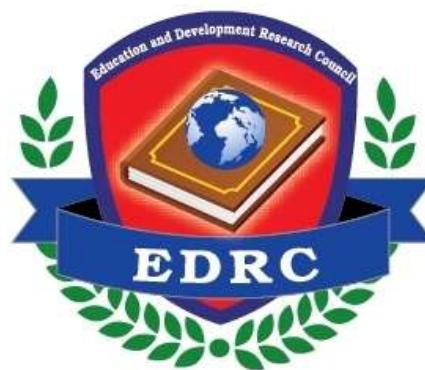


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Morphophonology of Verbal Inflection in Bangla: A Rule Based Account

Professor Shyamal Das¹

Abstract

It is a practice in academic circle dealing with Bangla grammar and its effective pedagogy to assume Sadhu Bangla as the origin of various dialects of Bangla. It is pertinent to delve deep into the trajectory of the emergence of Standard Colloquial Bangla – the dialect representing the language. This is the primary focus of the present article dealing with the morphophonology of verbal inflection in Bangla in the format of a rule based grammar. The findings promise to yield a fruitful mode of teaching and learning of morphology-phonology interaction of the language.

Keywords: Bangla grammar, pedagogy, Sadhu Bangla. Morphology-phonology

1. Introduction

Examination of the Bangla verbal inflection as attested in the Standard Colloquial Bangla (or SCB) shows that the forms owe their origin to the SB or the high variety of Bangla (now on SB) even as they attest remarkable phonological difference on the surface. It is a truism that inflected forms of a verb vary in order to semiotically encode the concepts of tense, person, number and gender across languages. SCB or SB is no exceptions to this. The present study attempts--

- a) to offer a comparative profile of the inflectional paradigms of some representative verbs of SCB and SB;
- b) to unearth the logic of these respective language/dialect speaking communities operating behind such coinages; and
- c) to analyze the modus operandi of such coinages constituting the inflectional morphology of the two systems.

Section 2 presents the data.3 offers analysis of them with 3.1 focusing on Present Indefinite forms, and 3.2 on Present Progressive. Progressive suffix is anatomized in 3.2.1. Section 4 deals with Present Perfective suffix. Section 5 offers the summa of the findings.

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2. Data

Classified data is as follows. Only inflected forms of First Person are chosen as representative: presence of the Second and Third Person markers -- o and e respectively -- does not have any noteworthy phonological impact on the output distinct from those noted in case of First Person marker. Second and Third Person markers are referred to in course of the discussion as and when necessary. SCB does not make any distinction in respect of number and gender either.

2.1 Present Indefinite

1. CV type roots

Root	Suffix	SB	SCB	
k ^h a	- ^h I	k ^h ai	k ^h ai	‘eat 1 Pres. Ind.’
pa	- ^h I	pa ^h I	pa ^h I	‘get 1 Pres. Ind.’

2. CVC type roots

tan	- ^h I	ta ^h ni	ta ^h ni	‘pull 1 Pres. Ind.’
kat	- ^h I	ka ^h ti	ka ^h ti	‘cut 1 Pres. Ind.’
koh	- ^h I	ko ^h hi	bo ^h li ⁱ	‘say 1 Pres. Ind.’
gah	- ^h I	ga ^h hi	ga ^h i	‘sing 1 Pres. Ind.’

3. CVCV type roots

bana	- ^h I	ba ^h na ^h I	ba ^h na ^h I	‘make 1 Pres. Ind.’
ta ^h na	- ^h I	ta ^h na ^h I	ta ^h na ^h I	‘hang 1 Pres. Ind.’

4. VC type roots

a ^h	- ^h I	a ^h si	a ^h si	‘come 1 Pres. Ind.’
ut ^h	- ^h I	ut ^h I	ut ^h I	‘get up 1 Pres. Ind.’

2.2 Present Progressive

5. CV type roots

Root	Suffix	SB	SCB
k ^h a	- ^h itec ^h I	k ^h ai ^h itec ^h I	k ^h acc ^h I ‘eat 1 Pres. Prog.’
pa	- ^h itec ^h I	pa ^h itec ^h I	k ^h acc ^h I ‘get 1 Pres. Prog.’

6. CVC type roots

tan	- ^h itec ^h I	ta ^h ni ^h itec ^h I	ta ^h ni ^h anc ^h I	‘pull 1 Pres. Prog.’
kat	- ^h itec ^h I	ka ^h ti ^h itec ^h I	ka ^h ti ^h ac ^h I	‘cut 1 Pres. Prog.’
koh	- ^h itec ^h I	ko ^h hi ^h itec ^h I	bo ^h li ^h I	‘say 1 Pres. Prog.’
gah	- ^h itec ^h I	ga ^h hi ^h itec ^h I	ga ^h ic ^h I	‘sing 1 Pres. Prog.’

7. CVCV type roots

bana	- ^h itec ^h I	ba ^h na ^h itec ^h I	ba ^h na ^h acc ^h I	‘make 1 Pres. Prog.’
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[t]anja -i[te]c^hI [tan]ja[i]t[ec]hI [tan]jacc^hI 'hang 1 Pres.Prog.'

8. VC type roots

aʃ	-i[te]c ^h I	aʃi[te]c ^h I	aʃc ^h I	'come1Pres. Prog.'
u[ʃ] ^h	-i[te]c ^h I	u[ʃ]i[te]c ^h I	u[ʃ]c ^h I	'getup1 Pres. Prog.'

2.3 Present Perfect

9. CV type roots

Root	Suffix	SB	SCB
k ^h a	-iac ^h I	k ^h aiac ^h I	k ^h ejech ^h I 'eat 1 Pres.Prog.'
pa	-iac ^h I	paiac ^h I	pejec ^h I 'get 1 Pres.Prog.'

10. CVC type roots

tan	-iac ^h I	taniac ^h I	tenech ^h I 'pull 1 Pres.Perf.'
ka[ʃ]	-iac ^h I	ka[ʃ]iac ^h I	ketech ^h I 'cut 1 Pres.Perf.'
k ^h oh	-iac ^h I	kohiac ^h I	bolec ^h I 'say 1 Pres.Perf.'
gah	-iac ^h I	gahiac ^h I	gejec ^h I 'sing 1 Pres.Perf.'

11. CVCV type roots

bana	-iac ^h I	banaiac ^h I	baniech ^h I 'make1Pres.Perf.'
[t]anja	-iac ^h I	[tan]jaiaч ^h I	[tan]jiec ^h I 'hang1Pres.Perf.'

12. VC type roots

aʃ	-iac ^h I	aʃiac ^h I	eʃec ^h I 'come1Pres. Perf.'
u[ʃ] ^h	-iac ^h I	u[ʃ]iac ^h I	u[ʃ]ec ^h I 'get up1 Pres.Perf.'

3. Analysis of SCB Morphology of Verbal Inflection

Discussion in multiple subsections offers scope for systematic analysis.

3.1 Present Indefinite Form

As the data (1-4) show in the First Person Present Indefinite form the SCB verbal inflection has two parts -- the verb root and the person marker -i. The same is also true of SB. The person marker -i is contrastive in occurrence: if it is replaced by -e, the resultant output signifies the Third Person (both for singular and plural); if it is replaced by o, the inflected form marks the Second Person in the Neutral form (i.e. tumi/tomra). The other two forms for the Second Person verbal inflection are Honorific and Non-honorific. For the former, the person marker is -n and for the latter it is -ʃ. To illustrate, for the verb k^ha while Neutral form for the Second Person is k^hao, for the Honorific category the corresponding form is k^han and for the Non-honorific it is k^haʃ (cf.13).

(-Note -Fact behind this substitution of k^hoh by bol in SCB is discussed later.)

13. Singular forms only

SB Input	SB	SCB	
k ^h a]I	k ^h ai	k ^h ai	'eat 1 Pres. Ind.'
k ^h a]o	k ^h ao	k ^h ao	'eat 2 Pres. Ind. Neutral'
k ^h a]ɔ	k ^h aɔ	k ^h aɔ	'eat 2 Pres. Ind. Non-honorific'
k ^h a]n	k ^h an	k ^h an	'eat, 2 Pres. Ind. Honorific'
k ^h a]e	k ^h ae	k ^h ae	'eats 3 Pres. Ind.'

Let us remember that both SB and SCB do not have distinct markers for singular and plural number. (13) proves that there is no variation between the verbal inflections of CV type roots for the First Person Present Independent form in SB and SCB since in both only the person marker I is affixed and more importantly in both the root vowel is a, -- allow vowel. When the root vowel is a non-low non-high vowel --ɔ, o, ε, e -- in both SB and SCB vowel harmony raises a root vowel by one notch if followed by a high vowel. There is no verb root in Bangla having high vowel (cf. 14). The tense marker for Present Indefinite is null.

14.	SB Input	SB	SCB
cɔl]I	→ coli	coli	'move 1 Pres. Ind.'
ɖɔr]I	→ ɖɔri	ɖɔri	'catch 1 Pres. Ind.'
ɖɔ]I	→ ɖɔi	ɖɔi	'wash 1 Pres. Ind.'
ʃɔn]I	→ ʃɔni	ʃɔni	'listen/hear 1 Pres. Ind.'
ɖek ^h]I	→ ɖek ^h i	ɖek ^h i	'see 1 Pres. Ind.'
lɛk ^h]I	→ lek ^h i	lek ^h i	'write 1 Pres. Ind.'
ʃek ^h]I	→ ʃik ^h i	ʃik ^h i	'learn 1 Pres. Ind.'
ne]I	→ ni	ni	'take 1 Pres. Ind.'

The story is almost the same in respect of verb roots having CVC structure. The only phonological change noted in such cases is that the inflected forms compulsorily undergo re-syllabification from [[CVC]suffix] input to the disyllabic CV.CV output.

15.	SB Input	SB	SCB
tan]I	→ t̪a.ni	t̪a.ni	'pull 1 Pres. Ind.'
cɔl]I	→ co.li	co.li	'move 1 Pres. Ind.'

Nothing unique is noted in respect of the Second, and Third Person Indefinite forms.

16.	SB Input	SB	SCB
ɖɔr]e	→ ɖɔ.re	ɖɔ.re	'catch 3 Pres. Ind.'
ʃɔn]o	→ ʃo.no	ʃo.no	'listen 2 Pres. Ind.'
ka]e	→ ka.te	ka.te	'cut 3 Pres. Ind.'
ɖek ^h]e	→ ɖe.k ^h e	ɖe.k ^h e	'see 1 Pres. Ind.'

However, as far as phonology is concerned an interesting development takes place in cases where coda consonant in CVC root is the

voiceless glottal fricative in SB. In such cases, this root final η is deleted in SCB yielding a CV type root and under suffixation a CVV output emerges: VV being a diphthong.

17.	SB Input	SB	SCB
	gah]I	→ ga.hi	gai 'sing 1 Pres. Ind.'
	cah]e	→ ca.he	cae 'want 3 Pres. Ind.'
	ʃəh]o	→ ʃə.ho	ʃəo 'endure 2 Pres. Ind.' ⁱⁱ

Inflection for the First Person Independent form in respect of verbs having VC root is exactly the same as that noted for CVC roots (cf. 18).

18.	SB Input	SB	SCB
	aʃ]I	→ a.ʃi	a.ʃi 'come1 Pres. Ind.'
	uʈʰ]I	→ u.ʈʰI	u.ʈʰI 'get up 1 Pres. Ind.'

CVCV roots are inflected like the CV type ones: only the person marker i (for First Person) is suffixed. Interestingly, CVCV roots are mostly Causative in sense and end in a.

19.	SB Input	SB	SCB
	ba.na]I	→ba.nai	ba.nai 'make1 Pres. Ind.'
	ʈaɳa]I	→ʈaɳaiʈaɳai	ʈaɳaiʈaɳai 'hang 1 Pres. Ind.'
	ha.ʃa]I	→ha.ʃaiha.ʃai	ha.ʃaiha.ʃai 'make1 Pres. Ind. Caus.'

An input of CVCV]I → CV.CVV where the second syllable contains a diphthong after inflection. Thus, the summary of the phonological processes in respect of inflection for First Person Present Independent forms may be stated as in (20):

20.

- a) There is no phonological difference between SB and SCB in respect of inflection for the First (also Second and Third Person) Person Present Independent forms.
- b) The tense marker for the Present Independent form is null.
- c) First Person marker is i .
- d) Suffixation of i having [+high] feature causes regressive vowel harmony: the root vowel is raised by one step in order to approximate to the trigger.
- e) Only the root vowel a resists the spread of [+high] feature from the suffix; instead, the root vowel a and the suffix vowel i unite to form a diphthong: ai.

¹ *The other morphophonemic development with CVh roots is that of substitution of the root itself by a completely different phonological form. For example, SB attests the presence of both kəh and bəl which in practical purpose mean the same: 'to speak'. Perhaps, because of this homonymy both the verb roots fell together in SCB as bəl.*

3.2 Present Progressive Form

In SB the verbal inflection for First Person Present Progressive tense consists of two primary parts with the morphemic structure [[Root]i₁te^h]. In SCB, it is [[Root]cc^h1] that signifies the same.

21a. SB Input

[[Root]Suffix] SB
[[k^ha]i₁te^h] → k^ha₁te^h I ‘eat 1 Pres. Prog.’

21b. SB Input

[[Root]Suffix] SCB
[[k^ha]i₁te^h] → [[k^ha]cc^h] = k^hacc^h I ‘eat 1 Pres. Prog.’

It is obvious from (21) that the SB suffix structure has undergone some interesting phonological transformation towards reduction in SCB. SB suffix for the progressive sense in the First Person is -i₁te^h. That is, if the first-person marker 1 is subtracted the remainder is -ite^h. Analysis of the remainder yields more than one possibility of combination. Deciding on the most convincing combination requires a closer investigation of several relevant factors. Let us consider them one by one.

3.2.1 Analysis of the Present Progressive Suffix

SB Progressive suffix -i₁te^h can have any of the three combinatory possibilities (22), if not more.

22. (a) -ite^h → i₁te^h
(b) -ite^h → i₁te^h
(c) -ite^h → i₁te]c^h

A pertinent question arises with regard to (22): why only two morphemes have been considered to be the constituent units of the suffix under discussion; why not three or n-number of morphemes?

For an answer to this question one has to explore the possible number of pieces of grammatical information that have been incorporated into the form -ite^h from a study of the Progressive form belonging to the other category of verbal conjugation. It is obvious that c^h signifies the Progressive Aspect that predominates the composite suffixal form -ite₁ec^h. Comparable form under reference includes conjugational variations like -ite^h]o‘2 Pres. Prog.’ and -ite^h]e‘3 Pres. Prog.’ where o and e are Person markers. The portion -ite of the suffix -ite^h can be traced also in infinitive forms such as ja-ite ‘to go’, k^ha-ite ‘to eat’, d^hor-ite ‘to catch’, tan-ite ‘to pull’ etc.

Delving further into the matter we get comparable syntactic structure in SB like the following.

23. {jaiteach^he} ‘is going’ < literally ‘exists in the act of going’

{k^hai₁teach^he} ‘is eating’ <literally ‘exists in the act of eating’
{d^horiteach^hI} ‘am holding’ <literally ‘I/we exist in the act of holding’
{hasiteach^ho} ‘you are laughing’ <literally ‘you exist in the act of laughing’ and so on.

In other words, -itech^h etymologically derives from an earlier form such as *{-iteach^h}. It is now easily understandable that through a process of morphophonemic contraction the syntactic form *{-iteach^h} gets reduced to -itech^h in SB. In addition to morpheme contraction, two phonological processes affecting the input suffix are also noticed:

24. i) deletion of the vowel a of ach^h; and
ii) re-syllabification of the tri-syllabic form *{-iteach^h} to a disyllabic one -itech^hi.e.
- i.te.ach^h(V.CV.VC) shrinks to – i.tech^h (V.CVC).

To sum up, one can justifiably be convinced of the proposed explanation behind the derivational history of the morpheme -itech^h along the line of arguments presented here. Originally, in SB there are two morphemes constituting a syntactic structure namely *{-iteach^h} meaning literally ‘verb+‘in doing exist’}. Stated differently, *{-iteach^h} originally means ‘somebody/something exists in the state of an action’. While the Progressive sense of the syntactic structure has remained as it is, the morphophonemic reduction has transformed the composite morpheme (bearing Progressive Aspect) into -itech^h.

After this discussion in favor of -itech^h<*{-iteach^h} one might feel like undertaking a similar exercise in favor of the other two options namely 22(a-b). But such an exercise will be not only time consuming but also will take the discussion wide afar. Instead, it suffices us to conclude that -i]tech^h]and-it]ec^h] do not have any historical-synchronic justification to be considered as the potential candidates for the Present Progressive suffix in SB.

3.2.2 Derivational History of SCB Progressive Suffix -cc^hI

A logical development from the preceding discussion is to investigate the process through which the SCB progressive suffix has presumably evolved from its SB counterpart. As a point of departure let us look at the following set of comparative data from the conjugation of some representative verbal roots in SCB and SB.

25. SB SCB
k^hai₁tech^hI → k^hacc^hI
jaitec^hI → jacc^hI
tanitec^hI → tanc^hI
katitec^hI → katc^hI

banai ^h tec ^h I	→	banacc ^h I
hata ^h tec ^h I	→	ha ^h acc ^h I
a ^h itec ^h I	→	a ^h sc ^h I
ani ^h tec ^h I	→	anc ^h I

We separate the person marking suffix -i in the inflected forms. Then, the structure is morphologically anatomized as [[Verb Root]Suffix(Prog.)] yielding [[[k^ha]itec^h]I] in SB as opposed to [[[k^ha]cc^h]I] in SCB. So, the point to be noted is that the SCB form departs from its SB counterpart in respect of the phonological realization of the Present Progressive suffix minus the person marker -i: -itec^h converts to -cc^h. It is time now to analyze the derivation of the SCB -cc^h from its SB equivalent -itec^h. A drastic reduction of the phonological structure of the suffix in question is attested in SCB. To be specific, the disyllabic SB form V.CVC reduces to CC. In the process of this reduction,

- a) first, the initial high vowel i is deleted from -itec^h: -itec^h → tec^h
- b) second, the vowel of the second syllable tec^h is also deleted: tec^h → tc^h

In consequence of these two successive vowel deletions the Progressive suffix at this stage reduces to -tc^h. From here a total assimilation of the dental plosive t with the palatal stop c^h (minus aspiration) is only a predictable logical development.

- c) third, tc^h → cc^h

This geminate is then distributed equally to the two syllables: the first part occupies the coda position of the root syllable of the verb having the form CV and transforms it to CVC. The second part constitutes the onset of the following syllable i.e. the person marker -i.

- d) finally, k^ha]cc^h]I] → k^hac]c^h]I] → k^hac.c^hI

Thus, the entire process, completed as it is, is a series of evolutionary steps as shown below (26).

26.	k ^h ai ^h tec ^h I	SB form
	k ^h a]itec ^h I	Root] Suffix]
	k ^h a]itec ^h]I	Root] Prog. Suffix] Person Marker]
	k ^h a]i.tec ^h]I	Re-syllabification within the Prog. Suffix
	k ^h a]tec ^h]I	Deletion of initial vowel i of the Progressive Suffix
	k ^h a]tc ^h]I	Deletion of the vowel e of the Progressive suffix
	k ^h a]cc ^h]I	Consonant Assimilation: tc ^h → cc ^h
	k ^h ac.c ^h I	Distribution of the Geminate cc ^h into two syllables
	k ^h acc ^h I	SCB form

Inferring an analogical derivational route for the Present Progressive suffix in respect of second- and third-person inflectional forms of verbs in SCB one arrives at the following paradigm.

27.	SB	Interim Form	SCB
	k ^{ha} itec ^h o	→k ^{ha}]cc ^h]o]	→k ^{ha} c.c ^h o ‘eat 2 Prog.’
	k ^{ha} itec ^h ij	→k ^{ha}]cc ^h]ij]	→k ^{ha} c.c ^h ij ‘eat2Non. Hon. Prog.’
	k ^{ha} itec ^h en	→k ^{ha}]cc ^h]en]	→k ^{ha} c.c ^h en ‘eat 2 Hon. Prog.’
	k ^{ha} itec ^h e	→k ^{ha}]cc ^h]e]	→k ^{ha} c.c ^h e ‘eat 3 Prog.’

Before we conclude this section, it is necessary to examine the nature of the morphemic adjustment that takes place in respect of inflecting the other two types of verbal roots namely CVC and CVCV.

In respect of CVC type roots the same process of phonological reduction is noticed in operation. There is, however, one important distinction and this has to refer directly to the ^{t_c^h state of evolution of the SB form -itec^h. Whereas in respect of CV type roots the dental plosive is found to undergo total assimilation (sans aspiration) with the following palatal stop, in case of CVC roots the latter’s coda consonant replaces *fully* or *partially* the dental plosive _t of the suffix with the result that the coda consonant virtually comes to abut the palatal plosive ^{c^h of the suffix. Thereafter the coda consonant, in some cases, undergoes a total assimilation with the following palatal consonant or shares some of the features of the palatal stop in other cases (28).}}

28.	SB	Interim Form	SCB
	tani _{te} c ^h I	tan]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ tan.c ^h I instead of *[tac.c ^h I]
	col _{te} c ^h I	col]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ col.c ^h I
	bosi _{te} c ^h I	bos]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ bos.c ^h I
	lagi _{te} c ^h I	lag]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ lak.c ^h I
	de _{k^h} itec ^h I	de ^{k^h}]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ de ^{k^h} c ^h I
	b ^h abi _{te} c ^h I	b ^h ab]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ b ^h ap.c ^h I
	d ^h ori _{te} c ^h I	d ^h or]t ^{c^h]I]}	→ d ^h oc.c ^h I

Observation of the above words and their representative morphemic shapes in SCB vis-à-vis SB highlight various phonological processes at work across the morpheme boundary. Some of these processes are: i) substitution (col.c^hI, bos.c^hI); ii) total assimilation (d^hoc.c^hI); (iii) voicing assimilation (lak.c^hI, b^hap.c^hI); iv) place assimilation (tan.c^hI); and v) deaspiration (de^{k^h}c^hI) etc. Direction of feature assimilation is primarily regressive.

Verbs with roots of CVCV type follow the processes noted in case of CV roots with the obvious distinction of having an extra syllabic on the left edge inherited from the root. There is not much scope for phonological operations as the root final vowel is ‘a’ and being a low vowel it resists any raising under the influence of the following high vowel in cc^hI. The vowel of the first syllable from the left edge is not affected either.

29.	SB	SCB
	banatec ^h I	→banacc ^h I ‘make 1 Pres. Prog.’

hataitech ^h I	→hatacc ^h I	‘handle 1 Pres. Prog.’
bɔsaiatech ^h I	→bɔfacc ^h I	‘sit 1 Pres. Prog. Caus.’
dek ^h aiatech ^h I	→dek ^h acc ^h I	‘show 1 Pres. Prog.’

4.0 Analysis of the Present Perfective Suffix

The scope of this study also involves the SCB verbal inflection for the Perfective Aspect in the present tense. This is because; we notice interesting phonological transformation of the suffix assuming the latter, as we have been doing so far, to have derived from the SB counterpart. To begin with let us have a look at the following set of representative examples (22).

30.	SB	Interim Form	SCB
	k ^h a]iac ^h]I]	→ k ^h a]ec ^h]I]	→ k ^h e.je.c ^h I ‘eat 1 Pres. Perf.’
	ɖ ^h ɔr]iac ^h]I]	→ ɖ ^h ɔr]ec ^h]I]	→ ɖ ^h ɔ.re.c ^h I ‘catch 1 Pres. Perf.’
	bana]iac ^h]I]	→ bana]ec ^h]I]	→ ba.ni.je.c ^h I ‘make 1 Pres. Perf.’

In the above examples, the Present Perfective suffix is represented by the portion that immediately follows the root and precedes the Person marking suffix -I. Once again, we are to explain the etymological history of the suffix under reference. A close look reveals that like of {-iteac^hI} → -itech^hI, {iaach^hI} → -iac^hI infact has two underlying components ia and ac^hI. If the person marker -I is removed the reduced form stands out as {iaac^hI}.

The first part, i.e. ia is a very common suffix to derive non-finite forms for verbs in Bangla that gives a sense of ‘having completed a work’. On the other hand, ac^hI is an existential verb by itself that refers to the condition of the agent of the action. In other words, in a syntactic construction like {k^hhaiaac^hI}, the condition of a First Person subject is that of ‘I/we exist after having eaten’. In course of time, these separate morphemes forming the syntactic collocation get amalgamated into -iac^hI which becomes a portmanteau suffix. This suffix carries the sense of ‘having done a work’ referred to by the preceding root. Some predictable phonological rules are found to operate in course of derivation of the Perfective form. This is shown below (31).

(i)	[[[k ^h a]iac ^h I]	SB
	↓	
	k ^h a.iac ^h .I	SB
	k ^h ai.a.c ^h I	Rule-1 Re-syllabification
	k ^h ei.e.c ^h I	Rule-2 Vowel Assimilation (bidirectional)
	k ^h e.e.c ^h I	Rule-3 TriggerVowel [i] Deletion for Reduction
	k ^h e.je.c ^h I	Rule-4 Emergence of Glidefor supplying Onset
	k ^h ec ^h I	SCB
(ii)	[[[ɖ ^h ɔr]iac ^h I]	SB
	↓	
	ɖ ^h ɔr.iac ^h .I	SB
	ɖ ^h ɔ.r.i.a.c ^h I	Rule-1 Re-syllabification

$\underline{d}^h o.r.i.e.c^h_I$	Rule-2 Vowel Assimilation (bidirectional)
$\underline{d}^h o.r.e.c^h_I$	Rule-3 Trigger Vowel [i] Deletion for Reduction
$\underline{d}^h o.r.e.c^h_I$	Rule-4 Re-syllabification
$\underline{d}^h o.r.e.c^h_I$	SCB
(iii) $[[[bana]iac^h]_I]$	SB
↓	
$ba.na.iac^h.I$	SB
$ba.nai.a.c^h_I$	Rule-1 Re-syllabification
$ba.ni.a.c^h_I$	Rule-2 Vowel Reduction: Diphthongs → monophthong ai → i
$ba.ni.e.c^h_I$	Rule-3 Vowel Assimilation
$ba.nie.c^h_I$	Rule-4 Re-syllabification
$baniec^h_I$	SCB

In the above evolution processes, a series of relevant phonological rules are applied in a particular sequence needed by the grammar (which is rule based) so that the desired output is obtained. This processual grammar can be effective for teaching morphology-phonology interaction in Bangla.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the derivational history of the three SCB verbal inflections with CV, CVC, and CVCV type verb roots has been examined. It has been found that in the suffixal part of the SB form some major phonological processes take place yielding the corresponding SCB forms. It would be interesting to examine the evolution process of similar verbal forms in other cognate dialects of Bangla from the SB variety assuming the latter to be the origin. In fine, an effective method can be developed for better teaching-learning of morphology-phonology interaction in Bangla.

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Experiences of the Undergraduate Students during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study at Govt. Teachers' Training College, Dhaka

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Abstract

The current study tried to explore the experiences the undergraduate students of Government Teachers' Training College Dhaka (TTCD) gathered during COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers applied qualitative research methodology to delve deep into the research problem through qualitative approach. In order to collect data, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with eight undergraduate students of Teachers' Training College, Dhaka. The eight students were interviewed over mobile phone and the conversations were recorded with prior permission. The major findings of the study included- maintaining physical distance was difficult; participating online academic activities was a big challenge for the students; and students got different insights about life during COVID-19 pandemic. Experiences the participants gathered during pandemic influenced their way of thinking and well-being.

Keywords: COVID-19, experiences, undergraduate students, pandemic, technology, the Internet

1. Introduction

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have influenced almost all sectors of our society. The virus supposedly spreads through an individual to other individuals rapidly. Many countries around the world maintain social and physical distances to stop or minimize the spread of this dangerous virus. As a protective measure against COVID-19, educational institutions have been closed by the governments in different parts of the world for indefinite period of time. This closure of institutions makes distances between students, students and teachers, and academic learning.

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According to the American Council on Education, enrollment was likely to drop by 15% in the fall of 2020, while at the same time many institutions confronted demands for large tuition cuts as academic activities continued virtually (National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper-27392). The Ministry of Education China estimates that more than 220 million children and adolescents are confined to their homes; this includes 180 million primary and secondary students and 47 million preschool children (Wang, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020). According to the report *Youth and Covid-19: impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being* (The Daily Star, 2020), COVID-19 has compelled students and universities alike to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. The uncertainty that is being felt by the world because of COVID-19 is, unsurprisingly, being mirrored by students as students are the integral part of the world society (Education.com 06 July, 2020). In order to engage students in academic activities, the governments all over the world have taken various steps to ensure the access to education through the Internet.

The government of Bangladesh has also shown success in teaching students by broadcasting pre-recorded lessons through television, YouTube Channels, etc. And many schools and colleges have been continuing their teaching and assessment activities through the Internet using some conferencing apps such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc. Most of the students of our country are not skilled to attend classes through the Internet; especially the underprivileged students are not able to attend virtual classes for not having digital devices or Internet connections. The pandemic had a big impact on students even on higher education students (Aristovnik, 2020). Like other countries Bangladesh shut down their educational institutions since 17th March 2020 to ensure distances and thus help reduce the spread of the virus. In order to continue teaching-learning activities, the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh encourages teachers to conduct online classes (Alam, 2020). A report by The BTRC (Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission) shows that there are almost 99.428 million Internet subscribers in Bangladesh. However, only access to the Internet does not mean that all are getting required speed of Internet connectivity (Alam, 2020). The current study aims to explore the personal and academic experiences of the undergraduate students at Teachers' Training College, Dhaka gathered during COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Rationale for the Study

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, a terrifying situation prevails all over the world. The students of all levels in Bangladesh have been staying at homes since 17th March 2020 due to the compulsory closure of educational institutions (Dhaka Tribune, 24 April 2021). A survey on French population shows that many students have been emotionally debilitated from being locked down for a long time (Martinelli, 2020).

During the pandemic, it is known from personal level telephone interactions that the undergraduate students of Teachers' Training College, Dhaka have experienced many issues that they had never faced before. Therefore, we decided to conduct the study with eight undergraduate students of Govt. Teachers' Training College Dhaka to learn what they personally experienced during their stay at homes; what challenges they experienced during attending online teaching-learning; and what insights they got from their lived experiences during COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Research Questions

The study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) What challenges did students face during COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2) What experiences did the students gather in attending the online teaching-learning activities?
- 3) What insights did the students get from COVID-19 pandemic?

4. Literature Review

COVID-19 has already disrupted students' lives in many ways such as making distance with their friends and teachers; being locked down at home for long time and not being able to take part in the outdoor activities, etc. In the last 50 years, there was a huge growth in the education sector all over the world, of course there were also lots of challenges that we all had to overcome to ensure education friendly environment for students and teachers but COVID-19 is the greatest challenge that hit the national education system severely (Daniel,2020). About 188 countries closed their education institutions as of April 2020 and sent the students home to ensure their safety (UNICEF, 2020). Though every government has been trying to provide education through the Internet, TV, and Radios, the access to this kind of facilities is difficult for middle income or low income families in developing and poor countries. Providing quality education is a big challenge during lock down all over the world including the developed countries. This situation has also caused negative impact on students' mental and physical health. Rahman (2020) asserted that the COVID-19 pandemic is making global health crisis in the current time and this is the greatest challenge we have faced since World War II(Chackraborty & Maity, 2020).

A recent BBC report revealed that a third of the world's population was currently under lockdown and that was a huge and unprecedented circumstance (BBC, 2020). As of 1st June 2020, globally, 1.2 billion learners (68.0 per cent of the world's total enrolled learners) were affected due to the closure of the educational institutions in 144 countries (The Financial Express, June 13, 2020). During lock down, students are getting involved in studies through e-learning process. E-learning is a form of

distance education to provide learning experiences for students. In a developing country like Bangladesh, there are many limitations to access to e-learning facilities. Many students in Bangladesh are unable to join online educational activities due to high cost and low speed of the Internet; and not having smart phones or laptops. Another issue is the fact that most of the students are living in the rural areas of the country where the Internet connection and high speed cannot be ensured.

The lack of or poor Internet connectivity is considered as a major obstacle that must be overcome in order to smoothen the online teaching-learning and assessment activities; and ignoring the poor Internet connectivity, it would be difficult to achieve the targets set for 2021 (Bangladesh Post, 2020). The lack of e-learning facilities show that digitalization of education in Bangladesh has not been fully achieved yet. As a result, many students across the country are now deprived of education which would create inequalities in the long run. One of the researchers' experiences show that the situation is more challenging for the higher education students because they feel lonely or helpless being in financial crises as most of them have lost their part-time jobs (July 2020, European Research Intensive University). The heightened level of psychological distress and downstream negative academic consequences are prevalent under abnormal circumstances (Granton, 2019).

As a result of physical distancing measures implemented in response to COVID-19, the tertiary education institutions shifted to an emergency online learning format which created academic stress for students (Grubic, Badovinac, & Johri, 2020). Most of the students of Bangladesh are not well-skilled to operate the devices which are used for online learning. Most of the educational institutions do not have LMS (Learning Management System) such as Learn, Moodle, or Canvas. Among the undergraduate students, mental depression is more prevalent among low-income and working-class students (Chirikov, Igorsoria, & Krista, 2020). The pandemic has the capability to affect students physically, academically, financially, and psychologically. A study during COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that undergraduate students have experienced increased symptoms of anxiety and depression due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have negative effect on students' studies and future lives (Islam, Barna, Raihan, Khan, & Hossain, 2020).

5. Research Methodology

This study was conducted by using qualitative research methodology. The researchers used semi-structured interview method with eight purposively selected undergraduate students from different years of Govt. Teachers' Training College, Dhaka. Interviews were conducted over mobile phone and the conversation was recorded with prior permission of

the interviewees. The interview data were transcribed, read again and again with a view to developing data through recurrent edits, coded, and then categorized based on the themes of the research questions. The participants were from different geographical locations and with different lived experiences. Therefore, they were selected in order to gather the real life experiences. Findings of the study emerged during data transcribing and coding. The findings have been presented in the following section. All the participants willingly agreed to become a part of the study. The students were given pseudonyms such as S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, and S8 to minimize any possible threats to them.

6. Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study included- maintaining social or physical distances was a challenge (6.1); availability of devices and Internet was a challenge (6.2); and different students had different insights about life (6.3). The findings and discussions have been presented below:

6.1 Maintaining Social Distance was a Challenge

World Health Organization (WHO) recommended social distancing among communities as a preventive measure. Bangladesh has a large population and most of them are not conscious enough to maintain distances as a protective measure (Ahmed, Rony, & Zaman, 2020). The father of S1 is an Upazila Chairman and he is a first year student. S1 asserts that he was getting worried during lock down because many people used to come to their house for different purposes as his father is a political leader. A few of the visitors used facial mask, maintained 3 feet distances was recommended by WHO but most of them did not follow the health guidelines. S1 maintains:

The news of increasing number of COVID-19 affected patients made the whole family worried. However, by the grace of the Almighty, we are not affected but we are passing difficult times. The whole family is scared in fear of getting COVID-19.

S3, S4, and S7 also claim that they also had trouble to maintain social distances. Bangladesh did not impose any strict protocol initially, and millions of people were out on the streets, especially in Dhaka (Anwar, Hosen, & Nasrullah, 2020). Unfortunately, the house of S4, a student of final year, was in a crowded area. Therefore, when she went out to bring necessary commodities, she had to face a large crowd most of whom were without masks. S4 asserts:

Though we are keeping sanitizer, washings hands, drinking hot water regularly, many people didn't care for those kinds of protective measure. Many people do not use mask, in shop or nearby Bazar there is no distance between seller and customers.

In most cases the health conscious people try to maintain distance but it is difficult because of the rush of people everywhere.

The above data show that students face common issues of maintaining the social distance. Though the rate of COVID 19 new patients and the death rates make a new record each day, many people do not care it much. A study jointly conducted by BRAC and Bangla daily Prothom Alo found that 61.10 percent people cannot maintain safe physical distancing in public spaces because of the thickness of people (The Daily Star, August,2020). As the death toll rises to 100 plus per day, the government of Bangladesh has decided to keep the educational institutions closed until 22 May 2021 (The Dhaka Tribune, 24 April, 2021). However, keeping the shopping malls, government and private offices closed has become a challenge and therefore, maintaining physical distances is a big challenge for the students as well as other people.

6.2 Availability of Gadgets and Internet

Participating online classes was a challenge for the undergraduate students of Teachers' Training College, Dhaka. It is 13 months since the educational institutions all over the country were shut down as part of efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Khan, 2020). It is observed from the interview data that during COVID-19, students have been facing trouble to attend online classes. The respondents claim that they were not habituated to attend the online classes before. S2 is 2nd year 3rd semester student staying in his village during the lock down period. Sometimes, he cannot not attend the classes for power failure, and the low speed of the Internet.S2 asserts:

My home is in Netrokona. I attend my classes from a remote place of Netrokona district. So sometimes, I fail to get access to Internet due to network issues. I could not join the classes many times due to low speed of Internet. The speed of Internet is so low that sometimes, I cannot join the classes even only with audio, let alone video facilities. When I am able to join with video, I miss the lively interactions with friends that happen in on campus classes.

S3and S5 also reveal that they also have been facing Internet issues when they want to join online classes. S3 claims:

The Internet price is very costly in our country. And mobile operator couldn't provide good speed of Internet. So it is very hard to join classes regularly from rural areas. Other problems is to sit in the same place for a long time; lack of complete understanding of the lessons being taught. I also face physical discomfort as I have to sit hours together to participate in the online classes and health issues stemming from attending hours of

online classes. Though it is good to see my friends and teachers online, longer periods and technological disturbances make it boring.

S1and S4 express similar opinions that they also have faced some issues like network problem, high cost and low speed of Internet, inadequacy of gadgets or digital devices, etc. A report by Jasim and Sajid (2020) reveal that slow Internet connection and high-cost mobile data remain the major obstacles for many university students from rural and remote areas. Educationists claim that the launching of online classes will not yield any positive result if network issues are not solved. According to a recent report by cable.co.uk (a UK-based website) that compares global Internet pricing claims that India provides Internet in the cheapest (\$0.26) price in not only compared to its neighbours but also globally. Bangladesh charges the highest (\$0.99) for one gigabyte of mobile data among three South Asian nations – India, Sri Lanka (\$0.87) and Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, students are facing network problems, high call-rate issues which do not help them to have a great time in lock down.

S6 and S7 allege that they have become lazy by sitting, eating, and sleeping. They claim that almost all activities are Internet-based and they do not have to take part in physical work. However, these two students helped their mothers in cooking and thus they have achieved some culinary skills. S8 maintains that he helps his father in the cornfield and he is passing busy time at home.

One thing is clear from the above data that although students have to face challenges of buying an android phone, laptops and high speed Internet, they have become expert in using the devices and the necessary Apps. This skill of using different gadgets and Apps would help students and teachers to use technology in teaching in a better way. Moreover, some of them have acquired some life skills such as cooking and farming.

6.3 Students Got Different Insights about Life

All the participants of the study have claim that they have a great learning from COVID-19. One of the best learning for them is to work for mankind and to stay neat and clean for a healthy life. The participants claim that from the beginning of the pandemic, they have been washing hands frequently; using mask while going outside; rubbing hand sanitizer, etc. “If we practice the stated activities continuously, it is expected that we will be able to lead healthy lives”, claims S2. S2 further points out that, COVID-19 has locked them at home but they had learnt some necessary skills such as cooking, painting, graphic designing, and farming which are needed for practical life.

S2 maintained:

In my pre-COVID life, I didn't wash my hands so often but now I do. After 5 years of separation with my family for education purposes, I have a great time with them for the last 13 months. In this lock down, I feel for the first time how much I love my family and how much they love me. My mother takes care of me about what I will eat, if I washed my hands, etc. The great learning in the lock down is: "Love your family because they do care about you."

"The great learning to me is that nature is more powerful and our power is limited. Money or wealth does not help always", maintains S3. He also realizes the suffering of the hungry people after they have lost their jobs because of COVID-19. S6 remarks that it is pathetic to see many people starving for some days and many people are ignoring them. However, claims S6, a small number of people are seen to come forward to help the poor. S6 alleges:

An unseen virus is going to demolish the whole mankind. We don't have enough resources to face a virus. But the whole life we are blindly wasting for making money. If money cannot save a life, why people should be so arrogant with their wealth? Viruses know no national boundaries or races, and only by working together mankind can win the battle against the viruses. So we all should work for mankind.

During COVID-19, S8 had enough time to enrich himself with practical knowledge and skills, and he also gets opportunities to serve mankind. S8Claims:

In this pandemic, many people lost their jobs. Poor people, especially the day labourer, face food crisis everywhere. And when I see this, it really hurts me. We, some friends, have been trying to help poor by collecting money, buying foods for them. I feel mentally satisfied by working for the people in need. I want to continue my service to the distressed humanity throughout my life.

The data stated above show that the undergraduate students of Teachers' Training College, Dhaka went through valuable experiences. Those lived experiences provided them with some rich insights like loving the people around is important and working for humanity is satisfying; considering nature more powerful than mankind, and money should not be preferred to life. The learning is great for one's life and can purify the souls of those who lived through the stated experiences.

7. Conclusion

This study has revealed that maintaining physical distances is challenging for the students who lived in the remote villages during

COVID-19. Students also face difficulties in attending the online classes in want of good quality gadgets and low Internet speed. Inequalities between students regarding access to the Internet and various gadgets was found dominant (Khairul, Islam, & Alif, 2020). Alongside negative impact of COVID-19, almost all the participants achieved some skills such as culinary skills, gadgets and Apps use skills, and providing support to the neighbours without hurting their ego. Some of the locked down students have developed human qualities through helping the distressed people and providing necessary support to their parents and others.

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Learning of Ethnic Minority Secondary Students during COVID-19

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate into the secondary ethnic students' learning experiences in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted in secondary schools of Khagrachari hill district in Bangladesh. This study applied qualitative approach. The methods used were semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A number of five teachers and 12 secondary students participated in the study. The interviews were conducted with the learners over mobile phone and the FGD was organised through messenger. Data were transcribed, coded, and then categorised based on the themes of the research questions. The research findings revealed that learners underwent diversified learning experiences; the learners maintained careful relation with school during the pandemic; academic activities were severely affected during COVID-19; learners were facing some physical and mental difficulties during the lock down period; the learners and teachers were expecting to reopen schools for the better interest of education by maintaining health rules.

Keywords: Covid-19, learning experience, ethnic minority, secondary learners, CHT

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh is part of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic started in 2019. The virus was confirmed to have spread to Bangladesh in 08 March 2020. In order to protect the citizens, the government declared "lockdown" nationwide from 23 March to 30 May and announced some necessary precautionary measures to prevent or minimize the spread of the virus. Covid-19 has disrupted the education systems around the world, pushing the majority of children out of schools. Around 40 million children enrolled in schools, Bangladesh is among the

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countries most affected by a complete shutdown from 17th March 2020. Regardless of its impact on household poverty, the coronavirus pandemic directly impacts learning outcomes by reducing time spent in learning activities in and outside schools. While institutional education disruption is universal, out-of-school learning deprivation varied depending on socio-economic status of the household, access to technology, and parental capabilities (IPA, 2020). Mahtab (2020) has reported that, the loss in schooling hours affects not only learning, it also limits students' physical movement and intellectual practices.

Therefore, on top of loss in learning, school closures have far-reaching impacts on social and economic areas such as school dropouts, digital divide, food insecurity and malnutrition, childcare, as well as disability services. Like all over the country, in the three districts of remote Southeastern Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh Covid-19 has made bad impact on education of the different ethnic minority students. Most of the time in the CHT, children have no choice but to study at home without access to modern technology like electricity and television and Internet.

2. Literature Review

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), located in South Eastern Bangladesh, is divided into three hill districts: Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban. It shares borders with Myanmar on the south and southeast, India on the north and northeast, and the Chittagong district of Bangladesh on the west. It is one of the most diverse regions in the country. The total area of the CHT is 13,295 square kilometers and the estimated population is 1.3 million. The region is geographically distinct from the plains, made up of very steep, rugged hilly terrain and in many places, dense bamboo jungle. The rough terrain, remoteness of villages and various political issues associated with a protracted conflict have seriously impeded the economic development of the region. Bangladesh is a land of more than 45 tribal groups. These indigenous people are living in both plain lands and the hilly areas of CHT. They have their own separate language, culture, customary laws, heritage, religion, political history, economy and social and political institutions that are highly distinct from those of the main ethno-linguistic groups in the country. These ethnic groups are known as the Jumma people (The European Union, 2010; Hossain, 2013; UNPO, 2018). On the other hand, Khagrachhari District is bounded by the Tripura state of India on the north, Rangamati and Chittagong districts on the south, Rangamati district on the east, Chittagong district and Tripura state of India on the west. Notable hill ranges are Golamoon, Chotto Panchari, Karmi Mura, Lutiban, Kuradia, Bhanga Mura, Jopisil. (Banglapedia, 2009)

According to WHO (World Health Organization), as of 3 January 2021, there have been 82,579,768 confirmed cases of Covid-19 globally, including 1,818,849 deaths in the USA. The sudden transition to home learning has brought to light many of the inequities in our school systems. The schools that serve low-income communities are facing more challenges to meet student needs such as use of technology and Internet access, meals, financial crisis, and supporting traumatized children, and engaging learners in achieving learning outcomes' (Teach for America, 2020). As the days pass by with no immediate solution to stop the outbreak of Covid-19, school and university closures will not only have a short-term impact on the continuity of learning for more than 285 million young learners in India but also engender far-reaching economic and societal consequences. Konikka (2020) opines that all are passing through a very tough and unpredictable phase in life. Covid-19 has changed substantially, the way of living. Education sector, too, like other areas cannot but think about the alternatives ways to continue the educational activities. Along with the rest of the world, Bangladesh has been continuing online education through television, radio, and through some Apps such as Zoom, Meet, Stream Yard, etc.

However, not all students have access to digital technology and in many cases; students find virtual classes fall short of their expectations and learning needs. According to IRIN (2011), Ethnic minority children in Bangladesh from the southeast Chittagong Hill Tracts are among the country's least literate and at heightened risk of dropping out of school, say experts and community leaders. More than half of all household members surveyed in CHT (55.2 percent) have no formal schooling, according to a recent study. Another Study done by the Daily Star (2012) reveals that due to linguistic barriers and improper academic curriculum, school students of the three hill districts are being deprived of quality education, which causes high dropout rate in the region compared to the national level dropout. However a large number of students remain outside the scope of digital education activities. Only a small part of the students are getting the opportunity to study online in this corona situation and 50 percent of the students have the opportunity to watch TV. It is true that many are being deprived of the opportunity of educational activities through digital technology. Besides, shortage of classrooms and practical rooms, shortage of skilled and experienced teachers and lack of infrastructure facilities, shortage of science and English teachers are the main obstacles of quality education are common challenges of education in hilly areas

However, different students in Bangladesh have varied experiences in attending the alternative education systems. Allo (2020), too, reveals that learners certainly have their own perception of online learning in the midst of this Covid-19 pandemic. Learning experience in Covid-19 period is, to some extent, different from normal situation all over

the world. Mahiswaran, Hussin, and Azazi (2020) opine that, recently the whole globe was affected by the Covid-19, which caused a major disruption in every economy sector as well as the education sector.

A learning experience is an interaction, collaboration and communication where a person learns something. Learning experiences comprise lessons taught by teachers or presenters in classrooms and training sessions. According to The Glossary of Educational Reform (2020), learning experience refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings of schools, classrooms or nontraditional settings like outside-of-school locations, outdoor environment, or whether it includes traditional educational interactions like students learning from teachers or nontraditional interactions like students learning through games and interactive software applications. In educational settings learning experiences are ideally challenging, interesting, rich, engaging, meaningful, and appropriate to learner needs (USESCO, 2020). However, this study tried to explore the learning experiences of the ethnic minority students enrolled in different secondary schools of Khagrachari

3. Research Questions

- i) What are the learning experiences of ethnic minority secondary school learners during Covid-19 pandemic?
- ii) How do the ethnic minority learners maintain relation with schools during Covid-19?
- iii) How have learners been practising their academic activities during Covid-19?
- iv) What challenges have the teachers and learners been facing since the closure of their schools?
- v) What are their opinions about reopening schools?

4. Methodology

It was a qualitative study which used interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Interviews were conducted with 12 learners of different classes from six to ten. The student participants comprise Chakma (6), Marma (3), and Tripura (3) of Khagrachari Sadar and Panchari Upazila. FGD was conducted with five teachers of five different subjects Bangla, English, Bangladesh, and Global Studies, Mathematics and Religion of five different schools comprising government, non-government schools of mixed-gender education and co-education system from Khagrachari Sadar and Panchari Upazila. Out of the five teachers, four were Chakma, one was Tripura. Collected data were transcribed, coded, and then categorized based on the themes and sub-themes of the research questions.

5. Findings and Discussion

During transcribing, coding, and categorizing the data, the following findings emerged: learning experiences of the ethnic minority students are diversified; learners' maintained cautious relation with school during Covid-19; academic activities were severely affected during Covid-19; learners are facing some physical and mental difficulties during the pandemic period; all the learners and the teachers are expecting to reopen schools following health guidelines.

5.1 Experiences of Ethnic Minority

In response to the question in interview what are their experiences during Corona period, their answer was that Corona is a virus. Came from China, to protect from Covid they use mask, drink warm water. Wash hands and face with soap. They remain clean and tidy. Schools are closed from March but have to go to school once a week. Sometimes teacher called them to go schools to submit assignment. They study themselves and sometimes from home teachers. Some of them have scope to join online classes of schools, some of them cannot because they have no smart phone and some schools do not take online classes. Most of them watch academic programs on BTV. In home they study textbooks and help families in different household activities. The subjects they have been studying during Covid through online class are Math, English, and Science. Most of them are getting benefit by watching academic programs on BTV some are not.

5.2 Learners Relation with School during COVID-19

COVID-19 is highly contagious. Learners wore new mask and washed hands with sanitizers frequently. Schools were closed, but needed to attend school to submit assignments on weekly basis. The schools were remaining closed since 17th March 2020 after the spread of Corona Virus. They had to communicate with schools sometimes physically, sometimes through phones, sometimes teachers used to visit the students' homes. Most of the parents and guardians did not encourage their children to go to schools because of COVID-19.

5.3 Academic Activities during COVID-19

Six student respondents had their home tutors while the rest of 6 respondents did not have any private tutors. They did their own study. Out of 12 respondents only three took part in online classes. 11 respondents could not afford smart phone where only one used Smartphone. 10 respondents watched academic programs on BTV, 2 respondents did not have any TV in their house to watch academic programs telecasting on BTV. A few of them have home tutors. Rest of them learnt from elder

brother and sisters' and maintained to continue self-study. Teachers opined that they could not take online classes as most of the students' families did not have Smartphone access. Poor and weak networking was also a problem in performing academic activities through online classes.

5.4 Learners Physical and Mental Difficulties

Some learners were facing cough, cold and fever during COVID-19, most of them were afraid of Corona. They could not concentrate to their study like before, they could not go to school regularly, and they did not go outside. Five teachers were connected with FGD through Facebook Messenger. Teachers were not involved directly in academic activities during the first phage COVID-19 period. They started to take classes online. Teachers uploaded video-recording sessions on their school Facebook page. Teachers claimed that the students and the guardians were aware of the online activities and they got involved in the activities gradually. One of the teachers claimed that mental turmoil prevailed in the students because the students could not come to schools, interaction with friends and teachers were restricted. A teacher claimed:

Though we have partial communication with the students over mobile phone, the interaction is not adequately meaningful. I do not know the real progress of the students' learning. I tried to guide my students and encourage the best use of time.

Staying in such a difficult, frightening, and isolated environment was truly physically and emotionally devastating for both the teachers as well as their students. In order to tackle this situation, the families and the schools should come forward to providing mental and moral support to the students.

5.5 Re-opening the Schools

The teachers demanded to reopen schools within a very short period of time. Some teachers were confident that most of learners were now skilled enough to take preventive measures against Corona virus infection. As, online facilities was not equal and available for all and teachers here were not accustomed to online classes, they are demanding to resume the school activities soon. One of the teachers claimed that he had to take around 20 online live-classes per month. There was a problem with poor network; and it was costly to take classes online. Very few of the students and their parents had smart phones. A teacher mentioned:

I can't connect many students in my classes; I cannot interact and assess their activities properly. I want the school to reopen quickly so that the students can re-start studies. Some students are really sincere; they contact me, and ask questions about examination.

On the other hand, one of the students of class VIII shared his feelings in such way that there was a network problem and none of his family had a smart phone. Sometimes, he had to join the classes with the neighbours' Smartphone. A student remarked:

I feel ashamed to borrow it again and again. Sometimes, father scolded me for wasting money through the use of his mobile phone. Sometimes, I shared classes with other students. Since I cannot ask questions of difficult items to my teacher, I feel frustrated.

This student also demanded the school to reopen soon. According to him, if the schools could not open soon, he might have to leave school and join any job to maintain the expenditure of the family.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In Bangladesh, in spite of various limitations, each school has carried out all the initiatives and programmes taken by the Ministry of Education to continue the education of the students while the schools are closed due to Covid-19. However, the students have been facing internet and device problems for which teaching and learning activities are being hampered. Teachers, guardians, and the students are connected although they are not happy with the types of connections. Teachers and students of Khagrachari demanded their schools to be reopen soon as there is no atrocity of Covid-19. But, teachers fear that the longer children stay away from normal school activities, the less likely they are to return to school. In order to make the children's life joyful, teachers may take initiatives to make the online activities more participatory. One of the recommendations that arise from the study is to strengthen the Internet speed in Khagrachari area. The other recommendation is reopening schools in Khagrachari area is a kind of isolated area and as there is almost no spread of corona virus.

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The Learner-centered Paradigm of Education: Turning the Classroom into a Community

Dr. Md. Enamul Hoque¹

Abstract

This is a quote of Ben Franklin: "Tell me and I forget; teach me and I remember; involve me and I learn". Providing students the opportunity to lead in their classroom is a great way to develop a student-centered learning environment that fosters engagement, growth and empowers students to take ownership of the learning experience. Teachers can lecture, and it may go in one ear and out the other, and therefore, it's really all their fault that we fail. The purpose of this study was to identify hindering factors for active participation in classroom based teaching learning, and to enhance students active participation in classroom based teaching learning process at the HSC level English education in Bangladesh. To conduct this study, qualitative methods were employed. The data were collected from the HSC 2nd year students and 10 EFL teachers teaching English. The data was collected through classroom observation and focus group discussions. The data obtained through observation and focus group discussion were analyzed using narrative description. The finding of the study revealed that students' active participation was low, and was challenged by different problems like- lack of awareness about active learning practices, lack of preparation in advance on the lesson, lack of continuous support from the teachers, lack of sufficient time for discussion, teaching methodologies, etc.

Keywords: Lerner-centered, focused, being active, involvement in learning

1. Introduction

Learning is something we all agree makes sense and makes things better. Education is essential. This was a debatable point for the masses several hundred years ago, of course, and, sadly, is still a debatable point for women in some places in the world, but in the West, we're decidedly in

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the learning camp. Around this time of year, especially, we're inundated with the ideology of education. The failure of our government to properly educate its masses seems to be a constant source of anxiety. Are our children really learning? They didn't appeal to our most basic human instincts - the desire to be stimulated, entertained, and challenged. Learners need to feel ownership of their learning and be given the opportunity to voice their views. Being active in decisions and activities of the school increases a sense of belonging and may help learners to develop leadership and social skills. Proactive efforts to engage marginalised learners and ensure their voices are heard are essential. Learners can develop communication and negotiation skills, learn to build relationships and improve their ability to work with others and to be innovative and creative. People have thought that there is an important connection between doing and learning; being active, or only passively involved in learning. The study has demonstrated that engaging students in the learning process increases their attention and focus, motivates them to practice higher-level critical thinking skills, and promotes meaningful learning experiences.

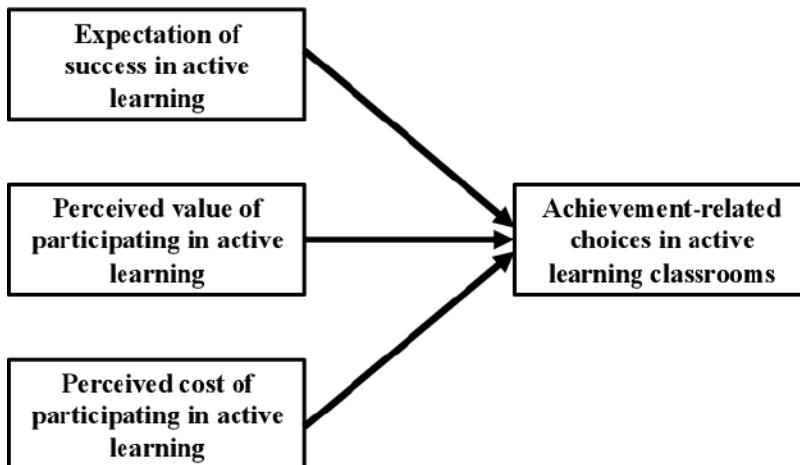


Figure- 1: Learners' participation in active learning

Active learning requires students to participate in class, as opposed to sitting and listening quietly. Strategies include, but are not limited to, brief question-and-answer sessions, discussion integrated into the lecture, impromptu writing assignments, hands-on activities, and experiential learning events. As you think of integrating active learning strategies into your course, consider ways to set clear expectations, design effective evaluation strategies, and provide helpful feedback. In any formal education, most of learning activities take place in a classroom. Classroom is a built-in environment where formal learning process takes place. It is an important context where both students and instructor come

into contact to share information in their quest for knowledge. For the instructor, classroom time is a golden opportunity to meet face to face with the students, delivering the teaching material effectively with the aim to ensure that students are learning what is being taught. On the other hand, the students are expected to be presence on time and participate actively to absorb, seek and apply the skill and knowledge shared in the classroom or other learning activities. These complementing engagements between lecturers and students do generate conducive classroom environment.

A favourable classroom environment involved two-way interaction between students and teachers. This type of classroom environment may stimulate learning and makes both the instructor and students feel satisfied, which eventually leads to effective learning process. Most students can obtain the benefits such as the enjoyment of sharing ideas with others and learn more if they are active to contribute in class discussion. Effective learning process occurred when both instructors and students interact and actively participate in the learning activities. Nevertheless, as we often hear from the academic world, students still do not actively participate or become passive in the classroom despite encouragements and use of various teaching methods by the instructors to stimulate active participation from the students. The concern on the students' participation leads a study to investigate the culture of student participation in the learning process.

Recently, there have become changes in academia in the last previous years or so is the shift from lecture-based classes to courses that encourage a student-centered approach as per the direction from Ministry of Education. Action research can be used to understand practice; how to make practice better; realize how to accommodate outside change in one's practice and recognize how to change the outside to make practice better. It has been blamed that active student participation in higher educational institutions using classroom facilitates have limitation both in terms of acquirement of knowledge and development of problem solving skills regardless of there is very little empirical evidence to either confirm or deny this perspective. Recent literature on higher educational institution give considerable focus on the limitations of the lecture method of teaching and the need for more active student's participation in the classroom.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Participation in classroom activities play significant roles in achieving educational objectives and raising students personality. Enhancing student's participation in different domains of classroom activities needs to be searched and studied to uncover its fact to know

its characteristics and advantages. Effectiveness in learning depends up on teachers' ability to select appropriate time considering learners experiences and preferences. This implies that learners are the chief central foci of classroom instructional planning. Their beliefs and motivation to learn their preferences and expectation should direct their instructors to design instructional strategies in general, and that of particular classroom activities in particular. Different studies suggest that active learning is the best instructional approaches in involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. It implies learners' active participation, involvement and thinking and doing what they think and sharing responsibilities for their learning rather than passively absorbing the supposedly rich contents provided by their instructors. Carrying out action research on enhancing class participation is timely and essential to improve students' participation in classroom based teaching learning process. Among many alternatives to assure quality of education, enhancing students' class participation has become very decisive. Therefore, the researchers planned to identify the determinant factors that why students' class participation of HSC students in Bangladesh is low and to make intervention based on the findings of the study.

1.2 Research Questions

The study set up the following research questions:

- 1) Why students are not well participating in classroom based teaching learning process?
- 2) What could be the possible approaches and solutions to enhance student class participation?

2. Literature Review

Here, student participation is defined as students being active and engaged in the classroom, students impacting on curriculum design as well as students' feeling of belonging to a community (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Zepke, 2015). The focus on student participation is especially pertinent for student-teachers as they, in their future profession, are expected to promote active participation among their pupils (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). In addition, students' active participation and engagement in their education has an elective affinity with neo-liberal trends, while being an important factor in quality measurements. Such trends can be connected to marketisation, focusing on performance, individualisation, competition and successful student achievements for future employability (Carey, 2013). Therefore, the democratic values of student participation in higher education may run the risk of being marginalised (Bergmark & Westman, 2016).

Researchers show that student participation involves, for example, students and faculty working together in partnerships; students having active roles in co-creating curriculum with the teachers; and students acting as agents of educational change (Bergmark & Westman, 2016). Zepke (2018) underlines that students' active participation, whether in classroom, in curriculum management or in partnerships with other stakeholders, may open for acknowledging critical active citizenship as well as students' social well-being, beyond measurable outcomes and high achievement. This holistic view is in line with Masika and Jones (2016), who emphasise belonging as part of student participation, signified by a feeling of being included and accepted by others – that is, being a member of a community of practice through collaboration and communication with peers.

Encouraging students to actively participate and to have an impact on curriculum design may entail the need for re-examining teacher and student roles, which in turn impacts social relationships and thereby the hierarchy (Cook-Sather, 2014). In many respects, higher education is based on the perspective of the university teacher – defining what is important for students, what they can learn and what they should do to attain the set objectives (Cherry, 2016). The culture of teacher dominance in higher education can hamper teachers' and students' development of new roles and viewing education from other perspectives. Organisational structures may also be a hindrance to student participation (Bovill et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there is a need to challenge the traditional teacher and student roles, a task that 'advocates a greater democratisation of the educational process' (Bovill et al., 2016, p. 196).

The motivations for working with student participation in higher education can be synthesised in the following aspects: extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic. Extrinsic motivations involve students' rights to participate in decisions affecting them, as stated in policies of higher education in various countries (Bartley, Dimenäs, & Hallnäs, 2010). The justification for promoting student participation is that it benefits the university (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). Student participation is perceived as positively impacting attainment and student completion rate, which are central factors in quality measurements (Carey, 2013). However, these positive impacts of student participation may also be seen as measurable benefits (grades, completion of degree) for the students themselves, not only for the university.

Intrinsic motivations can be described as students' involvement in educational activities that promote their learning, development and motivation. The justification for promoting student participation is that it benefits the students themselves, beyond grades and successful completion of degree (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009). Opportunities for participation during

students' university education contribute to their deeper understanding and ownership of the learning processes (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). Altruistic motivations can be understood as students' participation in higher education as part of a democratic mission, in which students learn citizenship. Students are viewed as partners, with a commitment to learning and practising democratic principles – or democratic socialisation (Boland, 2005). In today's society, anti-pluralist and anti-democratic views are on the rise, with subordination of minorities and questionable truths being launched, resulting in issues of educational equality being threatened. This accentuates the question of how democracy is perceived and played out in education, where it is important that students' voices are heard and their active participation is enabled. The justification for promoting student participation is that it benefits the society over the long term (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009).

Bruns (2006) focusses that student participation in class should be grade; if left ungraded, part of the motivation that students need is lost and part of the record that the lecturer can use to facilitate individual student learning is not developed. Hammond (2002) suggests that students' effective participation is a direct outcome of their individual preparation before the class. Teachers can an important role in encouraging participation whereas Frei (2002) denotes that student participation is a function of the ability by the teacher to create a supportive environment for participation. The way of teachers' teaching approach matters more along students learning interest and teaching learning environment as well as administration.

3. Methodology

The study employed qualitative approaches that enable to obtain the required data along with cross-sectional descriptive design and focus group discussion and direct personal observation during class. Description type of research used to describe phenomenon since the researchers had prior knowledge and exposure about problems and information needed to explain situations regarding low students class participation. The focus of the study was on the issue of students' involvement in the classroom.

Classroom observation was done on three EFL reading classes at the HSC level. The numbers of students in each class were 50, 60, and 55 respectively. The purpose of observation was to identify the culture, forms, and level of participation, and subsequently to categorize students. Their forms and frequency of participation are recorded throughout the lecture hours. Two focus group discussions were conducted among 10 EFL teachers, and 10 students studying at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Each of the discussions lasted for one hour. The students were asked questions on the factors that motivate them to speak up or not to

speak in the classroom. The teachers were asked how they involved their students in reading classes. The discussions were led by the researchers and were recorded. The data obtained through observation and FGD were analyzed using narrative description (qualitative methods of analysis).

4. Findings and Discussions

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted for one hour for students and one hour for EFL teachers. Aspects discussed in FGD are related to personality and traits of teachers, students and peers, culture and environment. These variables were selected with reference to some past studies which showed that all of these aspects were related to the participation of students in classroom.

4.1 Findings from Focus Group Discussions

In the student FGD, the students highlighted responsibility as part of personality that motivates them to speak in the reading classes. They expressed that it was the responsibility of the students to ask if they did not understand, wanted to know or needed further clarifications from the teachers. Few students mentioned the personalities such as like to read, like to ask to friends or teachers, prepared before entering the class and have a high curiosity attitude that drive them to speak up in classroom. While some students highlighted personality traits include make early preparations, like to talk and asking questions, like to read, and loves to get attention in class. Generally, students who have the characteristics of responsibility, like to read, high curiosity, always be prepared, and like to ask questions would form an active personality. These traits would facilitate the formation of self efficacy. Personality traits of passive students were found to be opposite to the active students and it distinguishes the degree of participation in classroom. Active student participations in class play meaningful role in satisfying educational objectives and raising students' personality. To assure quality of education, enhancing students' class participation has become very decisive as direct personal observation, registrar and departmental documents of students show they have very low performance and interest for class participation.

The FGDs were carefully designed and administered in such away each participants of the study express the idea with their feelings. Accordingly, each questions of the questioner were analyzed as follows. Before class room intervention students' perception has been analyzed. Majority of the respondents realized that active participation in a classroom helps them to share new ideas with their friends, Some respondents believe that they participate only to get mark and 26.08% of respondents also realize that participation in the classroom contribute

nothing for their success and 42.31% realize that participation in the classroom is time consuming. Teacher FGD revealed that some teachers encouraged their students to take part in the classroom activities. Motivational activities from the teachers were not widely performed in the class. The focus group discussions identified the following major challenges that hinder successful implementation of active participation of students. (i) Lack of awareness about active learning practices (ii) Lack of preparation in advance on the specific lessons (iii) Lack of continuous support from the teachers (iv) Lack of sufficient time for discussion (v). Teachers' inappropriate teaching methodologies (vi) Lack of reward means for active participant students from teachers.

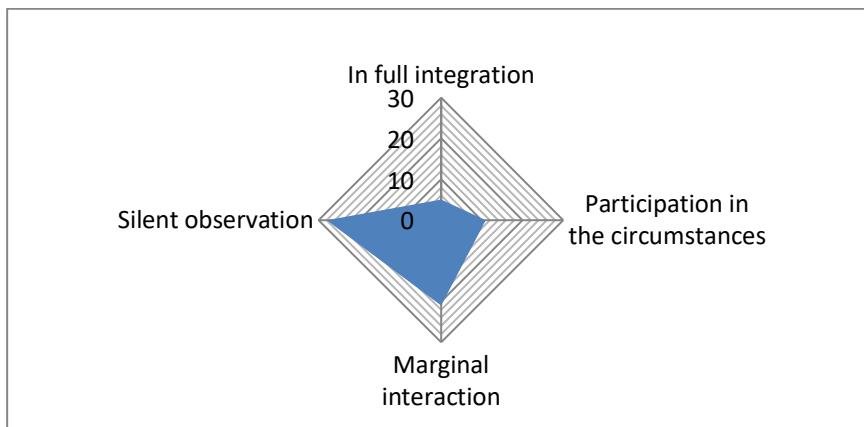
4.2 Findings from the Classroom Observation

The data from the classroom observation in the three classrooms was also analyzed to examine the pattern on forms of student's participation. There are four types of student behaviours in the classroom as full integration, participation in the circumstances, marginal interaction, and silence observation. In *full integration*, students engage actively in the class discussion, know what they want to say and what they should not say. Their participation in class is usually spontaneous and occurs naturally.

Participation in the circumstances occur when students influenced by factors, such as socio-cultural, cognitive, affective, linguistic, or the environment and these often lead to student participation and interaction with other students and instructors become less and speak only at appropriate time. In *marginal interaction*, students act more as listeners and less to speak out in the classroom. Unlike the students who actively participate in the classroom discussions, this category of students prefers to listen and take notes than involved in the classroom discussion.

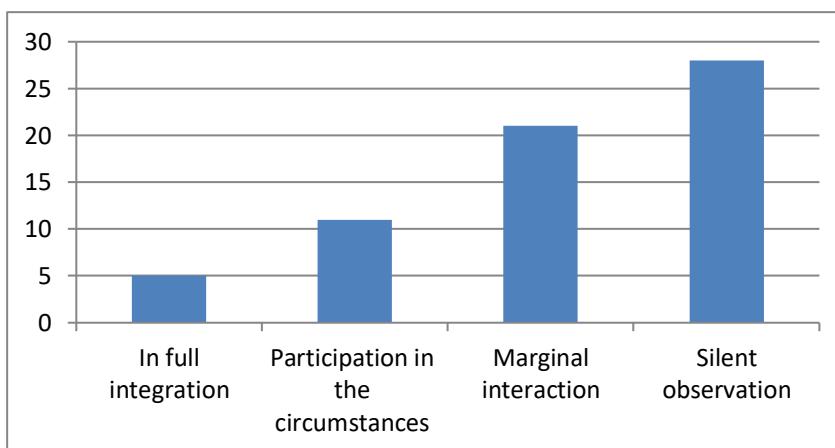
Lastly, *in silent observation*, students tend to avoid oral participation in the classroom. They seem to receive materials delivered in the classroom by taking notes using various strategies such as tape-recording or writing. Based on the various types of classroom behaviours, to be active learners, whenever in the classroom, students must engage actively by playing the roles of information seekers. The acts of asking questions, give opinions or simply answering questions posed by the instructor or fellow students are examples of active type of classroom participation.

Figure-2: Findings graphs on 1st Classroom observation



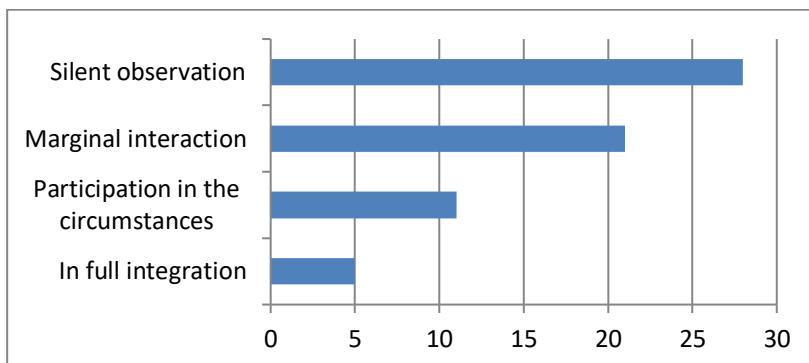
In the 1st Classroom observation, it was found that the students were more inclined to be passive by just writing and listening to the lectures. Out of 50 learners, 30 were found silent learners; 13 were marginal learners; 10 were Participant in the circumstances; and only 7 students were found in full integration.

Figure-3: Findings graphs on 2nd Classroom observation



However, in the 2nd Classroom observation it was found that out of 60 learners, 33 were found inactive and silent learners; 17 were marginal learners who occasionally participate in the classroom activities; 12 participants in the circumstances who lead to students- participation and interaction with other students and instructors become less and speak only at appropriate time.; and only 8 students were found in full integration and active learners always take part in the activities. They showed an active participation with students giving opinions and the other maxima with a passive participation by just writing and listening.

Figure-4: Findings graphs on 3rd Classroom observation



From the 3rd classroom, the maximum students showed a passive form of participation that was, sitting quietly and just listening to the lectures while the least number of participants involves in full integration. The overall result of the analysis showed that the main form of students participation is listening, followed by writing notes. During the observation, teachers hardly encouraged their students to take part in the discussion; even teachers hardly asked any questions. It appeared that the teachers were not fully aware of the importance of students' participation in the class.

The findings of the study from the observation revealed some exciting results. Firstly, the observation conducted on the three classrooms revealed that the students were not active participants. Based on the forms of participation the students can be categories as either participation in the circumstances, marginal interaction or silence observation. When they were in the classroom, they were more into listening and note-taking. Only maximum 15% of the students in each classroom were involved in the active participation category such as asking questions, giving opinions or discussing the topics of the lecture.

Secondly, the understanding on the student attitudes in the classroom help teachers to plan and create a conducive learning environment whereby classroom activities would be more interactive and stimulating. Teachers are encouraged to adopt various methods of active interactive teaching techniques such as problem-based learning and study group to stimulate active involvement from the students. Such pedagogical strategy will create a student centered and effective learning environments. According to Davis (2009), student's enthusiasm and willingness to participate in a classroom through these verbal engagements may create a conducive classroom environment for fruitful teaching and learning. Active class environment encourage student participation, enthusiasm and willingness to learn and a participative environment in the classroom stimulates learning, sets the momentum and makes both the lecturer and

student feel satisfied. Participative environment means not only a lot of questions and talking from the students, but it also means an environment where every student learned in a manner which best suits him or her. How to create a conducive environment? Lecturers must foster positive relationship with the students. Studies carried out in recent years have conclusively proven that the cordial and friendly relationship between students and teachers do generate the academic behavior.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Student's level of participation is highly affected by different factors such as in advance preparation, delivery of teaching material in advance, applying different active teaching methods by the teachers and availability of different rewarding means. As a result, majority of the students have positive attitude on active participation since they believed that active participation will help them to share new ideas with their friends. Though some students are still inactive perhaps due to different psychological and personal factors that need further investigation; the actions implemented also bring some important changes that enhanced students' class participation. Based on the findings, the following measures should be taken: (a) Creating awareness about active learning practices (b) Giving teaching materials in advance for preparation with discussion questions (c) Supporting and encouraging them to participate actively (d) Allocating sufficient time for discussion e. Improve on student centered teaching learning process using different active teaching methods like cross over group, jigsaw, micro teaching, hot seating, group discussion, and presentation (e) Motivating students to participate through incentives as a form of reward like mark, applaud etc. Despite that some students are still passive perhaps due to different psychological and personal factors that need further investigation; the actions implemented bring some important changes that enhanced students' class participation.

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Onset Declustering in English Loanwords in Chittagonian Bangla: An Optimality Theoretic Account

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Abstract

*The study investigates the phenomenon of word-initial vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion in the cluster simplification process of English loans in Chittagonian Bangla. An Optimality Theoretic (OT) analysis follows and exemplifies the cluster simplification process. It has been well represented that the emergence of constraint *CLUSTER^{ONS} is in the driving seat in Chittagonian Bangla. SYLLCON and CONTIGUITY are two more vital constraints besides two lower-ranked faithful constraints MAX-IO and DEP-IO that help the ranking in determining vowel epenthetic and consonant deletion process respectively. Further, ANCHOR-IO (L) works vital as the second- highest ranked constraint in consonant deletion. As the requirement of the research, a qualitative approach was followed. Primary data has been collected from some native speakers of CB based on the random sampling method. Finally, it is apparently found that the deletion of consonant /r/, which is a constant practice of the CB speakers, is an effect of auditory perception of English source language form (i.e., perceiving /r/ as a vowel) by the CB speakers of English.*

Key Words: epenthesis, deletion, Optimality Theory, Chittagonian Bangla, *CLUSTER^{ONS}

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the phenomenon of cluster simplification process at word-initial level with special reference to loanword adaptation of English to Chittagonian Bangla (henceforth CB). An Optimality Theoretic (OT) account is provided to justify the process of vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion. Like other East Bangla Dialects, CB does not allow tautosyllabic Cluster both at onset and coda, and here in this study, our full concentration will be on the onset declustering process only. Loanword adaptation is a long pervasive phenomenon. When these foreign words come to the native vocabulary, they need to go through

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some changes and this type of change conforms to the native phonology. The loanword adaptation process mainly depends on the different phoneme inventories, syllable structure, and phonotactic constraints that exist between the foreign language and the native one. Thus the foreign words that are used in the native vocabulary become more native and less foreign.

CB is a dialect of Bangla spoken by more than 13 million people (Ethnologue, 2006) around the world and most of the speakers live mainly in the South-east part of Bangladesh including Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Khagrachori, and Bandarban district. A good number of people also live in India especially in West Bengal and Tripura, Middle-east countries, Australia, USA etc. The CB speakers have a common tendency to speak in cluster simplification. It means that the tautosyllabic cluster is not accepted in CB and similar is the case of loanword adaptation. In CB consonant clusters in the same syllable, both at onset and coda are not possible and as a result, the foreign segments with consonant cluster need declustering to become the part of CB vocabulary. The possible syllable structures of CB are V, VC, CV, CVC, CVVC etc. As the CCVC, VCC, CCVCC or CCCVC are not allowed in CB, the speakers simplify those consonant clusters by either inserting a vowel (known as epenthesis) at the edge/middle or deleting a particular consonant (known as deletion).

2. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The current study aims to shed light on the loanword adaptation phenomenon of English loans in CB, which will be a big contribution to the understanding of CB syllable structure. The major objective of the study is to determine the phonotactic and phonological constraints that govern the nativization process of English syllable structure in CB. The scope of this study is limited to the donor language, English and the recipient one, that we examine here, is CB.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions will guide our study:

- 1) How do CB speakers nativize English syllable specifically consonant cluster at onset?
- 2) What are the constraint rankings for vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion process?

4. Epenthesis

Epenthesis refers to the insertion of a sound in a word, particularly to a syllable. In this process, a new vowel (consonant insertion is very rare,

which is discussed later on in brief.) may appear between two consonant clusters for cluster simplification. In CB phonology, epenthesis means adding a vowel at the edge or inside to decluster the consonant clusters. It is always a preferred strategy to repair clusters in many languages such as Burmese (Chang, 2009), Fula (Pardis&LaCharite, 1997), Hindi (Singh, 1985), Bangla (Karim, 2011), Assamese (Dutta, 2016), Shoan (Uffmann, 2007), Sylheti (Goswami, 2013) and some others. Epenthesis occurs when words are borrowed from English that have consonant clusters, which are not permitted in CB.

Basically in the falling sonority cluster, a vowel is inserted at the edge, but in the rising sonority cluster, the vowel is inserted in between the cluster. Epenthesis in the cluster is peripheral whenever C₁ is of higher sonority than C₂, but internal when C₁ is of lower sonority than C₂ (Gouskova, 2001). Here, we look only at English loans in CB and when our corpus data is analyzed, we get the following picture that can clarify the epenthesis process in Table 1.

Example	sp, st, sk(s+obstruent)	bl, gl, kl, pl, sl, sn, br, fr, kr, gr	lm, rm, rn	st, mp, lt
Sonority	Falling	Rising	falling	Falling
Epenthesis	Edge	Internal	internal	Edge
Position	Onset	Onset	coda	Coda
Types	Prothesis		Anaptyxis	Paragogue

Epenthesis is of three types, namely prothesis, anaptyxis and paragogue. As in this paper we concentrate on declustering at onset, we will discuss only two processes which are exemplified below:

4.1 Prothesis (CCCV>VC.CV.CV[C])

This is a type of epenthesis where a vowel sound is inserted at the initial position of a word to break the cluster. Sometimes it is called ‘word-initial epenthesis’. It happens when C₁ has a higher sonority than C₂. Prothesis is seen mostly in the case of ‘s-obstruent’ clusters and this is a very common adaptation process of English consonant cluster in CB, which is reflected in the following examples:

(i)	English	CB	Gloss
	/sprɪŋ/	/ɪsprɪŋ/	‘spring’
	/sti:m/	/iʃtɪm/	‘steam’
	/skru:/	/iskru:/	‘screw’

According to Maria Gouskova (2001), “epenthesis in onset cluster is peripheral when C₁ is of higher sonority than C₂, but internal whenever C₁ is of lower sonority than C₂” (p. 175). However, this observation is partially true in the case of CB phonology. CB speakers do not allow

internal epenthesis in one cluster pattern featuring ‘sibilant [s] + bilabial nasal [m]’. As a result, vowel epenthesis is found here at the edge. Examples are provided below:

(ii)	English	CB	Gloss
	/sməʊk/	/esmok/	‘smoke’
	/smail/	/esmail/	‘smile’
	/smel/	/esmel/	‘smell’

4.2 Anaptyxis (CCV>CV.CV[C])

This is an epenthesis process in which an extra vowel sound is inserted between two consonants (mostly in between ‘obstruent+sonorant’ cluster). In English terminology, it is called ‘parasitic vowel’. This type of epenthesis happens when the sonority of C₂ is higher than that of C₁, which is called rising sonority. Some examples are given below:

(iii)	English	CB	Gloss
	/blu:/	/bulu/	‘blue’
	/bri:f/	/birip/	‘brief’
	/gla:s/	/gɔlɔʃ/	‘glass’
	/g्रæm/	/gəram/	‘gram’
	/kla:s/	/kelas/	‘class’
	/kri:m/	/kirim/	‘cream’
	/pla:stɪk/	/felastɪk/	‘plastic’
	/sləʊp/	/solop/	‘slope’
	/snəʊ/	/sono/	‘snow’
	/fru:t/	/ɸurut/	‘fruit’

Though epenthesis is known as vowel epenthesis, sometimes it also includes insertion of a consonant sound at mid position, which is known as anexcrescence, but it is very rare in CB. For example: /kæmrə/ > /kəmberə/ ‘camera’

5. Deletion

Deletion generally refers to a loss of sound. The corpus data with onset cluster that we have analyzed are mentioned below:

(iv) Stop [p, t, d] + Liquid [r] > pr, tr, dr (Del. Liq.)

Deletion of the 2nd consonant happens at onset ‘stop [p, t, d]+liquid [r]’ cluster, where the liquid one gets deleted. Some examples of such deletion are provided below:

(v)	English	CB	Gloss
	/prɒbləm/	/ɸɔ:błəm/	‘problem’
	/prɔɪməri/	/ɸɔimari/	‘primary’
	/trʌk/	/tɔ:k/	‘truck’

/treɪn/	/tʃeɪn/	‘train’
/drʌm/	/də:m/	‘drum’
/drɔ:ə(r)/	/dʒiar/	‘drawer’

6. Research Methodology

As the requirement of the research, a qualitative approach was followed. Primary data were collected from some native speakers of CB both from towns and villages based on random sampling method. Like other social science research, during the field study time-intensive data collection methods such as interviews and observations were also applied. Those collected data were analyzed with the help of Optimality Theory, where the borrowing candidates were ranked by universal constraints posited to underlie the human faculty of language, and the candidates were determined by transduction processes articulated in prior studies of contact linguistics. This analysis is couched in terms of Optimality Theory because this model perspicuously expresses resolution of the competing forces and this is not rule based but constraint based.

7. Analysis of Data

Analyzing the data mentioned in section 4 and 5 we can generalize the following observations of onset cluster simplification in CB. These observations are mentioned below:

- i) The position of the epenthetic vowel is determined by the sonority of the consonants of a cluster. Falling or flat sonority among the consonants takes vowel epenthesis at the edge and rising sonority takes internal epenthesis.
- ii) Consonant cluster featuring ‘s+obstruent’ welcomes epenthesis at the edge.
- iii) If the second consonant in the cluster is ‘bilabial nasal’, it also takes edge epenthesis.
- iv) If the second member of the onset cluster is a sonorant (other than [m]) and the first member is obstruent, internal epenthesis takes place. So, the ‘obstruent+sonorant’ cluster takes vowel epenthesis at an internal position.
- v) Deletion of a consonant takes place in case of ‘obstruent+liquid’ onset cluster where liquid one gets deleted. Here, the obstruents are limited to [p, t, d] and liquid one is limited to [r].

8. OT Analysis of Different Declustering Process in CB Onset

It has been already told that both vowel epenthesis and deletion of consonant occur in CB to simplify clusters at the onset. The above-mentioned observations tend us to do analysis to prove the validity of the

data and determine CB grammar of epenthesis and deletion based on Optimality Theory proposed by Prince and Smolensky (1993), McCarthy and Prince (1995) and Kager (1999). In OT, borrowing candidates are ranked by some universal constraints and these constraints are language-specific, which means the constraints are determined by the phonological system of each individual language. OT is adapted to account for borrowing by taking the loanwords as the underlying form of the source language. These can be represented with some faithfulness and markedness constraints. OT distinguishes markedness constraints (McCarthy and Prince, 1995), which impose well-formedness of output prohibiting difficult structure to produce, and faithfulness constraints (Prince and Smolensky, 1993), which prefer pronounced realizations between underlying form (input) and the surface candidates (output). These constraints account for how loanwords are adapted in the native language.

Constraint rankings are not universal, rather they are language-specific. To satisfy one constraint is to violate another one. It is the fact that no candidate can satisfy all the constraints simultaneously. That is why, the violation of the winning candidate should be optimum. This mechanism of selection incurs ‘lesser’ constraint violations from other serious ones and thus involves the hierarchical ranking of constraints. It means higher-ranked constraints have priority over the lower-ranked ones.

As CB does not welcome tautosyllabic cluster, the markedness constraint **COMPLEX^{ONS}* remains the driving force constraint for declustering in CB. Next, over the issue of epenthesis or deletion, we can depend on the *Preservation Principle* of Paradis and LaCharité (1997). They propose that “unless the cost of preservation is too extreme...epenthesis should generally be preferred over deletion” (p. 384). Thus, MAX-IO, the faithful constraint that disallows deletion wins over DEP-IO, another faithful constraint for the cluster simplification process. ‘S-obstruent’ clusters have falling sonority and for that, epenthesis is preferred over deletion. Edge epenthesis violates ONSET but satisfies SYLLCON (Syllable Contact Law), which means sonority should not rise across the syllable boundary. Gouskova(2001) claims that, in the case of *Falling sonority input* “the constraint that prefers edge epenthesis is CONTIGUITY” (p. 177). When SYLLCON is not at stake, CONTIGUITY wins, because it keeps adjacent elements intact in the output. However, the *Rising sonority input* shows that CONTIGUITY must rank below SYLLCON.

This is true in the medial epenthesis in the case of the ‘sibilant+stop’ cluster as well as the ‘obstruent+sonorant’ cluster. However, this is not that much active in the case of edge epenthesis of the ‘sibilant+bilabial nasal’ cluster. While declustering the ‘sibilant+bilabial

nasal’ cluster CONTIGUITYranks higher than SYLLCON. Even ONSET ranks lower than CONTIGUITY, but higher than SYLLCON. Thus ‘sibilant+bilabial nasal’ clusters in CB partially disregard Maria Gouskova’s logic regarding “internal epenthesis” in the case of “Rising sonority”.

In the corpus data mentioned earlier, it is quite evident that consonant cluster at onset in CB is not allowed which makes the markedness constraint ***COMPLEX^{ONS}** as the driving force in the declustering process in CB. Two faithful constraints, MAX-IO ranks over DEP-IO, because CB prefers vowel epenthesis to consonant deletion, though deletion is not that much rare. At the time of the deletion process, these two faithful constraints switch their positions. Being a CVC-type language, CB welcomes the ranking of ONSET higher than DEP-IO. However, this markedness constraint ONSET ranks lower than faithful constraint CONTIGUITY to form the optimal output in CB as the speakers of this language prefer initial epenthesis to medial epenthesis or deletion.

Finally, I will go with the constraint SYLLCON to determine the epenthetic site by positioning vowel epenthesis at the edge at “Falling Sonority” and internal in the case of “Rising Sonority”. SYLLCON ranks higher than CONTIGUITY both at the edge or internal epenthesis except for the ‘sibilant+bilabialnasal’ feature. Only in the case of this particular feature combination CONTIGUITY ranks higher than SYLLCON.

All the above mentioned relevant constraints are presented below:

*COMPLEX^{ONS}	‘Onsets are simple’(Kager, 1999)
ONSET	‘Syllables must have onset’(*[V]) (Kager, 1999)
SYLLCON	‘The onset of a syllable must be less sonorous than the last segment in the immediately preceding syllable (Avoid rising sonority over asyllable boundary)’ (Bat-El. 1996)
CONTIGUITY	‘Elements adjacent in the input must be adjacent in the output.’ (no medial epenthesis/deletion)
	(Gouskova, 2001)
DEP-IO	‘Every segments of the output must have input correspondents’(‘No epenthesis’)
	(McCarthy & Prince, 1995)
MAX-IO	‘Every segments of the input must have output correspondents’(‘No deletion’) (McCarthy & Prince, 1995)

Based on the above mentioned constraint hierarchy we can specify the rankings under the following headings:

(i) sibilant + stop: (Falling Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, SYLLCON, MAX-IO >> CONTIGUITY
 >>ONSET>> DEP-IO

(ii) sibilant + bilabial nasal [m]: (Rising Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, CONTIGUITY, MAX-IO >>ONSET,
 SYLLCON >> DEP-IO

(iii) obstruent + sonorants:(Rising Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, SYLLCON,MAX-IO >>CONTIGUITY
 >>ONSET>> DEP IO

7. 1. OT Analysis of Vowel Epenthetic Process in CB

The following Tableau 1 illustrates edge epenthesis in the case of ‘sibilant + stop’ cluster, i.e. of the adaptation of the word /sprɪŋ/, which changes to /ɪspɪrɪŋ/.

In /sprɪŋ/ > /ɪspɪrɪŋ/, the ranking of *COMPLEX^{ONS}, SYLLCON, MAX-IO >> CONTIGUITY >>ONSET>> DEP-IO leads to the choice of candidate (b), in which a vowel is inserted at the edge of the onset.

Tableau 1:

/sprɪŋ/	*COMPLEX ^{ONS}	SYLLCON	MAX-IO	CONTIGUITY	ONSET	DEP-IO
(a) /sprɪŋ/	*!					
☞(b) /ɪspɪrɪŋ/					*	*
(c) /sɪprɪŋ/	*!			*		
(d) /pɪŋ/			**!	*		

In Tableau 1, the ‘sibilant + stop’ cluster is simplified. Candidate (a) violates the highest-ranked constraint *COMPLEX^{ONS} as CB does not allow tautosyllabic cluster at the onset. Candidate (c) violates both *COMPLEX^{ONS} and CONTIGUITY, but the highest-ranked constraint violation is more serious. Candidate (d) violates MAX-IO, another higher-ranked constraint.

Thus, candidate (b) becomes the optimal candidate because of least the violation, as it violates ONSET and DEP-IO, which are low-ranked constraints. Now, in tableau 2, we can work on ‘sibilant + bilabial nasal [m]’, where the ranking is, *COMPLEX^{ONS}, CONTIGUITY, MAX-IO >>ONSET, SYLLCON >> DEP-IO. The explanation for /sməʊk/ > /esmok/ is presented in the following tableau:

Tableau 2:

/sməʊk/	*COMPLEX ^{ONS}	CONTIGUITY	MAX-IO	ONSET	SYLLCON	DEP-IO
(a)	*!					
/sməʊk/						

(b) /semuk/		*!					*
↖ (c) /esmok/				*		*	*
(d) /mouk/		*!					

In tableau 2, we see that, candidate (a) violates the highest constraint $*COMPLEX^{ONS}$ as the cluster is used at onset position. Candidate (b) violates the next higher constraint CONTIGUITY, which is a gross violation. Candidate (d) violates the next higher constraint MAX-IO. So, candidate (c) is the most optimal candidate as it violates comparatively lower candidates like ONSET, SYLLCON and DEP-IO.

Now, in tableau 3, we can work on ‘obstruent + sonorants’ cluster, where the ranking is, $*COMPLEX^{ONS}$, SYLLCON, MAX-IO >> CONTIGUITY >> ONSET >> DEP-IO. The explanation for /kla:s/ > /kelas/ is presented in the following tableau:

Tableau 3:

/kla:s/	$*COMPLEX^{ONS}$	SYLLCON	MAX IO	CONTIGUITY	ONSET	DEP IO
(a) /kla:s/	*!					
↖ (b) /kelas/				*		*
(c) /eklas/		*!			*	*
(d) /kas/			*!	*		

In tableau 3, candidate (a) violates the highest ranked constraint $*COMPLEX^{ONS}$. Candidate (c) violates another higher ranked constraint SYLLCON. Candidate (d) violates next higher candidate Max-IO. Thus candidate (b) is the optimal candidate as its violation is minimal which are CONTIGUITY and DEP-IO. As candidate (b) violates lower ranked constraints, it is the winning candidate.

7.2 OT Analysis of Deletion Process in CB

Deletion at onset is not that much common as it only happens in the case of [p (ϕ), t (t), d (d) + r]. In this case, Here, [r] is deleted which can be explained through the following constraint ranking. In this process, we need one more markedness constraint known as ANCHOR-IO (L) along with the other constraints mentioned earlier.

ANCHOR-IO (L) ‘The initial element in the input must have a correspondence in the output (‘No epenthesis or deletion at the left edge’) (McCarthy & Prince, 1995)

In this deletion process, CONTIGUITY ranks higher than MAX-IO, as it is a common tendency to preserve all the segments of the loanwords in pronunciation and to keep them close and in right order, which makes epenthesis preferable to deletion. Thus DEP-IO ranks higher

than CONTIGUITY. In this deletion process ANCHOR-IO (L) restricts any epenthesis or deletion at left edge. So it ranks higher than DEP-IO but lower than *COMPLEX^{ONS}. The ranking of the constraints is presented below:

*COMPLEX^{ONS} >> ANCHOR-IO (L) >> DEP-IO >> CONTIGUITY >> MAX-IO

Now, we can take an example of stop + liquid cluster /tɻak/ > /tɻa:k/ for further analysis:

Tableau 4:

			ANCHOR-IO (L)	DEP-IO	CONTIGUITY	MAX-IO
	/tɻak/	*COMPLEX ^{ONS}				
(a)	/tɻak/	*!				
(b)	/terak/			*!		
(c)	/etɻak/			*		
(d)	/tɻa:k/				*	*
(e)	/ra:k/				*	*

From the tableau 4, it is evident that candidate (a) with complex onset violates the highest constraint *COMPLEX^{ONS}. Candidate (c) and (e) violate another higher-ranked constraint ANCHOR-IO (L), as it forbids both epenthesis and deletion at the left edge. Candidate (b) violates another higher-ranked constraint DEP-IO. So, candidate (d) is the optimal candidate, as it violates both the lower-ranked candidates CONTIGUITY and MAX-IO. Thus, candidate (d) is the winning candidate.

8. Conclusion

In this study, I have provided an OT analysis to account for the simplification process of the complex onset of English Loans to Chittagonian Bangla. I have shown how the declustering process works in CB with the help OT constraint ranking. Thus both the vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion processes at the word-initial level are explained with proper examples. The constraint rankings that I have proposed here are a good mixture of both markedness and faithful constraints. The article demonstrates how markedness constraint *COMPLEX^{ONS} acts as the driving force behind the cluster simplification process. It has also shown how CONTIGUITY ranks higher than SYLLCON in CB in the case of ‘s+bilabial nasal’ cluster. Next, in the case of consonant deletion, we see a great role played by the constraint ANCHOR-IO (L).

Thus, the OT account of the onset consonant cluster simplification process in CB projects that the phonological process is not arbitrary, rather rule-based. Finally, it is apparent that the /r/ deletion in ‘stop+liquid [r]’ clusters in CB is a process of auditory perception of deleting /r/ by the CB speakers being influenced by the native English speakers. In the example of ‘stop + liquid’ cluster /tɻak/ > /tɻa:k/ seems that the loss of the consonant

[r] at onset inspires the compensatory lengthening of the succeeding vowel [a:], which may be resolved in the further study. Finally, the constraints that we have postulated so far are as follows:

(i) sibilant + stop: (Falling Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, SYLLCON, MAX-IO >> CONTIGUITY >>ONSET>> DEP-IO

(ii) sibilant + bilabial nasal [m]: (Rising Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, CONTIGUITY, MAX-IO >>ONSET, SYLLCON >> DEP-IO

(iii) obstruent + sonorants:(Rising Sonority)

*COMPLEX^{ONS}, SYLLCON, MAX-IO >>CONTIGUITY >>ONSET>> DEP IO

(iv) For deletion process:

*COMPLEX^{ONS} >> ANCHOR-IO (L) >> DEP-IO >> CONTIGUITY >> MAX-IO

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Equalisation of Gender Binary: Roles of EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The study attempts to define teachers' roles, classroom teaching strategies, and course materials in EFL classroom. A questionnaire survey was conducted among nineteen EFL teachers teaching at primary to tertiary levels. This paper finds an unwelcoming scenario of gender abuse and cruelty both physically and psychologically. ESL/EFL teachers can play a vital role to equalise gender binaries as they can build up the sent-up of the students' minds. Finally, some strategies have been recommended to be implemented so that gender binaries may be equalised and the bond of human relationships can be optimised.

Keywords: Gender binary, equalisation, ESL/EFL teachers, classroom teaching.

1. Introduction

In current usage, gender is used to refer to those characteristics of socio-cultural origin which are attributed to the different biological sexes. Within Linguistics this usage is sometimes varied in order to avoid confusion with linguistic gender, but generally speaking feminist influence has succeeded in establishing that 'gender' involves society and/or culture and 'sex' involves biology (Hawthorn, 2003). Jackson and Scott (1996) make it clearer. According to them, the term 'gender' was adopted by feminists to emphasise the social shaping of femininity and masculinity, to challenge the idea that relations between women and men were ordained by nature. Sometimes a distinction is made between 'sex' as the biological differences between male and female and 'gender' as the cultural distinction between femininity and masculinity along with the social division between women and men.

In order to show the patriarchal hierarchy for man-woman relationship and their respective positions, Helen Cixous (2002) gives a list of patriarchal binary opposition like 'activity/ passivity, sun/moon, culture/nature, day/night, father/mother, head/ emotions, intelligible/ sensitive, logos/pathos'. These binary oppositions are intensely imbricated in the male centric worth framework: every restriction can be broken down as a pecking order where the 'female' side consistently observed as the

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negative, feeble occurrence. In this endless series of hierarchical binary oppositions there always in the end comes back to the fundamental 'couple' of male/female. This hidden male/female opposition with its inevitable positive/negative evaluation can always be traced as the underlying paradigm. For one of the terms to acquire meaning, Cixous claims, it must destroy the other. The 'couple' can't be left unblemished: it turns into a general war zone where the battle for connoting matchless quality is always re-established. At last, triumph is compared with movement and thrashing with lack of involvement; under male controlled society, the male is consistently the victor. She passionately denounces such an equation of femininity with passivity and as leaving no positive space for woman: 'Either woman is passive or she doesn't exist'. Gender-based binary distinctions can be summed up through the comment by Mary Eagleton (2011): 'According to binary thinking the male and the masculine constitutes the norm, the positive and the superior; the female and the feminine is the aberration, the negative, the inferior'.

According to feminist criticism, gender discrimination promotes such legends that the male is naturally predominant, and the female second rate; and the one principles and the other is dominated. These fantasies of sexual orientation and race misshape the relations between women and men. In a world of male dominance, men are endowed with power for political and socio-economic reasons, and they manipulate their power to control their opposites to satisfy their masculine desires. In light of this bogus presumption that males have more power and force than females, sexual orientation jobs are characterized in like manner.

Since this supposition has been a conventional standard of belief system for a considerable length of time, women and men fit in with the social thoughts built up for them by society, deliberately or unconsciously, to such an extent that men think that it is difficult to defy or acknowledge any propensity of assault or damage to their absolute power. So as to keep the power, men attempt each mean to construct an outright male controlled society of masculinity, with the goal that they can have a tight control of their adversaries—women sexually, socially, politically and economically, both inside and outside their homes. They attempt to decrease female identity or functions in the societal framework by setting up a negative picture of females as ideologically dependent and subordinate, that men are the subject or the total and that women are the Other—an object whose presence is characterized and deciphered by the male, the predominant being in society (Guo Yuehua, 2009). The results of this longing and practice of intensity for control are the strained connection between the male and the female.

Language is not just a language; rather it is a culture, ideology and identity for every ethnic group. Every word, sentence is the symbol of that

identity. So, language can shape a person's internal and external behaviour, ideologies, personality and many more in such a way that no other thing or phenomenon can do so extensively. Along these lines, ESL/EFL teachers can assume a fundamental job to even out these phony sexual orientation pairs and their accursed impacts, since they have an incredible breadth to develop the attitude of the learners. They can show the understudies through structuring impartial English jargons and various sentences dependent on syntactic capacities, and through advancing the sexual orientation levelling belief systems in passages, articles, creations other practices of language skills. Other than they have the benefits for open conversations on this issue in the classes, workshops, symposiums and a lot more to raise the cognizance of the youthful understudies who can change the situation of the general public for the abolishment of gender discrimination.

2. Literature Review

Gender equalisation is a common term used worldwide. It has been a great concern in language learning and teaching with the simultaneous pace of socio-economic development. Some contemporary studies extensively focus this issue. The interconnection of gender and language learning is a focusing point in some studies. Language (learning) as 'sexist' may vary in the classroom environment due to the sex differences. So 'sexist' happens to be the significant factor for language learning (Shazu, 2014). The majority or minority of same sex identity sometimes makes the teaching-learning environment either active or passive. This activeness or passiveness in the classroom is a wonderful factor for gender issue in language learning and teaching (Mahmud, 2010). Gender-based English language teaching may be various dimensional, such as, curricular innovation addressing the needs of particular learners; gender-oriented teaching practices, materials, and tasks; topic management concerning gender issues; and classroom management and decision-making practices (Norton and Pavlenko, 2004).

The concern of both gender and language is found in the study of Wang Qian. According to him, the gender orientation contrast is that the distinctions male and female learners appeared in the learning movement, and advances countermeasures for distinction educating, from the parts of sexual orientation contrasts in English learning in an assortment of exhibitions, such as in English learning style, learning memory, learning inspiration and the idea of sex contrasts and in the determination and utilisation of learning technique (Wang Qian, 2015). Course book as materials is also another important issue for gender-oriented language learning and teaching. Nazife Aydinoglu (2014) nicely refers to this matter, that is, *explicit* and *implicit* presentation of women in the course books focusing on the gender equality to enhance gender equality in

learners' life. Syntheses of some studies made a research gap for the role of ESL/EFL teachers in the gender equalisation issues. This current study attempts to address this gap and find a research-based ways out.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study has been accomplished in order to:

- a) depict a clear picture of the women's conditions in the male dominated hierarchy;
- b) marginalize the women's and men's power and capacity in the respective phases;
- c) show the interconnection and interdependence on each other for the better course of human life where both are involved sometimes actively sometimes passively;
- d) define the role of EFL/ESL teachers for the equalization of general binaries; and
- e) raise consciousness among the young students who can change the scenario of the society for the abolishment of gender discrimination.

4. Research Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been adopted because of the nature of this study. Primary data have been collected through a surveying questionnaire from 19 (nineteen) teachers out of whom 04 (four) from primary school, 04 (four) from high school, 05 (five) from higher secondary level or college and 06 (six) from University. Among these 19 (nineteen) teachers, 10 (thirteen) were females and 09 (thirteen) were male participants. All the participant teachers are definitely EFL/ESL teachers at Dhaka, Bangladesh. Secondary data for gender violence across the world including Bangladesh have been collected from the reports accomplished by BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

5. Findings of the Study

BRAC's Community Empowerment Programme, run by women-led organisations called *Polli Shomaj* (Rural Society), collected the data through its network of 12,800 ward level across 56 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh. The data collected from BRAC show a 41% rise in violence against women. Most of the violent acts against women and children are being committed by the people who are our intimate and trustworthy often at our own homes. Out of the whole perpetrators, 77% is our family members like husbands, fathers, father-in-laws, brothers, uncles and so on. The report also shows one woman experiences violence in every 50 minutes, one woman is physically tortured in every 65 minutes, one

woman commits suicide in every 6 hours, one woman is raped in every 12 hours and one woman is murdered in every single day (Suraiya, 2018, March 11).

UNODC

UNODC carried out a study focusing on gender-related killings of women and girls as a grave problem in different parts of the world in 2017. The study shows that about 87,000 women were the victims of intentional murder in 2017. More than half of them (58 per cent), meaning about 50,000 were killed by partners or family members. It means that 137 women across the world are killed by anyone of the own family members every day.

In 2017, Asia observed the highest number (20,000) of all women killed around the world by intimate persons or family members. The other subsequent parts of the world are Africa (19,000), the Americas (8,000), Europe (3,000) and Oceania (300). However, Africa experienced the greatest risk for women to be killed by their intimate partner or family members with the homicide rate of 3.1 per 100,000 female populations, while Europe is the lowest risk region with 0.7 per 100,000 populations. The intimate partner/family-related homicide rate was 1.6 per 100,000 female populations in the Americas in 2017, as well as 1.3 in Oceania and 0.9 in Asia (UNODC, 2019, July).

Table 1: Global Study on Homicide (UNODC, 2019 July)



The first five survey questions asked some basic information of the participants (Appendix). Apart from these, the questions aimed at having the idea of the participants' knowledge and involvement in the direct classroom teaching.

Table 2: Participants' Age, Sex, Designation, teaching Experience and Institution's Level

Sex	Male	10
	Female	9
Age	41 – 50	6
	31 – 40	7
	21 – 30	6
Designation	Professor	1
	Associate Professor	1
	Assistant Professor	4
	Lecturer	5
	Assistant Teacher	8
Teaching Experience	More than 10 years	4
	More than 5 years	10
	More than 2 years	5
Institution's Level	University	6
	College	5
	High School	4
	Primary School	4

The question 6 was designed to know whether or not the teachers have the idea of gender binaries. The knowledge of gender binaries will help them influence the learners to have a perfect mentality and motivation for equalisation of gender binaries. 52.63% of the participants have the idea of gender binaries but the rest of the participants (47.37%) doesn't have any idea regarding it and mostly they are the teachers of primary and high schools. This scenario also indicates that gender binaries, gender equalization and something else like this are not specifically learnt and taught in different levels of education.

The question 7 was designed to know the participants' opinion on the causes of the gender discrimination. 31.58% of the participants consider that psychological differences or the mean mentality is the cause of gender discrimination. 47.37% of them assume that 'social hierarchy' paves the way to discriminating the gender issues and people's mentality is moulded accordingly. The rest 21.05% believe that the directions of religion are not followed and practiced perfectly. They think religion is never biased rather always benevolent and justified for every person. It was a balanced standard of humanity.

The questions 8 and 9 intended to know what kind of belief the participants retain regarding the equalization between male and female, because without knowing this, strategies for teaching may not be taken since they are supposed to moulding the mentality of the young students. 89.47% of the participants believe in equalization as human being but they want to use the term gender justification, because equalisation is not

possible everywhere due to biological differences. The rest 10.5 3% doesn't believe so. Their argument is that since gender is a psychological term, it is better to use gender equalization so that all people including males and females can be equal as human being. The question 10 is designed to understand the influence of education on the equalization of the gender issue. It is very interesting that 100% of the participants considered education can change the situation for gender equalisation but most of them argue that education must be realistic and conducive to the ethics and humanity.

The question 11 aimed at focusing the various needs and requirements for both males and females based on the sex (biological)-differences. 42.11% of the participants think that sex-based separate educational environments are necessary. Their argument is that the physical juxtaposition of both males and females creates uncomfortable and uneasy situations for both. Gents and ladies toilets, reserved seats for women in public transports, separate queues for both males and females in different public-private offices, institutions, banks hospitals, ticket counters and so many other places are some realistic examples. Besides, some say that boys and girls should receive education in such environment where there is no scope for character accident in the adolescent and teenagers, because attraction with emotion for the opposite sex is very forceful during this period.

The question 12 is designed in order to know the influence and contribution of teachers to the equalization of gender binaries. 73.6 8% of the participants believe that teachers can be the pioneer of the making gender equalization and equalization of gender binaries. According to them teachers have a great influence on the society and people. They can change the mentality of the young learners. But only 26.32 % of them consider that not the teachers but the family and the strict implementation of law and force can play the pioneer role to make an environment of equalisation of gender binaries.

The question 13 intended to specify the role of ESL/EFL teachers for gender equality issue. English language is learnt and taught in almost all countries of the world as an international language. 89.47% the participants believe that EFL/ESL teachers have a worldwide influence and the scope to play a great role for creating the consciousness and concern of being equal as human being among the students. 10.53% does not believe so, because social workers can play this kind of role extensively with the support of the government.

Teacher's role

ESL/EFL teachers will play the role as the facilitators of students' learning with gender-neutral vocabulary, sentences, passages, paragraphs and compositions. They will guide the learners through providing them with language patterns and rules to develop their gender neutral mentality in language.

Course materials

ESL/EFL teachers may create the course materials forecasting the following dimensions:

Vocabulary – the list of gender neutral vocabulary should be provided with general vocabulary like, chair/chairperson chairman,

Sentences – the practice of grammatical functions and vocabulary in sentences should be practiced in such a way that they will sound neutral and there will be no gender discriminating binaries. For an example: *Human being is mortal* rather than *Man is mortal*; *Every morning my mother cooks food, my father washes clothes and I myself decorate the rooms* instead of *Every morning mother cooks food, washes clothes and father reads newspaper and I myself check my messenger inbox*.

Writing skill – gender neutral paragraphs and compositions should be selected and designed in the writing courses. 'My sister and my sister-in-law in their respective laws house', 'Eve teasing with my sister', 'When I am an eve teaser', 'A rape accident with my mother' and so on.

Reading skill – gender neutral reading texts, compositions and passages should be involved in the reading course books.

Speaking skill – gender neutral dialogues and debates may be designed and carried out among the students in the classroom.

Classroom teaching strategies with recommendations

Some classroom teaching strategies are recommended below:

- ESL/EFL teachers must show positive outlook and attitude towards the gender issues and the equalization of gender binaries in their behaviours, criticisms and class discussions
- ESL/EFL teachers may engage male students in writing and speaking on the contributions and importance of women in human life and vice versa for female students.
- ESL/EFL teachers should clarify the students of one thing that man and woman are two equal subordinate classes of the general term human as superordinate. So naturally men and women are equal as human beings though they are biologically different (Maniruzzam, 2014).

- ESL/EFL teachers may tell or give the students the scope of telling tales which are full of mutuality, interconnection, interdependences between men and women and respect to both the genders.
- ESL/EFL teachers must observe the behaviour of the students and, awards may be conferred to the students having the respect to the opposite sexes. It will motivate them to build the mentality of equalisation of gender binaries.
- Different quizzes, role play, group work, opinion sharing regarding gender issues and so many task-based classroom activities may be carried out.
- Teachers may arrange meetings with the guardians of the students and make them conscious and concerned for the equalization of the gender binaries so that their behaviour and activities at home with their children maybe neutral and equal.

6. Conclusion

The life power of human being begins with the help of women. So all human beings especially men are by-born indebted to women. They are men's mothers, sisters, wives and daughters or they are like our mothers, sisters and daughters. So how is it possible to tease, deny, abuse, harass, rape or discriminate the women? This kind of male domination and hierarchy should be abolished with the initiatives of the teachers especially ESL/EFL teachers. They can easily create such mentality among the young students. This feeling must be very conducive to the establishment of equalisation of the gender binaries rather than the biological differences. Ultimately it results in the happiness, peace and safety for every family, society, country and the world as well.

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Students' Performance in Bangla and English: Competency-based Examination

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Abstract

Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) has been introduced in 2009 with a view to assessing students' learning progress across the country. The main objective of the study was to explore students' performances on CBTIs in languages subjects (Bangla and English). A total of 320 answer scripts were evaluated by stratified random sampling procedures covering the eight regions of the country. Students' answers scripts were critically reviewed following the rubrics developed by the National Academy for Primary Education. The study found that the performance was not satisfactory in responding the items which require higher-order thinking skills, there were no difference among the students' in overall performances of Bangla and English subjects in CBTIs, individual performances in various language skills (such as- reading, writing skills) had significant variations because of various factors which need to be identified by further research.

Keywords: PECE, Assessment, primary education, Reading, Writing.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh has undoubtedly made remarkable progress in the field of education over the last few decades in ensuring primary education for all. One issue has been emerged in the education sector to ensure quality education for all which is also a top strategic priority of the government; this indicator considered as a key issue to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Quality education enhances students' thinking skills to lead the society in a better way, besides it also provides learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills needed to contribute

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to the national economy. Quality primary education plays an important role in developing learners' thinking skills, psychomotor skills, and lead to greater development in their earnings and health (Shafiq, 2013). For this reason, improving the educational performance of primary grade students is significant for both economic and social progress (NSA, 2017). In this decade, the government has taken many important initiatives like revising national curriculum, adopting new teaching-learning methodology, updating teacher education programme and administering new dynamics of students' assessment by introducing competency-based test items (ESP, 2020). The Government of Bangladesh has introduced the Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) from this decade as a part of summative assessment, and considered this assessment as a key to the progress in the development of ensuring the quality of education. At the end of the primary education cycle, thousands of students attend PECE in each year, and it is believed as the largest summative assessment arrangement for students in Bangladesh.

1.1 Significance of the Study

English has been taught as a compulsory subject along with Bangla for the last few decades in primary level. The national curriculum-2012 also emphasized on including modern approaches in teaching English and gave the same weightage like Bangla. Students have the opportunity to exercise the issues of the cognitive level while they are actively involved in the process of language learning. It is expected that the student who has a good understanding of mother language, they can learn and comprehend any foreign language easily. Without having a good foundation in mother language, students could not able to express themselves effectively in any foreign language whether it is English or not. Following the notion, the teaching-learning activities of Bangla and English were designed for the primary students; and the evaluation process also introduced to check how far students are able to achieve the targeted competencies of Bangla and English.

A summative assessment like PECE helps to get the overall idea of students' performance in Bangla and English subjects that were taught in school. In previous years, traditional test items were used to assess students' performance in PECE rather than including competency-based test items. In recent days, competency-based assessment is getting priority than content-based assessment (Roy, 2016). In the competency-based testing process, the competencies fixed for the students should be both measurable and observable. Students could be assessed by using textbook contents or taken contents from outside the textbook by maintaining a similar difficulty level. Reviewing students' answer scripts of PECE, is an opportunity to understand the students' achievement after completion of the primary education cycle. This study can provide important information

to the policy planners that how well students have performed in language-related competency-based test items and the possible areas that need to be focused. The gradual inclusion of competency-based items in the PECE raises some issues to know, like-What extent students are able to perform in achieving learning competencies in Bangla and English subjects? How well students are performed in different language skills related questions? So, it needs a study to explore the answers to those questions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study focused on the students' performances in language-related Competency-based Test Items (CBTIs) used in PECE. The objectives of the study are:

- (a) To evaluate students' performance in CBTIs of Bangla subject.
- (b) To evaluate students' performance in CBTIs of English subject.
- (c) To illustrate the variation of students' achievement in Bangla and English subjects.

2. Literature Review

Students' assessment involves checking the progress of learning, analysing the teaching-learning problems, and applying the findings for remedial action. In most of the countries, a specific body is responsible to conduct students' assessment nationwide and give feedback to the policymakers for further interventions (Linda & Laura, 2008).A national assessment is a survey of education institutions and students (and sometimes teachers) that is designed to provide evidence about the education system and students' achievements at a particular stage of education(DFID, 2011).The effective use of assessment findings includes applying the information gained to improve the quality of student learning. It also suggested the integration of assessment information into Education Management Information Systems for making decisions for the future.

In an educational setting, the learners are being assessed in mainly two ways: formative assessment and summative assessment. Usually, items were used in the test focusing on what they are being taught in the school to check the students' learning progress. Besides, tests could be arranged for measuring the learning skills and competencies that students have acquired in their entire education cycle (Roy, 2016). Formative assessment takes place during instruction and deals with how judgments about the quality of student performances can be used to shape and improve the student's competence more (Sadler, 1989). Whereas, the summative assessment emphasis on students' performance measurement and making reports on students' achievement for administrative purposes, like- awarding certificates, promoting to next grades, informing educational authorities etc.(Restrepo, 2017).

Conducting PECE examination focusing on assessing the learning competencies is a new concept in primary education of Bangladesh. Therefore, teachers had little experience earlier in developing competency-based items and assessing students' answer scripts accordingly, besides students also had a lack of understanding in answering competency-based test items. Considered that issue, Competency-Based Test Items (CBTIs) started to be introduced since the 2012 PECE, where only 10% of the traditional test items were replaced by CBTIs. There were concerns that many students might fail to pass the examinations and the students could face difficulty in answering the competency-based items.

In previous years, traditional test items were used to assess students' learning in PECE rather than administering competency-based test items. According to Roy (2016), the items used for assessing students' learning are taken from their textbook contents or beyond the textbook by maintaining a similar difficulty level. General practices of good assessment apply when assessing any subject competencies. It is critically important that the array of content assessments taken by Grade 5 students should be fair and valid (NAPE, 2014). PECE was first introduced in 2009 to ensure quality education. In PEDP3 main document (2011), one of the important disbursement-linked indicators was strengthening Grade-5 examination by introducing competency-based test items considering the terminal competencies stated in the national curriculum of NCTB. It also suggested increasing the percentages of competency-based items in grade-5 examination each year gradually (Directorate of Primary Education, 2011). Following this administrative direction, the Competency-Based Test Items (CBTIs) has been introduced since the 2012 PECE, where only 10% of the traditional test items were replaced by CBTIs (NAPE, 2015). After a successful intervention, the authority projected a gradual inclusion of CBTI in the next PECEs, and the inclusion of CBTI was 25% in 2013 PECE, 35% in 2014, 50% in 2015, 65% in 2016 and 80% in 2017. Following this step in 2018, the entire PECE was administered through competency-based, meaning the entire test was comprised of CBTIs; and different sets of questions were administered in PECE across the country.

3. Methodology

Documents analyses were conducted to carry out this study, and the analysis was done by reviewing students' answer scripts of Bangla and English. The answers scripts were selected from those students who appeared in PECE-2018. After collecting the answer scripts, a critical review was done following a marking scheme which was developed by NAPE. It is noted that those students' answer scripts were first assessed by the field level examiner following the same marking scheme.

3.1 Sampling

A total of eight sets question paper was administered in the whole country for PECE where the country is divided into eight regions considering district as a unit. Each region consisting of eight districts and one set of question among the eight sets is supplied in each region for conducting the examination. A total of 320 answer scripts for two subjects (160 scripts from each Bangla and English subject) were selected by stratified random sampling procedure which covered the entire country. Strata were selected according to the regions which make eight strata for eight regions.

3.2 Data Analysis

After completing the data entry, subject-wise online database files were created automatically which were then converted to SPSS data files for analysis. Simple descriptive statistics such as Frequency, Mean and percentages were used for analysis and. The inferential statistical analysis, t-test was conducted. Charts were used for projection.

4. Findings and Discussions

The presented data were derived by reviewing students answer scripts of Bangla and English, and presented according to the objectives of the study.

General Features of PECE Questions:

Table 1: General features of PECE-2018 questions

	Bangla	English
Total Items	14	13
Exam duration	2 hours and 30 minutes	2 hours and 30 minutes
Types of texts	Seen Texts, Unseen Texts, Poem	Seen Texts, Unseen Texts
Item types	Matching, Fill in the blanks, Form fill up, Short Questions, Creative Writing	Matching, Fill in the blanks, Rearrange, Form fill up, Short Questions, Creative Writing
Learning Domain Addressed	Remembering, Understanding, Applying	Remembering, Understanding, Applying

All the questions of PECE were competency-based in both Bangla and English. A total of 14 test items were given in Bangla question paper and 13 test items were given in English question paper. The time duration for each examination was 2 hours and 30 minutes. Both seen text and unseen text were used in Bangla and English questions. Moreover, descriptive and imaginative texts were used in both subjects; and poem and grammar-related items were also used in Bangla subject. Students were asked to give their answers by matching, fill in the blanks, short

questions, form fill up, letter writing and composition writing in both subjects. Different types of competency-based test items were included in PECE questions focusing on different language skills. Students' performance in reading and writing-related items in Bangla and English is given below:

Table 2: Students' performance in seen text

Items	Bangla			English		
	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean
Word meaning	5	4.1	81.0	-	-	-
Matching/Fill in the blanks	-	-	-	5	4.4	87.4
True/False	-	-	-	6	5.2	86.8
Short composition	-	-	-	10	5.5	54.6
SCRQ	10	7.8	77.9	12	7.6	63.1
Total	15	11.8	78.9	33	22.4	67.9

For the seen text, there were variations in items such as- Bangla question set used word meaning and SCRQ only whereas matching/fill in the blanks, true/false, short composition and SCRQ were used in the English question set.

Table 3: Students' performance in unseen text

Items	Bangla			English		
	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of Mean	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of Mean
Fill in the blanks	5	4.6	92.6	5	4.5	90.0
True/False	-	-	-	6	5.4	90.0
SCRQ	15	10.4	69.3	10	6.7	67.0
Letter writing	-	-	-	10	6.9	69.0
Total	20	14.6	73	31	22.6	72.9

Overall, students' performance for seen text was comparatively better for Bangla subject. Comparatively lower performances were seen in short composition writing and SCRQ for English. There was also dissimilarity between unseen text related items of the two subjects. In both Bangla and English, fill in the blanks and SCRQ were used, whereas true/false and letter writing-related items only included in English. Students performed better in fill in the blanks for both the subjects where their performance in SCRQ was comparatively low. Students scored low

in letter writing also. Overall performance for both Bangla and English were almost similar in unseen text related items.

Table 4: Students' performance in grammar for Bangla

Questions	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean
Transformation of verbs	5	4.2	84.0
Making interrogative sentence	5	4.2	84.0
Compound letter and making words and sentences	10	8.8	88.0
Punctuation marks	5	3.8	76.0
Express in a word	5	4.3	86.0
Synonym-Antonym	5	4.3	86.0
Total	35	29.2	83.4

In Bangla, there were grammar-related items which are- the transformation of verbs, making an interrogative sentence, compound letter, using punctuation, express in a word and synonym-antonym. There was no grammar-related item in English. Students' average marks in the transformation of verbs, making an interrogative sentence, compound letter, using punctuation, express in a word and synonym-antonym were 4.22, 4.16, 8.81, 3.81, 4.28 and 4.34 respectively. Overall, the mean score of students' achievements showed a good performance in grammar. Students exposed the best performance in compound letter and making words and sentences where their performance in using punctuation marks was comparatively low.

Table 5: Performance in poem for Bangla

Questions	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean
1stSCRQ	2	1.8	90.0
2ndSCRQ	5	3.4	68.0
3rdSCRQ	3	2.4	80.0
Total	10	6.7	67.0

Students were asked to answers three SCRQ related questions to a seen poem in Bangla. In poem related questions, the students got an average of 67% marks where they got 90% marks in the first questions which were from knowledge/remembering learning sub-domain. In English, there were no items from poems.

Table 6: Students' performance in writing-related items

Items	Bangla			English		
	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean
Short Composition	-	-	-	10	5.5	54.6
Application/Letter Writing	5	3.9	77.6	10	6.9	69.3
WH Question	-	-	-	10	6.9	69.0
Time/date/day	-	-	-	5	4.2	84.4
Rearrange	-	-	-	10	8.2	81.5
Form Fill up	5	4.8	96.0	5	4.9	97.2
Essay Writing	10	6.7	67.0	-	-	-
Total	15	10.1	67.1	50	35.3	70.7

Students' performance in writing skills was assessed by various items which varied in two subjects. In Bangla, writing application/letter, form fill up and essay writing were used where short composition, letter writing, making WH questions, time/date/day related task, rearrange words to make sentences, fill up forms were used only in English subject. Overall, students' performance in writing tasks was almost similar in both subjects. Students scored highest marks in form fill-up of the writing tasks for both subjects. The percentage of mean was about 50% for short composition writing in English and this was the lowest score in the writing part. Comparatively lower performances were observed in application/letter writing and WH question making.

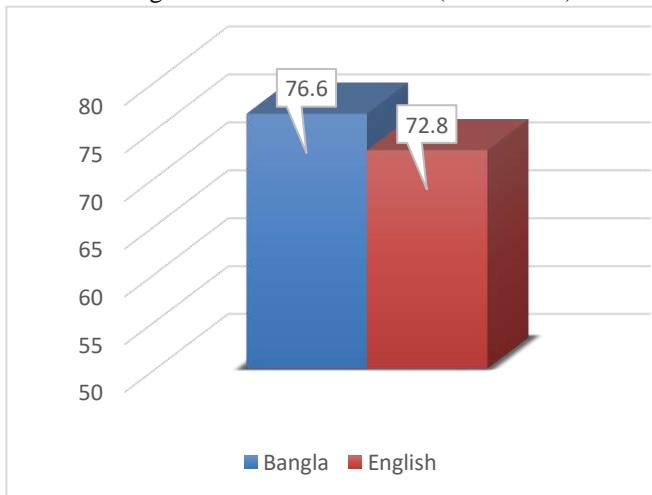
Table 7: Skill-wise students' performances

Items	Bangla			English			t-test p-value
	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean	Allocated marks	Achieved Mean Score	% of mean	
Reading	35	28.9	82.6	50	37.4	74.8	0.000
Writing	65	54.9	84.5	50	35.3	70.6	0.000

In language learning all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) need to be assessed. In PECE examination, only reading and writing skills were assessed as this is a paper-pencil test. It is noticeable that in both skills students did better for Bangla subject which was their mother tongue. Comparing the two skills, students performed comparatively better in writing than reading in Bangla subject. On the other hand, their performance was comparatively better in reading than writing in English subject. It is also revealed that allocated marks for writing (65) in Bangla was more in compared to reading (35) whereas in

English allocated marks were equal for both skills. Writing skills were emphasized in summative assessment for Bangla subject and students got more attention in writing as well.

Figure 1: Total achievement (mean score) in both subjects



The mean difference between Bangla and English for reading skill is found statistically significant ($p<0.01$) that is there were various factors which cause this difference and it needs to be identified. Similarly, for the writing skill, the mean difference is also statistically very significant ($p<0.01$). Students overall achievement score for Bangla was 76.6 whereas it was 72.8 for English. It was discovered from the data that the mean difference between these total scores for the two subjects was statistically not significant ($p=0.118$). Thus, it revealed that though there were no dissimilarities among the students' overall performances of Bangla and English subjects, individual performances in various language skills (such as- reading, writing skills) had significant variations because of various factors. It can be surmised that these variations occurred for differentiation in giving emphasis on various items or skills in these two subjects.

In different sets of questions, both descriptive and imaginative texts were used in Bangla and English subjects in the forms of Seen and Unseen texts. Students had to answer various test items which were matching, fill in the blanks, SCRQ, form fill up, letter/application writing, composition/essay writing etc. Students' performance for seen text was comparatively better for Bangla subject than English. Comparatively lower performances were seen in short composition writing and SCRQ for English. Overall, performance for both Bangla and English were almost similar in unseen text related items. Students performed better in fill in the

blanks for both the subjects where their performance in SCRQ was comparatively low. Students scored low in letter writing too.

Students' achievements in grammar-related items showed a good performance in Bangla. Students exposed the best performance in compound letter and making words and sentences where their performance in using punctuation marks was comparatively low. There was no grammar-related item in English. In poem related questions, the students got an average of 67% marks where they got 90% marks in answering remembering type questions. There was no poem related item in English. Students' performance in writing skills was assessed by various items which varied in two subjects. Overall performance on writing tasks was almost similar in both subjects. Students scored highest marks in form fill-up of the writing tasks for both subjects. They got the lowest score in short composition writing. Comparatively lower performances were observed in application/letter writing in both subjects and WH question making in English.

In PECE examination, only reading and writing skills were assessed as this is a summative assessment with a paper-pencil test. Students did better in both skills in their mother tongue. Comparing the two skills, students performed comparatively better in writing than reading in Bangla subject. On the other hand, their performance was comparatively better in reading than writing in English subject. Referring to the allocation of marks, it is thought that writing competencies were highlighted that Reading in Bangla exam, whereas in English both the skills got equal mark distribution in PECE.

The mean difference between Bangla and English for both reading and writing skills is found statistically very significant ($p<0.01$). It can be surmised that these differences were caused by various factors and it needs to be identified through extensive research. Students overall achievement score for Bangla was 76.6 whereas it was 72.8 for English and this difference was statistically not significant ($p=0.118$). Though there were no dissimilarities among the students' overall performances of Bangla and English subjects, their performances in various language skills (such as- reading, writing skills) had significant variations because of various factors.

5. Recommendations

The findings of this study could not be differentiated between the regions because for different items as well as different texts were used in different regions. However, the researcher made the following recommendations by surmising the facts.

- As students' weaknesses were found in answering SCRQ, letter writing, WH question making and composition writing in English, classroom teaching needs to be improved in those areas.
- It needs to be emphasized on practicing reading-related items in Bangla and writing-related items in English on a regular basis in the school setting.
- Class teachers should be motivated to provide opportunities for students to practice answering different learning domain-based questions in each subject through competency-based items.
- In school level, teachers need to prepare competency-based items and orient the students about these test items. In that case, training and motivation are needed for school teachers to develop question paper for the terminal and annual examinations by themselves. By doing so, students will feel confident to answer competency-based items in the real exam like PECE.

6. Conclusion

The study has conducted by reviewing 320 students' answer scripts of PECE 2018 from 8 different regions. From the results, it can be said that students had shown similar performance in Bangla and English in terms of getting the total marks for each subject. Students' performance was not satisfactory in replying the questions followed by reading texts, which requires higher-order cognitive skills. It is observed that some students were not able to achieve targeted competencies which indicated a learning gap. This study did not identify the students' learning gap due to time constraints and other limitations. The narrative part of the students' answer in the analysis could have more precisely assessed. Additional analysis of competency-based test items considering Bloom's Taxonomy could also be performed for getting vivid pictures of students' performance. If the students' results of the last few years of PECE could be included in the analysis, it would be more informative.

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The Roles of Peer Observation on Teacher Performances

Md Kamal Hossain¹

Abstract

The current study aimed at exploring the effectiveness of peer observation in enhancing teachers' performance. The study applied qualitative methodology for the study as it provided detailed information to explain complex issues. In order to collect data, the study interviewed five teachers; arranged a focus group discussion (FGD) with 15 students of intermediate level. Interviews were conducted in sound proof room with prior consent of the interviewees and the conversations were recorded. The major findings of the study showed that peer observation of teaching was effective in professional development; peer observation promoted active learning environment along with interpersonal skills which removed monotony in the teaching and learning process. This study also revealed that peer observation of teaching and learning was cheap and easily accessible. It constructs students' knowledge and makes them independent.

Keywords: peer observation, performance, effectiveness,

1. Introduction

Peer observation is a procedure of teaching where a teacher is viewed in his/her teaching session by one or more of his colleagues who afterwards provide/s feedback on the basis of their performance (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006). According to Showers and Joyce (1996), peer observation of teaching was first proposed in the early 1980s in US as an on-site dimension of staff development. Yee (2016) has also noted that peer observation refers to peer monitoring or lesson study for improving student learning by developing teaching skills, addressing common and mutual challenges in teaching and learning process. Ultimately, Lomas and Kinchin (2006) found that peer review enhances teaching quality among teachers over the sharing of helpful practice. Keeping professional development in mind, teachers nowadays engage themselves in multifarious training. They have come out of the traditional teacher-centered teaching to student centered-teaching and are performing

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collaborative teaching practices. Peer observation is such a professional development and instructional training which can help them to work together reflecting on current practices. Moreover, peer observation has effective acceptance among educators to improve student learning. It also removes isolation and develops an excellent cognition of best practices among teachers by expanding, refining and building new skills (Yee, 2016).

In Bangladesh, the government is also giving priority to teacher training. It is true that a trained teacher can teach successfully where a novice teacher develops his/her potential under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Therefore, professional training is a must for teachers to build up their teaching skills. Among various types of professional development training, peer observation is getting popularity nowadays because it is easy to receive from colleagues. If a teacher is busy and cannot move from his/her institution to receive formal training, peer observation of teaching can help him/her in this regard. On the whole, peer observation provides many benefits. Among them improving students' achievement and progress, enhancing professional skills, analyzing own lessons, improving teachers' performance are mentioned by Yee (2016). Besides improving teachers' performance, peer observation of teaching and co-reflection with collaboration to clarify teaching skills (Martin & Double, 1998).

Peer observation can be used for both formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative peer observation is the process of evaluating learners' advancement in the classroom and taking necessary action for further development. The purpose of this assessment is to find out the weakness of students and make them ready for summative assessment. This type of observation is most important for junior faculty members for developing their own teaching. Summative peer observation indicates the evaluation of peer classroom behaviour to provide teaching friendly tips used for merit, promotion and domination decisions. In summative peer observation, the instructor and committee members review all teaching materials such as course materials, syllabus, exams, teaching equipment, student evaluation and even face to face talk with students to obtain a complete picture of teaching before entering the classroom for an observation. In a nutshell, peer observation is a constructive and progressive professional development training which is very useful for gaining insights into another lecture's teaching style and student engagement that reveal many important things for the observer and the observed.

Peer observation of teaching develops a 'pair concept' and provides much opportunity to share and accumulate teaching and learning techniques colleagues. It aims at progressing teaching practice by

observing other colleagues (Hendry & Oliver 2012). Martin and Double (1998) mentioned the following objectives of peer observation- (i) developing a sense of individual gateway to curriculum delivery; (ii) improving and rectifying curriculum designing efficiency in assistance with a peer; (iii) improving and extending teaching strategies and modes of outgivings through combined contemplation; (iv) refining interpersonal skills; (v) identifying the weak points which need further development; and (vi) improving personal skills of evaluation and self-appraisal.

Of all the professional development trainings, peer observation is the best way to improve teachers' performance. In this regard, Menges (1987) mentions that peers can assist with supportive information to improve teachers' performance and teaching quality. He also finds that Peer observation has many benefits. Among them the prominent benefits are experience, assistance and values which obviously enhance teachers' skills. He concludes that a colleague gives witty comments about the appropriateness and the usages of teaching equipment apart from providing feedback on teaching activities. Also, Austin (2001) stated that in peer observation co-teachers work well together, share each other's experience and contribute to the improvement of their teaching. According to Showers (1985), peer coaching serves three important purposes. Firstly, it builds up a community of teachers to practise important component of training and develop a strong ties among professionals. Secondly, it improves understanding among colleagues and set a common goal for working together. Finally, peer coaching provides a structure for the follow up and helps to acquire new teaching skills and techniques. He, however, emphasizes three things while observing a peer- (i) closeness with ability (ii) permitting other teachers in the classroom for monitoring and feedback (iii) determination to strain and retouch skill.

Research Questions

- (1) What are the advantages of peer observation of teaching?
- (2) What do students think about peer observation of teacher?
- (3) How do the challenges in peer observation of teaching can be minimized?

2. Literature Review

As a professional development strategy, peer observation has gained much attention in recent years due to growing emphasis on student-centered learning (Mrudula, 2002). Most prominently, peer observation has a tested history as a process of teachers' professional development in UK tertiary education (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006). In recent years, its effectiveness and appropriateness have been examined by many researchers (Donegan, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 2000).

Ostovar-nameghi and Sheikhahmadi (2016) found peer observation as a process in which educators support each other in discussing the gap between gaining current skills or teaching methods and using them efficiently for implication. They added that peer observation helps replacing traditional teaching method to new teaching method solving each other's class related problems. There is no professor who does not intend to do a good job in the classroom and for actual professional development, they have inspired professionals to accept peer observation of teaching (Mento & Giampetro-Meyer, 2000).

Eri (2014) found the entire process of peer observation is a good platform for improving the professional practice among teachers through explicit feedback. Differently, Ostovar-nameghi and Sheikhahmadi (2016) discovered peer observation as a replacement of age-old teaching method to modern and update teaching method. Although their purpose was different, they deserved peer observation of teaching to improve teachers' performance. Moreover, teachers nowadays have come out of the one man show classroom engaging their colleagues and students with their teaching and learning process. Subsequently, Fletcher and Paul (2004) find that peer review develops teaching strategies while Martin and Double (1998) discover that peer observation is a chance to refine teaching skills through supportive collaboration. In the true sense of the term, peer observation is not for developing teachers' performance only, it also engages students with the learning process as the teachers' focus point is the students' improvement (Baker, 1998).

The effectiveness of peer observation is speedily drawing the attention of educational researchers (Daniels, Pirayoff, & Bessant, 2013; Cosh, 1998); Showers & Joyce, 1996). According to Eri (2014), peer observation is a mutual process where a colleague attends another's teaching and provide positive feedback that would facilitate education for both the observer and the observe. Some of the benefits of peer observations are- (i) analyzing and self-teaching (Showers, 1985); (ii) developing teaching quality and efficiency (Eri, 2014); (iii) facilitating college teaching (Borko, 2004); (iv) sharing each other's experience (Austin, 2001); and (v) providing constructive evaluation (Pereira, 2012).

3. Research Methodology

The researcher applied qualitative research methodology. The study used Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 15 students and in-depth interview with five teachers. The students have been selected from the institution where the researcher is teaching. Similarly, the teachers are chosen from the department of English of the same institution as they are involved in peer observation of teaching. Data has been collected from three FGDs with 15 students and in-depth interview with five teachers.

Among the students 8 were female and 7 were male likewise 3 teachers were male and 2 were female. The participants for the FGDs are selected using random sampling technique. The teachers have been selected based on their experience, age, gender and subject they were teaching. The population of the study is the students 1st year and 2nd year of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and the teachers were from the same college but different disciplines. Learners from the 1st year and 2nd year of HSC were selected to investigate into their reactions regarding the peer observations of their teachers.

4. Findings and Discussions

The findings from FGD with students and In-depth interview with teachers have been placed below:

4.1 Findings from In-depth Interview

The researcher interviewed five teachers who are practicing peer observation. They were well-trained; and they participated in the interview willingly. They comment that teaching through observing is really exciting. Most of them have acknowledged that they like and enjoy peer observation of teaching because it costs nothing but easily engage them in professional learning to improve teaching. When they were asked why peer observation is necessary for teaching, one of them replied that peer observation enhances teaching quality and skills. For example, he admits that he himself is the beneficiary of it. Another teacher stated that peer learning helps him to gain new experience from his colleagues. Considering its advantages, they admitted that peer observation should be introduced in other institution. Moreover, most of the interviewed teachers opined that peer observation is effective in many ways. Firstly, it is cheap and easily accessible. Secondly, it ensures students' engagement and participation in learning. Besides, it confirms direct interaction. Finally, it shares a similar discourse, permitting for a greater understanding. Along with this, they have emphasis on pair and group work for the learners. Thus, we find the advantages of peer observation of teaching which provides the answer of research question-1.

When asked about the challenges of peer teaching, one of them replied that there is scope of limited learning from peer observation. Observations can often be divisive and a source of friction among the peers, he added. An experienced teacher of the group was asked the way to solve the challenges arrived in the process of peer teaching. He opined that there must build up a crystal clear purpose and mutual trust among teachers. Then everyone can be benefited- both the observed and the observers. However, in some cases they have also found lack of commitment, communication, punctuality and insufficient knowledge of a

tutor which resulted in losing their enthusiasm in teaching and their interest to continue in playing their roles as a peer tutor.

4.2 Findings from FGD

The learners who took part in FGD agreed that they enjoy peer observation of teaching. One of the respondents stated, “I like peer observation because a teacher takes good preparation to present before his learners and peer simultaneously”. All the participants supported his statement. Another participant replied: “I enjoy peer observation of teaching because it creates opportunity for me to gain knowledge from my teacher as I can share similar topic with one more teachers at time for greater understanding.” “It creates direct interaction between the learner student and the teacher-student which promotes active learning along with interpersonal skills which removes monotony in the teaching and learning process.

All of them acknowledge the effectiveness of peer observation of teaching because it ensures active learning and emphasis on taking part in workshops, study groups, peer to peer learning tie up and group work. They also argue that peer observation is fruitful as it personalizes learning experience and foster cooperative learning. Moreover, teacher peers inspires them to form student to student peers which make them active participants in the learning process. However, one of the learners has requested this researcher to use clear, easy and legible lesson plan for instruction.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aforesaid arguments and literature reviews evidently establish that peer observation facilitates college teaching, improves teachers' performance, develops their skills, uplifts mutual understanding, provides positive feedback, solves problems, and enhances teaching quality and efficiency. Moreover, both the observer and the observees can identify their difficulties and reach a fruitful solution to find out the best option for teaching. They can certainly be benefited from the process of peer observation through discussion and feedback. Consequently, after peer observation many ideas emerge that help the teachers to renew their performances. If peer observation is implemented, the quality of education in the country will be improved. Therefore, teachers need to help teachers for academic and professional development (Menges, 1987). Principal of the respective institutions can encourage peer observation of teaching among his/her teaching staff so that all of them can be involved with the process without any hindrance. Pairs between experienced and inexperienced teachers are encouraged as it creates an opportunity for a novice teacher to learn, grow and take the responsibility.

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Understanding Bloom's Taxonomy for Learning Outcomes in the Classroom

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Abstract

Learning outcomes are specific and clear statements of what students are expected to learn and be able to demonstrate at the completion of their course of study. Learning outcomes are written to guide what the student is expected to do and achieve in the course, thus aiming for a student-centred perspective. Teaching is be directly related to our intended learning outcomes, or what learners should be able to do after the learning experience. The intended learning outcomes should also drive how we assess learners. Learning outcomes, as discussed here, are often referred to as “learning objectives,” although some consider “outcomes” as broader. The most famous classification system of learning outcomes is Bloom’s taxonomy (1956), which has been used for over 50 years. It helps to distinguish learning outcomes based on the cognitive skills required and their level of complexity. It has evolved over the years, so you may see other versions of it, but the one presented here is one of the most common. It describes levels of achievement that can be attained across the domains of learning: skills (psychomotor), behaviours (affective) or knowledge (cognitive). In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl revised Bloom’s cognitive taxonomy. The revised taxonomy uses verbs to focus on student behaviour and the two higher levels of “Create” and “Evaluate” have been rearranged with “Create” now representing the highest order of cognitive function.

Keywords: Understanding, Bloom's Taxonomy, Learning Outcomes

1. Introduction

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a classification of the different objectives and skills that educators set for their students (learning objectives). The taxonomy was proposed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist at the University of Chicago. The terminology has been recently updated to include the following six levels of learning. Bloom’s

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taxonomy was developed to provide a common language for teachers to discuss and exchange learning and assessment methods. Specific learning outcomes can be derived from the taxonomy, though it is most commonly used to assess learning on a variety of cognitive levels. The Cognitive Domain of Bloom's taxonomy consists of six hierarchical levels of learning. While we, as educators, strive for students to reach the highest levels of learning at the top of the pyramid, all levels of learning depend on a solid foundation of those that come below. The table below defines each cognitive level from higher- to lower-order thinking. The goal of an educator's using Bloom's taxonomy is to encourage higher-order thought in their students by building up from lower-level cognitive skills. Behavioral and cognitive learning outcomes are given to highlight how Bloom's taxonomy can be incorporated into larger-scale educational goals or guidelines. The key phrases can be used (e.g., Example Assessments) to prompt for these skills during the assessment process.

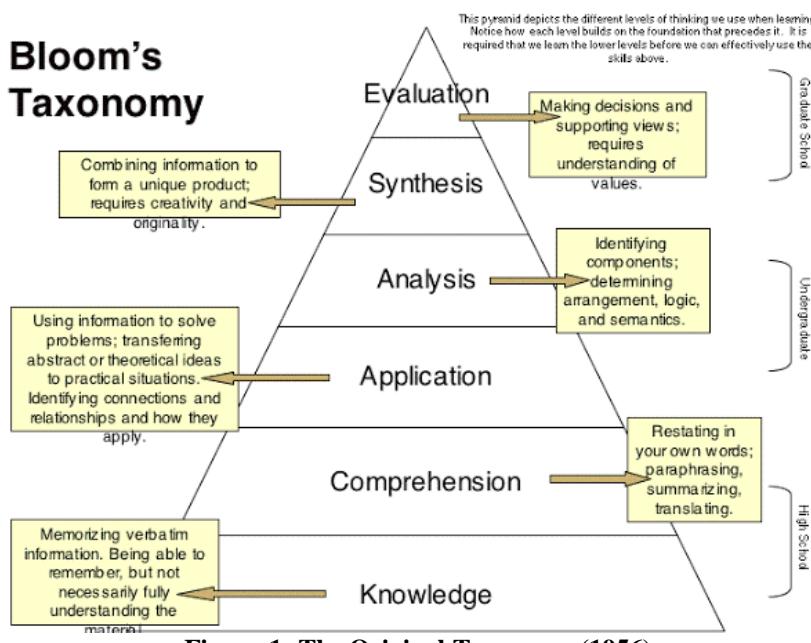


Figure-1: The Original Taxonomy (1956)

1.1 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are what you want your students to learn, either as a result of a specific lesson or on the grander, more general scale of the entire course. Learning outcomes target knowledge, skills, or attitudes for change. Bloom's taxonomy specifically targets these by seeking to increase knowledge (cognitive domain), develop skills (psychomotor domain), or develop emotional aptitude or balance (affective

domain). Learning outcomes might be identified by someone outside the teacher, such as state-wide or departmental standards. The taxonomy provides a basis for developing sub-goals and assessment methodology to meet these goals. It is important to note that learning outcomes are goals, and are not the activities performed to achieve those goals. Outcomes can be categorized into broad, global outcomes that may take many years to achieve and provide direction for education, educational goals that guide curriculum development over the weeks or months it takes to complete a specific course and instructional goals that narrowly focus on the daily activities, experiences, and exercises used in a specific lesson plan.

1.2 Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Less than a decade later on the other side of the Atlantic, a committee of American college and university examiners, headed by Benjamin S. Bloom, the University Examiner at the University of Chicago, set out on a project to classify the educational objectives of teachers. While we may not think of Bloom's taxonomy as participating in this broader modern discussion of the purpose of education, their idea of creating taxonomy for educational goals inevitably interacts with broader questions of purpose.

1.3 Applications of the Taxonomy

Taxonomies are developed to provide a framework for organizing a continuum along an underlying structure. For example, languages may be classified as Romantic, Germanic, etc. based on their underlying grammatical structure and origin. Bloom's taxonomy primarily provides instructors with a focus for developing their course learning outcomes. There are a number of reasons why a teacher would want to use Bloom's taxonomy. Initially, it can be used to increase one's understanding of the educational process. Teachers can see and understand complex cognitive development and how lower-level skills build into higher-order thinking (e.g., recalling facts and comprehending previous problems allows a student to apply their experience to similar problems). Using this understanding facilitates the prioritizing of material and can steer the organization of lessons to maximize class time. For example, lower-level skills (e.g., memorizing factual knowledge) can be developed before higher-level skills are introduced (e.g., analysis of relationships). Current educators frequently face a confusing array of standards and curriculum requirements. Bloom's taxonomy offers a guiding framework for breaking these criteria down into accessible chunks which can be used to direct day-to-day lesson plans and can be easily compared to their own goals for the class. Just as different levels require different instructional delivery methods, they also require different assessment methods. Bloom's taxonomy can be used as a checklist to ensure that all levels of a domain

have been assessed and align assessment methods with the appropriate lessons and methodologies. In this way, the taxonomy also makes it easier for you to maintain consistency between assessment methods, content, and instructional materials and identify weak areas.

1.4 Bloom's Taxonomy and the Purpose of Education

One of the major themes in the classical education renewal movement has been to challenge the utilitarianism of modern education. The purpose of education, the argument has gone, is so much broader and more far-reaching than modern educators are making it out to be. It is not merely job training or college preparation, but the formation of flourishing human beings. The cultivation of wisdom and virtue is the purpose of education.

2. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

There are six levels of cognitive learning according to the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy. Each level is conceptually different. The six levels are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Originally, Bloom's taxonomy was one-dimensional with an exclusive focus on the knowledge domain. The current updated version developed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) reorganizes, and highlights the interactions between, two dimensions: cognitive processes and knowledge content.

The Bloom's taxonomy words were changed from nouns to verbs—providing learners with clearer objectives for what is expected of them. What's more, the most important two levels, 'evaluate' and 'create', were swapped to make creation the main goal of learning:

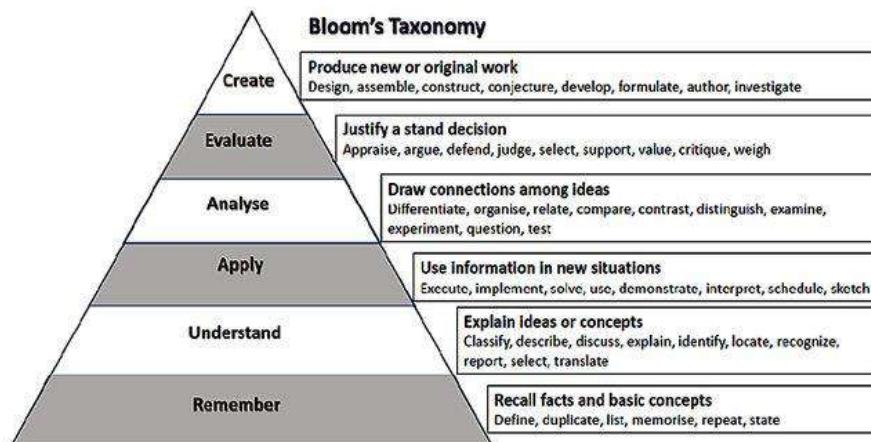


Figure-2: The Revised Taxonomy (2001)

2.1 Using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in Assessment

These levels can be helpful in developing learning outcomes because certain verbs are particularly appropriate at each level and not appropriate at other levels (though some verbs are useful at multiple levels):

Remember

To be able to recall information such as dates, events, places, ideas, definitions, formulas, and theories

Understand

It demonstrates comprehension through one or more forms of explanation. It includes - abstract, arrange, articulate, associate, categorize, clarify, classify, compare, compute, conclude, contrast, defend, diagram, differentiate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, exemplify, explain, extend, extrapolate, generalize, give examples of, illustrate, infer, interpolate, interpret, match, outline, paraphrase, predict, rearrange, reorder, rephrase, represent, restate, summarize, transform, and translate.

Apply

It includes -apply, calculate, carry out, classify, complete, compute, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, examine, execute, experiment, generalize, illustrate, implement, infer, interpret, manipulate, modify, operate, organize, outline, predict, solve, transfer, translate, and use.

Analyze

It includes- analyze, arrange, break down, categorize, classify, compare, connect, contrast, deconstruct, detect, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, divide, explain, identify, integrate, inventory, order, organize, relate, separate, and structure.

Evaluate

It makes judgments based on criteria and standards. It includes: appraise, apprise, argue, assess, compare, conclude, consider, contrast, convince, criticize, critique, decide, determine, discriminate, evaluate, grade, judge, justify, measure, rank, rate, recommend, review, score, select, standardize, support, test, and validate.

Create

It puts elements together to form a new coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure. It

includes: arrange, assemble, build, collect, combine, compile, compose, constitute, construct, create, design, develop, devise, formulate, generate, hypothesize, integrate, invent, make, manage, modify, organize, perform, plan, prepare, produce, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, reorganize, revise, rewrite, specify, synthesize, and write.

4. Criticisms of Bloom's Taxonomy

Educational theorists have criticized Bloom's Taxonomy on a few grounds.

- a) **Learning is not sequential in the taxonomy** – Bloom's Hierarchy seems too artificially constructed. It is a very linear, straightforward view of how humans comprehend information. Although each concept or classification has its place, researchers are beginning to see the mind as more of a web. A person might skip from knowledge to application then analyze the application, come to a conclusion (evaluation) and then re-analyze the conclusion all working toward a greater synthesis of information. Constructivist teaching has suggested that teachers need to spread higher-order thinking skills throughout a task rather than begin with the imparting of knowledge.
- b) **The taxonomy is incomplete in nature** – Bloom concentrated his efforts on learning, yet there is little about motivation or about classroom management.
- c) **It is too precise to be easily understood** – Classifying and separating learning into three spheres and nice hierarchies is a very modern, scientific view of learning. Yet, a postmodern critique would attempt to deconstruct this idea. For one, they would suggest that brain science is still in its earliest formation and that we do not entirely understand the mystery of the mind. In addition, postmodernists would suggest that many of the terms are simply artificial constructs used as ideology to conceal the messy side of learning.
- d) It is individualistic – Unlike the Social Learning Theory, Bloom's Taxonomy focuses heavily on how an individual learns. It misses what occurs when there are social forces. For example, an individual's ability to reach "evaluation" can easily be clouded by "groupthink."

5. Responses to Criticisms

Critics make valid points. However, they need to keep a few things in mind. **First**, Bloom saw his work as scientific and therefore contributed to the larger, democratic pool of scientific research. If his theories were incomplete, this is because he saw them as always changing

and he validated many outside theories. In addition, his taxonomy focuses on learning and assessment more than on how to teach. When critics take the time to read his work, they realize it was much broader than first assumed. In terms of being too precise and too individualistic, that is understandable. He lived during a period of rugged American individualism. He was a modern man, which meant that he took individualism, science and objective knowledge for granted.

6. Conclusion

Of course, no model is always perfect. People complain that it's too artificial and learning doesn't take place in neat categories like this in the real world. The distinction between lower and higher-level learning is misleading and actually undervalues the importance of fundamental knowledge. Others claim it is better suited to the learning of skills rather than content. However, we cannot deny the impact Bloom's work has had in education and training and its continuing influence on instructional designers and games developers today. On all those who draw on the same 'levelling up' ideas to build their training interventions. Countless people know, love and are comfortable with the original Bloom's Taxonomy and are understandably hesitant to change. After all, change is difficult for most people. The original Bloom's Taxonomy was and is a superb tool for educators. The new century has brought us the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy which really is new and improved.

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Students' Weaknesses in Writing English at the Undergraduate Level

Dr. Md. Aminul Haque¹

Abstract

Writing English is one of the important skills which learners have to learn at all levels of education. Effective learning of writing involves primarily three stages such as pre-writing, free-writing, and re-writing. Every stage is important for learners and learners are required to write essays, assignments or any kinds of compositions in English at the undergraduate level. The students at undergraduate level perform poorly in writing. This study tried to explore the current status of English writing, and the challenges students face during writing. Mixed-method approach was employed to collect data from 40 undergraduate students and four teachers from different departments of Govt. Edward College, Pabna. Data were collected using a writing test, a questionnaire for the students, and semi-structured interviews with randomly selected four teachers from four departments. Collected data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively and the findings were placed under the themes of the research questions. The major findings indicated that the students had weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary, and tenses; and the challenges they faced included brainstorming and maintaining coherence in writing.

Keyword: English writing, undergraduate level, weakness, composition, challenge

1. Introduction

It is difficult to acquire knowledge and skills for students learning English as an additional language and it is more difficult for Bangladeshi learners (Abbad, 1988; Khan, 1999; Rabaab'ah, 2005; Zughoul & Taminian, 1984). Many researchers state that writing is one of the most difficult skills and learners at all levels face difficulty to acquire it properly (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Kurk & Atay, 2007; Latif, 2007). Hughley et al. (1983) state three stages which include pre-writing, free-writing, and re-writing. Pre-writing means a stage of writing where the

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writer thinks how to start writing. In free-writing stage, the writer writes freely and in re-writing she/he writes any composition and edits and checks it again and again. Every stage of writing is very important for learners and they are required to learn how to write essays, assignments or any compositions in English. This study includes the learners of the undergraduate level of Government Edward College of Bangladesh who face problems in writing.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to explore the status of students' writing and to identify the challenges students faced in writing. In fact, Salem (2007) and Khan (1999) state that second or foreign language learners, especially Bangladeshi learners, feel weakness in writing English because of their limited stock of vocabulary, idioms, grammatical rules, mechanical process, cohesiveness, organizational knowledge, cultural knowledge and content based knowledge. Most of the students feel intimidated when they are required to write on a certain topic. Most of the students do not know how to start, how to develop their ideas and how to edit and conclude their writing. Therefore, the current study tried to explore the status of students' writing and challenges students studying at undergraduate level in Government Edward College, Pabna faced in writing English.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives for this study are to:

- a. examine students' present level of writing proficiency
- b. explore the barriers students face during free writing

1.3 Research Questions

This study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- a) What is the current status of English writing skill at undergraduate level at Govt Edward College, Pabna?
- b) What are the barriers that students face in writing English?

2. Review of Literature

A vast body of literature is available on the weaknesses of students in writing English in the global contexts although little work has been done in Bangladesh. Weigle (2002) discusses in long details the ability to write anything effectively in the global situation and explains that instruction in writing is playing an increasing role in both second and foreign language education. In the second or foreign language contexts, learners need to acquire the ability to write effectively in order to adjust to the global situation. At the university level in particular, writing is not just regarded

as a standard system of communication but also as an essential tool for learning. But due to the lack of writing ability students do not possess the appropriate skills of writing. In this regard, Weigle (2002) describes some models of writing and due to the absence of these models writing development seems to be hampered.

Hayes and Flower (1980) describe the process of writing in terms of the task environment i.e. writing assignment, producing text, learner's long term memory, knowledge of topic, knowledge of audience, writing plans, and a number of cognitive processes which include planning, translating and revising is important. The important insight of Hayes-Flower model for writing is a recursive process but not a linear process. According to Hayes and Flower (1980), students think less of themselves as writers if writing ability is seen as an inherent and relatively unchangeable talent. So, the cognitive processes in the Hayes model are text interpretation, reflection, and text production. In order to utilize this knowledge students need grammatical, linguistic and cultural knowledge.

It is noted that much of language knowledge is contained in the Hayes model under 'task schema' and 'genre knowledge'. Linguistic or grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge are essential for overcoming the weaknesses of writing. So, the Hayes model is significant for learners to overcome the weaknesses of written English. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) advocate a distinction between knowledge telling and knowledge transforming. Knowledge telling is a kind of writing that Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) call 'natural' or 'unproblematic'. It can be done by any fluent speaker of a language who has a grasp of the writing system. The writing of most children and adolescents refers to this category. On the other hand, the practice of writing creates new knowledge and may change the writer's view of communication. This process of knowledge is regarded as knowledge transformation and it involves problem analysis and goal setting which lead to problem solving activities. This model provides an explanation of the differences between skilled and unskilled writers. Skilled writers use writing strategies but unskilled writers use these rarely. This model has its limitations; e.g. the model does not provide an explanation of how one makes the transition from knowledge telling to knowledge transformation. In spite of it, this model is significant because it highlights important issues in setting tasks for writing assessment.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method design to collect data. The present level of proficiency and the barriers students faced were studied through students' written test, questionnaire survey and through semi-structured interviews with teachers. The status was identified from the

students' written work which was given at the beginning of the study. Students were asked to write a paragraph on Learning English Writing in the Classroom. A questionnaire containing 12 multiple choice questions covering areas such as writing techniques, medium of written instruction and examination, level of English written proficiency needed for the courses, present level of written proficiency, requirement of writing essays, assignments and compositions in English, carefulness of punctuation, grammatical knowledge, practice, educational background, vocabulary, idioms and mechanical process were provided to the students for the survey, and teachers were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule

Data were collected from 40 students from four departments including English and one teacher was selected from each department. The student participants were randomly selected so that there could be a good mixture of academically weaker and stronger students. The following table shows the departments and the number of participants selected from each department.

Departments	Number of participants	Number of teachers
Department of English	10	01
Department of Sociology	10	01
Department of Accounting	10	01
Department of Physics	10	01
Total	40	04

Student participants have been chosen from other departments as they have to study a compulsory paper in English and they have to learn English writing alongside other skills of English. Collected quantitative data were analysed statistically using percentage and the qualitative data were first transcribed, coded, and then categorized based on the themes of the research questions. The composition written by students was studied to find the kinds of mistakes they committed. Then the findings have been presented under the main themes of the research questions.

4. Findings and Discussions

The major findings that emerged included students have low level of English writing skill and the major challenges they faced included brainstorming and the mechanics of writing.

4.1 Students' Level of Writing

Students' weaknesses in writing English have emerged from their writing, from the questionnaire survey, and from the interviews with the teachers. It was also revealed that the students are weak in grammar and in the mechanics of writing. It was revealed from the paragraph written by

the students that none of the 40 students' English writing skill was improved enough that reflect the standard of the National University of Bangladesh. It is observed that many students cannot use tenses, number, right forms of verbs, preposition, and punctuation properly. Around 50% students had many spelling mistakes which should not have been in large number as all the students have studied English as a compulsory subject for long 12/13 years or more. This echoes the findings of Salem (2007) and Khan (1999) where they mentioned that students had weaknesses in vocabulary, grammar, tenses, and organization of writing. In answer to questions of the questionnaire, 37 out of 40 participants (92.5%) have confessed that they are weak in grammar; 39 out of 40 participants (98%) have confessed that they have a small stock of words and they cannot write sentences correctly and logically.

Teachers in the interview have also claimed that students have weaknesses in grammar, tenses, number (singular and plural), punctuation, preposition, sentence construction, and spelling. Moreover, many students cannot maintain the sequence of writing; they put their sentences in a haphazard way. One of the teachers alleged in the interview, "At this level, students should have been able to write correct English logically but it never happens in reality. Only 3 to 5 per cent students can write correct English and their sentences are coherent". Another teacher has claimed that the students are not that motivated to practise writing and the teachers also do not have much time to provide feedback to a large number of students in the department. The researcher's 25 years of teaching experiences show that the teachers of undergraduate level never provide feedback on students' written work; they just mark the students' assignments and written examination scripts. Students are not also found to be trying to improve their English writing skill. Actually the culture of recurrent feedback on students' writing is absent from the colleges. This might be a reason for students' low level of achievement in writing.

4.2 Major Challenges Encountered

50% of the participants who take part in the questionnaire survey have confessed that it is challenging for them to brainstorm on a topic; they do not find many pieces of information to start the writing because they were not engaged in brainstorming in the previous levels of education. The students allege that in schools and colleges, teachers used to tell us to memorize compositions which included paragraphs, essays, letters, completing a story, etc. Therefore, when at the undergraduate level, some teachers tell the students to brainstorm on a topic, the students cannot engage themselves in brainstorming and cannot contribute by providing some important words or ideas about the topic. Brainstorming seems to be a tough activity for the students as this is a new concept to them.

Then whatever they write, that is not always logical. The teachers have alleged in the interview that although students have to engage in free writing, many students memorize from other reference books or guidebooks which is not really free writing. “It is a common culture of the students to memorize compositions from different sources. Although the syllabus keeps some provision for free writing, the way students do it cannot be not free writing at all”, claims a teacher. Although some students try to write on their own, their writing contains a lot of errors and mistakes which should have been corrected in secondary schools through recurrent feedback and edits. Then comes the question of coherence. “Coherence is found in those writings which have been memorized by the students but those which were coined by students themselves lack coherence”, claims another teacher.

Although 70% students (28 out of 40) have claimed that they like freehand writing, in reality that is not reflected in their writing. In the write-ups which students wrote for the researcher, it is found that students could not go into the depth of the topic and the organization of the writing was weaker. It is also noticed that only a small number of students are able to write logically; although their isolated sentences are better in structure and wording, they are not well-connected with one another.

Moreover, it is revealed from the students’ writings that they usually use simple words that include the simple or easy level of vocabulary; and students have usually used simple sentences but only a few of them used complex sentences. They usually commit mistakes in grammatical rules e.g. sentence construction, proper use of tense, articles, verbs, and so on. The mechanical process used by them is not adequate. It might be because students do not invest much time on writing and do not receive repeated feedback from the teachers or the peers.

5. Conclusions

It revealed that the undergraduate students are weaker in English writing, and the major challenges they face include brainstorming and organization of writing. A number of conclusions may be reached from the study about how to get rid of the situation. Teachers’ instructional strategy should be participatory and there should be ample opportunities for students to receive recurrent feedback from the teachers and peers. Students should be encouraged to engage in writing to achieve the desired standard.

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The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching

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The abstract should provide a complete synopsis of the research paper and should introduce the topic and the specific research question(s), provide a statement regarding methodology and should provide a general statement about the results and the findings. Because it is really a summary of the entire research paper, it is often written last. The abstracts must not cross 225 words.

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The introduction begins by introducing the broad overall topic and providing basic background information of the study. It then narrows down to the specific research question(s) relating to this topic. Every section may have subsections. It provides the purpose and focus for the rest of the paper and sets up the justification for the research.

4. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to describe past important research and it relates specifically to the research problem. It should be a synthesis of the previous literature and the new idea being researched. The review should examine the major theories related to the topic to date and their contributors.

The researchers are required to know the research that has already been done in their field. The Literature Reviews examine previous related research. It should include all relevant findings from credible sources, such as academic books, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

5. Research Design/ Methodology

The section will describe the research design and methods used to complete to the study. The instruments used (e.g., questionnaire, interview protocol, observation, focus group discussion, think aloud protocol, etc.), the participants, and data analysis procedures should be clearly mentioned in this section. The section may comprise subsections for every item. The general rule of thumb is that readers should be provided with enough details of the study.

6. Findings and Discussion / Results

In this section, the results are presented. This section should focus only on results that are directly related to the research or the problem. Graphs and tables should only be used when there is too much data to efficiently include it within the text.

Findings and Discussion section should also discuss the results and the implications on the field, as well as other fields. In this section, the hypothesis is tested or the research questions are answered and validated by the interpretation of the results.

7. Recommendations (Optional)

In this section, the author/researcher may put forward some recommendations based on findings of the study.

8. Conclusion

This section should also discuss how the results relate to previous research mentioned in the literature review, any cautions about the findings, limitation of the study, and potential for future research.

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