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Noam Chomsky's Contribution to Second Language Acquisition: A Reflection on the Universal Grammar Theory

Dr. Md. Enamul Hoque¹

Abstract

This paper aims at reflecting the recent development in Second Language (SL) learning through Chomsky's principles and parameters in Universal Grammar, as many scholars have their opinions on Chomsky's theory on universal grammar and have their comments on it. Universal Grammar (UG) proposed by Chomsky (1986) has gained a huge popularity in language and linguistics study. The paper discusses the relevance of Universal Grammar to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) from different aspects: accessibility of UG, L1 and L2 acquisition differences, learning models, poverty of the stimulus argument, and debates on principles and parameters in SLA. Then, it addresses the three hypotheses of Universal grammar in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which focuses on whether adult language learners have access to the principles and parameters of UG in constructing the grammar of a second language. Moreover, the paper investigates shortcomings of UG in application of SLA, and discuss elaborately on the recent challenges that UG faces in the field of Second language Acquisition (SLA).

Keywords: Universal Grammar; principles, parameters, second language acquisition

1. Introduction

In the field of second language acquisition, Chomsky's theories on language learning are widely discussed and practiced. More recently arguments on application of Universal Grammar (UG) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) seem to be in a preferred place. During 1960s, the linguists became interested in a new theory about grammar of language. The theory was popularized by Noam Chomsky who focused on the effortless language learning of young children. Chomsky did not believe that exposure to a language was enough for a child to become efficient in a language. He maintained that humans are born with an

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innate ability to learn a language. According to UG, the basic structures of language are already encoded in the human brain at the time of birth. UG suggests that every language has some of the same laws and systems. For example, every language has a way to ask a question or make something negative or positive. Furthermore, every language has a way to identify a gender or show that something occurred in the past or present. The theory says that the basic grammar laws are the same for all languages, a child needs only to follow the particular set of rules that his peers follow in order to understand and produce their native language. His environment determines which language he will use, though he is born with the devices to learn any language successfully.

Three specific hypotheses under the framework of UG are addressed from academic perspective and review with supporting evidence, along with major criticisms that UG faces in the field of second language teaching and learning are investigated. This study first gives an overview of Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory within the framework of overall SLA research. It critically reviews the hypotheses, examining major arguments, shortcomings, vagueness of the construct, the simplification of input; and over claims that he made about the UG. Brown (2000) finds it as a subset of general human learning and arrays the elements that should be included in a theory of SLA:

(...) involves cognitive variations, is closely related to one's personality type, is interwoven with second culture learning, and involves interference, the creation of new linguistic systems, and the learning of discourse and communicative functions of language. (Brown, 2000, p.271)

In brief, a general SLA theory needs to take into account any language acquisition by learners with a variety of characteristics in a variety of contexts. The following are some of the attempts to explain SLA common to a variety of learners and contexts. With slight variation, SLA theories are grouped into three categories: linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural theories.

2. Linguistic Theory and UG

Universal Grammar is an accurate theory as it explains the underlying linguistic knowledge in second language learners' mind. According to Noam Chomsky, UG spotlights to answer three basic questions about human language: What constitutes knowledge of human language? 2. How is knowledge of language acquired by children? 3. How is knowledge of language put to use in communication? The UG claims that all human beings inherit a universal set of principles and parameters that manage the shape human languages. It provides a detailed descriptive structure which enables researchers to prepare well-defined hypotheses

about the task facing the learner and analysed in more focused manner. Chomsky (1978) proposed principles are unvarying and applicable to all natural languages; on the contrary, parameters possess a limited number of open values which characterise differences between human languages. However, recently he argues that the core of human language is the lexicon which can be characterised as: lexical categories and functional categories.

Chomsky first expresses the concept of UG. He believes that children could not learn their first language so quickly and naturally without the help of an innate language faculty. Children create a mental representation of language image which not only goes beyond the input they are exposing but also achieves at an age when they have difficulty grasping abstract concepts. Moreover, learners of SLA are cognitively mature, therefore, they are practical to solve their problems and deal with abstract concepts. UG is concerned with knowledge of language that is with the abstract mental representation of language and the computational mechanisms associated with it, which all human possess called competence not performance. A complete theory is to define how we access our knowledge base, and how it relates to a number of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic variables.

3. Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition

In the field of language education, an area that has prompted considerable debate is the question of whether linguistic capacities are innate or not. One is the nativist who claims that children are born with a set of linguistic knowledge. The other is the empiricists view that all concepts originate in experience, that all concepts are about or applicable to things that can be experienced, or that all rationally acceptable beliefs or propositions are justifiable or knowable only through experience of learners. The behaviorism has occupied a dominant position in interpreting the language learning since 1940s. The behavioral theory believes that language learning is a process of stimulus and response. However, some evidence in support of the nativist view comes from children with limited linguistic experience. In certain situations, they appear to have the capacity to invent some aspects of language (Carroll, 42). Chomsky's puts forward language acquisition device to refer to the innate mechanism of language learning and late he illustrates UG as a means to introduce his thought. Chomsky believes that UG is special device of human brain which can help people learn language fast. It is an unconscious and prospective knowledge which exists in human brain without learning and determines the existing appearance of human language. In the following sections the Universal Grammar approach from five specific areas of SLA research will be discussed:

3.1 Accessibility of Universal Grammar (UG)

Mitchell & Myles (2004) has made a comprehensive review of different theoretical positions regarding access to UG in SLA. These positions can be generally classified into three groups: no access, full access and partial access to UG. Proponents of no access position argue that there is a critical period for language acquisition. After that period, Universal Grammar will be no longer available (1989). Adult L2 learners thus have to resort to other learning mechanisms or strategies to learn L2. Their second language is learnt in the similar way as any other aspect of knowledge. Researchers who adopt full access position believe that Universal Grammar continues to operate for adult L2 learners. All the parameters of UG are available and can be reset. Supporters of partial access hypothesis also realize the important role of L1 in SLA, and propose that UG can only affect SLA indirectly via the L1. That is to say, only those principles and parameter settings acquired in L1 are available to L2 learners. If there are some other different parameter settings in L2, learners have to use other mechanisms and problem-solving strategies to learn the new language (1996)

3.2. L1 and L2 Acquisition Differences

The L2-L1 have several contextual differences in Second Language Acquisition (SLA): (1) First Language (L1) is already present; (2) Second Language (L2) learners are cognitively mature, but L1 learners have to attain their language competence along with other cognitive abilities; and (3) Input involves written as well as spoken language. Thomas (2004) points out some key differences between children's L1 learning and adult L2 learning, which involves the following: L2 learning may face and challenges of fossilization and L1 transfer; however, L2 learners have different motivations for learning an L2. Mitchell & Myles (2004) also suggest that L2 learners' needs are very different, because they are already "successful communicators in one particular language". Their skills to solve problems and deal with abstract concepts are relatively high and relatively accurate. However, a few L2 learners succeed in achieving near native competence because L2 learners may easily get satisfied with their interlanguage and their ability to communicate efficiently. Besides, White (1989) also discusses L1 and L2 acquisition differences from the standpoints of instruction and correction. It is believed that "explicit instruction and negative evidence" are not functional in L1 acquisition; on the other hand they are considered to be effective and necessary in second language learning.

3.3 Learning Models in UG

Chomsky (1964) recommends the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) hypothesis to explain how a human language is acquired by children. In principle, the LAD model can exhibit the process of acquisition of any natural language. For example, L1 input data are provided; then, the input is processed in the black box which contains UG principles and parameters; and finally, L1 grammar is produced. In the context of SLA, we can adapt the LAD model to L2 learning by simply extending the model to take in L2 input. However, Cook and Newson (1996) argue that the LAD diagram cannot represent the initial state of L2 learning due to the differences in L1 and L2 acquisition. Children develop their L1 and finally reach a steady state of knowing many things of the language.

3.4. Poverty-of-the-Stimulus Argument

Chomsky raised “Plato’s problem” in 1987 and regarded as an important attraction in theory development. The argument touches the core of the UG model. The structure of the argument is summarised into four steps by Cook (1996): (a) a L1 speaker knows a particular aspects of syntax; (b) this aspect of syntax cannot be learnt from the L1 input; (c) this aspect of syntax is not learnt from outside; and (d) this aspect of syntax is built-in to the mind. As this argument initially works for L1 acquisition, anyone may come across some problems when it is used for examining SLA. Firstly, the piece of knowledge in Step-1 is regular to all speakers in L1, while it may vary from person to person in SLA. Secondly, in Step-2, difference in input data is unrelated to First Language Acquisition (FLA). While L2 learning may be influenced by L1 transfer and some other type of evidence in the classroom which is unavailable to L1 child. Thirdly, Step-1 and Step-2 need to be modified because of different knowledge and evidence between L1 and L2 acquisition. Finally, the modification of the first two steps will increase the uncertainty of Step-3 and Step-4. In reality, the argument cannot be easily employed to L2 learning due to the complex nature of SLA. However, the poverty-of-the-stimulus argument is still an original method that can be properly used to examine the availability and functions of UG to SL Acquisition.

3.5 Parameters and Principles of UG

Principles are called the structural features that are common to all natural languages; hence, they are part of the child’s native endowment. Universal Grammar (UG) approach claims that there is a universal set of principles and parameters that control the shape of human language.

According to White (1989), languages can differ as to which functional categories are realized in the grammar. Features are said to vary in strength and a feature can be strong in one language and weak in another. For example, inflections are strong in French and weak in English. In SLA, UG principles are generally considered to be available since L2 learners do not break those principles in producing their interlanguage. This fact indicates that interlanguage is also “qualified” languages controlled by Universal Grammar. Current debates in research pay more attention to the availability of specific parameters, and parameter re-setting.

4. The UG Hypothesis for SLA

Chomsky (1986) argues that the knowledge is richly articulated and shared with others from the speech community. He suggests that the knowledge of language is not learned and the part of core of UG is biological endowment. The UG provides an authentic description for the logical problem of the first language acquisition. Chomsky’s approach has earned much popularity. One of the major reasons is that it suggests us a way of emphasizing the significance of child language acquisition. It is evident that many linguists are conducting study on that whether UG are available to L2 learning or not. Thus, this paper mainly focuses on the extent that L2 learners have access to the innate system, especially the concept of principles and parameters. Hence three different types of schools arose, which are as follows: (i) the direct accessibility, (ii) the indirect accessibility, (iii) and the inaccessibility.

The direct accessibility hypothesis emphasizes adult learners learn both first and L2 by setting parameters to UG. So, if UG can be used in the first language, it also can be applied in second language learning. Second language learner makes full use of UG including the part which is not reflected in his mother tongue. It is focused that the second language learners’ grammar knowledge is determined by the degree of UG. The indirect accessibility hypothesis assumes that UG functions in SLA through the grammar of mother tongue. When the parameter setting of SL is different from that of first language, SL learner cannot apply the parameter which has been lost in UG. Clahsen (1986) makes a comparison study with two groups. First group speaks German as their native language, and the other learners speaking German as L2. It was found that the learners in the first group learn the subject- verb –object (SVO) first and then acquire the knowledge of SOV. So, Clahsen argues that UG plays hardly any role in the SLA. So, it is to say, UG is inaccessible to SLA.

Inaccessibility hypothesis rejects all the influence of UG on SLA, assuming that the parameters of UG have been set in the process of first language acquisition, which cannot be reset. Tasks of L2 learners are

finished by their psychological device and cognitive strategies, suggesting that only first language learner can get access to UG. Therefore, the inaccessibility hypothesis only sees the value of universal grammar in the first language learning but denies the influences of UG in L2 learning. Brown et al. (2006) asserts that a number of concepts surrounding both UG and SLA have emerged in different forms.

5. General Arguments for Universal UG

Over the decades, a number of arguments have been put forward in support of the UG hypotheses. The UG states that all human languages share certain properties. Children are exposed to different input; but converge on the same grammar. They gain knowledge for which there is no evidence in the input. Speakers know which structures are ungrammatical and they do not acquire over general grammars in spite of the fact that they are not exposed to “negative evidence”. It focuses that humans are the only species that has language. Usually, children learn language quickly and effortlessly, on minimum exposure. Every child acquiring language passes the same stages in the same order. Language acquisition is very responsive to maturational factors and relatively insensitive to environmental factors. It is said that different brain circuits are responsible for representing/processing linguistic and non-linguistic information. That is to say, Universal Grammar (UG) in Second language Acquisition (SLA) is a remarkable contribution to the history of linguistics and will be essential reading for students and scholars of linguistics, specialists in Second language acquisition and language teacher-educators. Therefore, UG makes enormous contributions to L2 learning, so it is inappropriate to deny the roles that UG plays in language learning. Though three different theoretical hypotheses argue different perspectives with regard to L2 learning, UG plays a crucial role in the study of language learning, especially the systemic explanation for the first language learning.

6. Pedagogical Implication and Conclusion

To draw some pedagogical implications for SLA and ELT, two points can be focused. Firstly, teachers should provide adequate authentic language materials to raise students’ awareness of first language and second language differences, and facilitate their processes of hypotheses revising and parameters re-setting. Secondly, the explicit instructions and correction are very useful in English language teaching. Chomsky’s UG is a significant theory in the field of linguistics. It has given a solid explanation of the way how a child learns a language. It is a fundamental and significant turn or shift from the behaviourist opinion. The principle and parameter of UG have gained much focuses from the linguistics. It is full of value in understanding language acquisition. However, it can be

said that there are a few problems concerning the UG approach to SLA, which mainly include the fundamental differences between the L1 and L2 learning, and a number of problems concerning language processing, cognitive mechanism as well as other issues. It can be better understood what would be mainly focused on in the later researches of the field of linguistics so that the progress can be moved forward to SLA.

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EFL Reading Strategy Use Instruction at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh: An Analysis

Monalisa Khan¹

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring different reading strategies taught by the EFL teachers that improve students' learning at the Higher Secondary Level of Education in Bangladesh. To elicit the relevant data, the study used a qualitative instrument, that is, classroom observation. The participants of the classroom observations were 15 EFL teachers and their Higher Secondary students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The qualitative data analysis involved the use of the constant comparative and inductive method. The study reveals that (i) the EFL teachers apply both cognitive (macro-level) and meta-cognitive (micro-level) reading strategies to teach their students at the HSC level; and (ii) the HSC students in Bangladesh do not follow any specific single reading model rather they apply more than one models combining bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models while reading an EFL text in different stages of reading. The findings of the study have some pedagogical implications for both the teachers and the student. Then, the implications for future research and for teaching English in EFL settings were provided, based on the discussion and the results of this study.

Keywords: Reading, EFL Education, cognitive strategy, pedagogy

1. Introduction

English is said to be the world's most important language because of its communicative and educative value. It is thought to be an influential language for its power of expression and literature. Correspondingly, English has become one of the major subjects to be tested in all the yearly public examination at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels of education in Bangladesh. As a result, these high-stakes examinations have played a predominant role in English education. The content and questions included in written English examinations usually focus on testing EFL students' linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary and grammatical rules. Therefore, to be well-prepared for these examinations,

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the major English instruction and learning have directed to acquire linguistic aspects of English.

Researchers (Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010; Cobb, 2007) have found that there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success. A student who is a good reader is more likely to do well in school and score higher in the examinations than a student who is a weak reader. Good readers can understand the individual sentences and the organizational structure of a piece of writing. They can comprehend ideas, follow arguments, and detect implications. They know most of the words, determine the meaning of many of the unfamiliar words from the context and use their dictionary effectively. Therefore, the EFL students should try to develop their reading skills. Teaching reading and prepare the students as good and successful readers are very important. Reading strategy instruction approves that the target learners, at the end of the course, will be well prepared for successfully meeting the challenges reading texts of different types. The learners will be able to cope with any reading assessments and reading tasks they might encounter after their assessment. Regrettably, EFL reading is seem to be neglected at the HSC level. There are some major contributing factors that influence on language learning strategies. The context of the learning situation and the cultural value of the learners' society can be expected to have a strong influence on choice and acceptability of language learning strategies (Chamot, 2004; Farrell, 2009). Pritchard (1990) and Grabe (1991) have also pointed out that reading strategy and strategy preference are socially and culturally constructed. Three major factors that contribute to English learning and teaching in Bangladesh can be identified from literature review: (1) examination- oriented education system, (2) grammar-translation pedagogy, and (3) Bangladesh literacy tradition influence (Hoque, 2013).

In the national curriculum as recognized by the National Textbook and Curriculum Board of Bangladesh (NCTB), the objectives of reading EFL texts are designed as to identify the main ideas in the text, identify specific details, distinguish main ideas from supporting details, distinguish facts from opinions, make inferences and predictions based on information in the text, infer meanings of unfamiliar words, identify the author's purpose and tone, transfer information, produce academic vocabulary appropriately orally and in writing, phonological awareness, and summarize and/or paraphrase information in a text. The skills acquired in reading can promote the acquisition of other skills of language i.e., listening, speaking, and writing. If reading is practised, a successful reader may be proficient in other areas of English language.

The curriculum document of the NCTB states that successful teaching and learning of English ultimately depends on an effective teaching methodology. But, even after so many years of teaching, it is

assumed that English reading skills of the HSC level students are not satisfactory because the learners do not have required reading skills to understand lectures, comprehend textbooks, participate in class discussions, or generate satisfactory written work; this is also another problem to be investigated. Though a number of studies of the reading strategy use instruction have been conducted in the EFL context around the world, no formal inclusive study on the reading strategy use instruction has been carried out in Bangladesh. Hence, there is scope and need to research on this area. This study is conducted to explore the strategy use instruction that the teachers provide to their students of HSC level in order to develop their EFL reading skills.

Research Questions

To investigate the EFL reading strategy instruction and its impact on learning outcomes of the students, the present researcher formulated two research questions that are stated below:

- RQ₁.** What types of reading instructional strategies do the teachers apply to teach EFL reading at the HSC level in Bangladesh?
- RQ₂.** What types of reading strategies do the HSC level students apply to comprehending EFL reading materials?

2. Literature Review

Reading is a complicated and psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. 'Reading' has been described in a variety of ways to explain the process of what happens when one reads and how one comprehends a text. However, a widely accepted explanation of reading is not found in the literature (Dubin, Eskey & Grabe, 1986). Mitchell (as cited in Dubin et al., 1986), for instance, defines 'reading' as the ability to make sense of written messages. Smith (as cited in Dubin et. al., 1986, p. 28), on the other hand, sees reading as "an anticipatory, selective, purposeful, and comprehending process" wherein the reader interprets the text based on the questions formulated about the text. Widdowson (as cited in Dubin et. al., 1986) views reading as an interaction between the text and the reader; he adds that reading is a process of relating information presented in a text to the reader's existing knowledge about the topic.

Reading is recognized as one of the most important skills in academic and professional success in general, and in second or foreign language education in particular (Grabe, 1991; Carrell, 1989). Due to the importance of the English language as an international means of communicating scientific and technical information around the globe, reading in English acts as a satellite to receive the published information.

In spite of such an importance, most foreign students suffer from deficiencies in reading. Therefore, applied linguists have been concerned with developing theoretical models as well as practical activities to enhance foreign students' reading ability.

The contemporary theories of EFL reading comprehension models are briefly discussed and viewed from different perspectives during last few decades. These approaches are the "bottom up" processing (also known as driven processing) (Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989), 'the top-down' data processing (also known as conceptually-driven processing) (Goodman, 1973; Smith, 1971) and 'the interactive' models (Rumelhard, 1977; Stanovich, 1980). In the bottom-up processing, learners use their linguistics ability to process a text, whereas in the top-down process, learners activate their background knowledge and reflect it on the text they read. The third approach entitled "interactive model" claims that a learner needs to combine the two approaches mentioned above with a piece of reading text to grasp the utmost comprehension. In the top-down processing, learners use their prior knowledge to make predictions about the text. On the other hand, in the bottom-up processing, learners use their linguistic knowledge to recognize linguistic elements, such as words, sentences, semantics, etc. to do the construction of meaning.

'Reading strategies' refer to those mental processes that readers consciously choose to use in accomplishing reading tasks. As Block (1986) defined, reading strategies are techniques and methods readers use to make their reading successful. Over the last three decades, most research on foreign language (FL) reading has focused on the reading strategies that readers apply in comprehending reading texts. Reading strategies are a series of devices or actions that readers employ consciously in order to comprehend texts better (Paris, Lipson & Waxson al.,1991). According to Carrell, Pharis&Liberto (1989), reading strategies are the "actions that readers select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives" (p. 97).

Scholars have classified language reading strategies into different categories in view of different criteria. Oxford (1990), for example, divides strategies into six categories: memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social, and affective strategies. Cognitive Strategies are those strategies which the learner uses to adjust the process of knowledge acquisition (e.g. repeating, translating, grouping, note taking, deducting, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, and transfer). Metacognitive strategies are general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, and monitor their learning (e.g. planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed).

Metacognitive reading strategies are classified into three groups of planning (pre-reading), monitoring (during reading), and evaluating (post-reading) strategies, and each group has a variety of strategies that require readers' metacognitive processing. Oxford (1990) proposed that metacognitive strategies should include three strategy sets: Centering, arranging and planning, as well as evaluating the learning produced. A similar model of metacognitive strategies proposed by Pintrich (1999) includes three more generalized types of strategies: Planning, Monitoring, and Regulating. Zhang and Seepho (2013), in their study, they have divided as Planning Strategy in the Pre-reading activity, Monitoring Strategy in While-reading activity and Evaluation Strategy in post-reading activity

Mehrpour, Sadighi, and Bagheri (2012) conducted a study intended to investigate the effect of teaching reading strategies which actively engage the learners, and the effect of repeated practice of such strategies on raising the learners' awareness of the strategies. The findings of the study pointed to the problematic nature of reading strategy instruction. While strategy training appeared to raise students' awareness of reading strategies and could encourage strategy use by some students, some strategies were found to be harder to be acquired. On the other hand, the study of Takallou (2011) aimed at examining the effect of metacognitive strategies instruction on reading comprehension performance to investigate the probable effects of text type on the EFL learners' performance in reading comprehension tests. The findings of the study showed that the two experimental groups which received instruction on 'planning' and 'self-monitoring' outperformed the control group on the reading comprehension test. The findings of this study also indicated that both experimental and control groups outperformed in the authentic section of the reading comprehension test which seemed to suggest that metacognitive strategies instruction increased the experimental groups' metacognitive awareness. Similarly, the study conducted by Zhang and Seepho (2013) conducted indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between metacognitive strategy use and English reading achievement.

The previous research as reviewed has helped to shed light on various issues related to EFL reading. Based on the expectancy-value theory proposed by Day and Bamford (1998), reading strategy instruction involves reciprocal teaching method which has the potential to inspire EFL students' motivation and improve their reading comprehension. If EFL students feel the ease in English reading, then it would motivate them to get involved and read more on a regular basis. And if EFL students are reading more, then their reading achievement and language proficiency level can be expected higher. Though much is known about how readers do in the field of EFL reading, not much is known about the current

practices of reading strategy training of the EFL students especially the higher secondary level students of Bangladesh.

3. Research Design

The study applied Classroom Observation to collect qualitative data. The target population of this study was the Higher Secondary students and the EFL teachers teaching English at the HSC level. The participants of the classroom observations were 15 EFL teachers and their HSC students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The classroom observation was conducted in 15 different colleges of urban, sub-urban and rural areas: three geographical location of our country. The researcher obtained necessary permission from the respective college authorities prior to the administering the classroom observations. For conducting observations, the researcher developed an observation schedule (Hoque, 2013) to record the activities of the teaching reading, practice of reading models, reading instruction strategies, and the major pre-reading strategies employed in reading class.

3.1. Profile of the Participants

The observation participants were anonymous and were coded as T1, T2, T3, ----- T15 (Hoque, 2011). Of the participants, 3 were females and 12 were males. Each has a teaching experience of more than 5 years (Table 5.261). All of them received a master's degree either in English language or Literature. Their teaching hours ranged from 8-12 hours per week. None of them had the experience of studying or working abroad. Two participants reported having received teacher training in ELT, and two teachers claimed to have been exposed short training on teaching methodology:

Table 1: General characteristics of the participants observed

| Code | Academic Qualification | Gender | Geographic Location | Teaching Experience | Professional Training |
|------|------------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| T1 | MA (English) | Male | Urban | 8 years | ✓✓✓ |
| T2 | MA (English) | Male | Urban | 5 years | ✓✓ |
| T3 | M A(English) | Male | Urban | 5 years | ✓✓ |
| T4 | MA (English) | Male | Urban | 5 years | ✓✓✓ |
| T5 | MA (ELT) | Male | Urban | 6 years | ✓✓✓ |
| T6 | MA (English), B.Ed | Female | Sub-Urban | 12 years | ✓✓✓✓ |
| T7 | MA (English) | Male | Sub-urban | 8 years | ✓✓✓ |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|-----|
| T8 | MA (English) | Male | Sub-urban | 6 years | ✓ |
| T9 | MA (English) | Male | Sub-urban | 6 years | ✓ |
| T10 | MA (English) | Male | Sub-urban | 5 years | ✓ |
| T11 | MA (English) | Male | Rural | 5 years | ✓✓ |
| T12 | MA (English) | Male | Rural | 5 years | ✓✓ |
| T13 | MA (English) | Male | Rural | 6 years | ✓✓✓ |
| T14 | MA (English) | Female | Rural | 5 years | ✓✓ |
| T15 | MA (English) | Female | Rural | 5 years | ✓ |

3.2. Instrument

The classroom observation is a qualitative method of measuring classroom behaviours from direct observations. It specifies both the activities that are to be observed and how they are to be recorded. The data that is collected from this procedure focuses on the frequency of specific activities occurred in the classroom and measures their duration. For the present study, an inclusive Classroom Observation Protocol was developed to record a number of activities that occurred in a class before reading. The present study conducted classroom observation at the 15 higher secondary English classes. The observation was conducted in 45-minute classes. The present researcher recorded how the EFL teachers taught their students to apply cognitive, metacognitive strategies in comprehending an EFL text. Thus, the major objectives of the Classroom Observation Schedule aimed at recording the implementation of effective reading strategy instruction that might result in reading comprehension.

The areas the Observation Schedule covered were: identifying the main idea highlighting the five activities: 1) assessing students' background knowledge; 2) using title, chapters, heading, sub-heading); 3) using pictures, graphs, captions, maps, diagrams; 4) following bold/italic vocabulary; 5) identifying highlighted or boxed information; and 6) looking at preface, last chapter conclusion. The researcher observed the class, the activity and put down the length of activity in the specific column of the schedule. The present study administered non-participants classroom observation. The researcher was very objective during recording the classes and did not make any high inferences or judgments about the behaviours being observed in the classroom.

3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The study was conducted to investigate how the teachers taught their HSC students the reading strategies to be applied in EFL reading. In order to generalize the results, the researcher observed 15 classes in three

different areas: urban, sub-urban and rural areas. The classes were 45 minutes long. The teachers needed to handle large classes of 50-100 students. The researcher focused on the reading strategy use instruction of the EFL teachers to train their students how to use specific reading strategies in EFL reading class to successfully comprehend the text. The observation was conducted systematically strictly following the Observation Schedule. She coded the points directly in the specific column of the schedule. The study found that the observed EFL teachers taught their students different types of reading strategies through different types of techniques and activities. Some teachers were found aware of the importance of the using of reading strategies while few teachers were found reluctant in using and teaching the reading strategies while teaching EFL reading. The study explored teachers' instructional strategies and strategy use instructional approach differed from one another in form, degree, and frequency. The present researcher observed 6 major issues corresponding to the reading strategy use instruction. She maintained separate notebooks for keeping detailed records. The findings are presented below:

4. Findings of the Study

Drawing the main idea of a text is very crucial for a learner to achieve learning outcomes. The main idea needs to be obtained before the learners go into the details. The main idea of a paragraph or text is the author's message about the topic. It is often expressed directly or it can be implied. The present researcher observed how the teachers taught their students different techniques to find out the main idea of a given text. There are a number of well-established techniques to be applied to draw the main ideas. Main ideas are often found in the title, at the beginning of paragraphs; the first sentence often explains the subject being discussed in the passage.

The present study used qualitative method to analyze the data collected from the classroom observations. A variety of systems were used to encode the data, percentages and means were generated and qualitative data was summarized and included in the analysis to supplement and clarify quantitative analysis. The observation found that more than 85 % teachers applied different techniques to gain the main ideas of the text. They train their students how to draw the principal idea of a given text; however, nearly 50% teachers did not put much attention to identifying the main idea of the text. It was found that the teachers used techniques of identifying the main idea of a text mostly by asking with a leading question: "who or what is the paragraph about?" The findings of the classroom observation suggest that background knowledge activation strategy is used by a good number of teachers in HSC level EFL reading classes. The following table (Table: 3) shows the techniques and activities

the teachers applied to teach the use of reading strategy ‘*identifying main idea*’. The table below depicts what techniques they taught and how long they taught each of the activities:

Table 2: Findings of identifying main ideas

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| T | Assessing students' background knowledge | Use of title, chapters, heading, sub-heading, | Use of pictures, graphs, captions, maps, diagrams, | Following bold/ italic vocab. | Identifying highlighted or boxed information | Total Time Used |
| T1 | × | ✓ 2.5 mins | × | ✓ 1 min | ✓ 1.5mins | 7 mins |
| T2 | × | ✓ 2 min | ✓ 1 min | × | × | 3 mins |
| T3 | × | ✓ 2 mins | × | × | ✓ 1min | 4mins |
| T4 | ✓ 2 mins | ✓ 2.5 mins | × | × | ✓ 1.5 | 6mins |
| T5 | ✓ 2 mins | ✓ 2 mins | × | × | ✓ 1min | 6mins |
| T6 | ✓ | × | ✓ 1 min | ✓ 1 min | × | 2 mins |
| T7 | ✓ | × | ✓ 2 mins | ✓ 1 min | × | 3 mins |
| T8 | ✓ | ✓ 2min | × | ✓ 2 mins | × | 4 mins |
| T9 | ✓ | ✓ 2 mins | ✓ 3 mins | × | × | 5 mins |
| T10 | × | × | × | × | × | 0 min |
| T11 | × | × | ✓ 2 mins | ✓ 2 mins | × | 4 mins |
| T12 | ✓ 30 sec | ✓ 1.5 mins | ✓ 1 min | × | × | 3 mins |
| T13 | ✓ 1 min | × | ✓ 1 min | × | × | 2mins |
| T14 | × | × | × | × | × | 0 mins |
| T15 | × | × | ✓ 3mins | × | × | 3 mins |
| Mean score of time used | | | | | | 3.466 |
| Standard Deviation of Mean | | | | | | 2.030 |

The study found that maximum teachers (60%) taught their students to use of title, chapter's name, heading, sub-heading; and use of pictures, graphs, captions, maps, diagrams to grasp the main idea of a given text. The least used techniques the teachers used were identifying the highlighted or boxed information, and looking at preface, last chapter, and conclusion. Maximum number of teachers used the activation of background knowledge in their classes to identify the main idea. T1 used the highest amount of time totaling 7 (seven) minutes out of a 45 -minute class to teach identifying the main idea. On the other hand T10 and T14 did not initiate the teaching of the strategy and spent no time (0 minute) of their class. It was also found that teachers of the urban area were more active in teaching the identification of main ideas. Of the 15 classes observed, background knowledge strategy was mostly used by the urban teachers. They helped students integrate the techniques, engaged students using a variety of activities, assessed their background knowledge and managed the classroom. But in sub-urban classes, the activation of background knowledge was poor. The students grew impatient and were easily distracted. Findings also show that the percentage of assessing

background knowledge in rural classes was rarely seen. It is found that the teachers in rural area are less trained and poorly facilitated to teach reading as foreign language skills.

The findings is matched with the study of Tefera (2012) conducted in Ethiopia and the study of Ling (2011) conducted in China. Both of the studies suggested that more than 40% teachers did not teach how to find the main idea of the lesson. Similarly, their study found the rural teachers are less facilitated and more inactive in teaching reading strategy use instruction than urban teachers. However, the present findings contradict with Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) who showed that gender and demographic variation and differences did not make any differences in learning outcomes of reading comprehension.

Usually, the main idea is not always clearly stated. It is more difficult to identify a main idea when it is inferred or implied. An implied main idea can be found in several ways. Implied ideas can be drawn from facts, reasons, or examples that give hints or suggestions concerning the main idea. These hints are clues leading the learners to discover the main idea in the selected text. The teacher should apply techniques and find out the ways for their students to obtain the key ideas of the text. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies are involved in finding the main ideas of a text. It is considered that trained teachers can relatively be better performer than other teachers.

5. Recommendations

The results show that there is a lack of systematic teaching of reading practiced by most of informants. It is not probably because of negligence, but because of lack of knowledge of the teachers of how to go about teaching reading systematically. Therefore, the teachers can follow random methods of selecting the students to participate in reading activities instead of asking answers from the good readers only. The students who sit in the back benches, who are shy, who speak less, and who are slow in reading should be encouraged to take part in reading activities. It is important to consider how particular strategies are applied and the contexts in which they are needed. Therefore, based on these criteria for fluent reading and findings from this research, the teachers are recommended to follow certain guidelines in the different stages of learning specially before reading to address the academic reading needs of their students. An anticipation guide provides a structured forum for students to think carefully about a text's key themes or concepts before they actually read the text. In a sense, an anticipation guide helps students see that "instead of simply an assignment, reading becomes part of an ongoing conversation students have joined. The recommendations are as follow:

1. Preview the title, pictures, chapter names, and bold-faced words in order to make a prediction of the subject matter of the text.
2. Before assigning readings, ensure that students have the proper background knowledge to make sense of the text. Spend a few moments highlighting important background concepts and vocabulary words.
3. Identify major themes or concepts in the text that the students will be reading.
4. Connect new information to previously learned information by talking about a personal experience related to the theme.
5. Prior to reading, present the guide on the overhead or give students a copy; ask them to reflect on their beliefs about the statements. Engage the class in a discussion about students' responses, being careful to neither affirm nor deny students' positions.
6. Brainstorm key vocabulary prior to writing. Pre-teach key vocabulary for a particular unit or chapter before introducing the text.
7. Pre-teach themes or background information (i.e. historical context) for reading fiction.
8. Explicitly teach "how to use" the table of contents, glossary, index, headings, sidebars, charts, captions, and review questions in a text book.
9. Provide focus to readings, especially those that are long in length. Highlight key points for students to look out for.

6. Conclusion

This study attempts to investigate the use of the reading strategy use instruction used by the teachers at the HSC level in Bangladesh. The study applied a qualitative instrument, Classroom Observation schedule to elicit authentic data from the teacher and students. The study has observed that the poor academic background of the students to do the reading activities in the classroom is a general challenge for the student. The large class size is another setback for accomplishing the different types of reading tasks in groups, pair, and peer. The large class size is also found a big challenge in implementation of various types of reading strategies. The study shows time constraint in the class is a serious problem for all the classes observed because the teacher cannot implement target activities for shortage of time. The study demonstrates that teachers and learners suffer from scarcity of textbooks and authentic materials to practice EFL reading. Teachers' workload is a serious bar to prepare all the lessons using the appropriate strategies. The other challenges identified by the study include: lack of clarity in some of the strategies due to the short period, inability of the students to practice speaking; and difficulty in using some methods

such as student-led presentations. Based on the findings, the study highlights the key points of different stages of reading. *First*, Before Reading, student learns to use to get ready to read a text selection. These strategies help the student get an idea of what the author might be trying to say, how the information might be useful, and to create a mental set that might be useful for taking in and storing information. The students learn those skills through direct and explicit instruction by teachers. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires students to use Before-Reading strategies. It is expected the study would contribute to the fields of applied linguistics, ELT pedagogy, and applied research on academic disciplines and be considered as a powerful world literature for the researcher, ELT practitioners, teachers, students, and general readers.

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Alternative Assessment Practices in Secondary Schools in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The current study tried to explore the status of continuous assessment (CA) or alternative assessment in secondary schools in Bangladesh and the issues related to the implementation of CA. The researchers chose qualitative methodology for the study as it is possible to delve deep into the research problem through qualitative approach. In order to collect data, the researchers employed semi-structured interview method with four secondary teachers. The teachers were interviewed over mobile phone using a semi-structured interview schedule. The major findings of the study included-CA or alternative assessment was not implemented in schools; teachers and other stakeholders needed training for wider knowledge and skills required to implement CA; and strong monitoring and mentoring was vital for proper implementation of alternative assessment in schools. Moreover, it was revealed from the study that preservation of assessment data and documents was a challenge for the teachers. If CA or alternative assessment strategies are implemented in secondary schools of Bangladesh properly, quality of education is expected to improve.

Keywords: *Alternative assessment, continuous assessment, monitoring and mentoring, motivation, documentation*

1. Introduction

It is believed that assessment practices have direct effect on the classroom practices, that is, what is assessed is usually practised in the classrooms (Brown, 2004). The Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission formed after independence in 1971, put much importance to quality of education so that humans can be turned into resources (Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, 1974). Although the commission put emphasis on the quality of education, assessment system remained paper and pencil

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based in most cases. As a result, although there was cognitive growth of the students, skills to use the knowledge did not develop that much. Therefore, the question of quality education remained unanswered. In order to get rid of the situation, the government of Bangladesh introduced SBA (School Based Assessment) where students would find opportunity to practise the earned theoretical knowledge. 30% marks were allotted for internal assessment through engaging students in different activities such as pair work, group work, project work, report writing, and so on (NCTB, 2007). The name of SBA was changed into CA (continuous assessment) and allotted marks were brought down to 20%. SBA, CA, and alternative assessment strategies are synonymous. As SBA was meant for all secondary level institutions, the name SBA did not cover madras and higher secondary colleges. For madrasahs the name should have been MBA (Madrasah Based Assessment) and for colleges, it should have been CBA (College Based Assessment). A common name CA was used to cover all the secondary level institutions. CA or alternative assessment is supposed to be useful to put the knowledge into practices providing students skills alongside knowledge.

Alternative assessment or CA is assessment strategies which usually focus on skills rather than knowledge; paper and pencil tests focus more on knowledge of the students in a particular subject but CA or alternative assessment tests what a student can do with the knowledge learnt in the classroom (Podder, 2020). Only knowledge and little or no skill is like a curse for a student because their performances are disappointingly lower than their knowledge; and this kind of knowledge with little or no skill is also an indicator of low quality of education. If a student cannot relate their knowledge to real life, that cannot be called better education. For ensuring quality in education, we need to give a second thought to the current assessment system in schools and colleges; change in the assessment system may change the classroom practices. It is mentioned earlier that, unlike paper and pencil tests, alternative assessment focuses more on 'doing' alongside 'knowing'. If skills are practised and assessed alongside knowledge, the quality of education is manifested in the behaviours of the learners. Parents can see what their children are able to do; society can see what the students can do with the knowledge learnt in educational institutions. For example, if students are engaged in English speaking practices and this skill is assessed, the students' speaking skill must improve and will be noticeable in their everyday communication. In case of Mathematics, if students are engaged in measuring the areas of the classroom, their table, benches, books, etc. alongside solving problems given in the textbooks, students will be able to use the mathematical knowledge in practical life. As it is observed from the above discussion that CA or alternative assessment provide students with skills alongside

knowledge, NCTB (2012) included CA in the curriculum in order to enhance quality of secondary education in Bangladesh.

1.1 Rationale for the Study

SBA was introduced around 15 years ago (NCTB, 2006) and it was renamed as CA in 2012 (NCTB, 2012) in order to implement alternative assessment strategies in all the secondary level educational institutions. It is reported that CA is not being implemented in the schools (Podder, 2020). As alternative assessment contribute to the achievement of quality in education through the development of skills, the status of CA, reasons why CA is not being implemented, and ways to implement the strategies should be explored. This study tried to find answers to the research questions placed below:

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) What is the status of CA (alternative assessment) in secondary schools?
- 2) Why CA (alternative assessment) is not implemented as per curriculum guidelines?
- 3) How can alternative assessment be implemented in secondary level institutions?

1.3 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The participants of the study were previously known to the researchers. All of them underwent CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) or curriculum dissemination training at different times as participants. Sometimes the participants worked with the chief researcher as co-trainers. Therefore, the participants spoke freely and frankly because of the trust and faith in each other.

Although the mentioned were the scopes of the study, there were some limitations, too. The investigation was limited to only four teachers of four secondary schools of Dhaka city. This study could not include teachers practising in primary schools, higher secondary colleges, madrasahs, and vocational educational institutions. However, the study was rigorous and in-depth. Therefore, the findings of the study could be trusted because of the honest and unbiased nature of data collection and data analysis.

2. Literature Review

Since the independence, the education system of Bangladesh had a policy to introduce school based assessment (SBA) and include higher order questions in the public examinations as part of education reform

policy (ADB, 2015). Although SBA and higher order questions were in the policy, it was not implemented immediately after policy was taken. SBA was introduced to the curriculum in 2006 (Begum & Farooqi, 2008). Although SBA was changed into CA (Continuous Assessment) in 2012 (NCTB, 2012) to cover all kinds of secondary level educational institutions, the activities remained almost similar. It has been mentioned in section one (1) above that SBA, CA, and alternative assessment are synonymous; activities of SBA, CA and alternative assessment are alike. In other words, alternative assessment measures practical ability more than it measures knowledge. Janisch, Liu, and Akrof (2007) have stated that alternative assessment refers to classroom-based, qualitative, informal, or performance assessment; it is a way to measure students' skill achievement in more informal ways.

Podder (2020) maintains that there are four major types of alternative assessment strategies which include self-assessment (keeping records of practices, progress, and achievement); peer-assessment (keeping classmates' records of practices, progress, and contribution in accomplishing a task); student portfolios (preserving students' writing, drawings, paintings, certificates, appreciation letter of performances in a file or folder in the classroom); and performance assessment (student presents an individual work, pair work, or group work; teacher and other students of the class ask questions or provide feedback). Moreover, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2008) mention commonly employed alternative assessment strategies in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms. Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2008) put emphasis on video-recording students' performances as alternative assessment strategy which, according to them, motivates the students to perform better. The assessment strategies mentioned by Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2008) include portfolios, journals and diaries, writing folders, teacher observations, peer and teacher–student conferences, audiovisual recordings, checklists, and self-assessments. However, Sulaiman et al. (2019) and Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2008) state that alternative assessment strategies are similar to those mentioned by Podder (2020). So far as alternative assessment strategies are concerned, teachers can devise more strategies based on what subjects they are teaching, contexts, and requirement.

A study reveals that South African students learnt many other skills because of the alternative assessment practices other than knowledge which is usually assessed in the traditional assessment system (Stears & Gopal, 2010). Gears and Gopal (2010) further reports that those students performed poorly in pen and paper tests although their performances were better when alternative assessment strategies were employed. A study by Nasri, Roslan, Sekuan, Bakar and Puteh (2010) also supports the findings of Stears and Gopal (2010). Nasri et al. (2010) claim from a survey with

50 secondary school teachers in Brunei that alternative assessment can promote active learning and improve self confidence among students (95%). 80% of the respondents stated that alternative assessment was suitable to cultivate critical and creative thinking skills; and 85% of them stated that alternative assessment did not hamper classroom teaching and learning; it supported learning.

Barbarics (2019) from his qualitative study in Hungary with four teachers show that the main purpose of Hungarian teachers using alternative assessment strategies is to exonerate students from the stressful traditional testing, engage students in different activities, and then to provide constructive feedback which improve quality of teaching and learning. According Barbarics (2019), alongside reducing students' stress, alternative assessment strategies develop students' creativity, communication skills, self-regulation, real-life problem solving skills, ICT-use skills, build knowledge-base and cooperation attitudes.

Watt (2005) claims from a study in Sydney with 60 Mathematics teachers from 11 secondary schools that the use of a range of alternative assessment methods helped to portray the actual knowledge and skills of the students. Although alternative assessment practices benefit students in skills achievement (Letina, 2014; Nasri et al., 2010; Barbarics, 2019; Stears & Gopal, 2009; Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2008; Watt, 2005), secondary level educational institutions in Bangladesh are not exploiting the benefits of it. Ahmed, Islam, and Salahuddin (2015) claim from a study in Bangladesh that, although classroom assessment is an essential component in effective classroom practices, the teachers were found to dominate the students where there was no classroom assessment strategies employed.

Although Letina (2014) recognizes the positive aspects of alternative assessment practices, he also identified some limitations regarding lack of guidelines for assessment. Latina (2014) asked for some alternative assessment guidelines or policies for better implementation of the strategies and assessing the students. Begum and Farooqi (2008) assert from a study in Bangladesh that teachers consider SBA as an extra burden on them and they claim that the class periods do not allow implementation of SBA activities. Begum and Farooqi (2008) claim that the teachers' opinions might be like that mentioned because most of them were not trained in SBA. Denman and Al-Mahrooqi (2018) claim that alternative assessment lacks objectivity and reliability while every teacher grades students differently and many of the teachers give full marks without proper judgment of the students' performances. Denman and Al-Mahrooqi (2018) further maintain that traditional assessment strategies and the alternative assessment strategies should not be similar, alternative forms of assessment must be practical-based. The reviewed literature shows that

although there are merits of alternative assessment strategies, there are some weaknesses too. However, benefits outweigh the weaknesses. The weaknesses can be minimized through providing training to the teachers, preparing assessment guidelines, and through improved monitoring and mentoring.

3. Research Methodology

The researcher employed qualitative research methodology as it is possible to penetrate deep into the research problem through the use of qualitative research methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researchers used semi-structured interview method with purposively selected four secondary teachers from four different secondary schools in Dhaka city. Interviews were conducted over mobile phone with prior permission of the interviewees; and the conversations were recorded. The data were analysed thematically which included going through the transcribed data again and again and coding them based on similarity of themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The findings of the study emerged at the time of transcribing and coding the data. Then the coded data were categorised and put under the major themes of the research questions. All the four famous teachers were invited to take part in the study. They were famous because they have name and fame in their schools as well as in the society; different organizations such as American Centre, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), NCTB receive their services as Master Trainers and as textbook writers. They happily agreed and time was fixed for the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Among the four teachers, three were females having teaching experiences from 15 to 20 years. The teachers were given pseudonyms such as T1, T2, T3, T4 so that they cannot be identified from the reporting.

4. Findings of the Study

The findings of the study included-CA is not implemented in schools (4.1); teachers and other stakeholders need training (4.2); and strong monitoring and mentoring is vital (4.3). The findings have been presented below:

4.1 Implementation of CA in schools

Although CA was introduced in the curriculum of 2012 (NCTB, 2012) and SBA was introduced in 2007, the implementation of CA is reported to be poor in schools (Podder, 2020). The teachers in the study also expressed that CA was not implemented in schools. T1 asserted that they did not conduct CA in their schools; instead they held some other tests in the name of Model Test and Preparation Test. NCTB (2012)

approved only two examinations a year, half-yearly and year final. She claimed:

I have training in CA and I am interested in implementing CA or alternative assessment strategies in my school but I have to be much busy with preparing the tests, invigilating in the preparation and model tests, examining the scripts, preparing the result sheets, and so on. Moreover, two other examinations are there as per the curriculum guidelines. So many examinations and marking so many scripts is a barrier on the way to implementing the alternative assessment strategies.

Other teachers, too, provided similar opinions. Their interviews showed that in none of the four schools, CA or alternative assessment strategies were practised although all of them agreed that alternative assessment strategies had power to provide students with practical knowledge and skills. T4 was an assistant head teacher of a school. He used to teach Maths and science subjects. He maintained:

We do not conduct CA (or alternative assessment) in our school as it is not mandatory for us. SESIP (Secondary Education Sector Investment Program) provided us with a diary where we are supposed to plan the lessons and get the lesson plans approved by the head teacher or assistant head teacher. Most teachers do not use the diary for planning the lessons and we fill in the blank pages of the diary before the education officers come for visits.

Other two teacher participants, T2 and T3, also confessed that they also did not organize any CA in their schools. They asserted that they were not asked to do the alternative assessment by the school authority or by any other authority which indicated that there was no pressure from anyone to practise the alternative assessment strategies in schools.

The above data show that the schools do not implement CA or alternative assessment as they do not consider it important; and no authority, local or central, asks them to do CA compulsorily. Although around 40% of the teachers are trained, they do not conduct CA. As was reported by Begum and Farooqi (2008), the participating teachers of the current study also consider CA or alternative assessment as burden for them. However, Nasri et al. (2010) have alleged that alternative assessment seem to be burden to those teachers who do not have proper training in CA or alternative assessment.

4.2 Teachers and Stakeholders Awareness in CA

The four participants claim in the interviews that around 40% of their colleagues had training in CA or alternative assessment and these 40%

teachers were not conversant with different assessment strategies. T3 alleged:

I have received curriculum dissemination training organized by NCTB where I came across CA or alternative assessment strategies. Moreover, I received Master Trainer training in CA but many of my colleagues are not trained. Only around 40% or 50% of my colleagues have received training in CA but most of them are not confident in implementing it.

T4 had training and he was also aware of the benefits of CA. However, he and his school did not implement alternative assessment strategies. He maintained:

I used to know the CA/alternative assessment strategies but because of lack of practices, I forgot many of the strategies. As the school authority or any other authority does not seriously want us to implement CA, we do not go for extra work. Moreover, around 60% teachers are not trained in CA or alternative assessment.

T4 further asserted that other stakeholders such as students, parents, and education officers needed to be provided with training or at least they should be sensitized with the desired changes in the curriculum so that everyone concerned supported the implementation. T1 and T3 also provided similar data that they and their schools did not organize any CA. However, they (T1 & T3) confessed that they put fake marks against the roll numbers of the students without organizing CA for 20% marks. T1 claimed:

We do not have to conduct CA in our school but we add 20% marks in each subject to determine the final results of the students. We give these fake marks so that we can show the higher authority that we conduct CA in case they come to visit our school. To start CA or alternative assessment practices in full swing, proper training is needed for those who have little or no idea of CA.

The above data show that most of the teachers are not aware of the CA strategies and their benefits. If the teachers are provided with training and motivation, teachers may be aware of the benefits and how to apply CA. Alongside providing training to the teachers on the use of the alternative assessment strategies, there should be sessions on how to assess (or mark) students' performances in CA. The researchers believe that, in addition to teacher training for better implementation (Nasri et al., 2010), there should be arrangements for disseminating the alternative assessment ideas among students, guardians, and education officers because when all the stakeholders are aware of the possible changes in assessment, schools can easily implement alternative assessment strategies without obstacles created by anybody concerned.

4.3 Mentoring in Alternative Assessment

It was observed from the interview data and from literature that CA or alternative assessment was not in practices in schools as there was no monitoring to check if the curriculum guidelines regarding CA was being implemented or not. The interviewees claimed that they were not under compulsion to implement the CA strategies; neither the institutional heads nor anyone from higher authority visited schools to see the implementation of CA. T1 asserted:

Although I am aware of the CA strategies and the curriculum guidelines regarding CA implementation, I do not do that as no one practises CA or there is no instruction regarding the implementation of CA from the institution heads. The institution heads are much busy with Preparation Tests and Model tests.

T4 is an assistant head teacher and he has to teach in some classes. As an administrator, he firmly claimed that if not supervised by higher authority, teachers would never engage in CA implementation. T4 claimed:

In order to implement CA or alternative assessment strategies, the higher authority with sound knowledge of CA should come to visit the schools, check what the teachers are doing, mentor them so that the teachers feel empowered to implement the CA strategies.

T2 and T3 also asked for monitoring, mentoring, and motivational measures so that teachers feel encouraged to implement CA. According to them, through mentoring, the teachers can make their ideas clear through holding talks with the mentors. T3 asserted, “Although I have training, I need some more supports from experts during implementation so that my weak areas can be strengthened through talking with them”. T2 put added emphasis on the motivational activities. She asserted:

My experiences show that most of the teachers are not motivated to work hard and sincerely for the students. They just want to do the routine work; they do not want to try new ideas; they love to do things traditionally. For that reason, motivational activities need to be taken from the school authority or from the higher authority.

The four participating teachers informed that some schools started to implement CA at the beginning but they faced problem regarding preserving the data and the assessment documents. One of the four teachers, T4, disclosed that he did not find the results of the class tests and assessment documents when the school authority asked for the 20% marks in Mathematics. Then he had to provide fake marks in order to avoid

hassle and dishonor from the colleagues and the head teacher. Another teacher T2stated:

Our school began to implement CA in around 2014 and 2015, but it did not work because of the negligence of the teachers including the head teacher. The school authority did not tell us how to assess students continuously and how/where to preserve the assessment data and documents. I did not have any secured space in the common room to preserve the necessary documents.

T1 disclosed that she preserved the documents and the result sheets in her drawer but was facing difficulties as all students of a class were not assessed together; students were assessed on different days in a small number. However, T3 informed that she noted down the data against the roll numbers of the students in the attendance register. T3 claims that, there was also a problem. As there was not enough space in the attendance register, after some days, she could not understand what the data is meant for. She stated:

Although I write the marks or grades of the students in the students' attendance register, I cannot write details about the marks or grades; why I awarded that marks or grades; what was the assessment on, etc. As a result, I forget what that marks or grades mean, why I gave it, etc.

NCTB (2012) introduced CA in the curriculum and provided training to many teachers to implement CA in schools. However, the schools were not implementing the curriculum guidelines regarding CA mainly because there was no monitoring and mentoring from any organizations. Alongside monitoring and mentoring, there should be motivational activities as Tan (2012) claims that traditional teachers do not have any appetite for alternative assessment but teachers with progressive ideas and high motivation level can move forward with alternative assessment plans. Preserving the assessment data and analyzing them properly is important for taking further actions. Unless the data can be preserved systematically so that they can be retrieved immediately when necessary, it is difficult for teachers to give the final or average marks or grades to the students' performances. However, a separate register one full page dedicated for each student can solve the mentioned data preservation issues. Additionally, it is known from BEDU (Bangladesh Examination Development Unit) sources that they have prepared software aiming to solve the data preservation problems of the school teachers (Podder, 2020). Teachers would be able to input data just after assessment and they can retrieve them any time they require.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that most of the secondary schools do not implement CA; teachers and other stakeholders such as students, parents, education officers require training; monitoring and mentoring is a vital issue emerged from the study. Only training may not be enough, alternative assessment must be made mandatory for better implementation (Podder, 2020) of CA in schools. If the alternative assessment or CA strategies are implemented in secondary level educational institutions, the quality of education is expected to improve. Therefore, the education authority should take necessary actions for better implementation of CA or alternative assessment in secondary level educational institutions.

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Life Skills Based Education: Awareness of Secondary Learners

Sheikh Shahbaz Riad¹

Abstract

This study was conducted to discover how the current learners of secondary schools in Bangladesh particularly students of class nine and 10 were being informed and made aware of Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) which is an integral part of their curriculum. Document analysis and FGD methods were used for collecting data. Along with other documents, textbooks of class nine and ten of 2020 and National Curriculum 2012 were deeply analysed. The data were analysed thematically. The major findings of the study are: i) learners have good understanding about LSBE contents; ii) students are positive and feel free to discuss the subject matters among themselves; iii) LSBE is very beneficial for learners; iv) toilet facilities and common room should be in separate places; v) LSBE lessons are taught through lecture method; and vi) students demanded doctors to teach some special LSBE contents.

Keywords: LSBE, National curriculum, school environment, textbooks, secondary learners

1. Introduction

Life skills are “living skills” or psycho-social abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO 1997). Over the past two decades life skills-based education has started to play an important role for social and personal development of young people. Initiatives to develop and implement life skills-based education in schools have been undertaken in many countries around the world (WHO, 1999). UNICEF has had a significant role in LSBE development and initiatives at both national and international levels. (UNICEF, 2012). The Dakar Framework for Action describes the obtaining of life skills as a right for all young people and as an important element of quality education (UNESCO, 2008). In South Asian schools, life skills are taught as a separate curriculum, a component of an existing curriculum, an extracurricular activity, or a blend of these.

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(UNICEF, 2005). In Bangladesh, formal process of incorporating LSBE in secondary education started from 2004 (NCTB, 2010). Secondary curriculum of 2012 has also set objectives to prepare learners with Life skills (Objective: 13 and 18). LSBE contents have mainstreamed into the secondary textbooks of several subjects like Bangladesh and Global studies, Home science, Physical Education, Health Science and Sports, Islam and Moral Education (NCTB, 2017). On the other hand, poorly understood, Competing priorities, Poor policy support and poor and uneven implementation are the barriers of Life Skills-Based Education UNICEF (2007)

1.1 Statement of the Problems

UNICEF (2019) identified that LSBE should not only address knowledge and attitude change, but, more importantly, LSBE aimed at behavioural changes. Singh and Menon (2015) pointed out that, in the teaching of life skills, there is a risk that teachers in the country (India) are inadequately equipped in their own knowledge, attitudes and skills to teach effectively and with confidence. At the same time, solely reliant on rote learning or exam-based assessment is a difficulty in successfully integrating life skills in school education. Moreover, the findings of the study done by Adhiambol (2013) revealed that Life Skill Education (LSE) program was not implemented uniformly in schools in Kenya, because most schools did not have teaching curriculum for LSE due to the fact that the schools had no LSE syllabus, text books and other materials necessary for learning LSE'. Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss and Ahmed (2019), discovered that the majority of developing countries' life skills programs lack systematic implementation, evaluation and monitoring and programs are often conducted to yield short term results only.

In Bangladesh, Curriculum 2012 hopes that learners will acquire necessary knowledge, life-skills and views about hygienic life-style emphasizing food and nutrition, physical fitness, diseases, productive health and personal safety. Though, National Curriculum Textbook Board-NCTB (2016) in Bangladesh opined that, secondary education system still mostly knowledge based, where emphasis upon skills and attitude is inadequate and most of LSBE contents are being presented through lectures. UNICEF and Ministry of Education, Bangladesh had a target to increase capacity to implement LSBE for at least 2.5 million school students by 2016. When fully implemented, LSBE will benefit 7.5 million children/adolescents per year in secondary schools. But our secondary education system still mostly knowledge based, where emphasis upon skills and attitude is inadequate (NCTB, 2016).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to achieve the following objectives.

1. To find out the sufficiency of Life Skills Education in curriculum and textbooks.
2. To get students' understanding and perceptions on Life Skills Based Education.
3. To determine the situation of school environment friendly to LSBE.
4. To find out the problems for learners relating to LSBE in schools.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions comprised the purpose of the Study.

1. What are the understandings of secondary learners about life skills-based education?
2. How life skills are being practised in teaching-learning activities in schools?
3. How far is school environment friendly to implement LSBE?
4. What are the hindrances to implementing LSBE in secondary schools?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The terms “adolescents,” “youth,” and “young people” are used differently in different societies. These categories are often associated with varying roles, responsibilities and ages depending on the local context. In Bangladesh, the students of secondary level are the age of 11+ to 17+ are considered as ‘adolescents,’ ‘youth,’ and ‘young people’. According to Rafei (2001), life skills education recognizes the need to address the psychological and social needs of young people to help them to develop and grow into well-adjusted adults which are relevant to moulding effective responses to behaviour-related health problems of children and adolescents. Through life skills education, we can move towards more positive and holistic approaches to educate the new generation, and through them, future generations’. Again, ‘In life skills education children and adolescents are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. The pedagogy of life skills education is based on cooperative learning, participative activities and experimental learning’ (Vranda & Rao, 2011). The findings of the study were expected to enrich and create awareness among teachers and students on the importance of LSBE. The findings also will provide a framework for policy makers and curriculum developers on how to improve and modify Life Skills Education syllabus.

It is hoped the findings of the study were expected to develop to discover proper framework and methodology of Life Skills Education which will be more helpful for policy makers and curriculum developers on how to improve and modify different components of Life Skills Education curriculum.

1.5 LSBE in General

UNICEF has had a significant role in LSBE development and initiatives at both national and international levels (UNICEF, 2012). The Dakar Framework for Action describes the obtaining of life skills as a right for all young people and as an important element of quality education (UNESCO 2008). Aparna and Raakhee (2011) opined that Life skill facilitates a complete and integrated development of individuals to function effectively as social beings. Life skills can be applied in the contexts of social and health events. With life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. In South Asian schools, life skills are taught as a separate curriculum, a component of an existing curriculum, an extracurricular activity, or a blend of these (UNICEF, 2005). Initiatives to develop and implement life skills-based education in schools have been undertaken in many countries around the world. (WHO 1999).

World Health Organization (1997) defined Life Skills as are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. These are listed below:

Decision making; Problem solving; Creative thinking; Critical thinking; Effective communication; Interpersonal relationship skills; Self-awareness; Empathy; Coping with emotions; and Coping with stress

Decision making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. This can have consequences for health if young people actively make decisions about their actions in relation to health by. Assessing the different options, and what effects different decisions may have.

Problem solving enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.

Creative thinking contributes to both decision making and problem solving by enabling us to explore the available alternatives and various

consequences of our actions or non-action. It helps us .to look beyond our direct experience, and even if no problem is identified, or no decision is to be made, creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situations of our daily lives.

Critical thinking is an ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognise and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.

Effective communication means that we .are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, but also needs and fears. And it may mean being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.

Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways _with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It may mean keeping good relations with family members, which are .an important source of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively.

Self-awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, of our character, of our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing .self-awareness can help us to recognise when we .are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand, and accept others who may be very different from ourselves, which can improve social interactions, for example, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance, or tolerance, as is the case with AIDS sufferers, or people with mental disorders, who may be stigmatized and ostracized by the very people they depend upon for support.

Coping with emotions involves recognising emotions in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

Coping with stress is about recognising the sources of stress in our lives, recognising how this affects us, and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may mean that we take action to reduce the sources of

stress, for example, by making changes to our physical environment or lifestyle. Or it may mean learning how to relax, so that tensions created by unavoidable stress do not give rise to health problems (WHO, 1997)

1.6 LSBE in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, formal process of incorporating LSBE in secondary education started from 2004 (NCTB, 2010). Secondary curriculum of 2012 has also set objectives to prepare learners with Life skills (objective:13 and 18). LSBE contents have mainstreamed into the secondary textbooks of several subjects like Bangladesh and Global studies, Home science, Physical Education, Health Science and Sports, Islam and Moral Education (NCTB, 2017). Curriculum 2012 hopes that learners will acquire necessary knowledge, life-skills and views about hygienic life-style emphasizing food and nutrition, physical fitness, diseases, productive health and personal safety. Already Master Trainers (1760) and field level teachers training (82,000+26,000=106000) completed in 40+20=60 districts (SESIP-NCTB, 2017) has been completed.

Table 1: LSBE Lessons in Secondary Books

| Areas of Contents | Classes | | | | Numbers of Lessons |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|-----|------|------|--------------------|
| | VI | VII | VIII | IX-X | |
| Bangladesh and Global studies | 02 | 02 | 02 | 02 | 08 |
| Physical Education, Health Science and Sports | 09 | 09 | 07 | 15 | 40 |
| Home science, | 05 | 04 | 09 | 06 | 24 |
| Islam and Moral Education | 01 | 01 | - | - | 02 |
| Total | | | | | 74 |

Source: NCTB (2020)

Life Skill Based Contents and Lesson Titles-Class wise

Class Six

| Subjects | Lessons Title |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bangladesh and Global Studies: Chapter-7 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Something about rights 2. The rights of the child 3. Child labor 4. Child abuse 5. Our attitude towards the working child |
| Physical Education and Sports: Chapter-3 Number of Lessons 6 | 1. Concepts and requirements related to health sciences 2. Common infectious diseases 3. Symptoms of infectious diseases 4. Causes and consequences of infectious diseases Prevention of infectious diseases |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physical Education and Sports Chapter-4 Number of Lessons 5 | 1. Physical and mental changes during adolescence 2. Useful in nutritious and balanced diet during adolescence 3. Conventional and misconceptions about adolescent change 4. Menstrual health rules |
| Home Economics Chapter-5 number of Lessons -5 | 1. Physical development 2. The mental development of adolescence 3. Adolescent emotions 4. Adolescent social development 5. Moral development of adolescence |
| Home Economics Chapter-6 Number of Lessons -2 | 1. Personal awareness and cleanliness 2. Learning to protect your own safety |
| Islam and Moral Education Home Economics Chapter-5 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Smoking and drug addiction |

Class Seven

| Subjects | Lessons Title |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bangladesh and Global Studies: Chapter-7 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Drugs and drug addiction 2. Deterioration of drugs in individual family and society 3. The effect of peers on drug addiction 4. Prevention of drug addiction 5. Dealing with drug abuse |
| Physical Education and Sports: Chapter-3 Number of Lessons 6 | 1. Concepts and requirements related to health sciences 2. Common infectious diseases 3. Symptoms of infectious diseases 4. Causes and consequences of infectious diseases Prevention of infectious diseases |
| Physical Education and Sports Chapter-4 Number of Lessons 5 | 1. Physical and mental changes during adolescence 2. Useful in nutritious and balanced diet during adolescence 3. Conventional and misconceptions about adolescent change 4. Menstrual health rules |
| Home Economics Chapter-5 | 1. Physical development 2. The mental development of adolescence 3. Adolescent emotions |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of Lessons -5 | 4. Adolescent social development 5. Moral development of adolescence |
| Home Economics Chapter-6 Number of Lessons -2 | 1. Personal awareness and cleanliness 2. Learning to protect your own safety |
| Islam and Moral Education Home Economics Chapter-5 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Smoking and drug addiction |

Class Eight

| Subjects | Lessons Title |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bangladesh and Global Studies: Chapter-10 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Causes of drug addiction 2. Effects and prevention of drug addiction |
| Physical Education and Sports: Chapter-3 and 4 our Number of Lessons 8 | 1. The concept of HIV / AIDS 2. How HIV is transmitted to human body 3. Risk of HIV / AIDS infection 4. What to do to prevent HIV / AIDS 5. Prevention of infectious diseases 6. Concepts and requirements regarding reproductive health 7. Reproductive health hygiene 8. Consequences and prevention of premature pregnancy |
| Home Economics Chapter-4,7 Number of Lessons -9 | 1. Adolescent changes 2. Causes of puberty change 3. Adapting to family during adolescence 4. Adapting to society during 5. Drug addiction 6. Caution in choosing friends 7. Through publicity 8. Sexual harassment 9. Child marriage and dowry |

Classes: Nine-Ten

| Subjects | Lessons Title |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Bangladesh and Global Studies: Chapter-15 Number of Lessons 2 | 1. Violence against women 2. HIV / AIDS |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physical Education and Sports: Chapter-3,4,5 Number of Lessons 19 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental health and its role in student life 2. Types of mental behavior and ways to eliminate mental instability 3. Depression and its class division 4. Causes of mental depression and its effect on the student 5. Ways to get rid of mental fatigue 6. Healthcare and its importance 7. The concept of personal health care and its strategies 8. Providing the student with lunch tiffin 9. General health problems and their remedies 10. Student health care and health card 11. The concept of nutrition and its requirements 12. Causes and remedies of malnutrition 13. Players list food and calories according to age 14. Food poisoning, causes and remedies 15. Adolescence and puberty changes 16. Adapting to the stress and changes of puberty 17. Adolescent nutritional requirements 18. Reproductive health and its protection 19. Reproductive hygiene and gestational health care |
| Home Economies Chapter-6,8 Number of Lessons - 4 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Level of development 21. Adolescent psychosocial problems 22. Depression 23. Stress |

Source: NCTB, 2020

2. Research Methodology

It was a qualitative genre of research which employed focus group discussion (FGD) and document analysis. Creswell (2008) argued that in qualitative inquiry the intent is not generalized to a population, but to develop an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon. Four secondary schools comprising government, non-government, boys-girls and rural-urban of Dhaka and Chottogram division of Bangladesh were selected for this study purposively. Out of four schools, two were government, rests two were non-government secondary schools. Among them two were girls, one was a boys' and the rest were co-education schools. In each FGD group, there were 10 students. Out of 40 students, 22 were boys and other 18 were girls; and the students were included from science, humanities, and business groups.

3. Findings and Discussion

Throughout coding and categorizing the data, the following findings emerged: i) learners have good understanding about LSBE contents; ii) students are positive and feel free to discuss the subject matters among them; iii) LSBE is very beneficial for learners; iv) toilet facilities and common room should be in separate places v) presentation of most of the lessons were lecture based; and vi) students demanded doctors as teachers in some special contents.

3.1 Learners Understanding of LSBE

All four FGD groups of learners in the study have a very clear understanding about different contents of LSBE in different subjects, however when they were asked 'what is LSBE and why' they cannot explained clearly. But they knew that there are some contents in their different books like Science, Home Economies and Physical Education where they can know different knowledge about physical and mental development, adolescence, adolescent and psychosocial problems, child rights, depression, stress, and eve teasing. When they are asked what LSBE is, they cannot answer. Their teachers did not tell them in the classes, they stated.

3.2 Students' Attitudes to Subject-matters

Most of the participants of FGD groups were well informed that there are some sensitive themes and topics like HIV / AIDS, eve teasing, adolescence and puberty changes, reproductive health and its protection in their different subjects. Both girls and boys were found very natural and free to discuss the matters with teachers, among them and even with researchers. In that case girls were found very spontaneous than boys.

3.3 Learners Benefit from LSBE Classes

Learners are very positive to the importance and benefits of LSBE. They explained, 'if we, the girls, go somewhere, some boys tease us; try to melt our minds; we have to cross that area carefully; there can be different kinds of illegal activities in different places. We have to stand to protest against that misdeeds'. Besides, there may be obstacles on the way, some of us may be afraid that we will not be able to do this but we should not stay behind for fear that we will try. LSBE gives us that knowledge, skills and confidence. So life skills based education is beneficial to us'. The learners were asked how LSBE can help them to prevent eve-teasing. They said 'We can send a boy or girl to a Juvenile Correctional Institution to avoid eve-teasing, we can resist, we can protest, we can be aware of this, we can explain the different aspects of those who do such things. Moreover girls should be a little decent'.

3.4. Toilet and Common room Facilities

Participants' learners are partially happy with toilet facilities and common room though demand separate rooms. Out of four one has common room for girls. In other schools all other arrangements are there. All participants demanded to have common room with all facilities both for the boys and girls. They need special care to maintain physical and mental healthcare and its importance particularly for adapting to the stress and changes of puberty and period times.

3.5 Presentation of Lessons

The learners claimed that the most of their teachers conducted the classes traditionally where they were asked to readout the pages. If needed, teachers added some comments and explanations. In case of sensitive topics like characteristics of adolescence, period and puberty and SRHR the most of the teachers advise them to read out at home. Both boys and girls did not feel hesitation to listen to the lectures from female teachers than male teachers.

3.6 Necessity of Doctors as Teachers

Most of the learners of four FGD group strongly demanded doctors as teachers and counselors because there are some special and sensitive topics. They think that their teachers are not easy enough and resourceful to convey proper knowledge and skills to them. Most of them are shy and reluctant in these classes and contents. Besides, boys and girls are not willing to disclose their problems in front of their boys or girls classmates. They are ready to disclose the personal matters and problems to male or female doctors individually. 'If the doctors come once in every month, all the problems can be discussed to them openly', they opined.

4. Conclusion

Like other countries of the world, teenagers in Bangladesh are going through various problems and challenges. New challenges are always coming before them. Sometimes they are able to cope, sometimes confusing themselves rather than facing challenges. They do not have the help or understanding of anyone to get rid of these challenges and problems. Besides, the current society is rapidly changing. With this change, new and advanced problems are constantly being added. There are few ways to deal with these problems and challenges. Out of them the most appropriate way to cope with the challenge is to awaken the adolescent's own inner strength and put some of their skills into their hearts. And therefore, the education system should be able to meet the daily needs of the learners, adapt them to the environment and meet the problems and challenges. In this regard, our secondary education has

included the content of life-skills based education in various classes and training had been done for many teachers. Life skills are being used as an effective tool for teenagers to become empowered around the world. It is hoped that that life-skills education can help our learners to be better physically, mentally and socially.

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Studying MA in English at the Tertiary Level: Scopes for Career Development

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Abstract

Career development for the post-graduate students in Bangladesh higher education institutions has always been a concerning issue. The article reflects the English graduate students' aim in choosing the right career and its possible challenges consequent scopes in the job market in Bangladesh. Since career development heavily relies on other different factors like age, sex, subject orientation, gradation, and an overall assessment of competition in the job market, an English graduate has to focus on other different issues relating to the interviews and its possible challenges to follow. The article tried to give a clear picture of the existing condition of the English graduates and their formulation of planning in selecting a right career for the future development. A qualitative research has been conducted among the MA (English) students of a govt. college to assess the variable motivation of students to seek a constructive way out of their future career planning. A semi-structured in-depth interview and focus group discussion have been used to validate the data. Different types of data management have been applied and the collected data has been validated in several ways to reach a concrete status of the career planning of the graduates.

Keywords: Career development, tertiary level, English

1. Introduction

Students of graduate and post-graduate students are basically treated as tertiary level learners. Students studying MA in English and their future career planning have been incorporated and investigated in this present study in order that one can seek and find a way out for future planning of studies and career involvement in the future. The present research topic is also considered to bridge the gap between learners' satisfactory completion of tertiary education and to face the challenges of their career paths in their desired field of education. Many students in

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childhood go through a composition on “My Aim in Life” which paves their way to the future career planning for them. . Tertiary education and career choice has recently been a talked of issue in Bangladeshi post graduate students. Since career planning is a lifelong process, adult learners like the post graduate students always seek to rebuild the career at a continuous process. Merriam and Brockett (1997) have put it thus: for a comprehensive understanding of tertiary education the two terms education and learning must be distinguished from each other. If the goal of learning is not fit for future development of career then the pursuit of subject choice and career development coincide with each other. Being a teacher of a govt. college the subjective assessment to the Master degree students is always a matter of interest because of the students’ wide variety of choices at the completion of their career. One of the most important factors for the students to seek for higher education is to get a good job and pursue for the choice of a right subject like English in post-grad level of different govt. colleges.

The present study also focuses on the tertiary students’ involvement in the competitive job market and their contribution to the nation building activities to the country’s economic development (Society & Services, 2017). A huge number of students after passing their masters in the respective field of study seek for subject oriented job. Career has been a great motivating factor for the students to choose a right subject at the graduation and post-graduation level of studies.

Most of the students after passing Higher Secondary or graduation level pursue English as their post-graduation subject and get admission at the govt. colleges in Bangladesh. Since the existing socio-economic condition of Bangladesh is to get a job after completing post-graduation, a learner has to struggle at the competitive job market which is highly demandable and struggling for the students. Bangladesh job market is always highly competitive for the students and in comparison to the number of vacant posts it is really challenging for the students to get a secured and prestigious job. Moreover, the social influence of the political parties and a great variety of the corruption and bureaucratic complexities also influencing a challenging factor for the students to really achieve a good grade in the chosen subjects. Poor economic and financial conditions of most of the families in Bangladesh allow students to study a job-oriented subject to support the families and later on to lead an economically solvent life style for the future. All the above mentioned factors lead a student at the tertiary level of education to choose a suitable subject like English, Economics, CSE or other available subjects in the colleges just to face the hard reality of getting right career choice in life.

The life role models indicate the need to develop priorities for balancing a variety of roles including those of student, child, parent, spouse, worker and citizen (Haq, 2016). The decisions on career have become a life-role model in the sense that it can be equated with the term 'career development' which can be flourished with continuous development and close affinity of a post-graduate's life long process after the completion of Masters. Age model also affects career development when the learners feel that age-related factors are responsible for taking the right decision in career goal development. For instance, a fresh graduate might think of switching over his career field of choice rather than staying on his first area of "choice". The same picture is diametrically opposite when an experienced careerist would feel rather reluctant to switch his career and remain static at his/her parent organization of career field.

English language competence and fluency of English act as an important criteria of getting a good job in Bangladesh. According to Greculescu et al, 2013, linguistic qualification and standards are some factors of interaction between the worlds of work (inspired by stakeholders, employment services etc.) and of education (training providers and teachers etc.). Checking the nation dailies it can be really understood that job advertisements in Bangladesh seek graduates having a strong background of linguistic competence in English and a standardization of the course to comply with the need of the company's desire. Employees are to train the trainees as probationary officers after the successful recruitment of service and hence the need to achieve a good grade in the relevant subject is a complimentary needful resource of the job companies. In order to track the qualifications updated and relevant, a systematic norm and standardization of required qualification of job must be announced by the employers. Sometimes job-seekers are to announce reward benefit for the successful completion of the probationary period. The efforts of these occupational standards and requirements act as a bridge between the types of career work and the desired field of education of the post-graduate students. The result of the post-graduation and its status in relevant subject to compete for the jobs are seen a competence factor to pursue for the jobs. Moreover, the learning outcomes and mobility to gain practical experience in the tertiary level of education completion lead to the validity of securing a job in the market.

To fix the goal of target and heterogeneity of tertiary level education in career development at the post-graduation level, the right choice of career development requires a huge range of variety and practices. Successful learners having the knack of self-knowledge, and who are knowledgeable about employment situation and who possesses a good decision-making skill are more inclined to need information and to

make the career decisions. Despite there are a few old graduates whose career development has been characterized as “late, delayed or impaired” and whose career development objectives are different than others (Manuele, 1984, cited in Haq, 2016). The learners of these status require more positive development of self-images to enhance their career search and choice of career before entering and engaging into career planning activities. This certainly is a matter of study in the post-graduation level of students in a govt. college and more emphasis should be given on to the increase of ability to use resources, improving the decision-making skills and instigating the learners to choose the right subject at tertiary level of education.

Research Questions

The research study posed the following questions based on the purpose of the study:

1. What are the main advantages of studying MA English at the tertiary level of education in Bangladesh?
2. Which profession do the English graduates prefer most? What are the challenges the English post-graduates encounter to develop a career?

2. Literature Review

Learning and teaching English for international communication has become the most common and powerful way of establishing one's career after having studied and successfully completed post-graduation in English (Uddin, 2017). Since the country's economy is booming fast, many job employment organizations are seeking candidates having strong command over English. Many job advertisements invite candidates having strong command over English with the four language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students passing from the department of English are easily allowed to face the interviews at different govt. and non-govt. organizations. Since Bangladesh is a multi-lingual country most of the employment organizations prefer candidates with a current and relevant standard of practising English at the communication level with locals and foreigners. The scope of studying and practising English at the tertiary level is seen as an important indicator of entering the job sectors in Bangladesh.

Within the globalized and technological society, the study of foreign language as English and of English in particular will focus on the development of linguistic and professional communication skills and competence, prerequisites for the prospective choice of career and occupational opportunities (Greculescu et al, 2013). Linguistic competence and a good knowledge of English will be influencing not only the students

passing from English but also to the students of other departments in general in their career decision-making process. Achieving a good grade in linguistic competence like fluency in English and a strong command over English will certainly help students make their job-pathways in the competitive labour market more flexible and accessible. The students of MA English at my college have got all the privileges to nurture the English language skills capacity and to increase the ability to compete on the job market. For Bangladesh context, a huge number of students every year after graduating from different subject cannot compete with the job market just because of having inadequate skills in linguistic competence and a poor command of English.

According to the IMF, Bangladesh's economy was the second fastest growing major economy of 2016, with a rate of 7.1%. In the decade since 2016, Bangladesh averaged a GDP growth of 6.5% that has been largely driven by its exports of readymade garments, remittances and the domestic agricultural sector (Economic Survey of Bangladesh, 2016). So it can be seen that after passing the tertiary level of education at the post-graduate level students seek for jobs which are very much related to the economic development of the employment sectors like garments, buying houses and export-processing zones. A huge portion of the students passing out from the department of English easily employed such economic sectors to boom up the country's economy.

Since Bangladesh govt. has recently digitized all govt. job information online, students seeking for subject-oriented jobs are more inclined to take technology enhanced training with their major subjects. Most of the students after successful completion of post-graduation courses enrolled themselves in online training programs to ensure their desired jobs. Technology plays a vital role to prepare students for the workforce helping them to reach educational goals (Cradler et al., 2002). In order to be skilled in implementing technology in different job markets, students need to have a sound and adequate knowledge of English. A post-graduation degree in English simply works as a platform to get tech-enhanced jobs at home and abroad.

Future-ready students need to exercise self-oriented field of agency in pursuing their own education throughout their whole life. In order to set up a rapport of the self-realization, educators and teachers must build up a combined force with teachers, peers, families and community altogether ("The Future of Education and skills Education," 2030). In order to combat the future challenges of competitive job market a student's role is not only to achieve a good grade in own subject area rather a student has to equip with individual self-realization based networks where all stakeholders should make a commitment to help create a congenial atmosphere for the future challenges of the candidates. A

strong community-based networking can definitely create a platform for the English graduates to enhance the opportunities. All we need to focus the job orientation in a broader set of knowledge, language skills, positive attitude and values of action. A great opportunity for the students passing out from the department of English is that all things can be brought into action if they can only mobilize the self-attitudinal concepts into reality. Global English has spread the opportunity for the students achieving a degree in Masters have widened the door of job in global market. If the students are only positively motivated and mobilized they can be successfully employ themselves in future job arena.

An individual engaged in career planning should fix up a goal of achieving a selected career field for occupation (Cruz-español, 2014). The fixed goal can help career hunters realize, implement and decide a perfect choice in total career development. Success in career does not actually come overnight. For setting up a fixed goal, an individual has to choose a job oriented subject in graduation level which can help him/her to focus on the future prospect of facing the interviews. At the same time, it's worthwhile for the students to make options of choice alternately, for example in case of missing an opportunity another alternate pathway should be sought immediately. The best thing to succeed in career planning is to target a fixed goal of occupation right from the beginning of graduation. Most job offering companies invite candidates having a strong background of the subject relevant to the specified job. Hence, fixing a goal and deciding a competitive subject like English, for example, can be a very effective tool for career planning.

Two very crucial factors for career planning are deciding to opt for public or private career choice and the next one is a keen sense of perception to struggle and to survive in a work environment primarily against the self-will (kumar,n.d.). Most of the beginning jobs require a strong sense of determination to survive in the probationary period leading to the permanence of job. In such a condition learners' linguistic competence along with a self-will and mental determination work as anodyne to be best fitted for the career. Most of the jobs searching companies are looking for those fresh graduates who would like to bring a change not only in the companies but also in the global economic sector of the country. With this idea in mind, English graduates are brought under the conception of bringing a positive change in the total job areas where English language and literature can be very effective tools to be introduced with global economy and future international job market facilities.

Individuals have to survive and cope up with a sense of adaptability, fixation of mind for the untoward job situation, life-long learning and kind of autobiographical reasoning to stamp a well-directed position in the society (Watzlawik, et al 2016). Sometimes in the context

of Bangladesh competitive job market, a post-graduation degree is not sufficient enough to encounter the career searching. In case of facing a job interview, an individual has to well-equip himself/herself with a lot of other qualitative areas of self-development. Since the number of jobs are quite scanty in comparison with the candidates apply for the jobs it has now become obligatory to develop a series of self-attachment with career guidance and extra-curricular activities. Moreover, a strong sense of self-will and a persistent interest to stick to the opportunities would bring a positive result in career planning. More importantly, to compete with the stereotyped job markets a keen sense of creativity and personal engagement will have to be focused. Switching over different types of jobs gives individual life-long experiences which establish his/her mental ability to survive at whatever atmosphere s/he adjusted with. The students passing from Masters in English really engage in career planning by taking test of different types of beginner job to try better in the future.

At the time of considering a position in an organization the most important criteria required for are specific background, experience and educational background and certification from the part of the candidates (Samantha, 2010). The students of MA class can certainly fulfill the criteria discussed above. The question is whether or not students can opt for the right position at the right time. Most of the students in Bangladesh esp. those who graduated from English would like to fight for govt. jobs whereas the rest do rely on semi-govt. or multinational company jobs. In such cases, the students have to be potentially qualified for the skills mentioned above. If the students can prepare themselves mentally, physically, emotionally, professionally and socially they can be easily adaptable for the desired govt. jobs available. Though most jobs require experiences English background, students at the time of their breaks get part time employment and job experiences.

According to Brand, Valent, & Browning, 2013 the core principles of future and technical education lie mostly in the four categories: i) Alignment, ii) Collaboration, iii) Accountability and iv) Innovation. Effective alignment in the high quality performance can equip students to face the 21st century in high-demand occupations and high growth industry sectors ((Brand, Valent, & Browning, 2013). A strong collaboration between the stakeholders with accountability can sufficiently enhance the opportunity to search for a better job. Certain innovative skills like designing resume with an international standard, foreign training and an innovative tricks and strategies in the job interview sessions would maximise the idea of getting more jobs in future. In Bangladesh perspective, only achieving degree in English cannot guarantee for Govt. Non-govt., semi-govt. or other private jobs rather the combination of the above categories help candidates ensure better career development.

Because of the dramatic rise of the profit institutions, the higher expectations from the private and public colleges and an ambitious competition to become rich early in life—tertiary higher education is facing unprecedented challenges all throughout the world (Chan, 2016). In such a tangled situation of career development status, students completing the Masters in English are more inclined to grab the better desired position than any other subjects. It is usually seen that after passing Higher Secondary Exam students tussle in the university and colleges to get them admitted in English. Though English does not always guarantee the students to secure a prestigious job, it can at least provide a comparatively better opportunity to apply for a job. To face the global employment challenges, it is necessary to seek jobs with a sound knowledge technical and vocational combination of subjects. Graduates passing from English can be use the language and linguistics skills together with a literary sense to cope up the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh.

Since children make decisions early in their lives like food, toys, stuff of entertainment and clothing and so on they need to fix a goal right at the beginning of their lives as well. Though early choices have a short term impact on their lives it is somehow makes some differences in the career choices in future (Malthus & Lu, 2012). The children after completing schooling and higher education prepare themselves for the career adjustment competition. It is very natural that the childhood impression they carry does not necessarily keep pace with the career growth in the future. Many students after completing their Masters change the choice of career planning since the job requirements do not often match with the degrees they achieve in the tertiary level of education. For the students of English department this choice is somewhat flexible because most of the jobs require English as basic preliminary requirements. But the mind-set of the students has to change with the scope of job offered by the different organizations and institutions.

Career planning and decision making are part of a lifelong process involving various stages an individual must go through during their career. Students securing a degree in Masters in English should develop the four major area of exploring career development like self-assessment, exploration, reality testing and implementation for a broader perspective of job security ((Tajalli & Rangarajan, 2012). In this diverse and fast-changing world of challenges, a student has to undergo some acute and difficult hurdles to secure a prestigious job to consider. In case of Bangladesh, most of the students after passing post-graduation in English would like to get a job where they can not only afford to establish the family rather the salary structure and the type of job would go with the prestige of their social status. With this view in mind, a candidate has to equip him /her with a kind of platform where the prestige, status and salary

structure align with the society to maintain the balance of the career and the societal demands.

In my country Bangladesh, a student achieving a degree from English is now competing for non-subject oriented jobs in Bank, hospital, govt. administration, and other places of interest. Most of the graduates after having achieved a degree are working at an organization where his/her major subject area of interest does not match with the job s/he is employed in. For instance, a student doing his Masters in English is now employed as a banker or at administration, or at other non-govt. organization completely alienated to the Honours or Masters Subject s/he has achieved his degree. I think it is the responsibility of the govt. to ensure career development status in accordance with the subject a student secures at his/her graduation.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) and related other tools like career and personal development plans have been used in different governmental sectors, industries and organizations as a means to achieve short and long-term career goals and to improve the performance on the job (Gould, 2017). Once the individual development plan is set properly it can be just a powerful tool for shaping a career. In order to review and update one's personal objectives and goals one should think of continuously updating his/her own personal achievement status and thus need to streamline it with the demands of the century. When a student completes his Masters in English it does not fully ensure that he/she is sure of securing a job unless and otherwise s/he gives extra care to personally develop the IDP and thus to compete for the future career challenges. But it can also be said in terms of Bangladesh perspective, a good command of English would definitely help utilize the opportunities than other subject oriented status.

The process for making a choice in career is complex and unique for each individual relating to on cognitive and social factor structure of the individual's choice of domain (Mtemeri, 2017). A candidate has to take some very crucial decision in terms of choosing a right track in career otherwise it can definitely affect the rest of the life. Choice of career in the graduate and tertiary level has to be in consistent with the subject choice of individual's career choice in future. A good number of students, therefore, studies English as their major subject in tertiary education wants to have easy access to the job market competition. Even a large number of students are found studying English only to get a job without having any personal interest in choosing the subject. So more than personal, the cognitive and other social factors influence the students to study English in the tertiary level of education.

In relation with the changing trends of career, new concepts have emerged, devised to face a shifted environment, with increased

globalization, rapid technological advancements, growing workforce diversity and the expanding use of outsourcing and part time and temporary employees (Arthur et al 2009, Mulhall, 2015). These factors have gained importance in the recent past in Bangladesh where the traditional structures of job markets have transformed to a dynamic and up-to date platforms. Most job advertisements are circulated online and interviews take place virtually or walk-in. The entire accumulation of knowledge and skill and a healthy combination of personal and professional development can alter the archetype job market in Bangladesh. Free time, part time and casual job vacancies employ skilled group of people who can contribute to the fastest growing economy of Bangladesh.

According to the definition of UNESCO (2000), career orientation has been defined as a process by which an individual has to go through the process of discovery, acceptance and proper use of abilities, skills and experiences in accordance with aspirations and values (Guez,2000; Choudhury, But 2014; Crisan et al 2015). In case of career hunting immediately after the post-graduation, a student has to develop his mental strength with a self-realization of disseminating his abstract ideas into concrete reality. Students studying in MA English classes need to focus mainly on these self-aspects of combining his resource in career oriented job searches and interview based curriculum. Only results or grades do not suffice enough to complete for the real world situation in career search. The motivational values with a strong background of general knowledge and interpersonal skill can be welcoming for such English graduates.

Individuals need some sort of post-secondary education and training in order to become financially solvent and well-off in the long-term ((Julian, 2002).To meet the demands of the local and international job market facilities there is no alternative to continuous skill development and a competitive job oriented subject graduation. There is a strong correlation between the high wage earning and the standard living standard that is a pre-condition for leading a healthy and secured life in the future. So a strong technical skill with high job performance can only be ensured with a suitable subject oriented course and career oriented training to follow-up the on-going demand of the job. Since most of the training sessions are conducted in English it's also an advantageous point for the English graduates to cope up with the pre-job situation.

An individual's choice of career is normally influenced by some key factors like subjective assessment of the palpable fringes of the job, social and psychological factors-- like the status quo of the job, reputation of the company and so on(Greculescu & Todorescu, 2014). In case of having some drawbacks like strong competition, inflation of money, scarcity of jobs or other social phenomena hinder the a large amount of

recruitment process, the candidate's qualification skill will be a key factor to secure a position in job market. The higher qualification here in Bangladesh stands for the extra-curricular activities like an adequate knowledge of computer and ICT, online browsing, strong command and literacy skill in English, other than the good grades in Honours and Masters in a reputable subject like English. In spite of having corruption in recruitment process, candidates having higher qualification in English can somehow manage to be selected for the final selection of job.

Since career choice has an ephemeral impact on the individual it acts as a predictor and determinant to the feasible level of income, nature of employability and ultimately leaves an imprint upon the mind-set and psychological factor of the individual (Ahmed, Sharif, & Ahmad, 2017). This way, one's misleading choice of career might jeopardize his/her total life-span and distracting the future effort of searching for new jobs. In case of having no academic fitness, an individual is thought as burden to the family and to the society as well. Even graduating from substandard or common subjects does not bring a balance in income and life leading process. In Bangladesh context, it is often seen that students studying and graduating from English usually do not need to wait for ordinary jobs rather they hunt for the lucrative and prestigious jobs which require a subject value and other career based fundamental skills. A high profile career does not bring only the economic solvency rather it happens to have brought a complete perfection and satisfaction to the individual. Once a country is economically boosted it can manage the feasibility of employment for the unemployed or part time and casual workers.

New skills and competence has gripped the scientific and technological progress of the global economy and it has made a far-reaching effect on the career development of the individual to a great extent esp. in the developing country like Bangladesh (Chu, Hsieh, & Chang, 2007). Students graduating from English do not have that type of sufficient exposures to be skilled in for a career development. In such a case, more students acquiring knowledge in English have to face a tremendous academic set up for the challenges to meet. Consequently, a combination of academic achievements and quality enhancement combination greatly affect the up-gradation of status for the fresh graduates. The most advantageous opportunity an English graduate enjoy in career building is the English orientation in the training and post job probationary sectors. Since the most lucrative jobs in Bangladesh require a minimum Master's degree with competitive selection process,, a lot more chance are easily provided to the English graduates. Even in the foreign and deputed posts outside Bangladesh require a good number of English speaking people.

3. Methodology

Since interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to particularly examine the variables for the detailed analysis of descriptions, qualitative paradigm can be an effective way for such small scale research (Hoque, Enamul 2016). The study was carried out in qualitative research approach. For this study, the data was collected through i) a semi-structured in-depth interview, and ii) a focus group discussion (FGD). The study explored how the participants could plan their career.

3.1. Research Instruments

In-depth interview protocol has been used to find out the breadth and range of the comments collected by the opinions of the participants on the basis of the choices in terms of career selection of MA English students (Hoque, Enamul 2016). The interviews were semi-structured with prompts and the participants of the interviews communicated both English and Bangla. Regarding the value of data collected through interviews, Glesne and Pushkin (1992) can be cited as: the potential strength of the interviews provide opportunities to experience about those stuffs which might misjudge the researchers to get alternative explanations of what is seen. The semi-structured interviews aimed at drawing the interviewee's opinions and perception. The interview was conducted with a fairly open framework which might allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They were used both to give and receive information.

Mishra (2016) has put it thus: Focus Group Discussion is conducted in the form of a small group leading by the moderator (interviewer) in a relatively loosely-structured discussion of various topics of interest. The present study was also conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to obtain information from the participants. Since the students of masters in English of this focus group are from the similar background or experiences FGD is a very suitable way of gather information. The detailed data can also be gathered through open-ended questions providing strong quotations (Marsha, 2016) The FGD was administered to discuss on their education, career planning, opportunities, and challenges. The group was consisted of 15 students studying MA (English) in a Government college. The researcher himself acted as the moderator of the discussion. The researcher placed three types of questions for discussion: (i) *Probe questions* introduced participants to the discussion topic, and made them feel more comfortable sharing their opinion with the group. Then, the researcher asked (ii) *Follow-up question* to look into further into the discussion topic, and the participants' opinions; and finally the (iii) *Exit question* was placed to ensure not to miss anything.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were selected through Simple Random Sampling method from the students studying MA in English in Government College, Comilla, Bangladesh. The participants of the study were 15 students comprising 8 males and 7 females. The participants were between 23-25 years old. All the 15 participants were invited to take part both in the interview and focus group discussion (FGD) sessions. The selection of participants was 'purposive' or 'convenience' sampling who would provide the researcher the best information (Dawson& Anderson,1993).

3.3 Data analysis

Six steps qualitative method of data analysis provide the core skills that are in many ways helpful for conducting a qualitative type of research. This type of thematic analysis of data can provide flexible and useful research tool that can present rich and detailed account of data analysis (Braun, V& Clarke,2012).The present study applied six steps of data management. *The first step* was to transcribe the interviews. *The second step* was to carefully read through all the data in order to get a general idea. In the *third step*, the researcher set a coding and categorizing system and, in *step four*, the researcher used that coding system to establish themes throughout the transcriptions. In the *Step five*, the researcher described the themes in writing. Finally, in the *step six* the data was interpreted. The data received from the interview was analysed in constant comparative method. The remarks and statements made by the participants during the different interview sessions were compared and evaluated. The same set of interview schedule was used for all the participants.

4. Findings and Discussion

The findings of the interview data was validated in three ways: *First*, the researcher recorded each interview which might allow him to return to the notes if there were any inconsistencies or questions; *Secondly*, accuracy was validated through member checking to review the researcher's interview notes; finally, the entire research process was subjected to peer-debriefing to ensure that all steps and results were stated clearly and accurately The interview schedule was designed to record the students' claims and their beliefs', and statements on their career planning after having completed their Masters in English (Hoque, Enamul. 2016).The in-depth interview was proceeded vis-à-vis in order that a rapport could be established with respondents. Most of the respondents preferred to join govt. service, only few thought it would be wise for them

to join teaching in colleges, while a negligible part of them though they would join whatever they find.

The FGD covered the discussion of choices of study subjects, career planning, job opportunities, challenges, choices of government and non-government services, corporate job offers, entrepreneurship etc. Open-ended questions were used to provide direct quotations to gather the detailed data of the respondents (Mishra, 2016). The researcher enlivened the discussion with comments and various topics of job experiences, an English-background student could pursue. Finally, the transcripts of the group discussion and the researcher’s reflections and annotations were produced to gather the fundamental data. The findings of the study are summarized in the following sections:

4.1 Present Course and Its Relevance to the Career Plan

The research participants were interviewed face to face. They responded to the semi-structured questions and expressed their opinions and beliefs about the future planning of career search. Out of total 15 participants (8 male and 7 female), 10 were found highly pleased with their own subject of study i.e. English; 2 students were found displeased and would not show any interest in the subject. The rest of 3 students remarked that they only studied the subject as a course of study; they did not have any personal likings or career plan with the subject. Among the total 15 number of participants 9 students expressed their strong passion for joining in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS); 3 students opted for private jobs like private banking and the other 2 students liked corporate jobs; and only a student desired job outside Bangladesh:

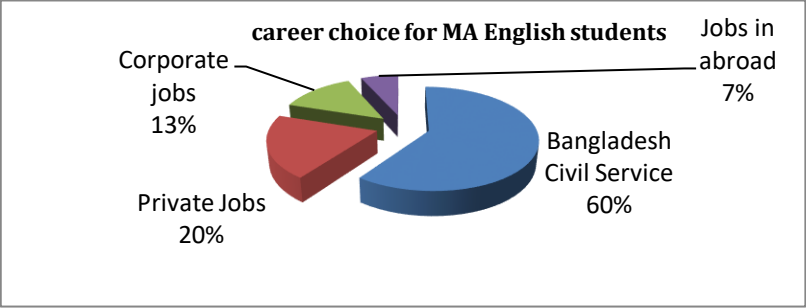


Fig.1: Pie chart showing the personal career choice of English graduates

The participants were also involved in a focus group discussion (FGD). The participants were given some probe questions to discuss on the academic education, career planning, opportunities and challenges. 15 students from the Masters of English were selected and they discussed about the questions with each other. They took part the discussion in a

very lively and positive atmosphere. 13 out of 15 students thought positively and expressed their opinion on the right implementation of their subject at the career search. 2 students remarked that they would not get a job unless they should spend money and use political power. Again at a different context, a number of 9 students strongly stated that they could tackle the barrier of getting a job if they worked hard; 4 students opined that in spite of their studying in English they might have to compete with others and they were not sure about securing a job. Other 2 students were not sure whether they would secure a job or not in spite of their graduation from English. From the FGD, it is very clear that almost all the students were highly ambitious of getting a prestigious job. All the participants believed that they would surely get a job after graduation in English. Since Bangladesh government did not restrict the subject oriented job opportunities in all sectors still there are possibilities for the English graduate to work in other job areas. It means students graduating from English are to settle in some other occupational areas in which it has no direct linkage with the subject. According to the job advertisements and circulars published in the national dailies, the following information about the career choice matching has been found.

The following table shows an interesting picture of job employment in different fields of occupation where English is not directly involved as service protocol:

| post-graduation subject | occupation | subject/occupation match factor |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| English | Teaching | similarity |
| English | Banking | dissimilarity |
| English | Administration | dissimilarity |
| English | Corporate jobs | similarity |
| English | Multinational companies | similarity, dissimilarity |

Table 1: Examples of English Graduates' choice

4.2 Career Planning with Classmates and Friends

The research participants were given the opportunity and they were encouraged to express their impartial and neutral opinion on career planning. Maximum number of the participants i.e. 12 out of 15 disclosed that they willingly shared their future career plan with other classmates and close friends. 3 of the participants did not feel like sharing the 'secret' of getting competitive jobs. The interviewee discussed the career opportunities, hierarchy of jobs, class 1, class 2 types of job, local and foreign job opportunities, range of salary etc. One very interesting aspect came out from the interview was that most of the participants were willing

to go abroad for a job provided only they were given the chance. They admitted that talking with friends and classmates about the career search opportunities positively motivated them to pursue for more job interviews. The participants believed that more discussions mean more innovative ideas which might make them optimistic and target oriented.

4.3 Possible Challenges for Career Planning

Students studying English are seen to face some challenges in coping up with the future career build-up. Private and public job sectors employment policy allow candidates to prepare with the basic subject requirements like maths, English, general knowledge and international affairs. In many cases, it is usually seen that English post-graduates are not well versed in Maths and other subjects. Moreover, many public and govt. employment agencies do not offer extra credits for English as a particular subject status. For this reason, MA English students lag behind in getting the right job status. Business studies and commerce background students are also given more preferences to enter into the banks, insurance, accounts sections of the offices to the MA English students. Bangladesh govt. has not yet recommended English as the first language status in job and employment affairs. Since govt. is prioritizing economic and technological developments of the country students of English department are categorically lagging behind in securing those high profile jobs in Ministry of Education, Finance, Economy, Planning and Development and as such. It is also true that in spite of subject mismatching in job sectors in Bangladesh, still MA English students pave their way by achieving extraordinary grades and contribute to the economic development of the country.

5. Conclusion

The job sectors, employment organizations and service points in Bangladesh remain under a colossal shift of change due to financial constraints and limitations. Due to bureaucratic complexities and high scale corruption in job sectors a huge number of students had to struggle just to find a suitable job. Moreover, the number of graduates every year is looming large in the country because of unauthorised registration of different colleges, unauthorized permission of opening Honours subject in different existing colleges and also the corruption in admission process in number of colleges. The result is a huge number of students have to fight for just one vacant position either in government or private job sectors of the country. Subject choice in the tertiary level of education has been most crucial and significant for the future career match.

The students studying MA in English are found to be relatively more privileged in securing jobs than the students of other departments.

From the above research study, it is very clear that in this present world of job hunt and career search, students need to choose the right subject at their tertiary level and also to choose the right position in a lucrative job. Students studying MA in English have got the opportunities to compete with other subject students and to choose a right career in the future. The youth should find a career path that interests and motivates them. Three phases of career planning - self exploration, career exploration and career planning and management (Haq, 2016) can also be effective way of searching for jobs. Above all, government should open more job opportunities like job fair, career centre, one stop service and walk-in interview to employ more youths to facilitate job creation market in the country. In terms of Bangladesh, employers should encourage only those candidates securing a competitive grade in tertiary level of education to select the right candidate and should not allow counterfeit candidates or those who have little or no links about the subjects demanded for the job interviews.

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Teachers' Awareness of Feedback on Fourth Year Students' Writing

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Abstract

The current study aims to explore the teachers' awareness of written feedback on the writing of fourth year undergraduate students. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews to collect data. Four teachers teaching the fourth year students of English Department at a government college in Cumilla, Bangladesh were selected for interviews. The teachers were interviewed over mobile phone due to the current world-wide Covid-19 pandemic. The interview data were transcribed and analysed thematically. The major findings of the study include- teachers are aware of the benefits of written feedback although they lack pedagogical knowledge regarding providing feedback; teachers love to provide direct corrective feedback; most of the students are not motivated to work on the feedback; students have improved their English writing skill as a result of feedback; and recurrent feedback and revision by students improves writing. However, teachers have to face some challenges which include – students' demotivation, large number of students, teachers' workload, and teachers' lack of pedagogical training.

Keywords: Feedback, Pedagogical knowledge, motivation, awareness, and undergraduate students

1. Introduction

Writing is the ability to write coherent sentences and paragraphs which is expected to be easily understood by the readers and it is considered as one of the most important and familiar tools of expressing views especially in case of passing in the examinations. It is also considered as the most difficult skill for the language learners since the learners need to have a good amount of English language knowledge about appropriate language use or specific lexicon with which they want to

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communicate to others (Tangpermpoon, 2008). Except writing in the examinations, there are many other fields where students are directly involved with writing. Writing should not be considered only a part of teaching and learning grammar and syntax that undermines the purpose of efficient writing. In EFL and ESL students' learning process, feedback plays an important role. Students can receive feedback on their linguistic errors both from oral and written response of the teachers. The researcher's experiences say that the teachers in Bangladesh higher education teach writing using the product approach teaching in which only the end product is desired for marking or grading and the students' products are usually based on the model provided by the teachers (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). In the current study, a small number of teachers use the process approach through providing written feedback with a view to developing students' English writing skill. This study provides a brief overview of the effectiveness of teachers' awareness on written feedback in students' writing.

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the introduction of communicative approach in the curriculum at secondary level from 1996, it was expected that English language learning would be easier and effective through the engagement of the students in language practices. Academic writing is often perceived as the most difficult task mainly due to learners' lack of vocabulary and grammatical competency (Giridharan & Robson, 2011). When teachers teach writing in the classrooms, it is assumed that students understand the mechanics of writing but when they write answers in the examinations, the examiners express their dissatisfaction seeing varieties of mistakes in students' writing (Hossain, 2018). Therefore, it is important to take care of the students' English writing so that they can write fluently on a topic known to them. Podder (2018) claims that teachers are sometimes seen unwilling to spend some additional time for the students' English writing skill development since the teachers have to pass busy time with teaching workload, taking tests, marking the answer scripts, and various curricular as well as co-curricular activities. On the other hand, students are much eager to make a good grade with least efforts which is one of the major challenges on the way to developing their English writing skill. The current study aims to explore the status of teachers' awareness on written feedback in fourth year students' writing at a government college in Cumilla, Bangladesh.

The study tried to explore the answers of the following questions:

- a) To what extent are the English teachers' aware of the written feedback at a government college?

- b) What kinds of feedback do the teachers provide on the fourth year students' written work in the English Department?
- c) To what extent do the fourth year students of English Department work on teachers' written feedback provided on their writing?

1.2 Rationale of the Study

Generally, traditional writing-teaching approach is followed by teachers in Bangladesh where learning grammar is emphasised and the students memorise the textbook contents without understanding and they write answers from their memory during the examinations. Teachers, in most cases, are not aware of the plagiarised answers; or they just ignore the act of plagiarism. As a result, the researcher's experiences show that the students admitted in the Department of English are weak in English writing although a small number of the students are able to communicate orally in English. Apparently, teachers are noticed to work hard to improve the writing skill of the students but it is difficult on their part to deal with 120 students admitted each year and continue until the fourth year. Although some initiatives are taken by the teachers, much improvement is not noticed. Therefore, it is important to explore how aware the teachers are about providing written feedback to students' writing; the ways teachers provide feedback on students' written work; and how the students respond to the written feedback provided by the teachers.

2. Literature Review

Hattie and Temperley (2007) describe feedback as information provided by an agent regarding some aspects of one's task performance. In writing development, feedback is a key element which truly develops writing ability. Nelson (2004) states that feedback can be consisted of praises, criticisms, requirements, explanation of aspects or summary of the writing with some instructions on the basis of writing needs. Ur (1996) describes feedback as information that is provided to the students about their (students') performances of a learning task aiming at improving their performances; the performance may be writing, speaking, reading, listening, or their sub skills such as grammar, tense, vocabulary, forms (choice of words, structures of sentences, etc.), meaning (what meaning the word, sentence, etc. provides), and so on.

Sameera, Amin, and Siddiqui (2016) conduct a mixed method study on 23 students at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). They divide the participants randomly into three groups (two experimental groups and one controlled group). The study presents that the experimental group students who received feedback on their writing made fewer mistakes and errors than the controlled group who did not receive any feedback which could help them to decide that writing feedback helps

students develop their writing accuracy. Morris (2001) suggests that effective feedback to the undergraduate students' writing can help them create opportunities of further education improving writing and thinking performances.

Zaman and Azad(2012) state that feedback can be provided in a positive or negative way. Positive feedback highlights a student's better performing areas and softly tells what is better to be done; the feedback provider talks tentative, they never become judgmental in the positive feedback. Generally, positive type of feedback is recognised as 'praise'. It may advocate the accuracy of the writing content including linguistic appropriateness (Ellis, 2009). He also alleges that negative feedback is corrective and students develop their writing through continuous efforts. Simultaneously feedback can be provided both on sentence formation and content of writing (Zaman & Azad, 2012). In writing, feedback on sentence formation covers grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and so on. In contrast, feedback on content puts emphasis on systematic organisation, ideas, and detail information.

According to Raihany (2014) feedback inspires the students for further learning through informing the outcome about what they have already learned and which areas need further efforts to improve. Cook (2013) explains that students frequently make similar mistakes several times in their writing which can be minimised through teachers' continuous feedback. Moreover, it helps the teachers to know how successfully they engage themselves in teaching as well as what they need to teach more effectively (Raihany, 2014). It signifies that feedback is essential both in developing teaching and learning process; teachers also can rethink about the teaching approaches and techniques. Ebrahim (2015) claims that traditional approach to teaching of writing skills are followed by the teachers in schools and colleges in Bangladesh. And this traditional approach to teaching of writing does not include feedback; teachers want to see the end product for marking. Although there is a little practice of feedback in the schools and in the higher education colleges, some teachers are seen to provide feedback to the students' writing. Podder (2018) claims that the teachers in Govt.

Teachers' Training College, Dhaka have started providing feedback following the process approach of writing teaching. They start feedback positively with some praising words for students' initial efforts. Students are allowed there to receive feedback in a face to face meeting about their mistakes and errors on subject-verb-agreement, choosing suitable words, use of tense, organisation and content, rephrasing of sentence, and so on. The students edit their writing according to the teachers' comments and guidance and it happens again and again until the writing is error-free.

3. Research Design

The current research is a qualitative study. In order to find answers to research questions, qualitative research methodology was used as through qualitative methods, it is possible to dig deep into the research problem (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In order to investigate into the research problem, the researcher interviewed four practising English teachers of a government college in Cumilla, Bangladesh. Besides, it was initially planned to analyse the four teachers' written feedback on six students' assignments. But due to pandemic COVID-19 and world-wide lockdown situation, analysing written feedback was not possible.

3.1 Data Analysis

In order to collect data, four teacher participants who teach the 4th year undergraduate students of English Department were selected for in-depth interview. Although it was initially planned to organise face to face interview, the four teachers were interviewed over phone due to the world-wide lockdown situation. The researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule followed by probing questions so that the respondents were not restricted from developing issues during the interview. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed. During the transcription and the recurrent reading of the text (transcription), the major themes came to the surface. Similar meaning giving data were coded in particular ink and then the similar coded data were categorised together. Different colour was used to mark the different themes. Then the similar coded data were put together under the themes of the research questions. Then the researcher tried to find links between the codes. Finally, the findings were interpreted through reasoning and relating to the current literature; that is, the researcher tried to say what the data provided by the participants meant.

4. Findings and Discussion

The data collected from different sources have been triangulated and the findings of the study through data analysis are presented in the following sections relating to the current literature.

4.1 Teachers' Awareness of Written Feedback

Before going to explore the awareness of the teachers about written feedback on students' writing, it seems wise to tell about the syllabus for the fourth year students of English Department under National University. In fourth year English, the syllabus designed by National University, Bangladesh is literature focused. Apart from that, there are some literary compositions (e.g. critical writing, evaluation of poem, writing explanations, analysing the stories and essays, and writing summary). The students have to sit for two in-courses and one test before

the final examinations which are conducted by the National University. All the four teacher participants claim that they examine the answer scripts of the in-courses and the test examinations and provide feedback on students' writing errors focusing the content and language, organisation and format of writing, lexical range, grammatical accuracy, quality of argument, and so on. Furthermore, the teachers claim that they encourage the students to start creative writing through the selection of social and educational issues. Although the number is small, some students are motivated to practise creative writing and they are getting feedback from their teachers. It is clear from the interviews of the teachers that they have some level of awareness regarding the corrective feedback on students' writing.

It is revealed from the interviews that the teachers in the current study have different experiences and different level of awareness. In the interview sessions, T1 articulates by saying:

Every writer is different in his style. As a teacher, I have to understand the learning needs of them. I am very much aware of my responsibility and I always try to provide them written corrective feedback on the margin or in between lines. Sometimes I provide them direct corrective comments and sometimes indirect, focused, unfocused, and metalinguistic comments. Of course, the way is positive as I think negative feedback may discourage the students to further writing.

Generally a good writing requires several feedback and revision which make it a quality product. Therefore, a good communication is also required between the teachers and students. Raihany (2014) alleges that teachers' written feedback to students' writing may greatly affect their next performances. Therefore, it is very important how the teachers respond to students' written task. T3 states the nature of her feedback in the following way:

First of all, I tell the students to read numerous articles, books, journals etc. from different sources related to the selected topic for generating ideas and information and to see the writing style of the writers. If the draft is not written adequately, I tell them to add more information until my expectation is met. I also guide them to choose suitable words, phrases and develop the language of their writing.

T3 provides feedback through the direct corrective method as most of the students are weak in English. On the other hand, T2 states two way policies in his feedback. He divides the students into two categories considering their learning needs. He maintains:

Those who are weak students have to focus on grammar (whether the sentence has been written correctly, spelling accuracy, correct

use of word and so on) following direct corrective method. On the other hand, those who are little bit advanced students have to focus on coherence and cohesion of the content, whether the sentences are written logically or out of context, and organisation of the paragraph.

Although Ebrahim (2015) claims that teachers in Bangladesh follow traditional writing-teaching approach in schools and colleges and most of the teachers do not wish to spend additional time in providing feedback for students' writing development, the data stated above show that the participants in the current study are aware of the impact of written feedback in the development of students' writing skill.

4.2 Strategies Teachers Employed in Providing Feedback

In our educational institutions, multi-level students are enrolled in the same classroom and their learning needs and learning strategies are different. However, it is learnt from the interviews that all the teachers start the feedback with some praising words for reinforcement; provide an outline or model as an example; and the teachers are aware of individual student's needs. T1 provides feedback using some short symbols. He articulates:

To provide feedback to students' written task, I use different symbols and colours. Firstly, I tell them what the symbols and colours mean. Generally I write Gr (correct the grammar), T (use the right tense), CW (choose the appropriate word), RS (reconstruct the sentence), CI (change the idea) and so on.

T1 claims that he also gives them instructions how to rephrase the sentences and how to make connection with the previous sentences and paragraph or the following paragraphs. The teachers not only provide written feedback but also give them mental supports to continue their writing that builds fearless relationship between the teachers and students. T4 asserts in the interview:

Nowadays, we, the teachers, have become more systematic. I always provide feedback using kind words and encourage them in a friendly manner to develop their English writing skill because we understand the students' problems and learning needs.

In the learning process, effective written feedback facilitates the students to construct new ideas. Rodriguez and Solis (2013) claimed that sometimes there were mismatches between the teachers' guidance and the students' understanding in revising the writing task. That is why; teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and then provide realistic suggestions for their better perception. In this regard, T3 alleges that sometimes her students do not understand some of the comments; and

they face problem in revising the task. For example, T3 claims, “If I write ‘rephrase the sentence’, in most cases, students are not sure what to write or how to rephrase.” T3 alleges:

At that time, I invite them to come to my sitting room individually and I explain the assigned task or action for revising the writing. Sometimes I give examples for their understanding. I motivate them to work hard on the assigned task and try to remove their fear through friendly behavior. I have found this friendly behavior motivates the students and make them confident to work hard.

T2 claims that he does not usually make long comments; he makes comments in brief such as Gr for grammar, T for tense, WC for choice of words, etc. The usual comments all the four teachers (T1, T2, T3, & T4) make include – tense or T; rephrase the sentence; this section is contradictory to section/paragraph number 1/2/3, etc; use a suitable synonym or WC; person and number; give reasons why you are saying this; do not confirm anything, speak tentatively; your conclusion has not summarised the main points; and so on. Of course, all the four teachers employ different kinds of feedback strategies. The data stated above show that all the four English teachers provide written feedback on students’ writing. Although teachers do not have any pedagogical training on feedback, undoubtedly, it is a commendable practice of the teachers and the students.

4.3 Students’ Response to Written Feedback

The teachers claim that most of the students become happy if they receive clear feedback from the teachers and the students promptly start the revision. T2 asserts, “Majority of the students become happy after getting feedback when it is sympathetic and easier to understand”. He claims:

When I invite them individually in my office they receive the feedback interestingly as they can ask me questions to make their understanding clear but when I provide feedback to an individual in front of a group, the individual student feel uneasy.

T1 alleges that a small number of students are enthusiastic about developing their English writing skill; they very often come to the feedback provider for clarification. T1 maintains, “I provide detail feedback so that students can understand easily; short and unclear feedback is not enough I think”. T4 agrees that direct corrective feedback method is appreciated by the students and the students promptly work on feedback. He further asserts that sometimes students are seen bored while

they receive indirect or unfocused feedback. He finds different type of responses from the students. He (T4) claims:

Some students become annoyed when there are some errors identified but only a small number of motivated students seek this opportunity to develop their writing ability and they work hard in revising the writing based on the teachers' guidance. These kinds of motivated students repeatedly come to the teachers for further feedback and clarifications on the teachers' feedback.

It is clear from the above data that students offer mixed kinds of responses to the teachers' written feedback on their writing. Even though some students like direct corrective feedback, many others do not like to have any feedback and to work in developing the writing. If teachers do not provide detailed feedback and explain the errors and mistakes adequately, most students do not understand what they have been wanted to do. But in Bangladesh, most students do not love even clear and detailed feedback on their writing. This happens probably because many Bangladeshi students want to gain academic certificate only; they do not bother about what they have learnt; certificate is their main target; or, they may not like feedback as memorising answers is a long practised-culture of most of the students.

4.4 Impact of Written Feedback on Students

Teachers' written feedback is regarded as a pedagogical tool of students' writing development (Raihany, 2014). Effective written feedback is not only a statement of what is correct or incorrect but it identifies the areas where students need improvement. The teachers (T1, T2, T3, & T4) allege that after receiving teachers' feedback, students revise their writing following the guidelines; employ proper techniques and features in revising; become aware of mistakes and errors; use appropriate grammar and mechanics; and thus improve their learning. T2 finds noticeable development among some students in the meantime. He (T2) claims:

Some students have developed their writing through receiving recurrent feedback and doing edits. A good number of them published several articles in the different English dailies. They have improved in reducing grammatical mistakes, choosing suitable words, organising the writing, etc.

T1 states that since he encourages the students and behaves friendly, they have become motivated. He thinks, motivation is the single thing which can change the entire learning situation. They also have become confident by removing fear, shyness, and hesitation which is a positive indication of achieving English writing skill. He (T1) continues:

After receiving feedback, the students have become more interactive with the teachers; developed communication skill; expert in using ICT; and connected with teachers through social media. Even in the corona epidemic, they communicate with us and receive feedback using online.

T4 also mentions the development he notices in students' academic result. Students pass the examinations with better grades than they did in the previous years which is an indication of their writing skill development. He (T4) articulates by saying:

In the previous years, the students of fourth year of English department were not that good in writing. Students have started to do better since the teachers started giving them feedback. Two of the students obtained first class this year although it is difficult to obtain first class in English Literature.

The presented data show that teachers' written feedback greatly influences the students' writing improvement as well as develops the teachers' professionalism. This kind of written feedback and students' revision creates an academic environment in the English Department. Sameera et al. (2016) and Jupri (2014) also find positive effects of written feedback both on students and the feedback providers.

4.5 The Ways Students Develop their Writing

It has been revealed from the interviews with the teachers that many students improved their English writing skill and achieved better grades in the final examinations. It would be interesting to learn how the students have been able to develop their writing skill. Teachers in the interviews reveal that the education base of the rural students is weak and many of them have special weaknesses in English as a Foreign Language. That is why the students have to go through a longer process for developing their writing skill. T2 asserts:

When the students are admitted into English Department, the base of their English is found very weak. We have to start with providing feedback on spelling and sentence construction. After getting written feedback, a small number of students revise their writing. They correct the identified errors and submit it to the teachers.

T2 further asserts that the teachers check the edited writing again and provide further feedback. The concerned student again revises the writing and submits it to the teachers. This process of providing feedback and recurrent revision continues until the writing becomes almost flawless. Zaman and Azad (2012) claim that teachers' written feedback is considered as the most effective way but students need to be actively

sincere in revising their writing based on the feedback. T1 confesses in the interview session that there are few students who are really encouraged. They come to me again and again and show me their writing to make some comments. When there are some comments in their written draft, they make the perception clear through asking questions. T3 also maintains the similar practice in developing students' English writing. She claims that the recurrent feedback begins and it continues in a cyclic order and this is the way students improve their English writing skill. She alleges:

Students select a topic, then talk to me and their peers in order to generate ideas. Then write a draft and come to me again. After preliminary comments, go back and develop the write-up.

T3 further claims that all the students who go through the mentioned process, must improve their English writing skill. The above data show that recurrent feedback and revision is the best way to develop students' English writing skill. However, the big challenge in the government colleges is engaging the students in the feedback and revision process because the number of students is big and the number of teachers is small.

4.6 Challenges Teachers Face in Providing Written Feedback

Written feedback to students' writing creates a favorable teaching environment where teachers have to spend a considerable amount of time in identifying errors and giving guidance (Zaman& Azad, 2012). As the current study is at a rural government college in Cumilla, Bangladesh, teachers here face numerous challenges to provide feedback on students' writing. T1 alleges that there are different classes of students who have different attitude. Sometimes they cannot be socialised with each other. He has to accommodate all of them and give them a sense of equality. Their lack of English skill, lack of mutual understanding, lack of confidence, shyness, and fear impede in the way of effective learning.

T2 states, there are a large number of students in English department of the college. Only four teachers have to maintain the first year to fourth year English classes. As a result, they sometimes fail to provide feedback to all of the fourth year students in time. He also finds an illegal practice of the students. He claims:

Managing the huge workload, it is difficult to provide written feedback to students' writing. Another thing is that when the students write assignment, some students directly copy the content from different sources. We have no plagiarism checker (e.g. Turnitin, plagscan, quetext). Therefore, it becomes difficult to identify whether the assignment is written by the student or he/she has copied from internet, books or some other sources.

During the interview session, T4 mentions that some students' residence is far away from the college. In some cases, they have to come to college on foot for insufficient financial support. So, it is difficult for the teachers to keep them in touch always and most of the days they remain absent from the classroom. This apathetic attitude of the students limits their vision and learning opportunity (Ebrahim, 2015).

T3 asserts, since writing development is a challenging task, students' eagerness to learn can make the teachers dynamic to provide them well-timed feedback. But some students are noticed to pay no attention to written feedback and misuse the teachers' guidance (Jupri, 2014). The four participants have identified the challenges to providing feedback on students' writing. However, there are some other challenges which include lack of training of teachers and the small number of teachers in comparison with the number of students. It is really difficult on the part of the teachers to provide written feedback on the writing of a big number of students. The college authority should recruit more English teachers for the Department of English and arrange training for them.

5. Conclusion

The study was conducted to investigate the teachers' awareness of written feedback on students' English writing as written feedback plays a vital role in developing students writing skill (Rodriguez and Solis, 2013). The outcome from the study reveals positive effect in regard to providing written feedback. It also manifests that students find written feedback helpful for developing their writing skill. If the findings and the recommendations of the study are positively considered, written feedback and English writing situation must improve in the college.

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Fusion of Materials for Popularizing Science in Schools

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Mirza Mohammad Didarul Anam²

Abstract

This experimental study intended to supply appropriate science materials prepared in Bangla and pilot their effectiveness in secondary schools. Those science materials were integrated in the daily lesson plans focusing participatory approaches in four secondary schools of Dhaka division including urban and remote areas. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the effectiveness of fusion of materials in science teaching and learning and to observe to what extent teachers internalized science researchers suggested pedagogies and exploited the benefits of science materials supplied. The study employed a mixed method design and used observation and questionnaire survey methods to collect data after piloting the fusion science materials. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and the quantitative data were analysed statistically. The findings revealed that- the teachers successfully used the materials to make science teaching-learning effective; and students whole-heartedly took part in the lessons.

Keywords: Fusion materials, TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), classroom, teaching-learning, participation.

1. Introduction

SDG target-4 puts emphasis on the quality of education and for ensuring the continuous progress in quality. The education and development of any country are inseparably interrelated. Bangladesh is one of the fastest developing countries in the world (Headey et al., 2015). In keeping consistencies with developed countries, Bangladesh need to put emphasis on ensuring the basic needs of its citizens especially quality education because it is one of the most important issues that is believed to lead Bangladesh to be a developed country. It is observed in developing countries like Bangladesh that the students are usually study for passing examinations rather than gathering knowledge. The main reason behind this is considered the un-enjoyable, one-way, and teacher-centered teaching. One-way teaching does not have opportunity for flourishing

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creative thinking skill of students. In contrast, the students are used to memorize some selective items to pass the examinations. The goal of education is to bring the people out of ignorance; enabling people to be able to differentiate between the right and wrong. Moreover, education is required for developing oneself. Therefore, the necessity was felt to change this education system where students would learn through engaging themselves in different activities. Science education has importance to its people of a country because it makes students curious and enables them to discover new things (Das et al, 2014). However, the number of students choosing science is decreasing which is another alarming issue in Bangladesh. It has been seen that the number of students in science discipline is gradually decreasing which is 22% in secondary level and 17% in higher secondary level (ProthomAlo, April 22, 2014). There are so many significant reasons behind this scenario. As for instance it can be said that many contents of textbook require hands on activities to learn science properly but lack of appropriate teaching tools fail to rouse and sustain students' attention in learning process. Moreover, the followed teaching style is traditional lecture method which fails to involve students in the learning process although curriculum suggests hands-on labs and experiments in science teaching (Das et al, 2014).

Fusion is the process or result of joining two or more things together to form a single entity (<https://bit.ly/2FzhxNT>). The fusion of materials work as supporting tools for learning science. The materials intentionally shift instruction to a learner-centered model replacing traditional lecture based instruction. It helps to explores topics in greater depth and creates meaningful learning opportunities, while educational technologies such as online videos are used to 'deliver content' outside of the classroom. For fusion of materials the 'content delivery' may take a variety of forms. Often, video lessons prepared by the teacher or third parties are used to deliver content, although online collaborative discussions, digital research, and text readings may be used (Li, 2017).

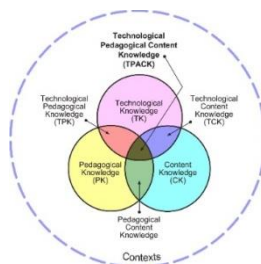


Fig. 1: TPACK: Source://bit.ly/2Futykj

The figure-1 explains that the TPACK framework focuses on teachers' deeper understandings of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge into teaching. Most importantly, TPACK is an emergent form of

knowledge that goes beyond knowledge of content, pedagogy, and technology taken individually but rather exists in a dynamic transactional relationship (Koehler et. al., 2014).

In this study, researchers intended to find the ways to strengthen the science education especially for secondary education in Bangladesh because science teaching faces lots of challenges in developing countries like Bangladesh. To meet successfully the 21st century challenges, it is needed to build a skilled generation whereby science can play more significant role than other subjects. So, our education system needs to be changed and should take necessary steps to popular science among the students together with enjoyable learning. There is a proverb saying “A stitch in time saves nine”. Therefore, it is high time to take necessary steps to collect the flaws in our education system otherwise it will be delayed.

1.1 Research Questions

- a. How did the teachers use the provided fusion materials in teaching science effectively?
- b. How effective was the fusion materials in teaching science?
- c. How did the students use the fusion materials to engage themselves in the learning process?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are so many initiatives taken by government of Bangladesh for empowering science teachers through various projects but the teachers are not encouraged expectedly to teach science learning by doing. Teachers are not used to demonstrate required experiments in science teaching-learning activities. In contrast, the science learning process does not focus scientific inquiry and rational thinking, it does not able to analyse cause-effect relationships but encourages rote learning. Furthermore, there are lot of digital contents developed as teaching tools in different grades and subjects focusing participatory approach but still science is taught through traditional lecture method rather than hands on activities. In addition to this, a lot of materials for science subject are available on YouTube. In fact, these have been developed by educationalists, whereas the teachers are dependent on lecture methods especially in teaching science (Babu, 2016). In contrast, contents in Bangla for teaching science directly linked to NCTB curriculum for grade VI are very limited. However, the limited number of contents those are available in different sources made only for teachers’ practice where the students are overlooked. Therefore, it is an urgent need for customizing materials in Bangla to make it accessible both for teachers and students. In this study, it was led the way for promoting science material in Bangla language of grade VI. These were basically a combination of text, graphics, audio and

video content adapted with different types of activities following the local curriculum.

The materials are structured as supporting tools focusing student centered approach for better understanding and practicing science. The contents are easily accessible for students and teachers which have clearly categorized according to the chapter and unit. Even teachers with weak English and for whom the Internet is largely inaccessible can readily locate the content for their lesson and be assisted to use it in an appropriate way. In that way, along with the locally available science materials, teachers can bring ICT into the classroom; the use of ICT also enhances the quality of teaching by encouraging and supporting participatory approaches. The materials are also guided together with a lesson plan for teachers to integrate these through participatory approaches. As the trial was involved with continuous mentoring and monitoring of teachers, it was not only identified potential pitfalls but also point to possible solutions. As follows it was pave the way for a wider scale roll-out of content in the future. In that way the study will recommend the underlying pedagogy for future classroom.

1.3 Scope

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is going on and the Education 4.0 version is calling us. In this era, Bangladesh also can't ignore the technology based teaching learning system. Science learning is mainly based on hands on activities that make students for understanding real world which should be taught in diverse mode rather than lecture. Preparing teacher led contents according to curriculum, need to integrate technology and pedagogy for successful deliver in class. It ensures the involvement of students in the class and makes science learning more enjoyable with deeper understanding. There was another area where the study focused for teachers' readiness to adopt improved materials as teaching-learning tools. It was also focused how the students create learning opportunity without having computer or laptop or any other devices or how they could use the contents in limited scope of using technology. In addition, this study focused whether the students more involve through problem solving strategies in learning science. Moreover, a little attempt has been taken so that the teachers can make them more confident to develop fusion materials and utilize properly in their classroom activities. The following stakeholders mainly get the benefit from this study-

- Teachers and students of grade VI for science.
- Teacher Educators working in the area of science.
- Parents can reduced educational expanses of their children.

2. Review of Literature

Chowdhury (2009) reports that the status of science teaching in school and college in Bangladesh is not satisfactory. In the past, science subjects were the most sought-after subjects at secondary, college, and university levels in the country. Science subjects have been losing its appeal in an alarming way. Researcher added more that the qualified teachers and properly equipped laboratories are few and far between and could hardly be found in most of the schools. The traditional teaching science and teachers cannot encourage the serious and meritorious students to take up science for their higher studies. As a result, enrollment in secondary and postsecondary science has steadily fallen over the last 10 years. In her study she also has explained the reason of decreasing popularity of science education in Bangladesh. It is clear that students have lost the attraction and interest on science education. She also recommended that problem-solving-oriented evaluations should be introduced to encourage creativity over memorization and let science and technology be the main vehicle for socio-economic development of the teeming millions of the world. Fusion of science materials approach also supports her recommendation.

Chandan (2017) presented whether the students are not opting science education in Bangladesh in his investigative article. Researcher stated on the basis of expert opinion that the reason behind the students of Bangladesh apathy towards science and the failure of interested students to continue in science lies in the textbooks and teaching-learning environment of our educational institutions. He found that Bangladesh Freedom Foundation, a non-governmental organization, conducted a study in 2012 among 140 students of grade VIII. As many as 73 percent of those students stated that they wanted to study science after passing grade VIII (students have to choose either science or business or humanities in Bangla-medium schools). However, less than 20 percent finally chose science in grade IX. He quoted the BANBEIS report published in 2015 and stated that the number of students studying science in secondary level reduced at a rate of 48 percent from 1993 to 2015. The rate was 36 percent at the higher secondary level between 1995 and 2015. However, there was no other attempt for popularizing science education to increase the rate of enrolment. According to the National Science and Technology Policy (2011) institution should be involved in the promotion of innovative production and marketing systems in public and private sectors involving innovative technologies, products, processes, services. In this study, researchers tried to do something innovative approach with the help of technology.

3. Research Design

This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Therefore, the study followed mixed method research design whereby focused experimental and descriptive research approaches. However, the schools were selected purposively in consideration with time, location, transportation and also willingness of school authorities. Teachers' skill and support were considered during selection of sample schools because the particular teachers had to play key role to implement the fusion materials in classroom. It was also considered that the schools those had lack of adequate facilities for teaching science. Grade VI science classroom was selected for experiment of fusion materials. Therefore, the students of grade VI were nominated and interviewed for collecting data.

3.1 Sample Size

The fusion materials have experimented in four schools from different districts of Dhaka division. Before selection of schools, researchers were contacted with the authorities of ten schools. Finally, four schools were chosen to apply the fusion materials and observe the effectiveness on students' learning. Similarly, there were 200 students (50 in each school) were given SD cards as respondents for the study. However, 40 (10x4) students were randomly interviewed through semi-structured questionnaire for assessing the effectiveness and usability of fusion materials.

3.2 Instrument for quantitative data

Data have been collected once from every selected respondent through a semi-structured questionnaire. There was five point Likert's scale with 10 questions included in questionnaire. Collected data have been processed and presented with percentage and graphs.

3.3. School Monitoring Tool

A fusion classroom observation schedule was developed for monitoring the accuracy of using fusion materials in classroom practice. The tools were focused whether the materials being used to engage students in learning. The teachers' feedback against students' requirements and possible problems faced by teachers in implementation process are also focused in observation schedule.

3.4 Activities Accomplished

To run and monitor this anticipated impact, the following activities were followed:

There were thirty video contents for experiments including animation, text, sounds following the textbook developed by skilled science teachers. The developers had deeper understanding on the integration of technology, pedagogy and content knowledge (TPACK). They had selected thirty practical related lessons which were not easy to understand and possible for students to solve inside the classroom. The developed contents were special enough for their kinds. In some cases, developers redesigned and reshaped real materials for experiment and took video snap of them. The developed contents had been supervised by the researchers for editing in two consecutive meetings with help of developers.

The study had an aims to involve community. Therefore, the school authorities especially head teachers and SMC chairman were asked to inform parents of grade VI for participating on a day long workshop in school campus because the parents had a significant role to permit the use of digital device to their children. There were four motivational parents meetings (one in each school) arranged at the first visit to inform about the responsibilities what they had to do for their children and let them use of fusion material. They all appreciated this innovative study and ensured their cooperation by providing smart phone to the kids for using fusion materials. It was satisfactory that most of the parents were female who actually concerned about their children.

After parents meeting all of the materials had supplied to learners through SD cards (50 for each school) so that they could inform the topics before entering class and lively participated in the classroom. The parents were asked to allow their child to use the materials in their device e.g. smart phone, laptop or desktop. One orientation program had been arranged for science teachers, head teacher and SMC chairman from selected schools. Similarly, science teachers and head teacher were asked to join in two teacher training workshops. In workshops, researchers presented the contents and teachers' guidelines so that the science teachers of those schools could deliver lessons according to lesson plans. Out of two workshops, first one had been arranged before starting the experiment of fusion materials and another workshop was done after first observation of classroom teaching-learning activities to share the experience and to overcome the weakness.

As part of the Demonstration and Lesson Planning Workshop, teachers worked in groups to review and critique the lesson plans produced and these responses were recorded in manual and pictorial. Following the training workshops, it was observed grade VI classes of science teacher selected for the study using the classroom observation checklist. The researchers had visited each school three times during the three months trial period for monitoring and mentoring the fusion classroom activities

and its effects on their learning. Following each visit the researchers filled a Visiting Report for data analysis.

4. Findings and Interpretation

The major findings of the study have been presented and discussed below in the following sections:

4.1 Teachers Successfully Used Fusion Materials

The fusion materials were initiated in classroom teaching to know the effectiveness of the materials. It was also observed the level of students' engagement in lesson and was monitored the teachers' acceptance to incorporate the content in teaching learning activities. Moreover, it was assessed whether the classroom was participated through fusion materials. During the very first visits after initiating of fusion materials, it was observed that there were many gaps in implementation process of classroom activities. For effective engagement of students in lesson, teachers were given lesson plans with proper instruction for incorporating materials but they did not go through unlikely they imposed lecture in class. In some cases, the required tasks or activities like group work or pair work were absent in the classroom activities accordingly the needs of contents. Moreover, students were silent in many respects whereas the teacher provided all answers without asking questions whether the students could answer or not. It was also found that there were some shortages of real materials that could be used effectively for learning completion. Somewhere lessons had been done without following lesson related activities and evaluation. Even the instructions for home work were not given properly. After finding these gaps, the research team organized a follow up training session for science teachers and head of institution of all sample schools.

During the second and third visits in fusion classrooms, it was found that the teachers were gradually made them skilled to manage the classroom activities following the lesson plan given in fusion materials. They made classrooms friendly in using the materials whereby students were more focused in lessons. Different types of activities were followed by the teachers in the fusion classes according to given lesson plan for ensuring the participation of students. The scope of using other real materials also mentioned in the lesson plans. Moreover, teachers delivered some other task at the group work whether the learners were sure about the accomplishment of lesson. Students were asked to find out the answers of provided task and they responded lively in the class. Formative assessments of related lessons were directed and instructions for home work were given accordingly. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teachers used the fusion materials in classroom activities effectively for

enhancing students learning. Finally, students are participated in classroom activities and learn lessons successfully with the use of fusion materials.

4.2 Fusion Materials are Effective in Teaching Science

Fusion Materials Make Science Easy-

The fusion materials were prepared following the science textbook of grade VI and it was administered on grade VI classrooms. The provided science materials completely covered the science subject which made better experience of learning for students. Students were asked whether the fusion materials are beneficial to the learning process of students.

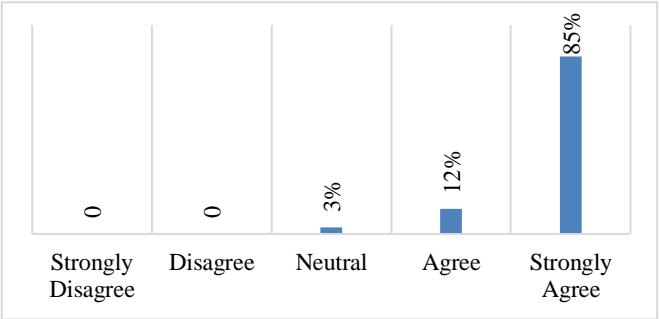


Fig. 2: Science Subjects Become Easy

Figure-2 demonstrates that 85% of the respondents strongly agreed that the teaching science became easy after using these materials whereas 12% of the respondents agreed with this statement and none of the students found those who disagreed. The results expose the positive impact of fusion materials in teaching science. During the observation it was found that the materials made learning easy and students were encouraged to participate in different activities then past.

Fusion Materials Increase Interest of Students-

The figure-3 shows that 78% of respondents have increased their interest on learning science while 12.50% of respondents agreed that science became an interesting subject to them after using fusion materials.

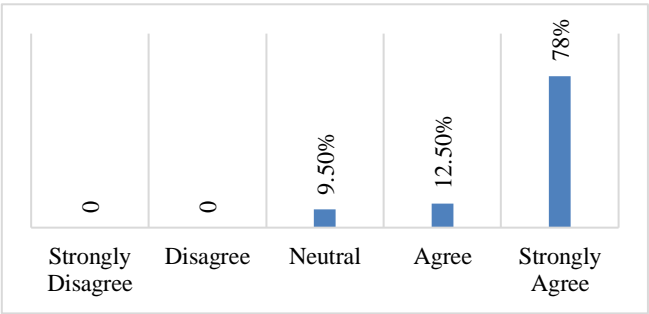


Fig. 3: Increase interest on doing things practically

The fusion materials engaged students in classroom activities more than earlier lecture based on classroom teaching-learning process whereby students made clear sense of accomplishment through active learning. Therefore, it can be said that the fusion materials have enormous effectiveness in teaching-learning arena which may help deepen learning for students.

Fusion Materials Increase Self-dependency on Learning Process-

Student becomes self-dependent in learning to solve problems and makes decisions easily that leads learner to create something new.

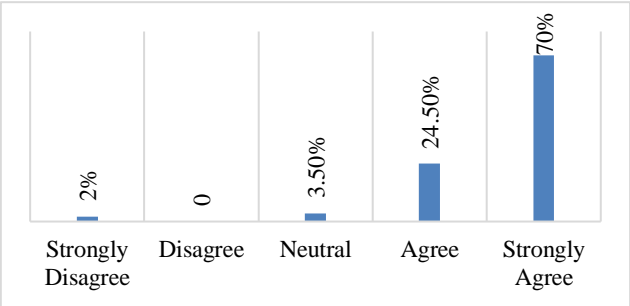


Fig. 4: Reducing dependency on private tutors and guidebooks

The figure-4 shows that 70% of respondents strongly agreed that the fusion materials made them self-dependent than earlier as well as reduced the dependency on private tutor and guide books after using innovative materials. The finding suggests that more use of fusion materials in home and classroom teaching-learning environments students are getting engage successfully in learning science and decrease remarkably the dependency on private tutors or guide books.

Fusion Materials Help to Understand Difficult Topics

The figure-5 states that the lessons which had been developed and

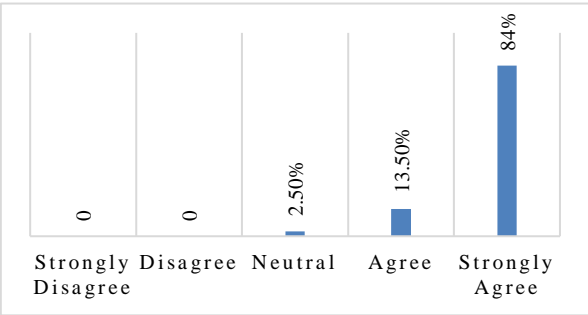


Fig. 5: Quite easy to understand difficult topic

followed TPACK model, were easy to understand the contents. The students were given the materials through mobile device supported SD card and were instructed to read the topics before entering the class so that they could follow the fusion materials with teachers. This process helped students to cope easily in teaching-learning process performed in classroom by teacher. There were 84% of students strongly supported and 16% agreed that the fusion materials helped their understanding process through effective collaboration and made them efficient learner by encouraging individual learning at home.

Fusion materials improve students’ results

The figure-6 reveals that 97% of students improved their results after using fusion materials while 81% strongly agreed and 16% went

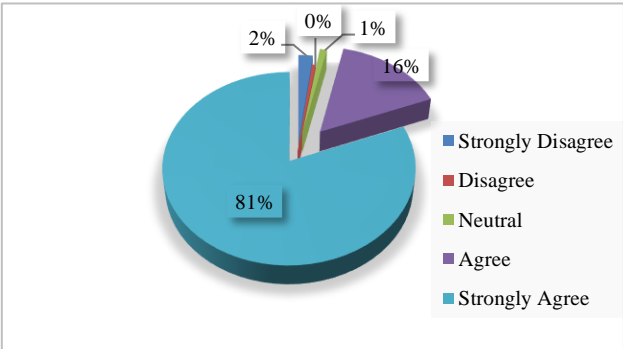


Fig. 6: Students’ Results are better than before

through the statement. Students also stated that they had gotten benefits in their study of using fusion materials. In contrast, a few of the students differently thought about improving the results. Despite have some weakness, it can be said that the fusion materials have significant effect of overall teaching-learning activities.

4.3 Fusion Materials Engage Learners in Learning

Fusion Materials Engage Students in Question-Answering Process-

The question-answer strategy in teaching is the most common form of interaction between teachers and students. By questioning, teachers can easily identify the gaps in knowledge and understanding of learner. Conversely, students have gradually habituated with asking specific and relevant questions on lesson through fusion materials. In this way fusion classroom transforms participatory and student-centered approach replacing traditional lecture based instruction.

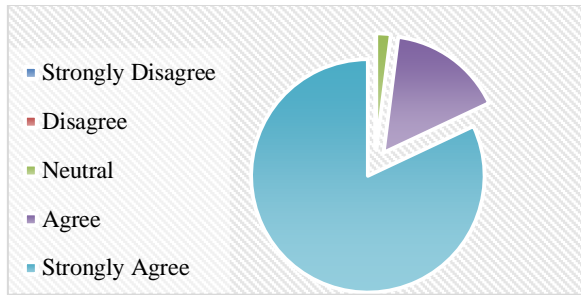


Fig. 7: Fusion Materials Create Opportunity for Students to Ask Questions

The figure-7 illustrates that the students (82%) were comfortable in asking critical questions and participated in discussion comparatively more than earlier lecture based classroom. It was possible because they were acquainted with the topic by fusion materials before entering the class. The spontaneous activities performed in session make the students confident to think critically.

Whereas, fusion materials were going through several questions and task to complete the lesson because the materials required positive answers in every step to proceed to next stage. The process encouraged the learner to ask their own questions on current content in teaching-learning arena. Therefore, the fusion materials motivated learners in lively participation of classroom activities.

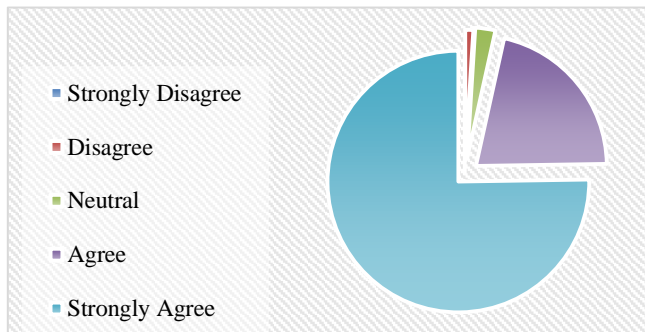


Fig. 8: Students Get Answers from Fusion Materials

The above figure-8 reveals that 76% of students agreed strongly as they found their answers from the fusion materials in class or at home. Similarly, 21.50% of respondents agreed that they learnt their expected answers from fusion materials in learning process. In contrast, there were a few students who did not agree with the statement. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fusion materials have significant effect to stimulate students about asking questions in teaching-learning activities and the process inspires them to transform their learning other classes as well.

Fusion Materials Ensure Enjoyable Learning-

The fusion materials were developed aligned with technology, pedagogy and content knowledge (TPACK) following the textbook. The supplied materials helped teachers to conduct class with participatory approach following the guidelines inherent in materials. Students were encouraged to participate in discussion, to engage in different kinds of activities such as individual work, group work and question-answer session with more interest.

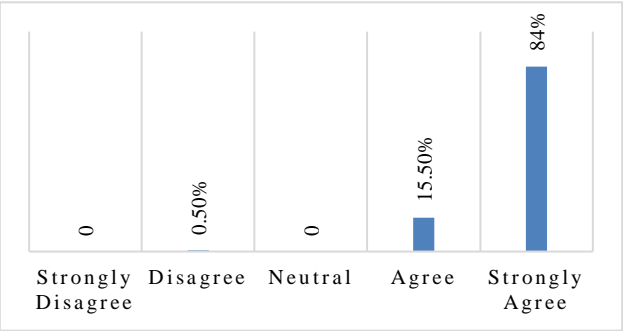


Fig. 9: Class Activities Become More Enjoyable

The figure-9 exposes that 84% of respondents strongly agreed that fusion materials made the classroom more enjoyable and effective rather than memorization of lesson in traditional classroom teaching-learning process.

Timely Ended Class-

The lessons were prepared by several types of questions and activities with time limitation. Time had been set in every segment of a lesson to accomplish the task in fixed time. This process makes learner efficient enough to do the task timely at home or schools.

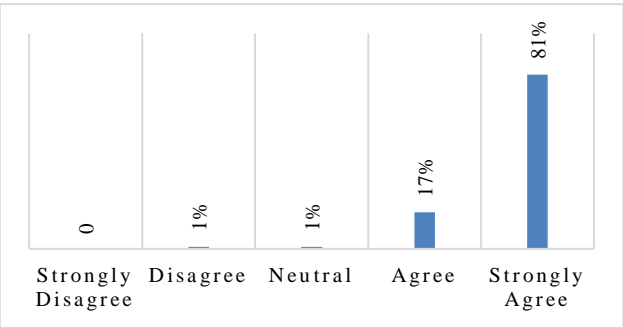


Fig. 10: Timely Ended Class

The findings from figure-10 demonstrate that the utmost percent (97%) of students had finished the lesson in time and they actively joined in the classroom. The materials worked as teaching assistant which helped

teachers to accomplish the different segment of activities in time. The innovative activities were set regarding students' age, capacity and time schedule of class with relevant question answer session. The teachers could easily manage the sessions in time with great participation of students.

5. Recommendations

- According to results of the intervention, it is understood that fusion materials in huge number are important for effective science teaching. Therefore, this study fully recommended that the number of fusion materials should be increased.
- NCTB can produce fusion materials and distribute through various channels as the NCTB is the apex body in Bangladesh for doing this.
- Each lesson should have well-defined guidelines or lesson plan for teachers to deliver the lesson in classroom as this is new concept for our teachers. Teachers can be sensitized about the concept of using fusion materials.
- Fusion materials should be used alongside other teaching aids such as real objects and laboratory work.
- National teachers' portal (Shikkhok Batayan) and students' portal (Konnect) can prepare and upload the fusion materials for publicizing among the teachers and students.
- Teacher training program can be arranged for science teachers for producing and implementing fusion materials in classroom instruction.
- A mobile app can be developed for easy access for the students. Moreover, offline app also helps students who do not have access to the Internet.

6. Conclusion

Innovative approach in education is crucial for 21st century learners because they have fascination to experiment the different ways of learning through the use of new technologies. Students would like to incorporate the technologies for learning science. So, teachers should be prepared to utilize technology in education. By applying fusion materials, students and teachers get more time to exercise participatory teaching-learning method in the classroom. This can increase students' potentiality and creativity while teachers become more innovative in their lessons. Science can be popularized through the use of fusion materials in order to build a prosperous Bangladesh. We should prepare our children to cope with global challenges by 2030 as the workforce of sustainable development.

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Group Works in English Language Classrooms: A Study in a Non-government College in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The objective of the current study was to find out the effectiveness of group work in English language classrooms to improve English writing skill of 11th grade students. Mixed-method genre of research was used to collect data. The researcher has conducted a survey with 50 students of 11th grade through a questionnaire having both close and open ended questions. Moreover, there was an individual writing test at the beginning and then at the end of four week intervention where students practiced writing in groups. The participants had to write a paragraph on Importance of English Writing Skill. Additionally, four teachers of the selected college were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule. The findings of the study showed that the students' errors and mistakes reduced through working in groups.

Keywords: Group work, Government College, Effectiveness, Eleventh Grade Students

1. Introduction

An old Chinese proverb goes, “Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand”, which indicates the importance of group work in the classroom. Teaching and learning in tertiary education are changing, however, in this time of pedagogical change group work remains a significant element of active learning theory and practice Burke (2011). Meanwhile, Harker (2007) found strong evidence that student-to-student interaction through group work can enrich learning outcomes. Basically, group work is a student-centered teaching and learning system where students work in teams to acquire knowledge and complete tasks through cooperation and collaborative interaction Rance-Rony (2010). More specifically, group work is a teaching method that enhances academic achievement of learners (Frykedal & Chiriac 2014). Therefore, college and university teachers are opting group work learning techniques to ensure a significant learning environment for their students (Monk-turner, Payne, Monk-turner, & Payne, 2007). Team-work gets spirit when individuals work combined in a group to improve both their individual learning outcomes and the learning outcomes of their

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companions (Johnson & Johnson, 2015). It is working together to achieve an undivided goal where the credit goes to all the members of the group because the power of group work mainly lies in the cooperation of the group members. While managing group work in a classroom (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2014) suggested to requirements for a teacher- (i) consciousness about classroom interaction and group processing (ii) efficiency to manage classroom interaction and group processing. Moreover, group work develops students' ideas, improves their all learning skills and contributes to a common goal. Hence, group work has become more popular as a means of motivating and inspiring student learning which is being followed in most educational institutions.

1.1 Clarification of the Key Concepts

The term 'effective' indicates the desired or intended result. It has been shown here as the positive result of group work. Planning, instruction, management, and interpersonal relations are some of the major components of effective teaching and learning. When a learner engages in group work, s/he can enjoy joint work and understand which develops his/her higher order skills. In addition, s/he can learn things that s/he would not know individually. Hence, group work is an effective platform to gain English language skills.

'Group work indicates students' working collaboratively in the classroom under an instructor. It is mainly a student-centered way of teaching and learning process which implies reciprocal cooperation and teamwork. It may include any learning or teaching topic or activities that students perform in the classroom. By working in a group under a teacher, students find an opportunity to help the individual exploring his/her thinking (Fisher, Thompson, & Silverberg 2005). Team work has two major benefits- it helps to learn and keeps the learning longer lasting because learning through discussion is really effective and longer lasting. It also connects students to each other personally and intellectually, reduces monotony of academic life and builds a community learner.

Burke (2011) finds that group is better than individual because groups have more information and knowledge resources. Moreover, cooperative learning provides an opportunity to gather more ideas which is almost impossible for an individual to gather alone Nipp (2017). According to Adelade University group work study gives the opportunity to enhance the following interpersonal skills. Above all, group work task develops quality and depth learning focusing on the processing rather than producing.

1.2 Research Questions

This current study will try to find out the answer to the following questions:

- 1) What are the constraints of implementing group work in an English language classroom?
- 2) How group work can effectively be organized in teaching and learning?
- 3) How do students perceive working in a group?

2. Literature Review

Group work is an excellent method of teaching and learning which inspires learners to learn and develops their idea of pleasure through sharing and learning (Taqi & Al-nouh, 2014). They add that in group work students of different levels form group and improve their understanding of the subject. There are much literature on group work, teamwork and cooperative learning but they cannot serve the real purpose because of their unauthentic settings and lack of practical advice to their particular contexts (Baines Ed, Blatchord Peter, 2007). The researcher has separated the review of literature into two parts- advantages and disadvantages as follows:

When the outcome of group work arises, Burke (2011) finds that the whole is better than the sum of its part. Encouraging student engagement through group work and collaboration in the classroom is a popular idea among students and teachers Storch (2001). It develops students' independence and makes them cooperative Baines et al. (2007). Likewise, group work brings potential benefits to the learners of second language in the classroom Ewald (2004). Russell (2010) has accepted that support for group work is extensive in entire educational literary works. A teacher who is concerned with the scope of information and understandings, attitudes and appreciations is encouraged to involve his/her students in group work Hock (1961). He further clarifies that group work helps an individual to reach his goal and achieve success in life. Accordingly, teamwork learning moves the learner from a passive student to an active participant in the educational process (Stover & Holland, 2018). In addition, it enhances student learning and academic acquisition which solves problem, promotes socialization and cooperation making student more strategic and helpful to each other Alansari (2006). Moreover, student to student grouping can enrich learning outcomes Harker (2007).

Essentially, group work ensures a pleasant and relaxing learning environment for learners which helps them to get a more self-confidence and self-esteem Jiang (2009). Moreover, group work provides an

opportunity to be good educators, good collaborator, good narrators and good listeners. Hopefully, the process of cooperation in group work gives an advantage to its members to construct and manipulate their knowledge and brings an important change among them Fisher et al. (2005). In addition, Espey (2010) finds that participating in group work learning is satisfying and fruitful learning experience whereas (Christie, Tolmie, Thurston, & Howe, 2009) find it as a powerful and natural mechanism for learning. As learners do not always have the same level and ability, instructor may organize them in group to ensure their participation to the reading and learning process Hounhanou (2017) so that they can resolve their problems together Baines et al. (2007). The learners also feel happy to spend more time for preparing class, and having discussion with group members. Beebe & Masterson (2003) found six prominent advantages of group work: group work reveals more information, variety of backgrounds, knowledge and experiences (Macgowan & Vakharia, 2012); group work enhances creativity applying the proverb “two heads are better than one”; learning through discussion in group lasts longer; students who are involved in group work are committed to the solution and are pleased with their involvement in the group Myers; learners involve in group work acquire better responsive power. They also can assess their individual behavior from the feedback they receive from group work. After having finished their graduation they got preference in their respective job field as group work is highly valued by employers Harker (2007).

Though group work is an effective active learning process, some research works revealed that students have sometimes negative attitudes towards group work due to unequal participation and poor or high performance. So, it can make confliction among the students.

Jiang (2009) found two main demerits of group work- (i) unbalance in participation of students (ii) unbalance in contribution to the success of the group. He described that advance students enjoy more opportunities in the group work while weak students hardly get opportunities to think independently. As they cannot contribute to the group, they lose their interest to participate in group work. Therefore, the original intention of implementing group work can be violated. Disadvantage of group work was further discussed by (Taqi & Al-nouh 2014) who discovered that in group work some students receive admiration doing little work while others receive same admiration doing most of the work. They have also pointed out ‘group work’ as noisy for which some group members show their reluctance to work in group with others. Moreover, students have limited possibility to receive feedback on their errors. As regards disadvantages (Beebe & Masterson 2003) discovered four problems of group work:

Individual may face pressure from the group to follow the opinion of the majority. S/he may accept the bad decision of the group just to avoid conflict; an individual who knows comparatively well may subjugate other group members (Goodman, Knight, Khudododov, & Goodman, 2014); some group members who are comparatively dull may depend on the others to do their assigned task; group work may create misunderstanding among the students.

In addition, group work seriously hampers the individual thinking of the learners. Besides, the other member of the group cannot think independently on their own works. Likewise, there may grow gender problem as every group consisted of male and female members. Moreover, the students start gossiping when they find any scope. As a result, the members of the group hesitate to interfere.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method type of methodology to conduct the study because mixed-method helps to enter into the depth of the research problem. It also increases reliability and credibility of the findings. Mckim (2017) found that mixed methods add more value than single quantitative or single qualitative study. Nowadays the demand of mixed methods are increasing because of the systematic combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies Lisle (2011). Indeed, mixed methods bring authentic link between quantitative and qualitative studies, and particularly, those who deal them (Almalki, Centre, Arabia, & Centre, 2016).

To collect primary data, the researcher has made a survey on 50 students through questionnaire; engaged students in individual pre-and-post intervention writing; and interviewed four English teachers who used to teach those students. The first year students were selected because they are involved in group work by their English teachers. Among the 50 students, 27 were male and the rest 23 were female. Their age varies from 18 to 20. The researcher formed ten groups where each group consists of five members. A questionnaire with both ten open-ended and closed ended questions was delivered to every learner where they could pick one answer from given number of options or they could provide answer in any way using their own words they think appropriate. The researcher did not force any of the students to answer any of the questions from the questionnaire against their will. As writing activity, the researcher asked each student to write a paragraph Importance of English Writing Skill and then asked them to write the same paragraph after four weeks of intervention. The pre-and-post intervention individual writings were assessed.

4. Findings and Discussion

The findings from questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and writing sample of the current study have been placed below:

4.1 Findings from Students' Questionnaire

The students' initial attitude towards group work was negative. Many of the students acknowledged that they seldom practised language in groups. It is due to their lack of knowledge of importance of group work. Learning a language depends on collaboration that needs group or pair work. So the fellow friends or learners can play a vital role in developing the interest of group work. Only few of the respondents witnessed that they do group work to make everything comprehensive of difficulties. Since, it is better to have confusion on any issue rather than having over confidence, the learners must follow the ethics of a group study. The summary of findings from the student questionnaire is presented in the following table:

| Sl. No | Questions | Always | Sometimes | Frequently | Never | Total students |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | Do your teachers involve you in group work? | 5 | 7 | 11 | 27 | 50 |
| 2 | Do you practise free hand writing in group? | 8 | 4 | 14 | 24 | 50 |
| 3 | Group work creates favorable environment for the weak students. Do you agree? | 25 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 50 |
| 4 | Do your teachers force you to sit for group work? | 32 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 50 |
| 5 | Group study increases communication skill. How much do you support? | 17 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 50 |
| 6 | Shyness is the constraints of implementing group work in the classroom. Do you support this | 15 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 50 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| | statement? | | | | | |
| 7 | A teacher can effectively manage his/her classroom doing group work study. How much do you support this statement? | 14 | 18 | 12 | 6 | 50 |
| 8 | Group is an easy way to learn without tutor. How far do you agree with this statement? | 20 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 50 |
| 9 | Do you think that group work makes a student extrovert? | 40 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 50 |
| 10 | Group work should be introduced in other educational institutions. Do you support this statement? | 30 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 50 |

Table 1: Findings from the student questionnaire

The above table shows that the students believe that group work has some benefits for the students. Finally, when the students were asked to express their feelings about group work the following answer was found:

| Options | Total | Responses | Percentage |
|----------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| Helpful | 50 | 40 | 80% |
| Partly helpful | 50 | 23 | 46% |
| Not helpful | 50 | 5 | 10% |

Table 2: Summary of results of student responses to group work

It is found that 80% students find group work helpful for them while 46% of them think them it is partly helpful. However, only 10% students consider that group work is not helpful for them.

4.2 Findings from the Pre-and-post Intervention Writing

A proficiency test of ten marks was arranged as pre-test to know the learners level of proficiency in the target language. It is found from the pre-test that most of the learners could not write well in their writing sample. As a writing sample, the students were asked to write a paragraph on “Importance of English Writing Skill” and they wrote accordingly. The structure of writing that means topic sentence, body and terminator was

under the minimum level. There were so many grammatical mistakes. It is a shocking matter that there were abundantly spelling mistakes in their writing. Such types of errors occurred in the writing sample of the students were unthinkable and unimaginable. The undergrad learners would not suppose to create blunders. Expectation from them was much higher. The improper use of Capitalization and punctuation has been found in their writing too. After passing a twelve year of academic life, till now they make these mistakes. The development of thought was also substandard according to their level of learning. The errors they made in their sample paragraph are as follows- “Todayes (Today’s) world English writing skill is important. Nowadays (nowadays) English is everywhere (everywhere). From writing jod (job) application to chating (chatting) with friends or passing exam with good grads (grades). To improve English writing skill we need to improve over speaking Englis (English). In our country English writing skill are bad for many resons (reasons).” The average marks were from 3 to 4 out of 10.

Table: Classification of writing problems and percentage per category

| No | Category of writing problems | Frequencies of writing problems | percentage |
|----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Organizational problem | 430 | 56% |
| 2 | Error in spelling | 379 | 33% |
| 3 | Misuse of tense | 287 | 38% |
| 4 | Subject verb agreement | 405 | 52% |
| 5 | Voice | 114 | 17% |
| 6 | Punctuation & capitalization | 315 | 63% |
| 7 | Preposition | 311 | 36% |
| 8 | Modals | 206 | 13% |
| 9 | Conditionals | 201 | 41% |
| 10 | Number | 204 | 23% |
| 11 | Pronoun | 98 | 13% |
| 12 | Misuse of words | 106 | 11% |
| 13 | Misuse of articles | 187 | 22% |
| 14 | Redundancy | 103 | 23% |
| 15 | Syntactical problem | 287 | 32% |

Table 3: Percentage and total number of mistakes

After a continuous hard work for four weeks (one hour per day) on group work in the class a post- test was arranged to assess the improvement of the same students. The test was on 10 marks and the topic was the previous one. A satisfactory development was noticed in the writing of the students. Majority of the students performed satisfactorily. The students tried utmost to be upgraded through group study under my

supervision in the classes. It is seen from the analysis of the post-test outcome that 70% students developed organizational problem in their writing. Here 30% students could not maintain the organizational aspect of writing whereas earlier it was 56%. In the same way error in spelling reduced to 18% from 33%. From the survey it was found that 38% learners made mistakes in using tense in the pre-test but in post-test decreased to 21%.

Similarly 28% students commit error in subject verb agreement whereas it was 52% in the pre-test. There also noticeable improvement in using voice, punctuation and capitalization, preposition, modals, conditionals and number while they wrote for the post test writing sample. It was found almost 50% improvements in these grammatical items. Use of inappropriate words ranges from 7% from 11%. Redundancy occurred 23% in the writing of the students in the pre-test while it decreased to 17% in the post test assessment. A common problem in the writing skill is syntactical problem which has also reduced to 21% from 32%. Other than this most of the learners had shown that they could grow their level of self-confidence in their English free hand writing that is they call after effect of the group study. Anxiety hinders the learners most in developing their communicational skill in skill. Fear of talking is also another barrier in developing second language learning. Engagement in study and its flow up to a standard level is also considered as a positive sign of group work.

The students were asked to write a paragraph on “Importance of English Writing Skill” as writing sample for the assessment of their proficiency in English. The purpose of the test was just to find out their deficiencies in the target language. The target learners studied English for twelve year in their secondary and higher secondary level. During their past academic life they scarcely did group work. Now these learners have been engaged in group work for their growth and motivation to study and group study as well. To evaluate the development process of the same population I arranged a post test on English writing skill for which I asked the learners to write a paragraph on “Qualities of a good teacher” A sharp difference has come out from the scrutiny of writing sample of the learners.

The students who were unable to achieve minimum level of marks in their writing composition are now able to secure a standard marks in comparison to their level of learning. The students improved their writing especially the structure of their writing a composition e.g. introduction, development of thought and the conclusion. The researcher found a sharp improvement in grammar, vocabulary, and good selection of diction. Hopefully, these positive findings inspire me to conduct group work in my English language classroom.

| No | Category of writing problems | Frequencies of writing problems | percentage |
|----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Organizational problem | 250 | 30% |
| 2 | Error in spelling | 179 | 18% |
| 3 | Misuse of tense | 287 | 21% |
| 4 | Subject verb agreement | 205 | 28% |
| 5 | Voice | 86 | 17% |
| 6 | Punctuation & capitalization | 156 | 30% |
| 7 | Preposition | 121 | 19% |
| 8 | Modals | 109 | 11% |
| 9 | Conditionals | 115 | 29% |
| 10 | Number | 87 | 15% |
| 11 | Pronoun | 68 | 9% |
| 12 | Misuse of words | 95 | 7% |
| 13 | Misuse of articles | 88 | 14% |
| 14 | Redundancy | 95 | 17% |
| 15 | Syntactical problem | 175 | 21% |

Table 4: Percentage and total number of mistakes

4.3 Findings from Teachers' Interview

All the four teachers were from the English Department who were teaching English language courses at the college. The duration of the interview was one hour. The teachers were respectfully asked to join the interview and express their views regarding group work they are experiencing. They were humbly request to reflect their views from their practical life that they observed in the past in teaching and now they are noticing from their teaching.

Teachers' interview has reshaped the idea of effectiveness of group study. From the reflection of teachers' interview the researcher was assured that the teachers reflected their opinion that the students show little interest in their group study. All the learned and expert teachers showed their keen interest in making easy the difficult lessons by working in group. They really loved to practise group work in teaching their respective subjects. The language teachers' classroom observation is not similar to those of the teachers of other subjects. They made me sure that group work differs from discipline to discipline though ethically all are same. They shared their opinion that most learners are to force to sit for group study in spite of knowing the benefits of working in group. They suggested that continuous group work increases the fluency of the learners and bring a great change in their learning process.

They mostly emphasized on the Students Talking Time (STT). As the students have much scope to talk openly, they have great chance to remove their interpersonal conflicts. Teachers' motivation directly works among the learners. They also gave importance on the teachers' role in managing the group, managing activities and supervising the learning. In Teachers Talking Time (TTT), the teachers are thought to find the easiest ways to provide a good instructions and suggestions for the weak and less interested learners.

When they were asked whether they practise group work, hopefully it is found that 5 of them always practise group work while 3 of them sometimes practise group work. In answer to a question whether they practise free hand writing in group work same answer as been found as before. Most of them have acknowledged that group work creates favorable environment for weaker students. However, 4 of them answered that they force their students to sit for group work while 2 of them answered negative. Surprisingly, it is found that 7 teachers out of 10 answered harmoniously that group work creates a significant role to ensure the participation of maximum students in the reading and learning process. Considering the effectiveness of group work, most of them opine that they will suggest other teachers to apply group work. However, 1 teacher was found who replied negative.

The course teachers ought to help the learners form the group according to the learner's autonomy ability to learn the language. It is good for cooperation and best learning outcome. Some teachers advised to know the expectation of the learners before forming the group. Scaffolding and motivation techniques should be used if necessary. Role-play, mime, extempore speech could be helpful for the learners if once it could be implemented and make worthy with learn ability.

5. Conclusion

As suggested in the literature and findings the researcher has discussed earlier, group work study can be effective in English language classroom but a proper management and guidelines must be ensured to get the best results. In the process of group work, a teacher works as a facilitator and not as a controller of the class where students take the responsibility of their own learning. Teachers are the guide, guardian and source of aspiration to the students and work as catalysts to achieve success in the teaching and learning process (Lazar, 2014). Engaging in group work, students find opportunity to identify problems, ask questions, reshape their work, and discuss their outcomes with one another. Most prominently, cooperative learning process is interesting, competitive and student friendly (Mehta & Kulshrestha, 2014). In fact, in cooperative

learning process, they learn from each other and achieve important interpersonal skills (Kibirige & Lehong, 2016).

The power of group study lies in the interrelationship among the group members. It can be mentioned that in a group a student can be tolerant to others' views or opinions which makes brotherhood among them. Group work also plays an important role in making leadership and self-confidence among the students. However, group work is hardly plain sailing because there may be chaos, conflicts and confusions, misunderstandings, and above the instructor who is conducting group work may not be strategic. Although group study offers potential learning benefits, educators should be aware that only cooperative learning process does not bring out the best for the learners Herrmann (2013). Finally, this study highlights that group work study helps to learn better than study alone. Particularly, in the classroom many students can learn better discussing with others as everyone has the potential probabilities to be benefited from someone else's strengths. Hopefully, two heads are better than one Taylor (2009). Moreover, participating in group work clarifies ideas, develops critical thinking power and interpersonal skills and enhances problem-solving abilities.

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Teaching S.T. Coleridge: A Lesson from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Ayesha Siddiqua¹

Abstract

Samuel Taylor Coleridge became worldwide famous for composing "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". It is considered as one of the greatest English poems. As a critic and philosopher, Coleridge has done more than any other writers to spread the ideas of the English Romantic Movement. The paper focuses a number of points a teacher must follow to teach the major themes of the poem. The Teaching, strategy, personality, poetic form, poetic dream are highlighted in this paper. It is a great story about youth, wisdom in leading others, but is not about the wisdom of success and win; it is about the other leadership wisdom: the one which comes from failure. The Mariner narrates the story of his last ill-fated voyage as the captain of a sailing ship. The voyage is an epic. It is not merely a story but a moral of a suffered mind. Death and its feminine mistress, a terrible ghost of Life-in-Death approach on a haunted ship and dice for the lives of the crew are the concern of the poem. In the poem, Death supersedes the crew but their leader is claimed by a fate worse than death- to live on while surrounded by the consequence of his failure. The paper focuses the major themes of this great poem to be taught in a classroom.

Keywords: Romantic Movement, Teaching, Philosophy, Strategy

1. Introduction

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a major poet of the period of romanticism. He is noted for his prose works on literature, religion, and the organization of society. He was one of the most prominent poets of literary Romanticism, and his most famous poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (published in 1798)" is a prime example of this movement's style and concerns. Coleridge's poem tells us of an old seafarer who has returned from a harrowing voyage. In the story, we find that the mariner stops a guest entering a wedding to share with him his story of escaping death and learning to value every living thing. The elements of

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Romanticism found in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” include strong images of the supernatural and natural incidents, as well as a profound thread of spirituality, all explored in an experimental structure. The poem deals with the subject of the Christian parable of sin, penance, and release. In the sailing community, killing of an albatross was considered to be bad luck. Coleridge projected his own life into the tale of the mariner, drawing parallels between his voyage on the sea and its hardships compared to his own life. Coleridge thought that nature was to some extent mystical and always possessed the quality of purity and at the same time great power.

1. 1. Coleridge Was a Precocious Reader

Despite his self-doubt, Coleridge was an extraordinary student who impressed classmates with his eloquence, his knowledge of classical languages, and his elegance for writing poetry. Coleridge grew up feeling rejected by his distant mother and bullied and mentally tortured by his older brother Frank. These early experiences gave rise to feelings of insecurity and loneliness that moved Coleridge throughout life.

1.2 "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) as a Dream Poem

Coleridge developed an intimate friendship with the poet William Wordsworth. Motivated by the encouragement and intellectual stimulation he received from Wordsworth, Coleridge directed his most creative period. Later, he composed a series of extraordinary poems, four of which appeared along with poems by Wordsworth in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Coleridge said that when they had planned this landmark collection, “it was agreed that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic. . . .” *Lyrical Ballads* starts with “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Coleridge got the idea for the poem from a friend who had dreamed about a skeleton ship. Before composing it, Coleridge discussed the poem extensively and repeatedly with Wordsworth, who contributed a number of plot ideas and even a few lines of verse in *the Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

1.3 Poetic Form of *the Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1798) is a celebrated literary ballad, or narrative poem written in deliberate imitation of the traditional folk ballad with a sensational subject matter—the perilous journey of an old sailor. It also contains other conventional elements: dialogue, repetition of words and phrases, and strong patterns of rhymes and rhythms. However, there are aspects of the poem that reflect Coleridge’s own romantic writing style: his emphasis on the supernatural, his stylish use of sound devices, and his use of antiquated language. For example, we can observe his description of a mysterious ghost ship:

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist! And still it neared and neared: As if it dodged a water-sprite, It plunged, and tacked and veered".

As we read "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," observe how Coleridge reworks the traditional ballad form and produces a poem of rare beauty and complexity.

2. Reading Strategy of the Ballad

Reading descriptive poem like all ballads, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is a narrative poem, a poem which tells a story. It has many of the fundamental elements of a prose story: setting, characters, point of view, plot, conflict, and theme. As you read the poem, use a plan like the one demonstrated to take notes about each of these elements. Reader should focus on the main story, not on the frame story. Moreover, readers should use the red marginal notes, which were written by Coleridge, to help the learners clarify plot developments.

3. Guilt Enchains the Readers

The well-known expression "like an albatross around my neck" stems from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." It is often used to portray feelings of guilt that weigh heavily on a person reading the work. Sometimes, we ever felt burdened by guilt. We may think about a time when you felt ashamed about something we had done.

4. Evaluation

In Coleridge's view, the indispensable element of literature was a unification of emotion and thought that he narrated as imagination. He especially emphasized poetry's capacity for incorporating the universal and the particular, the objective and the subjective, the generic and the individual issues. Coleridge's achievement has been given more extensively varying assessments than that of any other English literary artist, though there is wide agreement that his huge potential was never fully realized in his works. His height as a poet has never been in doubt; in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" he wrote the poem in English literature and perfected a mode of sensuous lyricism that is often echoed by later poets. As poet, social critic, literary critic, theologian, and psychologist, S.T. Coleridge expressed a deep concern with elucidating an underlying creative principle that is basic to both human beings and the universe as a whole.

To Coleridge, imagination is the model of this unifying strength and power as it represents the way by which the integrated human capacities for intuitive, non-rational understanding and for organizing and discriminating thought concerning the material world are reconciled.

Coleridge demonstrated his considerable success, to combine a sense of the universal and ideal with an acute observation of the particular and sensory in his own poetry and in his criticism. It is believed that there are many invisible elements than visible things in the universe. But, no one can describe their families, their ranks, relationships, distinguishing features, functions and everyday life. The human minds have always circled about knowledge of these things, but never gained it. It is sometimes good to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better universe otherwise the intellect, habituated to the petty things of daily life, may too much contract itself, and wholly sink down to trivial thoughts. But meanwhile, we must be vigilant for the truth and keep proportion that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night, false from the truth.

5. Conclusion

As a prolific writer, Coleridge was seldom satisfied with his own final products. Much of his most famous poetry is either fragmentary or heavily re-written at later time. As we know, there exist two different versions of "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (an early, yet complete one published in *Lyrical Ballads* and his heavily-rewritten later published version). It is a clear demonstration of the power of Coleridge's word craft that even in such fragments; he became capable to change the world of poetry forever. Coleridge's Poem is academic for citation and study. This paper is written primarily for the teachers and students to provide critical analysis of the poem, the Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Coleridge.

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A Study of Interlanguage: Concept and Aspects

Md. Mahmudul Amin¹

Abstract

Interlanguage is the interim language produced by learners when they learn a new language. Interlanguage hypothesis has contributed a lot to understand the nature of learner language with substantial empirical evidence. We came to realize what are responsible for learners' errors thus to provide linguistic remedy for those errors.

Keywords: *Interlanguage, fossilization, errors, strategy*

1. Introduction

As teachers we always expect error-free language production from our learners, however, it never happens when they learn a foreign language. We rather see that their language contains errors, and we correct them, explain our students why there are some errors in their produced sample. They understand, edit their sample. Alas! Again we see the reappearance of the same errors. Therefore, learner language is peculiar, at the time they learn any new language. They produce erroneous language. Previously contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (EA) tried to explain the reasons of errors that learners make when they communicate in the language they are learning. CA or EA have failed to provide any substantial evidence that could be supported by empirical evidence, interlanguage hypothesis provided the detailed reasons what make learner language different than the language they are learning. Hence interlanguage has become very dominant theory in second language acquisition (SLA) and research.

2. Interlanguage and its Aspects

The notion of Interlanguage was introduced at the very beginning when a new field named second language acquisition (SLA) started its journey. The concept has still been central to the field of understanding second language acquisition and research. The term Interlanguage (IL) was used by American linguist Selinker (1972) to refer to the language that learners produce when they learn a new language regardless of one's

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failure or success. Selinker maintains that IL is produced from an adult learner's "attempted meaningful performance" in a second language (L2). He postulates that "meaningful performance" refers to that context when an adult express meaning in communication in the process of learning a new language. Therefore, classroom language drills does not refer to meaningful performance. Thus, the use of an L2 by an L2 learner in real life context can produce IL.

Prior to the development of IL hypothesis, some other linguists postulated the phenomenon in different ways. As Nemser (1971) mentions that a learner while learning a foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) produces a language that is distinct from his native language (source language) and target language (TL). This "learner language" is termed an "approximative system". He claims that the learner speech at a given time is the "patterned product of an approximative system". The approximative systems vary from one stage to another stage in accordance with proficiency level, learning experience, communication function, personal characteristic, etc. Nemser (1971) mentions that learner language evolves series of stages, and the most advanced level is close to TL. However, perfect proficiency is rare for the adult learners. Regarding the syntax of the approximative system, he postulates that the speech of the learner is "structurally organized" and manifests the order and cohesiveness of a system. However, it gets restructured when new items are learnt. He suggests that learner speech should not be studied in from L1 or TL perspectives rather it should be studied by its own system because it is a language of its own aspects.

Cordor finds a relationship between learners' errors and the language they produce at different stages of learning a new language. Cordor (1967) states that the learners' errors are the inevitable by-products of the process of language learning. He posits that the errors occur due to the interference of the habit of the first language. He compares between the L1 and L2 acquisition process where the learners make errors but in case of L1 we ignore at the early stage of L1 acquisition. He explained that when a child produces expression like "this mummy chair", we do not regard it as ill formed, deviant or faulty because we understand that he is in the process of learning. The same is also true to L2 acquisition process where learners make errors. He further clarifies that these errors are the errors of competence i.e. linguistic knowledge. Learners' errors are systematic and this language is termed "transitional competence". He maintains that understanding learner language at certain point in the course of his learning is very important in three ways: (1) they tell about the progress of the learner and what remains for him to learn; (2) it tells how language is learned or acquired, and what strategies the learner is using in his discovery of the language; (3) we can understand from the errors the device a learner uses in order to learn. Cordor posits that making errors are

the process of hypothesis testing by the L1 and L2 learners about the language they are learning.

However, Selinker proposed the term Interlanguage most persuasively and developed it into a set of testable hypotheses. The IL hypothesis was intended to stimulate to systematic research into the development of language produced by adult second language learners. It aimed at identifying the psycholinguistic process that shaped the learner language and what stopped learners from further learning or what was responsible for what he termed “fossilization” (Tarone, 1994). He claims that the L2 learners’ utterances to express meaning are produced from a separate linguistic system, and this system is called interlanguage (IL). Therefore, IL is the language an L2 learner produces that is different from his L1 and TL while one learns an L2. Selinker proposed that there are five processes that are accountable of second language learning. These are: (1) language transfer, (2) transfer of training, (3) strategies of second language learning, (4) strategies of second language communication, and (5) overgeneralization of TL linguistic material. Selinker assumes that these processes are primarily responsible for IL which is deviated from the L1 or TL of the L2 learner. These five processes are considered by the learners as means to internalize and master the TL system. Now the processes are discussed in details below (Selinker, 1972, p. 216- 217):

Language Transfer: If the fossilizable items, rules, and subsystems in IL performance are the results of the NL influence then it is called process of language transfer. The first language inhibition is responsible for the appearance of errors in ILs as language transfer. Previously in contrastive analysis (CA), the native language transfer was thought to be the sole shaper of learner language, however, in Selinker it was one of the processes (Tarone, 1994). Language transfer is a process where learner thought some elements that the learners think the same in their NL, IL, TL. This identification leads to produce IL. **Transfer of training:** If the ill forms, items and subsystems are the result of training process then it is called transfer of training process. This difficulty does not arise due to L1 and TL differences rather as a part of the training process (Selinker, 1972). Transfer of occurs if the L2 learners apply rules that they learnt from classroom instruction or textbooks. It has positive role when the learners produce language IL forms that are indistinguishable from the TL. However, it could have negative role if the learners produce ill forms (Tarone, 2006). For example, most secondary level learners in Bangladesh in writing formal letter to the Headmaster or higher authority begin like *with due respect I would like to state that* mostly. The reason is that the teachers teach it in this way and the books they read also present the same language. Thus, these types of fixed phrases for most formal contexts are the result of the transfer of training.

Strategies of second language learning: It happens from the strategies the learners consciously employ to deal with the learning materials when they learn an L2. For example, learners in their IL produce sentences like *I am missing you* or *I am hearing you*. Here the learners use –ing with state and action verbs indiscriminately. Thus, they simplify the TL rules and produce ill formed sentences as a result of strategies of second language learning. Therefore, the strategy of simplification is known as the strategy of second language learning. Sometimes, the learners avoid plural markers or article in communication when they simplify the rules. It is a conscious effort to master the target language. Other examples of learning strategies are to use mnemonics to remember target vocabulary, memorizing verbs and textbook dialogues. The strategies may be successful, but they may result in errors. For example, the memorized list could get confused in actual language use (Tarone, 2006).

Strategies of second language communication: If the strategies of communication with native speaker are erroneous, they are the result of strategies of communication (Selinker, 1972). Learners use strategies of communication to solve communication problem if their IL is not adequate. They feel that to express meaning in TL, they do not have available linguistic items needed. Therefore, they employ a variety of strategies to convey the meaning in communication. For example, if a learner wants to refer to the word “cord” in English but he does not know the exact lexical item for this, he may use “a kind of wire with two plugs in each side” or “a tube” in his IL. Thus the linguistic forms or pattern may become more or less permanent parts of his IL (Tarone, 2006).

Overgeneralization: It happens when the L2 learners overgeneralize the TL rules. For example, the addition of suffix –ed with verb “go as goed for went” to make the past form of the verb “go”. Another example of overgeneralization as mentioned by Selinker is the use of the verb “drive” in: “After thinking a little I decided to start on the bicycle as slow as I could as it was not possible to drive fast.” Here the learner uses the verb “drive” for all kinds of vehicles which is not appropriate hence the mark of IL. This is widely found in child language acquisition. The learner shows the evidence that he has mastered a general rule, but yet to know all the exceptions to that rule. For example, a learner may use –ed suffix to make the past form of regular and irregular verbs as: walked, *hitted, laughed, *drinked, etc.

Selinker mentions that among the L2 learners, only 5% could reach the native like competence. However others stop at different stages of their learning. He terms this phenomenon “fossilization”. He assumes that fossilization occurs when the L2 learners maintain some linguistic item, rules, and subsystems of a particular native language tend to

maintain in the IL. Therefore, fossilization occurs when further instruction stop working for the development of the learner language (p. 215). Fossilization manifests as errors in learners' production. Thus the reappearance of errors thought to be eradicated is very crucial IL systems.

3. Development of Interlanguage Hypothesis

Since IL presents very influential assumptions on SLA, after Selinker, a number of linguists and sociolinguists have shown much interest in IL. They have studied IL from multiple perspectives. However, the central claims of IL remain unchanged. Here the remarkable and newly proposed aspects and findings of IL studies are summarized. According to Selinker (1972) IL phenomenon is restricted to the adult learners' acquisition of second language. However, Selinker, Swain and Dumas (1975) in French immersion program in Toronto Canada show that children produce language forms that are alike produced by adult learners. Their ILs get apparently fossilized, and are influenced by L1 (Tarone, 2018). Thus, IL is no more restricted to adult learners only rather it is extended to child L2 acquisition as well.

Another important issue came forward among linguists if ILs are natural languages or not. Selinker in his IL hypothesis claimed that ILs are not natural languages for some reasons: (a) natural languages are produced by universal grammar (UG), (b) interlanguages, unlike natural languages fossilize and evidence L1 transfer, (c) ILs are the products of cognitive process or latent psychological structure, (d) therefore, interlanguages do not have to obey language universal (Tarone, 2006, 2018). However, Adjemian (1976) took the opposing view and maintains that IL is a natural language of its own right. Like all other languages it has a system of linguistic rules and unlike other natural languages, these rules are "permeable". Therefore, he claims that like other languages ILs have internal organization of a language, and ILs can be analyzed linguistically. In this respect ILs are produced from universal grammar that produces native languages. As he mentions Cordor who suggested that they way to understand "transitional competence" or what Selinker calls IL is to make a series of descriptions of the learner's IL. The description can help understand the psychological and linguistic process under the construct of ILs, and hence the process of SLA. Again, ILs containsystemacity which refers to the internal consistency of rules and feature system of ILs. Therefore, like human language, it must contain an organized set of rules and elements like lexical item, phonological units, grammatical aspects, etc.

Regarding learning strategies Adjemian postulates that learning strategies are cognitive activities not the grammatical rules that learners make use of when they attempt to determine the forms of new language

system they are acquiring. These are helpful to make initial hypotheses about the nature of new linguistic system.

A third modification is noticed from the sociolinguistic view. It is found that interlanguage development seems to vary in different social contexts and discourse domains. Evidence shows that learners can produce more fluent, grammatical and transfer-free interlanguage in some social contexts than in others. For example, when they speak on academic matter, they are more free and fluent than when they talk about everyday topics like favourite food or bicycling (Selinker & Doglus, 1985, Tarone, 2018). Thus, social context, task, topic, and interlocutors play important role in the development and production of interlanguage.

The fourth development occurs with Selinker’s concept on fossilization. Selinker proposed that fossilization is inevitable. He argued that no second language learner could speak in a way that he or is indistinguishable from the native speaker of that language. He proposed that there are some psycholinguistic reasons that are responsible for the inevitable fossilization. However, Scovel (1988 cited in Tarone, 2018) proposed the Josef Conrad Phenomenon, in order to show that adult learners’ phonological systems may get fossilized; but the morphology, syntax, and lexicon may develop until they reach the native speaker like proficiency. Thus Scovel contradicts Selinker’s view on fossilization. The following diagram presents IL:

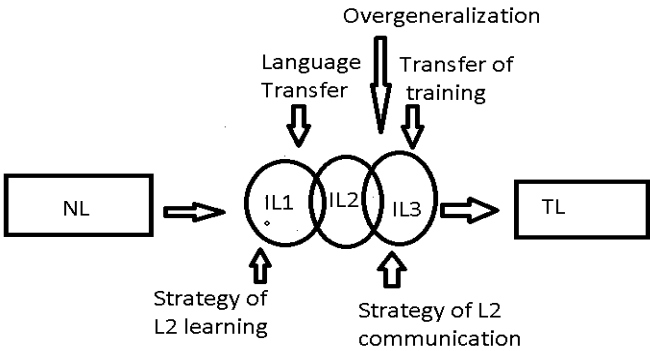


Diagram: Interlanguage

4. Conclusion

Understanding IL is very significant to the teaching of a foreign language or second language. IL hypothesis makes us understand that errors are very natural in learning process. Again, we also know that IL is incomplete by nature and always in the state of flux (Maniruzzaman,

2008). The developmental feature of IL has made us realize that ILs are permeable. When a learner is forced to communicate, he uses the IL forms which are not completely developed or he does not have the control of the forms. It may be that the forms are improperly generalized or distorted. It happens for the permeability of ILs. Permeability means that learners' ILs systems are open, and are influenced either by NL or TL. It also happens due to the learners' strategy to simplify the TL rules by using IL grammar. Therefore, for effective teaching, teachers of an L2 or FL must understand the internal process of IL that is accountable for erroneous language produced by learners.

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Use of Technology at Undergraduate Level English Classes: A Case Study

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Abstract

The current study aimed at exploring the barriers of using ICT in the English. The study is conducted in qualitative approach where interview of four teachers, focus group discussion (FGD) with 10 undergraduate students, and class observation of two teachers have been used as research instruments. The research informs about the present status of ICT use in the country, points out the problems teachers encounter in the classroom. It is found from the study that lack of time, lack of infrastructure and technical support, lack of training, unwillingness to use ICT are the barriers in integrating technology in the classroom. The research also presents the recommendation on how to develop the experience of ICT integration and the role of principals and administrators in bringing positive change in infusing ICT in the teaching and learning process particularly in English language classroom.

Keywords: Technology, undergraduate English classes, teaching, ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, reflection of technology is evident in English language teaching (Hashanah, 2014). Many parts of our life are directly or indirectly connected with the technology (Ivy, 2010). The world is tremendously influenced by the waves of technology and technology in education has taken its place firmly. In our country, the scenario of using technology in education, particularly in English language classrooms, presents a different picture where the teachers as well as the students encounter challenges in using ICT tools (Rahman, 2015; Zaman, 2015; & Sarkar, 2018). A tremendous change has taken place recently with the application of technology in English language classroom (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). With the emergence of web 2.0, teaching and learning have been influenced a lot. National ICT policy (2009) of Bangladesh has given emphasis on the integration of ICT in education (Karim et al., 2017). At

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the same time, Education Ministry of Bangladesh has also directed to ensure ICT implementation in educational institutions. In training sessions, emphasis on using technology has been given the most priority in Bangladesh (Karim et al., 2017). The present study tried to explore the barriers of integrating ICT in English classes faced by English teachers at undergraduate English classes. In this research, qualitative method will be used where interview, focus group discussion and observation of teachers will be used as instruments. At the end, the researcher will present some recommendations on how to solve the barriers in using ICT in English class.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

The scenario of a foreign classroom reminds us the presence of computers, white boards, projectors, Internet access, available devices where a teacher can transform a class into a more engaging and student friendly environment (Zaman, 2015). The teacher in that situation does not have any constraints in conducting his/her class. But the scenario is quite different in our country. As a developing nation, we face many problems and at the same time, we do not have the expertise to utilise the available resources. We need to know the proper of use computer, internet and necessary software. We are lagging behind day by day for not having a competent knowledge of information technology. To do well in teaching and learning, we need to be technically literate (Koehler & Mishra, 2005). Along with technological knowledge, we also need the knowledge of English.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) to explore the barriers faced by the English lecturers to integrate technology
- 2) to discuss possible solutions to overcome the challenges faced by English lecturers in integrating technology

1.3 Research Questions

Research questions of the study are given below:

- 1) What are the challenges teachers faces in integrating technology in English language teaching?
- 2) ii) What are the possible solutions to these challenges of technology uses as perceived by teachers?

1.4 Significance of the Study

With the change of time, teaching and learning have also changed. In order to keep pace with the trending teaching techniques, the necessity of technology cannot be ignored. The development of education largely depends on the proper teaching methods and engagement of students in problem solving tasks. Students are also increasing and to keep students calm, technology can be utilised to save time as teaching time in our country is disrupted for various reasons for example political unrest, session jam. Teachers as well the college authority will be able to understand the present situation of integrating technology and it will also present how the problem can be solved. On the other hand, in our country, the culture of research is not noticeable. The study tried to focus on the issues creating barriers in English language teaching.

2. Literature Review

Relevant literature review illustrated the main issues regarding integration of ICT in teaching and learning, barriers of using technology in English language teaching. Snoeyink and Ertmer (2001) suggest in their study two kinds of barriers which are first order barriers and second order barriers. In the first order barriers, they have pointed on the lack of equipment, lack of support and resources. Second order barriers are associated with school level matters for example school culture and level of teachers, their beliefs on teaching and using technology and finally the intention of embracing the change. These internal and external factors are reliable for the challenges of using technology in the classroom. Bangladesh is considered to be a developing country where the necessary resources and materials are not available. In order to implement an ICT friendly situation, the availability of computers, projectors, white board are very important. It is not possible to manage all the things in one place. On the contrary, along with computers, required software is also important (Khan et al., 2012). Frequent power cut is a regular affair in Bangladesh. It is not possible to conduct classes without electricity. Some institutions cannot afford alternative energy sources for running their institutions. This is more acute in villages in Bangladesh. Studies focus that this is very much seen in developing countries (Mou 2016). Power sector is to be strengthened in this regard. Government needs to subsidy in this sector.

Money is the driving force in every place. The institutions do not have adequate funds to buy all the costly materials. On the other hand, much money is needed to maintain those things. People in our country live below the poverty line and it is not so easy to arrange a huge number of computers and other accessories. According to Mumtaz (2000), we come to notice that lack of funds does not confirm the available hardware and software to be used by the teachers in the class. Afshari et al. (2009) opine

that effective use of technology requires the easy access of computers and other resources. Support from the institution is a crucial matter. In many cases it is found that teachers do not get the prompt support from the institutions. Delay in support creates barriers in the process of delivering technology enabled classroom. When working with computers and internet, the teacher may find some problems while using those resources. In a study conducted by Rahman (2015), reveals that teachers do not get timely support when their computers malfunction in the classroom. Internet is the key element in materialising ICT based classroom. Internet access unavailability, high price of bandwidth, institute's perception about internet correspond to the limited use in the classroom. Though there is internet connectivity for administrative purposes but no internet connectivity is provided to the classroom. Even the institute does not have central connectivity hotspot (Zaman 2015).

It is considered by the educators and experts that investing in technology will certainly make changes in teaching and learning (Khan et al., 2012). Long term planning is required to see the benefits of ICT in education. The government plan and institution's initiatives can bring changes in teaching. Bangladesh government is keen to implement "Vision 2021" by using ICT. The problem lies in the execution because many plans of the government go in vain for lack of proper scrutiny and monitoring (Khan et al., 2012). It is seen from observation that teachers' attitude to ICT is not satisfactory. Some of them do not welcome the newness in teaching. Birch and Burnett (2009) presented in their study about teachers' thought about using technology in the classroom. Some teachers are not willing to use technology in the class because they lack interest in using technology. In every class, teachers do not use technology as it. Takes much time to create PowerPoint slides and some teachers do not want to work hard for the improvement of students (Rahman, 2015). They do not want to be acquainted with new technological tools. Training is one of the important factors for the integration of ICT in English language teaching. If the teacher does not know the basics of operating devices, he/she cannot fully utilise ICT resources in the classroom. Therefore, much importance has been given on the training of teachers (Mou, 2016; Khan et al., 2013; Zaman, 2015; &Sarkar, 2018).

A study conducted in Bangladesh by Roufand Mohamed (2018) regarding secondary school teachers' use of technology in the English language classrooms reveals that teachers have poor knowledge in using technology in their teaching. It is found in their study that some teachers even did not use computers in their classes. On the other hand, their use of technology is not for student centred learning. They do not engage students in pair work and group work or any other collaborative work with the help of technology.

3. Research Methodology

The present study used two focus group discussions (FGD) with 10 undergraduate students from each of the two selected colleges. In-depth interview of four English teachers from two colleges was taken for data collection from teachers. Teachers were chosen as they take English classes and my study area centres on English language classes. The students from two colleges studying in English honours participated as the participants of the focus group discussion. In my research, I have taken classroom observation of one teacher from each college. I have taken non probability purposive sampling. The reason for choosing this sampling technique was to save time. The study area was Dhaka city. Two non-government colleges took part in the research. The teachers were chosen from English department and ratio of male and female English teachers was balanced, two male and two female English teachers were chosen from two colleges.

4. Findings and Discussion

The major findings of the study are presented below:

4.1 Findings from Teachers' Interview

Teachers from both "A" and "B" colleges expressed their ideas regarding the benefits of ICT integration in their English classroom and they have expressed how ICT has helped in their teaching practices. One of the respondents from "A" college expressed his ideas in this way,

My use of ICT has created the interaction with my students and I have been able to use my class time effectively and through my ICT integration, I have found the lessons interesting and enjoyable to my students. I have been able to use formative assessment through employing ICT tools in my English class.

While presenting their idea about technology tools in the class, they have told that they use Microsoft PowerPoint, laptop, Microsoft Word. In college "A" the teachers have to bring their personal laptop in the class. On the other hand, teachers from college "B", they do not need to carry their computers in the class as the projector and the laptop are installed in the class. While discussing the barriers in the classroom, all of them have a common complaint about the role of the institute's indifference to provide technological support in the class. They do not get the required support from the college administration when they require technical support. One of the respondents from college "B" expresses her ideas:

One of the computers malfunctioned one day and the college authority took a long time to fix the problem. On that day, I had to take my

class in the traditional way apart from using technological tools. Teachers from both of the colleges have some common barriers. Power disruption is among them. Frequent power cut hampers the class. When electricity becomes unavailable, some time is wasted. They have to use the whiteboard with marker. At that time, students make noise when teachers cannot have the eye contact on the students.

4.2 Findings from FGD

Students have expressed that they can find the class time effective when teachers use multimedia in the class. Students get pleasure and think that their time properly utilised in multimedia enabled class. When the teacher delivers lectures using educational technology, we can easily understand the topic. It also helps our thinking process as they use some clues about the topic. This is possible in the multimedia enabled class. We can watch it and can imagine at the same time. A mental picture is portrayed in the mind. The text becomes easier and the image/video has a lasting impression on the minds of the students. One of the students speaks in favour of technology integrated class:

As pictures are shown along with the lecture of the teacher, the lesson becomes easier to understand on our part. We can concentrate in the class.

Students also spoke about the lack of sound system in the class. Audio visual presentation enlivens the class and students most of the time are deprived of the absence of mic in the class. In a large class, it is not possible for the teacher to reach his voice at the end of the class. The size of the room does not allow the teacher for making students heard his voice particularly who sit at the end of the class. Students express that the teacher takes preparation for conducting the class. The teacher brings the materials in his/her flash drive and opens the file in the computer for students' viewing. On different occasions, if the file does not open for computer virus or technical issue, the teacher uses the white board with his marker and he goes back to his traditional way of teaching where the writing on the board involves time and in this situation, some students disrupt the class.

While asking the questions about the integration of ICT in the class, they mean use of PowerPoint, use of internet, pdf books and so on. Students know about educational technologies like YouTube, reading pdf books. They also watch 10 minute school, a popular academic lecture series available on YouTube prepared by Bangladeshi students. Students have also provided an important idea they must attend the classes to develop their knowledge and they have also emphasized their own style of reading and writing where technology can make their way smooth.

While discussing the benefits of internet, students opine that after the class, they can interact with their friends using Whats App and Messenger. Through this they can work collaboratively and can increase their academic knowledge. Their English speaking fluency will increase. In this era of technology, students can take help from internet and other online tools.

4.3 Findings from Teachers' Class Observation

It is observed from the class of the teachers that they take necessary preparation for presenting ICT based classes. They take preparations from books, Internet and use of PowerPoint, projector and computer. Teachers did not use mobile phones in the class to present audio in the class. None of the colleges do have mikes installed in the class and for this reason, the teacher has to carry their personal microphone in the class which sometimes do not cover the whole class. Teachers use both technology and traditional way of teaching. Teachers check the homework of the students. Then he provides feedback and he does not use the projector to show the mistakes and gives instructions orally. Teachers mostly use PowerPoint slides and they cannot use internet in the class as the college does not provide internet access for the teachers to be used in the class. It is found that the technological tools are used by the teachers where students cannot take part. Teachers do not present any quiz on the screen. Teachers take the class and students become the silent listeners. The teacher does not engage students in group work or pair work in the class. It is observed that the teacher follows blended classroom where he uses technological and traditional way of teaching. The PowerPoint slides are not attractive and students find no interest in the class. Some students were not attentive in the class. The teacher did not provide any exercise for the students.

4.4 Discussion

The pictures presented from different sources clearly show that the teachers have some problems in using technology in their English classes. It was understood that they face problems as they do not have the adequate training in using technology which was echoed in the study of Zaman (2015), Sarkar (2018), and Khan et al. (2012). Electricity issue is a great factor in using technology. It could be the charge of the laptop or the available energy for the running of devices. The teachers have faced power cut in taking their classes (Parvin 2013; Mou, 2016; &Khan et al., 2012). It also kills some time to setup the devices for the class which is evident in the study of Rahman (2015). The scenario is quite distressing in villages. During power cut, students make noise in the class and the teacher has to pass a bad time and his/her mood of taking class is disrupted to a great extent.

In educational institutes, there is a shortage of projectors which sometimes create barrier in teaching (Mou, 2016). The teacher sometimes has to carry the projector in the class. In most of the cases, it is seen that principals are not technically sound. The maximum technical tasks are done by the technical persons in the office. Even the email of the institute is checked by staff. As a result, principals are not in a position to understand the value of technology in the college campus.

5. Recommendation

Training for teachers is one of the important tasks to be implemented for making teachers capable of using computer and mobile phones so that they can use those devices in the classroom. Teachers also need to develop their professionalism through training. Outlook of teachers needs to be changed and teachers should make a plan for their individual professional development. Students do not want their classes to be taken in the traditional way. For their acceptability to the students and for becoming effective teachers, they need to upgrade themselves for facing 21st century skills. They have to pay their time for honing their skills. Here, the institution has a great role for upgrading the quality of the teachers. The institution can lower the work load of the teachers so that they can get time for their development. A congenial atmosphere is needed for conducting teaching and learning process. Many institutions lack basic amenities for smoothly running teaching related tasks. It is to be mentioned here apart from educational activities, students also need to take part in co-curricular activities. The college should subscribe some online authentic resources for upgrading the standard of students and teachers. On the whole, internet literacy is a must for the upgrade of the students, teachers and administrators. If people are provided awareness and technical support for augmenting their skill, they could certainly develop themselves and could have brought effective changes through integration of technology.

The colleges do not utilise all the benefits of ICT. Even all kinds of assessments are done manually. No computerised systems are available in all the educational institutions. In some educational institutions, result is created using online resource. But no college has the mechanism of keeping students' attendance through bio metric system. In all the colleges, roll calling of students takes a huge amount of time in every class. As a result, the most important class time gets shorter. If the attendance is taken at the entry level of the students, the teachers could more time to take their classes. Automatic attendance system lessens the time to manual attendance system. The institutions should implement this system as early as possible. The institute can monitor the classes and take regular measures to see the projectors and the internet connections are active. The college

can make a team who will see the overall connectivity issue in the classrooms. Under the leadership of the principal, the implementation of ICT in the classroom can be ensured.

Funding is also an issue to integrate technology in the regular classes. The college can create a fund from students for ensuring ICT tools in all the classes. On the other hand, colleges can get help from government funding. Computer labs are necessary where students can know how to use internet and how to take study materials from internet. Training of students is also necessary for making them capable of attending technology enabled classes where they can also contribute their knowledge. It is seen that students have little access to computers and internet in the college premises. Ensuring internet access and providing training and workshop for the students will facilitate students' fair use of internet and OER (Open Education Resources).

6. Conclusion

The study explores the barriers of using ICT in English classroom of two colleges in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. In this research interview of four teachers teaching English was taken, 2 FGD were conducted and the class observation of two teachers was done. From the research, it was found that device's malfunctioning, lack of available electricity in the classroom, poor institutional support, lack of sound system, lack of internet access, lack of teachers' training on ICT, lack of sound system in the classroom, classroom duration, setting projector, lack of available projectors in the classes, flash drive not working while showing the presentation, lack of encouragement and motivation from colleagues and Principals, are the barriers in using technology in the classroom.

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Call for Papers

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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.

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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.

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The section will describe the research design and methods used to complete 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. This 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.

9. References

In this section, the author should give a listing of works cited in the paper. References should be an alphabetized list of all the academic sources used.

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