with good English through books. Three candidates mention good teachers as the secret behind their acquisition of English and even these teachers were helpful because they were instrumental in making them read good books. Reading therefore seems to be the common thread that runs through the individual experiences of all the professionals.

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CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it.

– Christine Nuttall

5.1. Introduction.

The aim of this study is to focus upon the acquisition of English as a second language by Mizo learners at the elementary level. The efforts made by the schools and teachers in teaching English have been examined and the actual results of these efforts have been studied through the output of the teachers and students. The study has been conducted with the help of two sets of questionnaires, one for high school students and the other for elementary teachers in English Medium schools. It also includes the review of the English text-books being used in English medium schools in Mizoram during the 2014-2015 academic session. The study also involved the interview of 10 Mizo professionals, all residents of Aizawl, who have done all their schooling within Mizoram but who have acquired English up to a level beyond their peers, and comparable or even better in most cases, than those educated in more English language oriented places. The aim of these interviews was to find out the common factors which helped them in their acquisition of English so that these factors or situations could be replicated in order to help students of today to acquire English successfully.

The study has found the teachers to be as experienced, as sincere and as hard-working as any of their counterparts in other neighboring states. The students too are seen to show great enthusiasm in acquiring English as a second language. The study has found out that the textbooks that are being used in Mizoram are, except for Class VIII, the same ones that are being used in other states. However, in spite of all the ongoing efforts made for the

acquisition of English, the level of acquisition taking place in elementary schools in Mizoram leaves much to be desired. This deficiency is sharply felt when students have to interact in English with non-Mizos within Mizoram or when they go for further studies to Shillong, Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore and other cities. There is thus a wide gap between the aspirations of the students to be fluent in English and the actual acquisition of English taking place in the schools.

As stated earlier in the Objectives of the study in Chapter I, the focus of this study is to examine and to attempt a solution of the problems of Mizo learners of English in the future. All other factors being equal, Mizo students are less fortunate than their counterparts in Meghalaya and Nagaland for example, as far as the acquisition of English is concerned. This is due to the fact that Mizo people live in a mono-lingual society with very little opportunities to use English, whereas Khasis and Nagas live in a mixed society speaking various languages. There is a practical need in their daily lives to speak either in English or Hindi in the case of Meghalaya and in English or Nagamese in the case of Nagaland. Because of this disadvantage in Mizo society, English teachers in Mizoram have to look at other possible solutions to the problem peculiar to Mizo students.

5.2. Three Possible Solutions to the Problem.

On a close examination of the responses to the questionnaires, both teachers' and students' it is obvious that the only way that Mizo students can acquire English successfully is through exposure to the language. 81% of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire recommend more exposure to English for their students in order to facilitate their acquisition of English. 44.3 % of the students questioned too, the majority, also believe that they are not good in English because of lack of exposure to the language. But as stated earlier, there are no native speakers to be found in Mizoram today, from whom the students could learn

English. In fact the majority of English language speakers themselves have not had the opportunity to interact with native speakers. Moreover, English is not spoken by a majority of the population except within limited circles and official purposes. It is quite obvious therefore that the only means by which young Mizo learners can get exposed to English is one or a combination of the following : through the teaching of good English teachers in their respective schools, through mass media mainly Television, or through the reading of good books in English.

5.3. Contribution of English Teachers:

Good language teachers do not work by rule of thumb or recipe. They possess, like good cooks, a set of principles which guide their work, in other words some general notions about what is going on when people learn languages, an informal 'theory' about how languages are taught and learned. I call it an informal theory because, while experienced teachers certainly do possess such general principles, they may not be able, or may not have tried, to formulate them explicitly and clearly in words...language teaching is an art rather than a scientific process (Corder 1).

37.4% of the student respondents believe that good teachers are the most helpful factors for them in acquiring English and 51% of them say that whatever English they have acquired, they have done so with the help of their teachers. Four out of the ten people interviewed, have also mentioned the contribution of their English teachers in their acquisition of English. Today in Mizoram, English medium schools have the majority of students because, as mentioned earlier, even parents in the low income group believe that securing an English medium educational background will ensure a good future for their children. But since most English medium schools are privately run, they cannot afford to pay

a high salary to the teachers. Therefore, while good English teachers are certainly very crucial for the acquisition of English, it is impossible to find a sufficient number of good teachers to work in these schools which have the majority of children.

Among the teachers of English Medium Schools who responded to the questionnaire, 84% had never undergone any kind of training for the teaching of English, out of those who did, only 4.20% have a degree in teaching and 1.40% have a diploma in teaching while the rest have certificates for one or two days' training. It can thus be seen that as far as teaching qualification goes, there are not enough qualified teachers for Mizoram. It is no wonder then that 84% of the teacher-respondents feel the need to undergo some kind of training or refresher course. Therefore, it is not possible to rely solely on the teaching of good teachers for the vast number elementary students in Elementary schools in Mizoram to acquire English because there are not enough 'good' and qualified teachers for all the students.

5.4. Contribution of Television.

94.40% of the teachers questioned believe that their students have opportunities to hear English spoken outside the classroom and 81.70% of them believe that television and radio are the main sources through which Mizo children get to hear English being spoken outside the classroom. 27.8% of the students have also cited television, radio and other media as the most helpful factors in their acquisition of English. Television is indeed a powerful medium which has helped students acquire English and interestingly, Hindi and Korean to a certain extent. There are some Mizo parents who say that their children have picked up American English from the serials and movies they watch on Television, while there are other parents who claim that their children have learnt the basics of Hindi just from watching Hindi cartoons on Television. Television, though a powerful medium through which children get exposed to English however, cannot be recommended on a large scale. Not all television

programs are educational and the student is often exposed to a confusing variety of English. Moreover the percentage of programs which could help in the acquisition of English is very low therefore Television cannot be totally relied upon as a source of learning English. The following factors could hinder television from being a reliable source of acquiring English:

1. All television programs do not contain good acceptable English.
2. All children do not have access to television.
3. All children who have access to television are not in charge of the remote control.
4. All children who have access to the remote control do not watch programs which are good for the acquisition of English.

5.5. The Contribution of Reading.

The only alternative left untried therefore, to expose Mizo learners to good English so that they may acquire the language appears to be the promotion of reading. This is a step which can be taken on a large scale at every level in the school, starting from the primary classes. 30.8% of the students believe that the reading of English books is the most helpful factor in acquiring English and 32.40% of the teachers who responded also feel that making the students read books and magazines would be most helpful in the acquisition of English. It is also noteworthy that all the professionals interviewed, although they belong to different age groups and backgrounds, have cited their reading habit as their main source of acquiring English.

5.6. Findings from the interviews.

As mentioned in Chapter IV, interviewed candidates range from young professionals who have just entered service to retired government officials. Some were brought up in villages while some did their schooling in Aizawl and Lunglei. Some write beautiful poetry in English while some have been speech writers for the likes of chief ministers of Mizoram

while others teach English in schools and colleges. However, in spite of the great diversity in their ages, backgrounds and talents, the responses to the interviews prove that self-study in the acquisition of English is possible even if the circumstances and the environment may not be ideal.

Only two of the candidates interviewed, Mr, Denghnuna and Mr. Thanhawla have the good fortune of having had a regular interaction with native speakers at certain periods in their lives; the rest did not have any interaction with native speakers of English. Four candidates mention good teachers as the secret behind their acquisition of English. One common factor that we see running through the experiences of all the professionals interviewed, the factor they all claim to be most helpful in their acquisition of English is reading. Therefore, in the light of such evidence, it is suggested that all serious English teachers should look into the reading habit and try their best to promote it among their students. In order to promote reading however, English teachers will have to have a clear concept of what we call reading here implies.

5.7. Definitions of Reading.

Reading can be defined in many ways. Reading is thinking under the stimulus of the written or printed page. It is the amalgamation of visual and non-visual experience or behaviour, or, reading is decoding print or 'deciphering' print, or reading is understanding, interpreting or making sense of a given text etc. In the early stages of learning, learners try to figure out the shape of letters, words, etc, thus, involving decoding and deciphering. Next the learners move on to reading aloud which helps them to discover how writing is associated with the spoken words. Learners can then graduate to silent reading or reading for comprehension which is an activity which includes reading newspapers, books, posters, road signs, telephone directories, etc. (Aslam 105).

Reading is the total understanding of a message or a message in a 'text'. This means the meaning is not merely lying in the text waiting to be passively absorbed. On the contrary the reader will have to be actively involved and will have to work to get the meaning out. The reader must understand that reaching the message involves his own efforts as well as those of the writer. Further, before reading, the reader assumes that:

- He and the writer are using the same code.
- The writer has a message.
- The writer wants the reader to understand the message.

(Venkateswaran 85).

5.8. The Importance of Reading.

The importance of reading may be set down in the following points:

1. It indicates knowledge of the language.
2. It helps in keeping up with important information through newspapers, journals, books, etc.
3. It is a source of recreation. In leisure hours one can go through books, magazines, journals etc.
4. It is a good source of self-education.
5. Reading is a form of experience. Reading brings us in contact with the minds of great authors, with the written account of their experiences, their recorded lives and the advancements made by them in various fields.
6. It gives the learner a full control over words and patterns which they come across during the process of speaking.
7. Prof.Ghanchi and Trivedi remark, "In fact education of a child is imperfect, unless he is equipped with the ability to read, to decipher, to interpret and to properly the

contents of a reading material. The intellectual advancement of the child is strictly limited, if he is unable to read” (Sharma 162).

Reading in English is the most attainable language skill for students in countries where English is not widely spoken. It is also one of the most useful skills in learning any foreign language. It serves as a means by which the ‘unbounded field of knowledge’ lies open before us and we are able to know new facts and relationships. Good reading habits promote ‘self education’ which helps in the modification of personality. Reading is an activity which is not confined to school life alone. It is an activity which becomes a part of man’s life. Reading trains our mind and broadens our outlook. The importance of reading has also been put in the following way by G.M.N Ehlers :

Reading is of very great importance in the school, as well as in life. The power to read efficiently is one of the reasons for success in school, as the majority of the branches of school work involve reading. Inefficient reading is one of the causes of retardation. Reading is an essential and constant activity in life...there is a huge and insatiable demand for reading matter in the world today. And no wonder, for by far the greater part of man’s culture, i.e., his spiritual possessions, has been stored in books. Reading is the key to all this wealth (52).

5.9. The main ways of Reading.

The main ways of reading are –

Skimming- quickly running one’s eyes over a text to get the gist of it.

Scanning -quickly going through s text to find a particular piece of information.

Intensive reading- reading shorter texts, to extract specific information. This is more an accuracy activity involving reading for detail. Intensive reading means students are expected to understand everything they read and be able to understand detailed vocabulary and comprehension questions (Baruah 79).

It is obvious that silent reading is the more efficient way of reading and is therefore more useful in life. Silent reading means reading completely silently, without even moving the lips...The importance of silent reading in life, however, does not reduce the importance of oral reading at the initial stages of language learning....Since reading means 'reading with comprehension', it is necessary for the pupils to understand the passage before they are asked to read it aloud. Without such understanding the reading would become what Maria Montessori calls 'barking at print'(217).

5.10. The suitability Dr. Michael West's method for Mizo learners.

Dr. Michael West, as mentioned in 2.9, concentrated upon reading in his new method and revolted against the undue emphasis laid on speech by the Direct Method. His claim is supported by the psychological principle that a child first listens and understands, and then speaks. (107)

Dr. West's method seems to be a suitable solution to the problems of the Mizo learners because of the following reasons:

1. It aims at the development of the skill of reading, an essential aspect of language learning, a skill which Mizo students can easily be taught.
2. It lays emphasis on silent reading which is ideal for English medium schools in Mizoram which are generally over-crowded, and where reading aloud would create a lot of commotion.

3. As there are no native speakers to be found in Mizoram, speech and pronunciation can become a big obstacle in the path of learners, but they are free from phonetic hurdles when they read.
4. Reading can serve as a basis for Mizo learners to write and speak.
5. Reading can lead Mizo learners to the ‘feeling’ and comprehension of the language.
6. As there are not enough good English to cater to all the students of English medium schools, teachers more qualified to teach other subjects are often made to teach English and students are often exposed to incorrect forms of English. This problem can be avoided through reading.
7. As mentioned in section 2.9, Dr. West says that learning to read a language is by far the shortest road to learning to speak and write it. He also says that through reading we get acquainted with the vocabulary used by the writers of English and gain an insight into the structure of the language, which is very necessary for its active use (Jain and Sharma 108). This makes it a suitable method for Mizo learners.

5.11. The suitability of Krashen’s method of reading for Mizo learners.

Dr. Stephen Krashen is famous for his monitor hypothesis also known as the monitor model of 1998 which consists of five underlying hypothesis as mentioned in 2.6. The most helpful contribution of Krashen, and what would be most relevant for the present study would be the reading method which he says “ is the most powerful tool we have in language education, first and second” (2004).

“...I know how to bring people to the highest levels of literacy ...and the answer, we all know, is one word—reading. And there’s one kind of reading that works better than any other and it was the kind of reading you did last

night before you fell asleep....The kind of reading that really counts is the reading you and I do all the time, that we do obsessively, we call it Free Voluntary Reading(FVR) ...reading because you want to... no book reports, no questions at the end of the chapter, you don't like the book you put it down you pick up another one. Free Voluntary reading is the source, in my opinion, of our reading ability, it's the source, the source of most of our vocabulary, ...our ability to handle complex grammatical constructions,... our ability to spell, to spell well... our ability to write with a good writing style, much of our knowledge of the world comes from reading..."

In the course of the same lecture, Krashen demonstrated the fact that free reading is more effective than workbooks and activities in the acquisition of language. Reading therefore seems to be a method worth trying out in the acquisition of the English as a second language for Mizo learners.

In the introduction to a paper entitled Free Voluntary Reading : New Research, Applications, and Controversies he presented at the RELC conference, Singapore on April 2004, Krashen has also put forward the importance of reading in the following words:

Evidence for the value of free voluntary reading, or recreational reading, continues to accumulate. In the last few decades, evidence from several areas continues to show that those who do more recreational reading show better development in reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. These results hold for first and second language acquisition, and for children and adults.

Krashen his book *The Power of Reading* (2004) states his belief that students who read more do better on a wide variety of tests, develop vocabulary and writing competence. They also do well in general knowledge. Krashen believes that when children read for

pleasure, they acquire involuntarily and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so called language skills and become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style and become good perfect spellers. For all these findings of Krashen we can assume that reading is the method through which Mizo students can acquire English as a second language without any hassles.

5.12. Place of reading among students in Mizoram today.

Reading has not been given the importance it deserves in schools in Mizoram till today. 85.90% of the teachers interviewed consider reading to be very important and 73.20% believe that there is scope for the development of reading in the present educational set-up. However, there does not seem to be any steps taken for the encouragement of reading because 64.80% of the teachers say that there are no library facilities in their schools, the schools that do have libraries reserve it mostly for the use of the teachers. The greatest number of teachers, 34.40 %, believe that reading is the most helpful factor for acquiring English among their students. However, the Grammar-Translation method which is in vogue in our schools leaves little room for reading. Teachers are not well equipped to teaching proper reading and the present examination system too does not encourage reading.

Reading is a skill which is found to be the easiest by the highest number of students who responded to the questionnaire - 165 or 40.6% while only 31 or 7.6% of them find it difficult. Moreover, 84.5% of the students say that they like to read books. On the other hand, at present, only 15.8% of the students claim that they have learnt English from books. It appears therefore that the promotion of the reading habit has a large potential to be tapped in the field of language acquisition. There are certain reasons why reading has not been given

the place it deserves in Indian schools in general and in this holds true even in the schools of Mizoram, as we shall see in the next section.

5.13. Reasons why reading is not encouraged in Indian schools.

Considering the kind of course structure that we have, teachers concentrate more on ‘completing the course’ than invest time on making the students speak or involve them in any ‘speaking’ activities. Some students also find the class environment or teacher’s presence intimidating; this also acts as a barrier. Our English syllabuses also give very little, or no, importance to reading, though students are expected to use English in all modes. Most of our courses are text-based and teachers are expected to finish the syllabus within a specified time. Most of the school time is therefore spent in completing the syllabus, leaving no time for other skills to be developed. Even though, the prescribed medium for teaching English in most of the schools is English alone, it is not used. This could be attributed to the fact that the teachers themselves are not well-versed in the language, and is especially true of ‘general line’ teachers in our schools who teach all subjects and specialize in none. English, though an important language does not get the kind of promotion it should get from the government and from the school. There are also certain reasons for retardation in English reading in the present syllabus in India as well as in Mizoram :

1. It has no place in the examination system.
2. Teachers do not realize its importance.
3. It has not been given a proper place in the mother-tongue, so it also fails to receive a proper place in English.
4. Overcrowded classes.
5. In Translation cum grammar method, there is no place for reading.
6. The text-book material is not well graded.

7. Many teachers of English are not efficient in reading.
8. There is no clear-cut aim about reading.

5.14. Steps that can be taken to promote reading among students.

Promoting the reading habit will hopefully bring about a considerable change in the acquisition of English by Mizo learners at the elementary level. The improvement of reading abilities will require the cooperative efforts of all members of the school staff. Every room in the school, not merely the English class room, could be a reading room, in which boys and girls find encouragement and stimulation to read. Each room in the school could be provided with bulletin boards, book shelves and book tables, magazine racks, and an abundance of appropriate reading materials attractively arranged and displayed. Teachers in all fields should take time to introduce young people to these materials, selected to meet a wide range of interests and reading abilities, and allow time to students to read them at leisure during class time and to share their reading experiences with each other. In all instances, the aim should be not only the development of skills, but especially the establishment of keen and enduring interests in reading (Ratawal 264).

Some suggestions to make teaching reading effective may include the following:

1. Ryburn says, "It may be laid down as a general principle, that in his first year, a pupil should never be required to read any word with which he is not already familiar through conversation.
2. Reading should start when the child can learn his own mother tongue.
3. Reading should never start with a text-book.
4. It should always start with black-board and flash cards.
5. More emphasis should be laid on recognizing the word and understanding the meaning of the word simultaneously.

6. Use simple structures to start with.
7. Teacher should create proper atmosphere for reading.
8. Steps should be taken to provide library facilities to teachers.
9. Teachers should check all unwanted gestures in reading.
10. He should always remember problems of reading a foreign language.

5.15. Teaching Children to Read.

Teaching children to read has always been one of the most important responsibilities of the elementary school. At present this does not seem to be realized by a majority of the English teachers in elementary schools in Mizoram as only 24 of the 71 teachers seem to encourage their students to read book. Every child needs to develop his reading ability fully in order to succeed in school and to discharge his responsibilities later as a citizen of a democratic society.

Studies reveal that there is ample evidence that many children are failing to develop sufficient reading ability to meet the demands of the school curriculum. It has been estimated that approximately one fourth of the failures in the elementary school are caused by a lack of reading ability; that a large number of first grade children, including many with normal or superior intelligence, fail to get a good start in reading; and that many of those who can read have not developed reading tastes of a high quality and do not read widely. This finding in western countries where the students already have English as their mother tongue should make teachers in Mizoram aware that the need to make their students develop the skill of reading is so much more important.

5.16. Conclusion.

Ultimately, the study has come to the conclusion that though a lot of effort has been given to the acquisition of English as a second language in Mizoram, the success rate is far from satisfactory. It has also been discovered that though speaking and writing skills have been given a lot of attention, reading has never been given the attention that it deserves in the curriculum and it has never been tried and tested as a method for acquiring English as a second language in schools in Mizoram. This is reflected in the data from the teachers as well as students' questionnaires, the text-book evaluations and the interview of select professionals. The researcher strongly suggests promoting the reading habit in elementary schools across Mizoram because as Krashen (2004) put it - "...it is the source of most of our vocabulary, our ability to handle complex grammatical constructions,... our ability to spell... our ability to write with a good writing style, much of our knowledge of the world comes from reading..." The reason why the reading of English books is accessible and suitable for Mizo learners may be pointed out as follows:

1. English Books are much easier to find than good English teachers.
2. Books are resources which can reach even the farthest corners of the state.
3. Books can be shared by many students and may be read over and over again without incurring any additional expenditure.
4. Books are the most reliable resources to teach good English, they seldom contain mistakes thus readers are exposed to the correct form of English.
5. Books are relatively cheaper than other teaching aids.
6. Reading can be done by all age groups.
7. Reading can be continued anywhere as books are easy to carry.

In this tiny state in the far north-eastern corner of India, the school syllabus could be unsuitable, good English teachers may be hard to find and native speakers of English even harder to find. Television programs which can teach good English may not reach all quarters and the students might lack the correct environment to practise spoken English. In such a situation, the importance of reading good English books cannot be over-emphasized. It is therefore suggested that the acquisition of English as a second language should be reinforced by inculcating the habit of reading both in the school and outside. Books are resources that are within the reach of Mizo students at the present time, and since reading is a very economical and simple measure, it can be started immediately in all the schools without any infrastructural or other expensive requirements. It will be a long time yet before Aizawl can become a metropolitan city where the environment and the population will provide opportunities to acquire and practice English without too much effort. Until then, in the present educational set up, reading, in combination with the other methods currently being used by the teachers as well as the students, seems to hold a very promising key to the successful acquisition of English as a second language for Mizo learners at the elementary level.

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APPENDIX – I

SAMPLE OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES