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# **Professional Training for Qualified Teacher Status: A Strategy for Enhancing Secondary Teacher Professionalism**

*Dr. John Dewar Wilson*<sup>\*</sup>

## **Abstract**

*Human resource developers view pre-employment training as an investment that pays for itself. Though pre-service professional training for teachers is available in Bangladesh, it is not compulsory. Yet such training develops professionalism. This paper proposes six key influences: selection and self-selection, context awareness, subject orientation, beginning professional development, factors influencing teaching and learning and professional commitment. Sixteen indicators summarize potential trainee learning. Discussion contrasts traditional practices in initial training arrangements, including Bangladesh with developments internationally.*

**Keywords:** Professional training, secondary trainee teachers, development partnerships, learning scientists

## **1. Introduction**

Teachers are the most important 'within school' factor in pupil learning. Pre-service education and professional training are critical factors in building teacher professionalism (UNESCO, 2015). In Bangladesh, graduates must hold an academic degree and pass screening tests to be eligible to teach. While a form of pre-service professional training is available, graduates may begin teaching without taking it. Professional training has never been defined. What it means to be 'professionally qualified to teach' is unclear, as is 'beginner teacher' standard – sometimes referred to as 'Qualified Teacher Status' (Q.T.S.). This paper sets out to answer the question: *'In what ways can compulsory professional training contribute to graduate trainee learning for secondary teaching?'* It sets out arguments for all pre-work training, and specific arguments for compulsory professional training for graduates who want to teach. Such training typically involves a year of study for a Postgraduate Certificate of

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Education (P.G.C.E.) qualification that national teacher registration bodies recognize for Q.T.S.

The human resource development literature (Jacobs, 2003) identifies general arguments for compulsory training before taking up any job. Trainees are incompetent at point of entry to work; errors not identified and corrected can have costly outcomes. Persons with no training vary in performance: training can develop competences of average and weak performers to higher levels. Training that develops competence pays for itself. Training helps system managers conceptualize workplace competence for developing it.

There has long been consensus that secondary teachers should have high academic qualifications, signified by a degree. But different views are held about the need for professional training. Some see teaching as an 'art' rather than a set of practical skills. Compulsory professional training was introduced in Scotland in 1926; only in the 1970s was it required of teachers in England's prestigious independent school sector. Even today little is known of what trainees learn from professional training (Ingvarson et al., 2014). Nor does empirical evidence illuminate which programs train best (Menter, 2015). Research (Ingvarson et al., 2014) does, however suggest that teachers are the most important 'within-school' factor in pupil learning, with two to three times the impact of other factors, equivalent to pupils achieving 40% more learning in a year.

An international survey (OECD, 2014) found that professional training made teachers feel better prepared for teaching, and more committed to their work, as reflected in higher job retention. Knowledge, derived in large part from initial training constitutes one of three dimensions of teacher professionalism (OECD, 2016). Consequently, many governments have adopted 'strengthening' policies. Existing programs have been reviewed (see Australia's Federal Department of Education's (2014) *Action Now*), some institutions closed, and professional competency standards articulated (see, for example Australian Professional Standards at [www.aitsl.edu.au](http://www.aitsl.edu.au) , 2011). 'Beginner teacher' competency standards articulate what trainees should know, and be able to do by the end of P.G.C.E. training. Schools are upgraded as professional development partners of university faculties that now incorporate formerly free-standing teacher training institutions. Qualifications of teacher educators are broadened to include skills derived from research, evaluation and curriculum development as well as secondary teaching experience. Underpinning such developments is a new research-based view of teaching as a science of designing learning environments (Sawyer, 2014).

## 2. Informing Influences

Initial professional training shapes trainees' thinking about teaching. It also changes their behavior. The study identifies six informing influences: selection and self-selection, context awareness, subject orientation, beginning professional development, factors influencing teaching and learning and professional commitment. The essence of each influence is captured in indicators, sixteen in total. Discussion contrasts traditional arrangements in initial training, including Bangladesh with developments internationally.

### 2.1. Selection and Self-selection

In many countries, including Bangladesh it is relatively easy to secure a place on a teacher training program. Provided an applicant has the necessary academic qualifications, security clearance, and positive references from suitable persons, institutional managers will probably offer a place without even an interview. Most institutions operate an opaque process based on interviews and tests to ensure that all government-funded seats are filled – but, of course never exceeded!. *Action Now* (2014) sought greater transparency. In England, one private training provider – *Teach First* (2016) - operates a competency-based teacher selection system that reflects core leadership values underpinning its training program. The online application form requires 150-word answers to difficult, but revealing questions about life achievements. Screened applicants attend a selection day that comprises an interview, role play exercise and group problem-solving task. Candidates are assessed on criteria of interaction skills, knowledge, resilience, ability to self-evaluate, planning and organizing, humility, respect and empathy, leadership and problem-solving. Only 1 in 6 is accepted, but 95% of these obtain Q.T.S. within two years, and around 56% are still teaching five years later, with many others in related work. Success in any screening process, especially a rigorous one boosts self-esteem, sense of self-efficacy and professional identity that lead not only to higher group performance, but also to commitment to the training program, accepting a teaching post and identifying education as one's career field. Free or subsidized training, too is an index of social worth. It signals that society is willing to invest in developing skills needed to do a valued job well.

'Seeking out the learner' is one of UNESCO's (2004) criteria for quality training. Whatever their demonstrated commitment, some on-course trainees may encounter personal difficulties in completing training. Personalized support offered by faculty is a key factor in persistence, especially during and subsequent to first teaching encounters where trainees see experienced successful teachers managing effectively, but doubt whether they can meet the challenge. Competency-based selection

systems, such as *Teach First* provide a basis for individualizing training, but the Open University in United Kingdom leads the field through tailoring training to needs identified from Recognition of Prior Learning (Mayes and Burgess, 2010), supporting self-selection.

In essence, then selection and admission to professional training, with on-going personalized support influences trainees' thinking about:

- Whether they possess, or want to develop personal competences and dispositions to succeed in teaching; and,
- That, like nurses they belong to a socially valued, highly trained, select professional group.

## 2.2. Context Awareness

Opening trainees' eyes to the 'story' of education bolsters professional commitment. The story highlights how compulsory schooling revealed the health of nations, fulfills moral purposes in promoting validated learning, evokes social conscience and spurs reform, creating literate societies with better life expectancies, higher standards of living, aspirations for gender equity and social justice, and an infrastructure for research and development that has shaped the modern world. It showcases teachers currently exploiting just a limited range of technologies to, nevertheless, give those privileged to be in school opportunities to unleash their unimaginable potential. However, honest story-tellers will also raise questions about continued relevance of assumptions underlying many contemporary school practices. Though education is recognized as a human right, and schools are embedded as social furniture, and important instruments of economic policy, 'de-schoolers' and others criticize fixed 'routines' that fail to exploit the potential of modern technologies and techniques, such as mobiles, video games and networking for transforming learning. Furthermore school managers face new challenges of achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century goals through developing pupils' 'transversal' skills - collaboration and team work, problem-identification and problem solving, and promoting self-regulation of life-style to address such social and moral issues as diet, drugs and cyber-security. To signal their social responsiveness, busy head teachers need to devolve responsibilities by providing colleagues with leadership, modeling and networking opportunities – a second dimension of professionalism - that go beyond classroom and school to engage with parents and community in purposeful dialogue (Alam, 2013) to promote the learning society. The final chapter in the story is forward-looking: interpreting, and planning responses to emerging trends – social, economic, technological and cultural that may shape tomorrow's world and exploring how to influence, or harness them to realize worthwhile, but controversial social visions.

In essence, then professional training can give trainees insights into past, present and future contexts and influence their thinking on:

- What society expects schools (and teachers) to achieve for all pupils, given social trends and emerging needs;
- What society expects of them in, and beyond classroom and school community; and,
- What moral purposes underlie teaching and their ethical responsibilities to all learners.

### **2.3. Subject Orientation**

Entering trainees are subject experts who face two main challenges: how to teach the syllabus effectively, and with what resources? Training provides time to study aims and objectives of the 'formal' national curriculum and to note how far its ambitious 'scope and sequence' content statements are reflected in external examination questions. Proposed curriculum changes need explained and 'boundary' and other implications discussed. 'Pedagogy' is perceived to be the essence of teacher training. Over the years most college-based components of programs in Bangladesh have incorporated 'active' learning strategies: in laboratories for languages and the sciences, micro-teaching to develop questioning and other skills, and simulations, where trainees give mini-lectures to peers, showing off newly acquired Power Point skills.

Trainees' lessons are derived from National Curriculum and Textbook Board textbooks, with assignments that provide for limited pupil-centered learning. Textbooks are supported by Teacher Guides with potential for development as 'educative curriculum materials' (Davis and Krajcik, 2004). However, the market is flooded with supplementary materials - 'notebooks' and examination papers with model answers. Training provides faculty with an opportunity to address the issue of usage. Internet access to on-line resources offers boundless possibilities assuming current, connectivity and pupil access – future possibilities for most. The current one-year Bachelor of Education program advocates use of cheap, locally available resource materials that departments stock and faculty can show trainees how to use.

Practice teaching is at the heart of training programs. When approving lesson plans, faculty and supportive teachers may draw upon their pedagogical 'content' and 'topic' knowledge (PCK/PTK) to help trainees anticipate typical pupil – and trainee! misunderstandings of main teaching points (Fisher et al., 2014). Where a skilled teacher agrees to team-teach, trainees can learn what planning and resourcing lessons really involves, feel supported in adapting teaching to assist pupils with differing

learning needs, and acquire new insights into the meaning of self-evaluation.

Advocates of teacher education reform propose interdisciplinary coursework in all programs to develop trainee understandings of local and global citizenship and sustainable development (Wisely et al, 2010). Research suggests that high-achieving graduates have 'deep' subject knowledge that enables them to better explain basic principles to pupils. In integrated programs, subject expertise guarantees authenticity of concepts and procedures from different disciplines, while it gives graduates autonomy – a third dimension of teacher professionalism - to teach advanced topics to senior pupils in their own way.

Though basing selection largely on graduate qualifications, teacher training programs invest much effort in reshaping professional identity from subject specialist to pupil-centered teacher.

In essence, then professional training can influence subject specialists by informing them:

- What quality resources can assist them to teach their subject, with adaptations for pupils at different stages with differing capabilities; and
- What place their subject has in the wider curriculum, including for inter-disciplinary studies such as sustainable development.

## **2.4. Beginning Professional Development**

Schools are familiar environments to most trainees. Most Bangladesh classrooms support the traditional 'instructional' model: a room with fixed desks for pupils who face a dais where the teacher stands before the blackboard. Environments can reflect hierarchies of power that determine pedagogies and roles: the dais signifies teacher as 'knowledge expert', physically 'above' learners; fixed desks imply pupil passivity - attention-payers who respond when instructed. Teacher 'work' follows a standard routine (Riad and Podder, 2014), with learning 'scaffolded' by textbooks: introduction, questions - perhaps, instruction, questioning, written exercise and 'correcting' – if there is time, a rarity with classes of over 30 pupils.

Though all training programs no doubt assert the importance of practicum, not all ensure that trainees participate. Those that do request head masters to ensure that trainees observe 'good models'. However, lack of monitoring against performance competency standards means that teacher quality is largely based on hearsay. Some teachers refuse to accept trainees; others stay in the classroom because they are required to, but are not prepared to offer feedback, so that trainees may have to rely on a

fellow-trainee for another opinion on effects of their teaching. Teacher Training College (TTC) faculty, overloaded with trainees typically have time for only one or two, often short and hurried supervisory visits to gauge whether trainees merit certification.

Training systems provide frameworks that assist trainees to see accepted practices through new eyes. Action Research (AR) is one such framework that enables paired trainees to study a current practice and try to improve it – such as setting group tasks for discussion after instructional teaching, and monitoring pupil take-up. Putting ideas into words in the form of a proposal, describing work undertaken and outcomes achieved introduces most trainees to new vocabulary for a challenging writing genre. For some it is their first experience of empirical research. AR gives insight into difficulties of bringing about meaningful educational change, and of finding words to capture the experience. It gives trainees status as teacher-researchers.

Teacher education programs are making renewed efforts to promote strong functional partnerships with schools. In England graduates typically spend two thirds of their training year there. Following six weeks' orientation, *Teach First* trainees achieve 'Beginner Teacher' Q.T.S. after working in selected schools for two years in teams led by expert teachers, with salary reflecting teaching load. In United States, highly rated university education programs designate selected schools as 'professional development partners' where learning scientists, in association with teachers are reconceptualizing 'teaching' as a science that exploits both andragogical and pedagogical techniques. Typically their focus is not on individual lessons but on curriculum 'units' of 3-4 class periods that are analyzed for worthwhile learning outcomes.

By a process of 'backward-mapping' (McTighe and Wiggins, 2012), teachers supported by faculty, design activities to achieve these outcomes. They engage pupils in a problem, or project central to the unit. Individually and collaboratively pupils raise questions, discuss, plan and carry out classroom-based, technologically-supported information searches, sometimes with pupils in other schools. Findings are shared, interpretations presented and debated, and conclusions drawn in plenary sessions. The teacher 'scaffolds' initial enquiries through prompts and probing questions, sets standards and ensures that rules of discourse are observed. Such pupil-centered learning environments can promote growth, not only of transversal skills, but of metacognition for learning-to-learn. Leaders of proposed Centers of Excellence for English, mathematics and sciences in Bangladesh TTC could link to such initiatives.

In essence, then compulsory professional training influences beginning professional development by informing trainees:

- About strengths and limitations of school-based teaching environments, and how best to manage them; and,
- From observing experts, how teachers can enhance pupil learning; and,
- From feedback, how to achieve 'beginner' standard in lesson planning, teaching and assessing pupils; and,
- From Action Research, challenges of describing, evaluating and advancing educational practice.

## 2.5. Factors Influencing Teaching and Learning

Trainee teachers are a learning community. Participants come from a wide range of backgrounds. Though successful learners, they may hold widely different beliefs about issues at the heart of teaching and learning: that pupils learn irrespective of the teacher, that intelligence is 'fixed', that ethnic minority pupils are inherently 'stupid' or 'lazy', or that science is too intellectual and abstract for girls, whose place really is in the home. Such beliefs may be deeply held, are rarely coherent, and perhaps only semi-conscious. They may derive from socio-cultural upbringing, peer group, personal experience in education, or media.

Faculty can surface beliefs and promote discussion about them. They may explore difficulties trainees encountered in their own learning and how they overcame them; case studies from classroom research can illuminate how curriculum and teaching, as well as situational and personal factors, such as illness can create learning difficulties that almost everyone encounters at some point in their lives. Equally, expert subject teachers can show how to challenge stereotypes. Studies of mathematics' teachers (Sfard and Cobb, 2014) suggest that inviting pupils to explain how they solved maths problems, and promoting discussion of strengths and weaknesses of different solutions effectively changes the learning environment and transforms pupils' fears to enjoyment. At the same time, deep-seated attitudes are hard to change. In Finland, trainees' beliefs are assessed on a continuous basis: resistance to evidence may result in advice to seek an alternative career.

In essence, then compulsory professional training can influence trainees to recognize:

- That learning communities hold diverse beliefs about children, teaching and learning, but that strategies exist to develop learners' potential; and,
- What factors influence pupils' capacity to learn, and appropriate responses.

## 2.6. Professional Commitment

Professional development 'partnership' schools provide trainees with opportunities beyond observing skilled teachers and receiving incisive, constructive expert feedback that develops their teaching selves. Such schools are often research and practice communities. Many staff, studying for Master and Doctoral degrees may engage trainees in discussions about their research. Their topics likely derive from partner university projects, ranging from integrating ICT into science teaching to trialing and evaluating new gaming technologies. School environments are likely to be hectic places with site-specific language – learning trajectories, micro-genetic methods, embodied design - reflecting efforts to develop a richer professional vocabulary for describing learning. 'Partnership' schools ground trainees' vision of schools as extensions to university Faculties of Education, like teaching hospitals in medicine; education practice aims to be knowledge-based and purposeful rather than inherited 'routines'. The process is two-way: professors take classes and some teacher-researchers are adjunct professors. Participants illustrate reflectiveness-in and on action: they raise, and try to answer such questions as: 'How can informal "process" learning in science be credited when external assessment systems seem to put most weight on "product" knowledge?'

The professionals leading this work – old as well as young, in both school and university, and the wider network of lifelong learners – have acquired and continue to develop a basic, and rapidly expanding professional tool-kit: experience of working with adolescents, specialist theoretical and practical subject knowledge, networks to the wider research community, expertise in a range of research techniques, and interest in talking and writing about their work, reflected in commitment to realizing the potential of fellow-professionals – career teachers as well as trainees - as agents for pupil learning. Such pre-service training initiates trainees into an emerging discourse about what teachers achieve with pupils and how to enhance it.

In essence, then compulsory professional training can influence trainees' professionalism by informing them:

- That committed, experienced teachers can assist them to learn to teach; and,
- That initial training leaves much to learn to reach expert standards, and to incorporate new technologies into teaching; and,
- What vision inspires leading professionals to want professional development to transform teaching/learning contexts to improve learning quality.

### 3. Conclusion

This paper suggests how professional training can, or might influence trainee learning for secondary teaching. Such training varies enormously in quality, yet even the most basic appears to confer knowledge that shapes professionalism. How it does so, and in what ways merits further investigation. However, compulsory training will not improve educational quality overnight, any more than joining a gymnasium and exercising every day will make one fit. Each has to be coordinated with other relevant actions. A government that makes pre-service professional training for graduates compulsory signals that it is serious about enhancing teacher quality. But real progress depends on investing in competency-based trainee selection systems, providing expert professional leadership for teacher education institutions, and ensuring teacher educators with secondary school teaching experience have qualifications, professional development opportunities, resources and freedom from bureaucratic influences to develop competency-based training programs that deliver thoughtfully developed 'Beginner Teacher' standards. In addition investment is needed in schools and teachers. Schools provide a vital social service, but must evolve if they are to meet societal expectations of shaping future generations in socially productive ways. Secondary teachers are a highly qualified group whose work is complex, multi-faceted and continuously evolving. They need, and deserve ongoing, high quality professional development. They also have a right to conditions of service that make the job viable, and material rewards similar, at least, to the average earned by graduates with equivalent qualifications in other occupations.

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# The Emerging Alphabet of Tripura Bangla: A Metrical Account

Shyamal Das<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

*In Tripura Bangla (TB), in comparison to Standard Colloquial Bangla (SCB) or Sadhu Bangla, various types of weakening of obstruents namely deaspiration, fricativization, place-change and place loss etc. take place in both prominent and non-prominent positions. Underlying aspiration of voiceless as well as voiced plosives is substituted by a high tone. In the medial position, tone occurs with voicing. Segment deletion in medial non-prominent syllable onsets is also noticed. The latter is an extreme form of weakening. Faithfulness to prosodic heads theory fails to account for such weakening. Instead, this could be because of a major ongoing wave of redistribution of features, including weakening and loss, redefining the phonemic inventory of TB. The present study looks into the relevant aspects of this restructuring phenomenon with the help of empirical evidence. A logical step would next be moving on to restating these reduction processes in more abstract terms and recasting them in the network of emerging featural redistribution characterizing language change in case of TB. There is ample evidence to presume these redistribution processes as motivated by the universal trend of moving towards the 'unmarked'.*

**Keywords:** *Tripura Bangla, (de)aspiration, fricativization, high tone, wave*

## 1. Introduction

The ternary rhythm of Tripura Bangla (TB) has been accounted for in terms of *binary* trochaic feet along with a lapse constraint. The empirical justification for trochees has been derived from the theory of prosodic licensing arguing for survival of the marked features in positions of prominence. Subsequent study has revealed a plenty of counter evidence to this stand. Weakening in strong positions as well as retention in weak positions has led to a wider survey of the segmental properties of the dialect. The present article attempts to put forth the gist of the study: a distinct property of segmental weakening has been acquired by TB

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compared to the underlying form; and that this development is in concordance with the cross linguistic trend of moving towards the less marked. In the remains of the paper section 2.0 argues for trochee as the metrical foot in TB based on the role of Positional Faithfulness/Prosodic Licensing. The subsection 2.1 offers a reformulated anti-lapse constraint. The unit 2.2. justifies the selection of trochee as the TB metrical foot. In section 3. the scholar argues against the role of Prosodic Licensing in TB. The subsection 3.1. offers evidence for weakening in strong positions. 3.2. deals with licensing of marked elements in the non-prominent positions both foot internal and foot external. Finally the paper winds up the major findings in Conclusion in 4.

## 2. Trochee based on the role of Prosodic Licensing

### 2.1. Reformulated Anti-lapse Constraint

TB has a marked metrical pattern i.e. a ternary rhythm with stress falling on every third non-final syllable after the initial main stress in words of minimally five light syllables. It has been accounted for in terms of *binary* trochees with rightward iteration. A novel constraint \*LAPSE(DE) plays a crucial role in explaining the presence of three weak beats on the right edge of words of  $3n+1$  i.e. four and seven light syllables. Relevant data are quoted below from Das (2001).

(1) a. (bá.ta.) <u>sa</u>	‘type of candy’
b. (á.na.) <u>ba</u> .di	‘uncultivable’
c. (á.ʃɔ.)hɔ.(zù.gi)	‘non-cooperative’
d. (á.ʃɔ.)hɔ.(zù.gi.)ta	‘non-cooperation’
e. (á.no.)nu.(kɔ.ro.) <u>ni</u> .yo	‘inimitable’
f. (á.no.)nu.(kɔ.ro.)ni.(yɔ.ta)	‘inimitability’

Previously Elenbaas and Kager (1999) proposed an anti-lapse constraint as below:

(2) \* LAPSE

Every weak beat must be adjacent to a strong beat or the word-edge.

This constraint can explain the ternary rhythm in words of 3, 5, 6, and 8 syllable words in (1). But \*LAPSE fails to account for 4 and 7 syllable sequences. To accommodate the latter Das (2001) reformulates the anti-lapse constraint as (3).

(3) \* LAPSE (DE)

Every weak beat must be adjacent to either a *directional foot-edge* or word edge.

DE therefore signifies the right edge of a foot and the edge of the word *on the right* for TB. As foot edge and word edge act as licensors of weak beats, the underlined syllables in (1b) and (1e) are logically accounted for in terms of constraint ranking. (3) also produces the other observed facts of TB noted in (1). Foot internal weak beats are implicitly licensed by the strong beat within the foot and hence the latter need not be mentioned separately in the new anti-lapse constraint qua Das (2001).

## 2.2. Why Trochée?

Ternary feet are very rare and marked across languages. So, binary feet are preferred over ternary feet. The former are divided into two types: trochée and iambs. Once again, trochees are very common in natural languages. The first major evidence for trochaic foot in TB is provided by its obligatory word initial main stress in light syllable sequences followed by rightward iterative scansion. The corpus data of TB support this prosodic stand. Additionally, that this is not a theory-driven exigency can be reinforced by resorting to the principles of Prosodic Licensing or Positional Faithfulness.

Underlying segments with marked features are licensed only in the prosodically strong positions like stressed syllables, onsets, word edges, root initial syllables, foot heads etc. In the weak or non-privileged positions such marked features weaken to relatively unmarked ones: maximum weakening is deletion. Amongst the marked features noted across languages are voicing, aspiration, place/manner specifications etc. etc. “Processes of weakening may be subsumed under two heads namely, the loss of marked feature specifications such as voicing, aspiration, place specification or even the loss of an entire segment, and lenition, exemplifying processes such as voicing, spirantization and sonorization.” (Vijayakrishnan 1999) Converse of weakening is licensing of marked features in strong positions.

TB trochees demonstrate instances of both licensing and weakening in designated prosodic positions. Velar stops and aspirates are disfavored in this variety of Bangla. But there is an asymmetry in their distribution determined by prosodic positions. Following data illustrate this.

Foot type: (σ σ) (CV.CV)

(4)

a. ka.ka → ka.ha ‘uncle’	b. ka.ki → ka.hi ‘uncle’s wife’
c. bā.ka → b̥e.ha ‘curved’	d. t̥a.ka → t̥e.ha ‘money’
e. r̥e.kʰa → r̥e.ha ‘line/a name’	f. kʰu.ɖa → kʰi.ɖa ‘hunger’
g. mu.kʰa → mu.ha ‘lid’	h. kʰa.ki → kʰa.hi ‘grey’

i. go.ru → go.ru 'cow/bull'	j. qā.ja → ga.za 'marijuana'
k. ru.gi → ru.gi 'patient'	l. r̥.ga → r̥.ha 'REGA'
m. t̥a.ga.da → t̥a.ha.da 'urgency'	n. g̥o.ra → go.ra/gu.ra 'horse'
o. g̥ɔ.ja → gɔ.ja 'scratch'	p. bi.g̥a → bi.ga 'unit of land'

Voiceless unaspirated velar stop k is licensed in the stressed syllable of a (word initial) trochee (4a-b); in the foot internal weak syllable k weakens to h (4c-d). Voiced velars also enjoy the same privilege: allowed in syllable onsets both in the stressed and unstressed ones (4i-k). Two rare examples of g → h (4l, m) agree with the general trend noted in respect of k → h in unstressed syllable!

Voiceless velar aspirates also are unlincensed in foot internal non-prominent syllables and hence they reduce to *placeless* (glottal?) fricative h (4e, g). The converse is true in case of the segment in prominent place (4f, h). Voicing and aspiration combination in all places is strictly prohibited in TB compared to the UR form compatible with SCB (4n-p).

Additional examples illustrating this account based on prosodic licensing are also provided by sequences of three light syllables.

Foot type: (ᬁ.ᬁ.)ᬁ (CV.CV.)CV

(5)

a. pᬁ.tᬁ.ka → pᬁ.tᬁ.ha 'flag'	b. ε.ka.ki → ε.ha.hi 'alone'
c. ε.lᬁ.ka → ε.lᬁ.ha 'area'	d. ca.lᬁ.ki → sa.lᬁ.hi 'cunningness'
e. boi.jᬁ.kᬁ.i → boi.jᬁ.hi 'a name'	f. bi.ʃᬁ.kᬁ.a → bi.ʃᬁ.ha 'a name'

Unfooted as well as unstressed syllable onsets also attest weakening of k, k<sup>h</sup> → h.

Beside velars, labials also undergo weakening in prosodically weak positions -- unstressed as well as unfooted. The following TB words illustrate this observation.

(6)

a. bᬁ.pa.ri → bᬁ.ha.ri 'trader'	b. su.pa.ri → su.ha.ri 'beetle nut'
c. su.pa.rif → su.ha.rif 'recommendation'	d. u.pᬁ.re → u.hᬁ.re 'above'
e. go.lᬁ.pi → gu.lᬁ.hi 'pink'	f. a.lᬁ.pi → a.lᬁ.ɸi/a.lᬁ.hi 'conveyer of marriage proposal'

Additional support for prosodic licensing of marked elements in stressed initial syllable onset is supplied by the grammar of vowel distribution. TB vowel system consists of five vowels in underived words: /i, ε, a, ɔ, u/. The two mid vowels /e, o/ found in SCB/Sadhu Bangla are not attested.

This is in agreement with the universal preference for lesser use of the vertical points for mid vowels and greater dispersion among vocalic segments for greater salience. Presence of /e/ is mainly dependent upon a high vowel in the following syllable.

(7)

a. eli	'whining'	b. zedu	'father's elder brother'
c. besi	'much'	d. lezur	'tail'
e. bedji	'woman'	f. kelu	'SCB' (derogatory)

Besides, there are very few underived words with final e in TB.

(8)

a. ke	'who'	b. te	'he, familiar'
c. ze	'who'	d. he	's/he'
e. de	'give/surname'	f. ne	'take'

These words perhaps exhaust the list of monomorphemes with final /e/.

In sum, the use of /e/ as an independent phoneme is very restrictive, limited to the word initial stressed syllable. It is never used in unstressed weak positions in underived words. One thus can treat this as a crucial piece of evidence in favor of prosodic licensing determining the location for retention of marked segments, and deletion otherwise.

Similarly /o/ is attested in word initial syllables which bear stress. Otherwise ɔ is the popular choice. bo 'bride' is perhaps the only underived *content* word with final /o/. In the non-final position occurrence of /o/ is primarily conditioned by the presence of a succeeding high vowel.

(9)

a. nod	'river'	b. nodi	'river'
c. god	'routine'	d. godi	'cushion'
e. gor	'home'	f. gori	'watch'

/o/ is accepted as a nucleus if it occurs in the initial syllable irrespective of the presence or quality of the vowel in the following syllable, if any.

(10)

sok	'eye'	tola	'unit of weight'	gola	'granary'
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In this section I have argued in favor of prosodic licensing being solely responsible for allowing marked features/segments in the prominent positions i.e. stressed syllables within an initial trochee in TB. Weakening takes place in non-prominent positions.

This is not the whole story however. Prosodic licensing or positional faithfulness is not the sole determinant of licensing or weakening of features or segments. Consider the discussion in the following section.

### 3. Arguing against the role of Prosodic Licensing

#### 3.1. Weakening in Strong Positions

The claim of prosodic licensing for ensuring the survival of 'difficult'/marked features or segments in the prominent positions within a foot/word suddenly takes a back seat as soon as we come across TB words of the following mono- and disyllabic types. In these words (11-15) weakening of underlying forms take place even in the foot head i.e. the left most syllable onset. This time obstruents of diverse kind undergo feature loss of various types contrary to the dicta of prosodic licensing. Monosyllables, monomorphemes are also noted to illustrate the weakening processes: they are assumed to constitute a trochee qua Das (2001, 2011).

Foot type: (᳚) CV, (᳚᳚) CV.CV

(11)  $p \rightarrow \phi$ ,  $p^h \rightarrow \phi^h/\check{\phi}$ ,  $b \rightarrow \beta$  (optional)

a. $pap \rightarrow \phi a \phi$ 'sin'	b. $pit^h a \rightarrow \phi i \check{d}a$ 'cake'
c. $pū̄ti \rightarrow \phi u \check{d}i$ 'kind of fish'	d. $puli \rightarrow \phi uli$ 'cake type'
e. $pan \rightarrow \phi an$ 'beetle leaf'	f. $peti \rightarrow \phi e \check{d}i$ 'carton'
g. $p^h ul \rightarrow \phi^h/\check{\phi}ul$ 'flower'	h. $p^h \check{a}pa \rightarrow \phi^h/\check{\phi}a \phi a$ 'hollow'
i. $p^h \check{a}na \rightarrow \phi^h/\check{\phi}na$ 'snake's hood'	j. $baba \rightarrow \beta a \beta a$ 'daddy'
k. $boba \rightarrow \beta o \beta a$ 'dumb'	l. $bina \rightarrow \beta ina$ 'musical instrument'

The labial stops, both voiced and voiceless, weaken by spirantization whether they occur in the strong or weak positions. Voiceless aspirates tend to lose the feature [spread glottis] replaced by a High tone (᳚) (cf.11g-i). Voicing and aspiration never co-occur in an obstruent in TB. Palatal plosives get neutralized to alveolar fricatives in TB. Voicing remains intact. Voiceless aspirates supplant aspiration by incorporating a High tone, once again. These weakening take place irrespective of the position of occurrence of the host obstruent. (cf.12)

Foot type: (᳚) CV, (᳚᳚) CV.CV

(12)  $c \rightarrow s$ ,  $c^h \rightarrow \check{s}$ ,  $j \rightarrow z$

a. $cal \rightarrow sail$ 'rice'	b. $cini \rightarrow sini$ 'sugar'
c. $caci \rightarrow sasi$ 'uncle's wife'	d. $c^h ani \rightarrow \check{s}ani$ 'cataract'
e. $c^h u \check{t}i \rightarrow \check{s}u \check{d}i$ 'leave'	f. $mac^h i \rightarrow ma \check{s}i$ 'fly'

g. *jama* → *zama* ‘shirt’  
j. *moja* → *moza* ‘fun/joy’

i. *jadu* → *zađu* ‘magic’

Dental plosives demonstrate a very restricted application of the weakening processes under discussion. Only the voiceless aspirates optionally give up aspiration and a High tone enters the scene. Voiced aspirates are never attested in this variety of Bangla: underlying voiced aspirates lose aspiration in all positions and the High tone takes its place (13g-i). *Aspiration is nearly wiped out of TB*. Once again, deaspiaction tends to take place in both strong and weak locales (cf.13).

Foot type: (᳚) CV, (᳚᳚) CV.CV

(13)  $t^h \rightarrow \dot{t}$  (optionally attested in foot heads; in non-head it is a must);  $d^h \rightarrow \dot{d}$  everywhere

a. $t^hala \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \dot{t}al$ ‘dish’	b. $t^h\acute{e}kna \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \acute{e}kna$ ‘thrashing’
c. $t^hana \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \acute{f}ana$ ‘police station’	
d. $ma\acute{t}h'a \rightarrow ma\acute{f}a$ ‘head’	e. $be\acute{t}h'a \rightarrow \beta\acute{e}ta$ ‘ache’
f. $me\acute{t}^h'i \rightarrow me\acute{f}i$ ‘fenugreek’	
g. $ga\acute{d}^h'a \rightarrow ga\acute{d}a$ ‘ass’	h. $ad\acute{h}a \rightarrow a\acute{d}a$ ‘half’
i. $da\acute{h}an \rightarrow da\acute{d}an$ ‘paddy’	

The same holds true for the retroflex plosives. Both voiceless and voiced retroflexes stand immune to any weakening processes. Voiced aspirates are not accepted. Voiceless ones *optionally* reduce to non-aspirates word initially, and as compensation a High tone emerges (14a-c). Locale of occurrence has no definitive role to play (cf. 14). In the non-stressed syllable the non-aspirated stops acquire voicing plus high tone perhaps through voicing assimilation with the flanking vowels (14d-f). Why word medially high tone coexists with voicing needs further investigation.

Foot type: (᳚) CV, (᳚᳚) CV.CV

(14)  $t^h \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \dot{t}$ , (intervocally  $\dot{d}$ ),  $d^h \rightarrow \dot{d}$  (everywhere)

a. $t^hakur \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \dot{t}ahur$	‘priest’	b. $t^hika \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \acute{t}iha$	‘buttress’
c. $t^hela \rightarrow \dot{t}^h/ \acute{f}ela$	‘push’		
d. $mi\acute{t}h'a \rightarrow mi\acute{d}a$	‘sweet’	e. $la\acute{t}^h'i \rightarrow la\acute{d}i$	‘stick’
f. $at\acute{h}a \rightarrow a\acute{d}a$	‘glue’		
g. $da\acute{h}ak \rightarrow da\acute{d}ak$	‘drum’	h. $da\acute{h}il \rightarrow da\acute{d}il$	‘stone throw’
i. $da\acute{h}aka \rightarrow da\acute{d}aka$	‘Dhaka’		

Further instances proving the irrelevance of prominent positions or prosodic heads as licensors of marked features/segments in TB can be noted in the following. Post alveolar fricative /Σ/ neutralizes to /h/ in the putative strong position i.e. the stressed syllable onset in a word initial trochee whether interpreted moraically (15a-b) or syllabically (15c-f). Ultimate form of weakening is segment deletion (15g-h). In both prominent and non-prominent positions (syllables) weakening takes place, although to different extents.

Foot type: (σ) CV, (σσ) CVCV

(15)  $\int \rightarrow h, \emptyset$

- a.  $\int_{ak} \rightarrow h_{ag}$  'leafy vegetable'
- b.  $\int_{al} \rightarrow h_{al}$  'thorn'
- c.  $\int_{u\bar{t}a} \rightarrow h_{u\bar{t}a}$  'thread'
- d.  $\int_{anai} \rightarrow hanai$  'musical instrument'
- e.  $\int_{ala} \rightarrow hala$  'wife's younger brother'
- f.  $\int_{u\bar{t}ki} \rightarrow hu\bar{t}ki$  'dry fish'
- g.  $\int_{mu\bar{a}} \rightarrow mua$  'mother's sister's husband'
- h.  $\int_{di\bar{a}} \rightarrow dia$  'sense of direction'

Thus the TB data in this section establish that weakening of obstruents --- deaspiration, fricativization, place-change and place loss --- take place in both prominent and non-prominent positions. Underlying aspiration of voiceless as well as voiced plosives is substituted by a high tone. In the medial position tone occurs with voicing. Segment deletion in medial non-prominent syllable onsets is also noticed. The latter is an extreme form of weakening.

### 3.2. Foot Internal and Foot External Position

In the preceding two sections it has been observed that the marked features get weakened or deleted in both heads and non-heads of foot in TB. While this is the overall trend in the phonology of the language variety under discussion, the implication stands that the marked features will not *at all* be attested in the in the non-prominent positions both foot internal and/or foot external. The present section is therefore devoted to surveying for relevant data to the contrary if available i.e. finding evidence of licensing in non-prominent positions *outside foot*.

Summarizing the core features of the metrical phonology of TB Das (2001:167) observes that feet in TB are characterized by three properties discussed as below.

- a) "...feet are disyllabic troches; b) feet are never ternary; and c) a (heavy) monosyllabic foot is always terminal. Assumption (a) means the range of possible foot shapes (trochees) in TB include ('HL), ('HH), ('LL). The anti-trochaic combination ('LH) is permitted only in disyllables owing to the undominated restriction

against word final primary prominence (NON-FIN). Assumption (b) states that the maximal size of the foot in TB is binary which is obviously fulfilled at the syllabic level. Assumption (c) implies that the occurrence of a (heavy) monosyllabic foot is always restricted to the word final position as in ('LL) ( 'H). The question how this monosyllabic foot is going to fulfill the requirement of maximal foot construction (by proposing a catalectic syllable at the right edge of the PrWd or through any other means) is a debatable issue ...”.

Disyllables of ('LL) type have already been surveyed and it has been found that marked features undergo weakening mainly in the non-stressed syllables; but weakening also takes place in the stressed word initial syllables (cf. 11-15). In light trisyllables too the final syllable permits  $\kappa$ ,  $\kappa\text{h}$   $\rightarrow$   $\eta$  weakening (cf. 5). The following data illustrate the issue in respect of ('HL) and ('HH) trochees.

(16) Foot type: (σσ) CVC.CV ( 'HL)

a. kāk̥a → (kér.ha)/(kéx.ra) 'crab'	b. t̥elka → (t̥él.ha) 'oily'
c. c̥orka → (sór.ha) 'wheel'	
d. p̥al̥tu → (p̥h/φál.tu) 'baseless'	e. kamla → (xám.la) 'laborer'
f. ʃ̥orka → (ʃór.ha) 'orts'	
g. sapla → (háp.la) 'water lily'	h. jabra → (záb.ra) 'garbage'
i. jibra → (zíb.ra) 'tongue'	

(17) Foot type: (σσ) CVC.CVC ( 'HH)

a. kakr̥ol → (xár.hol) 'vegetable type'	b. pánðeb → (φáñ.ðeb)/(hán.ðeb) ‘a name’
c. ʃ̥orkar → (ʃór.har) 'government'	d. ʃindur → (hín.ður) 'vermillion'
e. cóncol → (són.sol) 'restless'	f. jónjal → (zón.zal) 'garbage'

The metrical pattern of LH foot agrees with the data in ('HL), ('HH) and ('LL) in that the primary prominence is placed on the word initial light syllable since the heavy syllable H, despite being heavy, and hence capable of attracting stress (by WSP), fails to do so because of the overriding constraint NON-FIN. The latter prohibits final primary prominence. (18) Illustrates this.

(18) Foot type: (σσ) CV.CVC (LH) UR → TB

k → h, k<sup>h</sup> → h +/-high tone

- a. ca.kor → (sa.hər) ‘servant’
- b. ſokal → (ʃə.hal) ‘morning’
- c. bikal → (bi.hal) ‘afternoon’
- d. ſaikəl → (sai.həl) ‘bicycle’
- e. rak<sup>h</sup>al → (ra.hal) ‘shepherd/a name’
- f. nik<sup>h</sup>il → (ni.hil) ‘a name’
- g. mak<sup>h</sup>on → (ma.hən) ‘butter/a name’

Further evidence in favor of non-prominent syllable failing to license the marked features can be derived from the following words.

(19) Foot type: (σσ) CV.CVC (LH) UR = TB

p → h, p<sup>h</sup> → h/ɸ +/-High tone

- a. kopal → (kó.hal) ‘fate/forehead’
- b. gopal → (go.hal) ‘a name/Lord Krishna’
- c. bipəd → (bi.həd) ‘danger/ ill luck’
- d. ɸupur → (du.hur) ‘noon’
- e. tripal → (ti.hal) ‘tarpaulin’
- f. upaʃ → (u.haʃ) ‘fast’
- g. tʊphən → (tu.hən) ‘storm’
- h. ɸap<sup>h</sup>ail → (tá.hail)/(ta.ɸáil)  
‘arrogance’
- i. ɸap<sup>h</sup>at → ɸaɸáat ‘distance’
- j. ɸapət → (dá.hət) ‘sway/prowess’

Weakening of the voiceless plosives k, kh and p in non-prominent positions have already been discussed with evidence in foot internal unstressed syllables. Similarly the underlying marked features constituting these segments are also unattested in the foot external final light syllables in (cf.5-6) in words like the following (repeated).

(20)

- a. ca.la.ki → (sá.la).hi ‘cunningness’
- b. boi.ʃa.k<sup>h</sup>i → (bói.ʃa).hi ‘a name’
- c. go.la.pi → (gú.la).hi ‘pink’
- d. a.la.pi → (á.la).ɸi/(á.la).hi  
‘conveyer of marriage proposal’

The retroflex and dental plosives in general resist any feature reduction. But in foot internal onset they tend to lose aspiration: laɸ<sup>h</sup>i → laɸi ‘stick’, aʈ<sup>h</sup>a → aʈa ‘glue’; maʈ<sup>h</sup>a → maʈa ‘head’, beʈ<sup>h</sup>a → βeʈa ‘ache’, meʈ<sup>h</sup>i → meʈi ‘fenugreek’. In unfooted word final light syllable also t<sup>h</sup> loses aspiration: təmaʈ<sup>h</sup>a → (té.ma).ta ‘tri-junction’, kukəʈ<sup>h</sup>a → (kú.xə).ta ‘foul talk’ (High tone appears on the syllable which host the aspiration in the underlying form). No such instances could be found for aspirated retroflex. Our hunch is however that no licensing of underlying aspiration is attested here as illustrated by the hypothetical sequence: CV' .CV. t<sup>h</sup> V → (CV≡.CV). t<sup>h</sup>V.

In the prosodically strong position i.e. initial stressed syllable of a trochee the alveo-palatal fricative  $\zeta$  is found to neutralize to  $h$  (a canonical placeless fricative) (cf.15):  $\text{sala} \rightarrow \text{hala}$  ‘wife’s younger brother’,  $\text{ſutki} \rightarrow \text{huſki}$  ‘dry fish’,  $\text{ſuſa} \rightarrow \text{huſa}$  ‘thread’ etc. In extreme case, in the unstressed syllable  $\zeta$  deletes:  $\text{muſa} \rightarrow \text{mua}$  ‘mother’s sister’s husband’,  $\text{diſa} \rightarrow \text{dia}$  ‘sense of direction’ etc. In other words it can be concluded that both in stressed and unstressed syllable onsets  $\zeta$  loses its underlying place feature. But there are plenty of instances where this weakening is strictly

(21)  $\zeta \rightarrow \zeta; *h$

a. $\text{ſoja} \rightarrow (\text{ſu}.za)$ ‘straight’	b. $\text{ſida} \rightarrow (\text{ſi}.da)$ ‘straight’
c. $\text{neſa} \rightarrow (\text{ni}.ſa)$ ‘intoxication’	d. $\text{maſi} \rightarrow (\text{ma}.ſi)$ ‘mom’s sister’
e. $\text{amaſa} \rightarrow (\text{a.ma.})ſa$ ‘dysentery’	f. $\text{hameſa} \rightarrow (\text{ha}.ma.))ſa$ ‘often’
g. $\text{gorimoſi} \rightarrow (\text{go}.ri.)mo.ſi$ ‘idleness’	
h. $\text{protibeſi} \rightarrow (\text{po}.ti.)be.ſi$ ‘neighbor’	

Pending further research in this dual behavior of  $\zeta$  it can be deduced for now that  $\zeta$  largely retains its underlying features both in the lexically prominent and non-prominent positions. Positional faithfulness or faithfulness to prosodic heads does not have any role to play. This could be because of a major ongoing wave of redistribution of features including weakening and loss redefining the phonemic inventory of TB. In the preceding two sections we have looked into the relevant aspects of this restructuring phenomenon with the help of empirical evidence. A logical step next would be moving on to restating these reduction processes in more abstract terms and recasting them in the network of emerging featural redistribution characterizing language change in case of TB.

#### 4. Conclusion

Under duress of moving towards the unmarked TB alphabet demonstrates consonant weakening of various types resulting in deletion of marked features like aspiration, voicing, and the coexistence of the two, plosiveness, replacement of peripheral places of articulation like labial and velar by coronal (alveolar) etc. Though appears tempting initially, closer inspection reveals the irrelevance of the claim of prominent positions or prosodic heads as licensors of marked features. For instance, post alveolar fricative  $\zeta$  neutralizes to  $h$  in the putative strong position i.e. the stressed syllable onset in a word initial trochee whether interpreted moraically or syllabically. Ultimate form of weakening is segment deletion (15g-h). In both prominent and non-prominent positions (i.e. syllables) weakening takes place, although to different extents. The major points of segmental

weakening giving rise to a new set of consonants in TB are recapped as follows. Weakening in terms of:

**a) Relocation of Place of articulation (movement towards the coronal)**

- Palatal plosives move to coronal (alveolar) region:  $\text{c}, \text{c}^h \rightarrow \text{s}, \acute{\text{s}}$ ;  $\text{j}, \text{j}^h \rightarrow \text{z}, \acute{\text{z}}$  [’ = High tone]
- (Velars and labials retain their place of articulation.)
- (Retroflexes and dentals, and post alveolars, being coronals, do not move.)
- Voiceless labial and velars fricativize:  $\text{p} \rightarrow \phi, \text{k} \rightarrow \chi$ ; they also lose their place features when non-initial and neutralize to h.

**b) Manner of articulation**

- Palatal stops weaken to fricatives:  $\chi, \text{cH} \rightarrow \sigma, \sigma'$ ;  $\phi, \text{φH} \rightarrow \zeta, \zeta'$ . [’ = High tone]
- Voiceless labial and velar stops fricativize:  $\text{p} \rightarrow \div, \text{k} \rightarrow \xi$
- Post alveolar fricative neutralizes to  $\text{ʃ}$ .

**c) Phonation**

- voiced aspirated plosives lose aspiration:  $\text{b}^h, \text{d}^h, \text{g}^h, \text{d}^h, \text{j}^h \rightarrow \text{b}, \text{d}, \text{g}, \text{d}, \text{z}$ . [d. retroflex ]
- Voiceless velar deaspirate and fricativize non-initially:  $\text{k}^h \rightarrow \text{x}, \acute{\text{x}}$ ; (subsequently reduce to h);  $\text{k}^h$  but remains initially.
- Voiceless labial deaspirate and fricativize non-initially:  $\text{p}^h \rightarrow \phi$ ; (subsequently reduce to h); but  $\phi^h$  initially.
- palatals deaspirate (and acquire High tone.): [  $\text{c}, \text{c}^h \rightarrow \text{s}, \acute{\text{s}}$ ;  $\text{j}, \text{j}^h \rightarrow \text{z}, \acute{\text{z}}$  ] [’ = High tone]
- Voiceless dentals optionally deaspirate initially:  $\text{t}^h \rightarrow \text{t}, \acute{\text{t}} / \text{t}^h$  elsewhere obligatorily.
- Voiceless retroflexes optionally deaspirate initially:  $\text{t}^h \rightarrow \text{t}, \acute{\text{t}} / \text{t}^h$ ; elsewhere obligatorily
- voiceless retroflexes aspirated/unaspirated undergo lenition and acquire voice and High tone intervocally:  $\text{t}, \text{t}^h \rightarrow \text{d}$  between two vowels. Loss of aspiration is compensated by a High tone across the board.

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# **Learner Involvement in English Language Speaking Practices**

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*Biplob Mallick*<sup>†</sup>

## **Abstract**

*Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced to class six in 1996 and then to other classes of secondary level on an incremental basis. CLT supportive textbooks were written and taught for more than one-and-a-half decades but the school leavers' performance in English especially in speaking was not considered satisfactory. The study experimented if continuous speaking practices in the classrooms enabled learners to speak English. In order to do that, speaking intervention was given to 40 ninth graders of two schools in Faridpur Town. Before giving intervention to the experimental groups, a speaking test was administered to all the 40 respondents; after every month of intervention, the respondents' speaking skill was tested and the scores were recorded; and at the end of the sixth month of teaching in the classrooms three days a week, a post-test of speaking skill was given to the respondents with the same set of questions. Moreover, observation, interview, and a questionnaire survey were administered to the respondents. The study revealed that the continuous practices had positive impact on developing students' speaking skills; and a friendly teaching-learning environment enabled students to speak English confidently. The study also revealed that an arrangement of credit to speaking skills could enhance speaking practices in and outside the classroom.*

**Keywords:** *CLT, secondary level, controlled and experimental groups, speaking test*

## **1. Introduction**

The government of Bangladesh is conscious of the ever-growing needs for fluency in English language around the world. As a result,

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communicative English language teaching was introduced to secondary level of education in 1996. Although communicative language teaching (CLT) was introduced to class six in 1996, it was introduced to other classes of secondary level on an incremental basis. The government also renovated the English textbooks in consistence with CLT approach with a view to making the students expert in the four basic skills of English language. CLT curriculum was being implemented at secondary level since then. But, the oral-aural skills of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) passed learners were considered below the expectations probably because of the fact that CLT approaches were not properly practised in the classrooms. Suchana (2010) found that CLT was partially practised in Bangladesh secondary classrooms; the study of Suchana revealed that these oral-aural skills were not usually practised with added importance as those two skills were assessed neither in schools nor in the SSC examinations although the curriculum document published in 1995 gave the English teachers as well as the schools mandate to assess listening and speaking skills through formative assessment. On the contrary, teachers attached importance to reading and writing skills only as students had to sit for examinations in those two areas of the English language. Therefore, the teachers and the students had shown more interest to score higher marks in the examinations that insisted them to practise only reading and writing skills. As a result, learners' grades in English in the SSC examinations were not reflected in the everyday use of English.

Proper use of CLT approaches not only help to be skilled in the four language skills but also encourage the students and the teachers to practise and learn English as a foreign or international language. An innovative way of using CLT in classroom can remove learners' fear of speaking English, can make a learner creative, and proficient in English making them confident in their everyday oral communication home and abroad. Moreover, proper use of CLT makes classrooms learner-centered and thus, they can achieve oral communicative competence in English exonerating learners from memorizing grammatical rules and structures.

A study conducted by Ufier (2015) at Oklahoma University revealed that there was a strong and positive effect of English language abilities on income and export of a country. In order to boost economy, Bangladesh badly needs English language skills. Another study in India by Azam, Chin, and Prakash (2011) revealed that people fluent in English earned 43% higher than those who did not know English. The report also indicated that English fluency had strong competitive advantage when seeking jobs especially in private companies and foreign affairs in government of Bangladesh. In order to sustain and continue the on-going progress smoothly, Bangladesh needs to develop overall English language skills of her people because along with the increased use of technology,

the number of English speaking population is a key indicator determining the rate of economic growth of a country.

Podder (2012) alleged that the ambitious students had to go to the British Council or to other English language learning centers to cover the lacking of English language although this lacking could have been made up in schools if the teachers taught properly using the CLT approaches and techniques. NCTB (1995) expected that the students would be able to speak English and understand when others spoke it. In order to fulfill this expectation, it is assumed that allocating some marks for speaking skills could work positively as Brown (2004) claimed that assessment system very often dictates the classroom practices.

## **2. Background of the Study**

As an international language English requires more attention to achieve fluency in speaking in schools because most of the students feel anxiety in speaking compared to other skills such as reading, writing, and listening (Juana & Palak, 2011). In Bangladesh, English is a compulsory subject in secondary schools but it is not taught in schools as a foreign language (Rahman & Mahmud, 2010), and they follow traditional grammar translation method ignoring listening and speaking skills by both teachers and students (Suchana, 2010). Therefore, the students do not have enough English speaking and listening opportunities in Bangladesh (Karim & Zaman, 2006). However, the classroom is the only place where students get opportunity to practise speaking in English (Juana & Palak, 2011).

Moreover, the students are inspired neither by teachers nor by family members to speak English although the curriculum and the textbooks support communicative approach which can make students proficient in speaking if practised properly in classroom teaching. A study by Podder (2007) showed that the classroom practice was not going on following the textbooks. Hossen (2008) claimed that most teachers used the grammar translation method in teaching English and faced difficulty to engage learners in speaking activities. He also found that the teachers used their own style in teaching English ignoring the CLT approach. Most teachers spoke Bangla in teaching English and teachers spoke most of the times minimizing students' language practice opportunities. Students remain almost passive in the classrooms and memorize answers at home to pass the examinations rather than learning to communicate in English. Rozina and Zulfeqar (2012) stated that although in some schools teachers sometimes used English in teaching the target language, most of the time they translated the text into Bangla so that students could easily understand the topic ruining students' opportunity to practise English. However, as per the curriculum expectations, it was expected that teachers would use English properly in the classrooms so that the students were able to speak

English naturally through continuous practices as teachers' approaches are important in teaching a foreign language (Suchana, 2010). The intensive use of English in the classrooms both by teachers and students can produce congenial environment where students themselves can attain fluency in speaking English.

### **3. Research Questions**

The study posed the following research questions: Can speaking practices in the classrooms improve learners' oral skill? How can learners' fear of speaking English be reduced? And, what can ensure English speaking practice in the classrooms as well as in the school campuses?

### **4. Methodology**

The study was experimental in nature and it employed teaching intervention, questionnaire survey, observation, and interview methods. The degree of progress was analyzed comparing post-test results with that of the pre-test although the progress of the respondents of the experimental groups were tested every month with the same set of questions. The intervention was provided after conducting pre-test and it was continued for six months. The researchers taught English following the school syllabus, English for Today book, and class routine in presence of the concerned English teachers three times a week in each school. They followed communicative approaches of teaching English.

The ninth grade students were selected as participants of the study. In consideration of time and capability of the researchers, only forty students were interviewed with a set of 10 questions in both pre-test and post-test. The respondents were selected randomly through randomly. There was an experimental and a controlled group in each school. However, the intervention was provided to all the learners of the sections from which participants were selected to give intervention. Respondents' participation in all the classroom activities conducted was ensured through monitoring and observation by the two researchers; it was possible as the researchers were two in number, and the regular English teacher was present during the teaching intervention. A set of ten questions for pre- and post- tests were selected from the questions previously developed by a group of English language teacher educators and secondary English teachers in a workshop organized by TQI-SEP to test speaking skills of students of that level.

### **5. Findings and Discussions**

The findings of the study are presented aligning with the research questions. The findings show that the proper application of CLT

approaches improves students' speaking skill; teachers' friendly behaviours and creating English speaking environment help practise English speaking; and inclusion of speaking in assessment can compel students to speak English. The findings of the study are as follows:

### 5.1. Oral Practices for Improving Speaking Skills

The study revealed that the regular practices of CLT in classroom teaching improved students' speaking skill significantly. The comparison between pre-test and post-test results showed that CLT helped students perform better than those who were taught traditionally using the grammar translation method. The two experimental groups, the researchers provided intervention in, achieved remarkably higher scores than controlled groups (see the tables 1 and 2 below). The findings suggested that the regular exercise of CLT approach increased students' vocabulary and helped acquiring fluency in speaking. The following tables show the gradual development of learners' speaking skill.

Table 1: (Boys): Experimental Group

SL	Pre-test	Test result at the end of each month					Post-test
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	48	55	61	64	70	76	79
2	49	52	57	63	68	75	88
3	40	48	54	59	63	72	76
4	52	56	64	73	73	79	83
5	49	54	59	65	65	73	78
6	53	64	69	79	79	86	91
7	41	49	54	64	64	67	73
8	49	58	62	71	71	75	83
9	47	51	58	72	72	77	81
10	50	53	62	73	73	78	85
AVG (%)	47.8						81.7

At the beginning of the intervention, participants were hesitating speaking English because of lack of confidence. They alleged that they were not habituated in English speaking and English instruction. All the respondents alleged that their teacher taught English in Bangla. However, the learners gained confidence gradually in speaking as the researchers motivated them to speak English and from the friendly attitudes of the researchers and their skillful teaching using CLT. The students were made aware of using simple, compound, complex sentences and chunks of sentences in speaking and they were found speaking English although some of their English was grammatically incorrect. Being encouraged by the researchers, the learners started using everyday English such as 'good morning', 'good afternoon', 'how are you?', 'of course', 'not at all', 'could

you please repeat?’, ‘What do you mean?’, ‘Is it right?’, ‘Good to see you’ , ‘see you later’, and so on.

The post-test mean score for girls of the experimental group was 86.3 which was significantly higher than their pre-test mean score 50.40. The increase in score from pre-test to post test was about 36%. In contrast, the score of the boys’ experimental group made an enormous difference between pre-test and post-test results being 47.8 and 81.7 respectively (table 1 above). This result suggested that the CLT approach had significantly positive impact (34%) in developing speaking ability of the students.

Table 2: (Girls) Experimental Group

SL	Pre-test	In between pre and post-test in every end of the month					Post-test
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	52	60	60	65	72	76	87
2	44	55	60	68	76	81	86
3	40	46	56	64	70	75	79
4	56	61	66	69	75	78	84
5	53	58	61	68	72	80	90
6	60	65	66	72	80	85	92
7	48	53	62	71	73	76	85
8	50	58	58	65	67	72	79
9	49	57	62	66	74	78	88
10	52	64	69	75	81	86	93
AVG (%)	50.4						86.3

The mean score of the girls and the boys’ groups in post-test proved that the intervention was very much useful and effective to develop speaking skill of the students emphasizing the need for implementing communicative language teaching in the classrooms. The result also focused on the necessity of continuing CLT approaches implementing the National Curriculum of NCTB. Hossain (2016) also reiterated that students in the rural Bangladesh achieved low level of speaking skill because of minimum oral practices in the classrooms. The same study also reported that 84% of the respondents claimed that English speaking friendly environment was important to develop speaking skill of the students.

On the other hand, the evidence collected from the girl respondents disclosed that the post-test mean score of the experimental group (86.3) was relatively higher than controlled group (60.2). In contrast, the mean score for boys also showed that the experimental group was improved more (81.7) than the controlled group (57.4). The results provided a clear message that the traditional instructional approaches of

English teaching should be replaced by CLT. The scores showed that the students in the experimental groups developed their speaking skills which emphasized the need for creating English speaking environment in the classrooms by the teachers.

The speaking test results of the respondents in the controlled group showed that the learners' speaking skill of the controlled groups also rose fairly but the development in the experimental groups was significantly higher (table 3 and 4 next page). It is acknowledged that conscious students learn English informally from many sources such as books, newspapers, televisions, computers, friends, CD (Compact Disk) players, Internet, educated parents, classmates, and so on. However, as the most of the students in our country do not have the mentioned opportunities, it becomes the responsibility of teachers to create English speaking environment inside the classrooms as well as in the institution premises.

When compared the speaking performances of girls with those of boys in the experimental groups, it was found that the boys' speaking skill development was 36% and the girls' speaking skill developed 35.9%. The individual scores of pre-test and post-test also indicated that there were no students who scored less than 40% and 53% respectively. From the pre-test and post-test results, it can be said that the progress of the participants' speaking ability was satisfactory irrespective of boys and girls of the experimental groups. And the results of the pre-tests of the experimental and the controlled groups were almost similar. On the basis of students' pre-test results, it was observed that there was insignificant difference in four groups, two experimental and two controlled. The pre-test scores of the girls were 50.4% for experimental and 48.6% for controlled group on average. Similarly, boys' scores were 47.8% for experimental and 47.5% for controlled groups respectively.

It should be mentioned that the students were highly interested in speaking classes where they were engaged in a variety of speaking activities. Their interest in speaking English was reflected in their enthusiasm in pair speaking, role play, and dialogues based on their textbook. Moreover, the students also expected their teachers to conduct classes in English with participation of students. The learners' overall level of speaking ability increased to a satisfactory level in two experimental sections of two schools. The collected data after administering CLT approach in classrooms revealed improved performance of students in compared with their controlled group friends. It was also proved that the proper use of CLT could have a significant effect on the development of speaking skill.

Table 3: Pre- test and-post test scores of the controlled group respondents

Table 3 (Boys) Controlled Group			Table 4 (Girls) Controlled Group		
SL	Pre-test	Post-test	SL	Pre-test	Post test
1	43	50	1	43	59
2	50	53	2	49	56
3	54	60	3	50	60
4	56	64	4	48	61
5	48	62	5	57	65
6	45	59	6	53	60
7	40	52	7	50	60
8	48	54	8	45	56
9	46	58	9	40	59
10	45	62	10	51	66
AVG (%)	47.5	57.4	AVG (%)	48.6	60.2

In spite of having some development naturally or because of other factors' influences in the controlled groups, the importance of CLT cannot and should not be diminished.

## 5.2. Fearless Environment Needed

During intervention, it was observed that the students felt nervousness to speak English in the beginning. A vast majority of the students constituting 88% agreed that they had felt a kind of tension in the beginning of the researchers' teaching using CLT approaches; and teacher's speaking of English throughout the sessions. However, most of them (75%) had been able to remove their nervousness during the end of the intervention period especially because of friendly attitudes of the researchers. The learners claimed that their fear could be minimized or removed by proper use of CLT in classrooms. 83% of the participants had agreed that they had limited opportunity to practise English because of lack of English speaking environment in the classrooms as well as in the school campus. 79% of the respondents had demanded English speaking environment in the classrooms as there was limited English speaking opportunity at home and outside the schools. The students expected that the environment should be friendly in CLT classrooms where they could uninterruptedly exercise speaking with their friends forgetting the hesitation of accuracy. Teachers can give more speaking practice opportunities by teaching English textbooks communicatively and by being more flexible with learners regarding English speaking.

It was revealed that, teachers' attitudes in and perception influenced students' motivation and interest to speak English. The positive attitude of teachers helped the respondents face the challenges on the way to language learning. To remove anxiety of speaking English, learner-friendly environment had significant effect on developing speaking ability. The respondents said, "Friendly environment provided us with freedom to choose topics we like and to practise speaking in English about that. Thus, after practising for some days, we become confident". 68% of the respondents mentioned that friendly environment made them confident in speaking English in the classrooms with teachers as well as class-mates in-and-outside the classrooms. The respondents asked for friendly environment and freedom to choose topics of their interests to talk about. In order to engage learners in English language practice, teachers can use the textbook pictures, dialogues, substitution tables and other opportunities given in the textbook.

The research findings disclosed that the teachers should engage learners in informal talks among students in classrooms. The learners preferred topics chosen from their daily lives such as learners' personal life, their family, the games and sports they play, the famous person they like or know, a recent visit to a person or place, etc. 77% of the participants believed that the mentioned types of topics helped them engage in speaking practice in a tension-free environment. Most of the students (92%) have enjoyed CLT classes taught by the researchers and had been benefitted in terms of improving their speaking ability. Delivering the lessons in a participatory way through the engagement of the learners was liked by 93% of the respondents. The dialogue practices were liked by 72% of the respondents. They alleged that they were more engaged during dialogue practices. In order to make learners fluent in speaking, teachers need to create English speaking-friendly environment to support learners in developing English speaking skill alongside other skills of English language. The National Curriculum -2012 expects that the secondary school leavers would be able to communicate orally in different situations. Podder (2010) questioned if 90% or 95% marks in English mean anything if learners could not communicate orally in English.

### **5.3. Allocation of Marks for Speaking**

The respondents claimed that as there were no marks allotted for speaking skill assessment, the students and the teachers were both not interested to practise speaking in the classrooms and elsewhere. To make students more engaged in speaking practices, teachers or schools could allot some marks for speaking for formative assessment and could easily engage students in speaking practice. Teachers could assess students' speaking skill through continuous assessment as the National Curriculum -

2012 gave teachers mandate to assess learners' oral-aural skills. However, neither the teachers nor the learners were interested in speaking practice as speaking had no marks in the year final or in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations. Currently only reading and writing skills of students are assessed. In order to get the benefits of CLT, the government can allocate some marks for speaking assessment. If speaking comes under assessment, teachers and students would be bound to speak English for passing the examinations. In the first classes taught by the researchers, they noticed that there were no English for Today books with the learners. The students said, "We do not bring the books as teachers do not teach from the books. Teachers do not use the English for Today books as no questions are set from there. Teachers teach from the guidebooks; there are model questions; we practice solving the model questions so that we can get good marks or grades in the SSC examinations." Therefore, it is assumed that if some marks are allotted, teachers as well as the learners would be interested or bound to practise speaking skill and thus the curricular expectations would be fulfilled. Some of the participants demanded allocation of marks for speaking skill assessment so that students felt psychological pressure to speak English in order to pass the speaking tests.

## **6. Conclusion**

The research reveals that the proper use of CLT in the classrooms develops students' English speaking skill, and the friendly, threat-free environment motivate students to speak English with teachers as well as classmates. In the friendly environment, students do not feel anxiety to speak English. It is also revealed that the use of the textbook lessons and topics from students' daily life can make the speaking more interesting to them. Additionally, including some marks for speaking skill assessment can enhance speaking practices in the classrooms and in the school premises. Moreover, speaking English by the English teachers can make a big difference to the prevailing English language speaking situation at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. More research should be carried out on this area of English language teaching and learning to indicate shortcomings and possible solutions.

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# **Gaps between the Beliefs and Practices of the EFL Teachers: An Empirical Study**

*Dr. M. Enamul Hoque\**

## **Abstract**

*Teachers' beliefs and professional statements are thought to have a profound influence on their classroom practices. Teachers tend to implement classroom practices that reflect their philosophical beliefs. The objective of the study was to explore the gaps between statements and classroom practices of teachers in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Higher Secondary Level. The present research was an intensive qualitative study which applied in-depth interviews and the reference of classroom observation outcomes to determine the gaps between the teachers' beliefs and their practice in the classroom. The participants of the study were 6 EFL teachers who took part in the in-depth interview sessions after they were observed in the EFL class. The data was analysed in the constant comparative method; the remarks and assertions made by interviewed teachers during the various interview sessions were constantly compared and contrasted throughout the research process. The study revealed that in most of the cases the teachers did not practice what they believed and claimed to have practiced in their EFL classroom; with a very few exceptions, they were found very traditional and dominating in the classroom opposed to what they claimed in their interview sessions. The teachers advocated the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), use of target language, student-centered classroom, various participatory instructional approaches, and use of authentic materials; however, their claims were not reflected in practical when they were observed in the classroom teaching.*

**Keywords:** *Belief and practice, gaps, classroom, EFL teachers, influence*

## **1. Introduction**

Language teachers' beliefs and understandings of teaching and learning play a significant role in their classroom practices, and in their professional development. Beliefs provide basis to the actions. Teachers' beliefs impact the performance of teachers. It is maintained that good beliefs results in the form of good practices. Normally, it is assumed that teachers do practice in the classroom what they think and believe. As

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Harste and Burke (2007) assume that teachers make decisions about classroom instruction in light of their theoretical beliefs they hold about teaching and learning. Teachers' beliefs influence their teaching goals, teaching methods, procedures, use of materials, classroom interaction patterns, their roles, their students, and the schools they work in. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2001) postulate, teachers possess assumptions about language and language learning, and that these provide the basis for a particular approach to language instruction. Hence, it is argued that if theoretical orientation is a major indicator of how teachers act during language instruction, then teacher educators can affect classroom practice by ensuring that teachers develop a theoretical orientation that is "reflective of current and pertinent research in the field" (Cummins, Cheek, & Lindsey, 2004, p. 183). The study is interested in how teachers might articulate a particular 'belief' about teaching and learning - yet their practice seems to be at odds with this 'belief' (observed practice).

Bangladesh has an educational context which is centralised, knowledge-focused, and examination-based. It also has a socio-cultural environment in which teachers have to cope with large classes and a lack of freedom to choose their own textbooks and content of teaching. Classroom observations have shown that the traditional outdated teaching norms typical of the Bangladesh educational context are still present. The participating teachers in this study were found to hold a knowledge transmission perspective and to adopt transmission-oriented teaching styles. This paper aims at bringing together the findings and key points of a review of a significant part of the available literature associated with the relationships between teacher beliefs and their practice in the classroom, including the more recent research that has been carried out in this area and to discuss its implications for educational evaluation and research in science education

## **2. Literature Review**

The role of teachers as one of the main stakeholders in the implementation of educational change and curriculum innovation has been the focus of ongoing interest to curriculum researchers, and has been examined extensively in the literature, both conceptually and empirically. This is because teachers, as implementers, determine whether or not curriculum innovation is executed in the classroom as it is intended by policymakers. For instance, Hoque (2011) asserts that teachers are the individual who implement, adapt, reject, or ignore curriculum innovation; and generate washback on teaching and learning. The objectives of the syllabus and curriculum are gained through their classroom activities. They are main agents to generate positive and/or negative washback from test on teaching and learning.

Several studies have examined the relationship between teacher beliefs and their practice. However, perhaps partly because of the variety of belief definitions in the literature, the relationship between teacher beliefs and practice is in question. The findings in the literature include English education which have not been consistent, with few studies being found about specific subject matter knowledge and beliefs (Mansour, 2009; Pajares, 2004) and fewer about beliefs and goals(Lacorte & Canabal, 2005) or beliefs and emotions. Pajares (2004) argue that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is a complex one, and that the researcher must question common assumptions made about it. It has been argued that in the EFL teaching there is often a disparity between teachers' espoused beliefs about reading and their actual practices (Davis, 1986). On the other hand, it has been reported that teachers actively formulate and reformulate their beliefs and adapt their instruction accordingly in the process of teaching (Borko et.al., 1981). While it cannot be denied that some teachers maintain congruence between their beliefs and instruction, Duffy (1982) maintains that the belief of the urgency to cover material and have a well-managed classroom is the actual driving force behind most teachers' instructional decision-making.

Teacher perception, teacher attitudes and teacher beliefs are often mentioned in the washback studies as well (Cheng, 2005; Watanabe, 2004). Therefore, teachers' decisive roles in the implementation of the curriculum cannot be underestimated. Without their support and genuine involvement in the innovation, any curriculum implementation will stay at a superficial level, with either semi- or even non-implementation. This section discusses the disjunction between policymakers and implementers as well as implications for teachers, based on the existing research data. The findings of the previous researches on teaching show that washback is subject to how (methodology) teachers teach. This may be attributed to Hawkey's claim (2006) that "the distinction between course content and methodology is not always clear cut" (p. 106). The examination had had considerable impact on the content of English lessons and on the way teachers designed their classroom tests (some of this was positive and some negative), but it had had little or no impact on the methodology they used in the classroom or on the way they marked their pupils' test performance. Therefore, it was very crucial for the present study to conduct interviews with EFL teachers to examine whether their perception of test, classroom behaviours, curriculum knowledge, etc contribute to generating washback on teaching and learning.

Consistent with the findings of Andrews (2004), Shulman (2000), and Turner (2008) that view teacher pedagogical knowledge as an essential component of teacher professionalism, this study has shown that this dimension of knowledge exerts a strong influence on how teachers

interpret testing innovation and change their practice. This finding also reinforces Richards' (2008) assertion that such knowledge contributes to the formulation of teachers' working principles that guide their teaching behaviour and functions as the source of teachers' practices.

### **3. Research Design**

Both watching and asking are very powerful instruments in any complex research such as the present study. In order to triangulate and possibly extend the findings of the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 EFL teachers of Higher Secondary level. They were all directly involved in HSC education in Bangladesh. This was an interview on a one-to-one basis. The instrument was used in the research for eliciting qualitative data on: how the teachers planned, how they designed the policy, how they delivered inputs, and how they received outcomes. The different sets of semi-structured interview questions were designed. The assent was obtained from all of the participants before the interviews took place. The researcher himself was the moderator and took detailed notes throughout the discussion, including notes on the participants' body language. All of the interview sessions were noted down minutely in order to avoid missing the interviewees' comments.

#### **3.1. Profile of the Participants**

All the 6 observation participants were currently EFL teachers working at ten different colleges both in urban and rural areas. Of the 6 participants, 3 were females and 3 were males. Each had a teaching experience of more than 10 years (Table 1). All of them received at least a master degree in English. Their teaching hours ranged from 8-12 hours per week. At the time of observation, they were teaching HSC students with similar level of proficiency in English. None of them had experience of studying or working abroad. Two participants reported having received teacher training in ELT, and one teacher claimed to have been exposed to task-based activities. The teachers were academically fit and qualified with some foreign visits. Some of the teachers received short training on teaching in CLT Approach. The teachers received computer literacy and accustomed to use Facebook and other social media. For ethical consideration, the teachers' identity was kept anonymous, and the teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3...T6. The professional information of the participants is stated in the table below:

Table: General characteristics of the participants observed

Sl	Teachers Description	Teachers Status					
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
1	General Characteristics of the Participants						
2	Sex	M	F	M	F	F	M
3	No. of years of teaching experience	15	11	13	10	14	15
4	No. of teaching hours per week	10	12	8	12	10	12
5	Class size (No. of students in class)	49	55	74	62	50	42
6	Experience of being in an English-speaking country	No	No	No	No	No	No
7	Training in teaching methodology	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

### 3.2. Instrument

An in-depth interview protocol was used to explore the breadth and range of views represented by the participants on the topic of the gaps between the belief statement of teachers and their practice in the EFL classroom. The study also used Classroom observation outcomes as the reference to gauge gaps between *what is said and what is practised*. All of the interviews were semi-structured with prompts whenever necessary; and they were conducted in English and Bengali, and hence the language in which all participants would most likely feel comfortable communicating. All the interviews were audio-recorded and backed up by written field notes in order to trial the data collection procedure and the equipment. At this pilot stage, interviewees expressed no particular difficulties in answering any of the questions. Concerning the value of the data collected through interviews. Glesene and Peshkin (1992) argue that the potential strength lies in the fact that interviews provide opportunities to learn about the things that might be missed by the researchers to explore alternative explanations of what is seen. Therefore, the interview schedules were employed for the main study with just occasional minor corrections of wording. All of the interviews lasted around 30 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once and the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

In the qualitative paradigm, interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to probe particular variables for detailed descriptions. The method that the study used to analyse the data is called the constant

comparative method. The remarks and assertions made by interviewed teachers during the various interview sessions were constantly compared and contrasted throughout the research process. The data were analysed and allowed any pattern to emerge. In this particular type of interviewing, the present researcher typically told the same questions to each of the participants used. The interviews were also used for the collection of straightforward factual information. Oral consent was obtained from all participants prior to interviews. The interviews also provided an opportunity for the teachers to give their impressions of the lessons, to describe the rationale behind their choices of activities and materials, and to express their opinions regarding the imposition of English tests as a graduation requirement.

### **3.4. Organizing the Data**

First, the researcher performed minor editing to make field notes and interview summaries manageable and retrievable. Then, he closely examined a small batch of data, and jotted down the emerging themes and patterns. Having developed some preliminary categories of themes, he read through the data, and grouped them according to these categories. He analysed the data logically, and assigned units of data into categories based on shared themes. Each participant was interviewed once and the interviews were audio-recorded and coded three kinds of coding: descriptive coding, topic coding and analytic coding. The process of analysis began with topic coding. The topics were designated according to the categories previously used in designing the interview schedules. The researcher then looked for patterns across each of the categories, seeking to identify recurrent analytical categories. The transcripts were then grouped and edited again according to the new analytic categories. For the purpose of examining the reliability of the interview data, the researcher went back to the audio-recorded interviews and recoded the previously analysed interviews. The purpose of this approach was to make sure that the present researcher had been consistent with the criteria for analysis. The qualitative data analysis proceeded along the following steps.

## **4. Findings and Discussions**

The study conducted a loosely structured interview. It allowed freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore additional points and change direction, if necessary. The interview schedule was designed so as to record the teachers 'claims, their beliefs, and statements on their teaching practices. The in-depth interviews were carried out face to face so that a rapport could be created with respondents. Body language was also used to add a high level of understanding to the answers. Teachers' claims were justified with the information received from

classroom observations. After the classroom observation had been over, the present researcher conducted post-observation interview with the observed teachers which is the concern of the present study. It was found that there was a significant gap between beliefs of English language teachers and their classroom practices. The gaps between their *words and deeds* lead to harmful washback on the classroom teaching and learning. In many cases the interviewed teachers said one thing but implemented other thing, for example, they told, “the teachers must use the text-book and authentic materials in the class”, but they were found using guidebooks, suggestion book, and test-papers as their only materials. Thus, the study discovered many discrepancies between *what is said and what is done*.

The findings disclosed that the interviewed EFL teachers used most of the class time for the test preparation. The most of the teachers usually used commercially produced test related materials, and preferred to use the mother tongue Bengali as a medium of instruction. They were negatively influenced by the HSC examination which was the evidence of negative washback of the test. While interviewing, the teachers advocated the CLT, the use of target language, student-centered classroom, various participatory instructional approaches, and the use of authentic materials; but, during the classroom observation, it was found that most of teachers did not practice and perform per their beliefs and professional statement; they simply followed GTM for the examination preparation which generate harmful and negative washback on teaching and learning.

The interviews with the teachers were based on the classroom observation. So, the findings of interview cannot be isolated from the findings of classroom observation. The findings are presented in the following sub-sections:

#### **4.1. Interview with Teacher 1 (T1)**

The researcher conducted interview with T1. He along with his students was observed during classroom observation. Two days before the classroom observation started, T1 initially impressed the researcher as an advocate of student-directed instruction. He explicitly mentioned that the way he taught was in line with his teaching beliefs and the needs of his students. The present researcher had expected that he would incorporate some learner-centered activities in his class. Contrary to expectations, no such activities were observed throughout the observation process. In fact, his class turned out to be typically teacher-centered.

In the class, he was observed spending a lot of time lecturing on linguistic knowledge. Pair work/group work activities were hardly implemented. Meanwhile, although the researcher observed him occasionally talking vigorously to his students by asking them

comprehension questions related to the texts being taught, his instruction was conducted in Bengali. Moreover, he supplied them with answers most of the time. The results reveal a big mismatch between *what he said and what he practiced*. One possible reason for such a mismatch as well as his extensive use of Bengali in the classroom was that his own English language proficiency level was not very high, which made it impossible for him to adequately express his ideas in English. The researcher made such an inference based on the statements he made at one individual interview.

When addressing the role of language proficiency in EFL instruction, he stated that he occasionally found it hard to convey his ideas in English. Another possible reason was that although he previously expressed his interest in CLT and task-based teaching approaches, he might not be well-equipped with the hands-on knowledge which would allow him to manipulate the approaches as he wished. Evidence for this inference can be found in the conflicting remarks made by him on different interview occasions. During the interview, he was talking in the presence of his colleagues, he criticized the structural approach (or grammar-translation approach) saying:

This approach is too stereotyped and backward. I believe that an English class should revolve around productive skills, since the goal of our teaching is to enhance students' communicative competence.

In replying to a question, he articulated some interesting beliefs in teaching communicatively:

Although helping students acquire communicative competence is our goal, it seems unattainable. Therefore, pure communication is deceiving. Above all, students need to lay a solid foundation in grammar.

#### **4.2. Interview with Teacher 2 (T2)**

T2 was interviewed 2 days after she had taken part in the classroom observation. It was found that T2 taught her lessons using the structural approach. The instructional pattern she followed was a monotonous one, starting with reading the text aloud herself, then presenting and explaining language points (e.g., vocabulary and grammar), and ending up analysing the text paragraph by paragraph and translating them into Bengali. One strong impression from the observations was that the teacher's lecture dominated the class. The researcher observed the students being ignored most of the time and rarely called upon in class. Interestingly, T2 herself admitted that her classes were very much teacher-

centered. When asked why no group-work activities were organized, she said:

I have tried using group work, but I find that such kinds of activities are ineffective. It is a waste of time to conduct them. The reason is that instead of using English, my students tended to talk to one another in Bengali.

She also expressed her dilemma as to what to teach in the class by saying:

I used to teach by focusing on the meaning of the text rather than on language points, but my students complained about the meaning-based instruction saying that they had not learned anything. As a result I had to concentrate more of my class time on teaching vocabulary and grammar. I sometimes feel I do not know what to teach and how to teach.

Her statements seemed to imply that whether or not teachers could organise communicative activities depends on the motivation as well as the English level of their students. She also seemed to suggest that students' beliefs or students' roles in the classroom constitute a barrier to the implementation of communicative activities in their instruction. This view was corroborated by T1 who also pointed out that students preferred to be taught more vocabulary because it is tested in different forms. In addition, like T1, she reflected on the challenge she confronted when it came to organising communicative activities. From her accounts, her own low oral proficiency also poses a constraint on her instruction. She also echoed T1's claim saying that she sometimes found it hard to convey her ideas freely in English as well. When accounting for the reason that led to teachers' low oral proficiency, she articulated:

This has a lot to do with the policies and orientations of the colleges as well as the government. As a rule, little attention has been given to whether you teach well or not. As long as you have published a certain amount of journal articles and done well in research, you are considered having accomplished your job.

She further reminded the researcher that similar challenges were also faced by many other EFL teachers like her.

#### **4.3. Interview with Teacher 3 (T3)**

The researcher interviewed T3 at his college campus. T3 wanted to talk before his colleagues. He claimed that he was a very serious type of teacher and most of his students did well in the examination. It was found that T3's lessons were also characterized as being knowledge-oriented and teacher-dominated. Reading is the primary skill emphasized by him. The focus of his instruction was predominantly on language knowledge.

Teacher talk took up 60-70% of his class time. What struck the researcher was that as part of the class routine, he invariably started each new lesson leading his students to go over the vocabulary lists provided at the end of each text (lesson) before giving his lecture on the text. Apart from activities such as reading texts aloud and translation, rarely he was observed interacting with his students for the purposes of communication. Throughout the observation process, he talked about the importance of students' participation in classroom activities, but pair-work or group-work was never observed in his class. Furthermore, he seldom produced extended sentences in English. Much of the classroom instruction was carried out in Bengali.

He organized test-related activities, and the method he used was stereotyped. For example, when he led his students to do fast-reading exercises, first he simply asked the students to quietly read a passage he passed out to them and then answer the given questions. After that, he checked the answers with the whole class and provided them with the keys by highlighting the essential vocabulary and explaining why each choice was made. Between whiles, he gave the students tips on how to deal with the similar types of questions in case they appear on the HSC examination, which was the direct evidence of negative washback of examination.

When the researcher asked T3 to comment retrospectively on the teaching strategies he utilized in his instruction, he articulated some interesting beliefs in why he taught vocabulary this way. Here is an excerpt from his remarks at the interview:

Seldom did I think of such issues as teaching methods. I simply taught using my own way of teaching. Personally, I think that teaching priority should be given to developing students' abilities in reading, because I find the biggest barrier the students encountered while reading is that their vocabulary is limited. Consequently, they had difficulty understanding the passages they read, and furthermore they could hardly convey their ideas when writing compositions. Therefore, linguistic knowledge should still be stressed.

He further justified his practice by saying:

The students are used to the method of structural analysis, and they find it hard to change their traditional way of learning. Each text of *English for Today* for classes 11-12 consists of a large number of new words. If we do not explain them, the students do not know how to use them.

He also defended his use of Bengali in the class saying, "Using English is a waste of time. The students may not be used to being taught

purely in English in class". One of the reasons of using Bengali frequently in the classes was that they themselves were not adequately fluent in English.

#### **4.4. Interview with Teacher 4 (T4)**

The researcher interviewed T4 in the teacher's room of her college. She showed her sincerity and expressed her willingness to cooperate with the researcher in providing information she knew. During classroom observation, she was found very lively and friendly in her class. Unlike other participants who attached more importance to language forms, T4 stressed the development of students' ability to use English. She was so highly motivated that she spontaneously experimented with communicative activities as well as cooperative learning activities (e.g., pair work/ group work, language games, questions and answers) in her classes. Not only was she observed frequently utilizing authentic materials, but she was also found using textbooks more creatively and trying hard to encourage her students to interact in class. It was noted during the observations that her students showed higher motivation in learning English and were more active in class than those of other classes observed.

When recounting the reasons why she implemented these interactive activities rather than spending a lot of time on language forms, she articulated:

I attempted to arrange as many activities as possible, because I was afraid that my students would be bored with my lessons. What I cannot stand is that they all lower their heads and do not respond to me. I do not think the "Cramming-Duck" method works. I believe that if a teacher lectures for two hours, a student will only end up acquiring 10% of what he or she is taught. In my opinion, teaching vocabulary as discrete points does more harm than good to the students, even though they prefer to be taught that way. The more vocabulary we explain, the more confused the students will become. It is impossible for students to have a command of it by learning it in such a decontextualized way.

The above comments provided insight into her professional stances on EFL instruction. In replying to a question, she pointed out that she was aware that most of her colleagues continued to devote plenty of their class time to teaching language forms. She proceeded to pinpoint the reasons why teachers at large had a preference for teaching vocabulary items. The following is an excerpt from her interview discussion:

There are a number of reasons for this. One is that they may have been taught that way. Another plausible reason is that they are constrained by their own language proficiency. To be specific,

they have trouble expressing their ideas in English themselves. In such a case, teaching vocabulary is the easiest way they can do. By so doing, they no longer need to take the trouble to improve their own language abilities. Nor do they need to rack their brains on how to teach. Another reason might be that that way of teaching, in their opinion, appeals to their students.

She commented that the majority of teachers had never thought of whether it was appropriate to teach vocabulary that way; they simply followed what other teachers did. She added that it was also possible that some teachers were not responsible or conscientious enough. In spite of her efforts, her class still seemed deficient in that she was seldom seen calling on students to answer her questions on a one-to-one basis. She was also aware that she had encountered some obstacles while carrying out student-centered activities. With respect to the impact of learner beliefs in teaching, her opinions are consistent with those of others. One example she gave the present researcher corroborated T1's and T2's assertion that students' beliefs also had a part to play in the way that teachers taught:

Once I received a letter from my students saying that they enjoyed my class very much. While they assured me that they were contented with the way I delivered my lessons, they expressed their worry about the group discussions that I had assigned them to prepare, for they reminded me that their exam was round the corner.

This example serves to illustrate that students' beliefs also play an important part in teachers' decisions as to how to teach. In any way, students sometimes influence the teachers to teach particular items important for the examination which indicates the unavoidable washback of HSC examination in English on teaching and learning English.

#### **4.5. Interview with Teacher 5 (T5)**

As mentioned earlier, the interviews with the teachers were based on the classroom observation. So, the findings of interview cannot be isolated from the findings of classroom observation. The observation data showed that the way T5 dealt with her lessons exhibits features of both traditional methods of teaching and CLT. She was observed using her textbook creatively by going beyond it to create local contexts for her students to use the language. At such times, she was carrying out activities to practice students' skill in speaking. She was found using the textbook in a formal way, dealing with it as a means of reinforcing language forms such as vocabulary and grammatical points. During these times, a lot of translations and paraphrases were utilized. When asked to explain her reasons for using methods of translation and paraphrases, she told:

I frequently put what I said from English into Bengali to highlight what was taught. In this way, I can clarify what the students may not have understood. With reference to paraphrasing, It is hard to say whether it is good or not. In many cases, teachers have prewritten the paraphrased sentences on their own textbooks. Generally the sentences are copied from teachers' books. In class, they simply need to read them.

She reflected retrospectively on her own way of teaching, saying:

Although I prefer to use CLT and attempt to conduct meaning-based instruction, the time I dedicated to preparing my lessons was, to be frank, quite limited. Had I committed more time and energy to my teaching, my lessons would have taken a dramatic turn.

During the observations, she was found devoting a lot of time to explanations of linguistic points. She defended why she was doing so, saying:

Language is a means of communication. When students talk, they need to demonstrate a good command of linguistic knowledge. Otherwise, they will be at a loss what to talk about. In my view, language use should take place under the condition that there is some real content. Content is the carrier of communication.

#### **4.6. Interview with Teacher 6 (T6)**

Before the classroom observation started, the researcher informed the teachers that he would talk to them to share views. Accordingly, the researcher interviewed T6 on his classroom teaching. T6's teaching patterns could be characterised as combining aspects of the traditional method (e.g., with a focus on basic skills such as pronunciation and recitation) and CLT (e.g., engaging students in discussions and negotiation of meaning).

During the observations, he was often seen asking students to read texts aloud and in the meantime modeling correct pronunciation. While he placed special emphasis on pronunciation, the time he spent on teaching vocabulary and grammar was much less than that other observed teachers did. Compared to other observed teachers, he used more English in class. Similar to the students of T4's class, his students were all well-disciplined and highly cooperative in the classroom, which might be related to the high expectations he set for them. A look at the interview data demonstrated that his practices in the classroom reflected his teaching

philosophies. The following comments reflected some of his teaching stances:

To acquire a language is to use it. So, our teaching should aim at helping our students to acquire the competence to use English. Foremost, we must help them lay a solid foundation in basic skills such as pronunciation and talking in appropriate English. To develop these skills, memorisation is pivotal. Without memorizing some standardized texts or articles, it will be impossible for them to express their opinions freely. That is why I assigned my students 42 topics and each class each student is supposed to be able to recite 3 paragraphs in relation to these topics. My students are cooperative, because I let them know my purpose of doing so. It is important to communicate with students and let them know how to learn.

It can be seen that based on his notion, the ability of language use can be acquired through practice of basic skills such as pronunciation and rote memory. An interesting finding is that like T4, T6 was negative about devoting a lot of time to teaching vocabulary items, saying that it was quite time-consuming and impeded the enhancement of students' language competence. According to him, even if the students were taught a lot of vocabulary, they could hardly remember them. Like T4, he made an interesting comment on why many teachers prefer to teach vocabulary:

Quite a number of students believe that the teachers who lecture on vocabulary are both high-leveled and knowledgeable. But the fact is that teaching vocabulary is the easiest approach.

He also explained why he spoke English most of the time in his classroom. His assumption is that because he teaches in English, his students would be able to be exposed to the language as much as possible. In an individual interview, he revisited the issue of teacher quality touched upon by his colleague at the group interview. Some interesting points he made on the issue are as follows:

EFL teachers' input in the classroom plays a crucial role in students' exposure to the language. It's more important than the exposure they receive when listening to the recordings or watching TV, since the interactions between a teacher and his/her students are more direct. If the teachers' oral proficiency has improved, then EFL teaching will be upgraded to a higher level. However, the reforms have been made to English second paper cannot attain such a goal.

The purpose of EFL teacher interview was to explore how the interviewed six teachers conducted their teaching with regard to the intended curriculum. From the interviews, the four EFL teachers (out of six) recognized their own lack of knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. Although the curriculum designers/ policymakers expected teachers to adhere to the objectives and specifications of the syllabus in their classroom teaching and to be knowledgeable and clear about the syllabus, the teachers also expressed their lack of interest in this curricular document. Though the interviewed EFL teachers advocated CLT and Direct method, they followed the traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM) while teaching. In terms of the student-centred approach, all the teachers interviewed attributed large class sizes, students' poor language proficiency, limited teaching periods, heavy teaching loads, and students' study habits as obstacles to their implementation of CLT approach. Maximum teachers stated that 100% use of English in instruction would probably result in students' frustration, based on their students' language ability. They remarked that use of their first language was beneficial for their students. In the present scenario, both the teachers and their student are under huge pressure of examination preparation. Therefore, effective teaching-learning seldom takes place in the class; additionally the exam pressure generates harmful and negative washback.

The effects of gaps between *beliefs and classroom practices* enhance '*teaching to the test*' (Hoque, 2011), a narrowing of the intended curriculum by focusing on improving students' test scores, and paying scant attention to the cultivation of students' communicative skills. Indeed, both classroom observations and interviews demonstrated a discrepancy between what was intended by the policymakers and what was enacted by the teachers. The findings of this study also reflect that while the curriculum innovation calls for all four skills to be treated equally, the exams focuses on knowledge of grammatical points, vocabulary, and English usage. Because speaking and listening activities are not tested in the exam, students resisted teachers' attempts to implement these activities in the class. It is clear that the mismatch between assessment and the curriculum is another factor that works against communicative teaching in Bangladesh.

This mismatch in turn, leads teachers to focus on translation and grammar, and to pay little attention to the development of students' communicative skills generating negative washback on teaching and learning EFL. This study thus examines what the requirements embodied within the curriculum imply for teachers' classroom practices. Although the findings of this study relate specifically to the teacher situation in Bangladesh where the study was based, many of these recommendations may be relevant to other educational contexts and to professional

development in general. Thus, a study like this one can serve to add to the understanding of EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in the area of academic teaching instruction and can act as a catalyst to enable other teachers to reflect on and examine their own beliefs about their teaching of English language in academic contexts. However, this study calls for more research on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in the area of classroom instruction in order to further advance the knowledge of how EFL teachers think and act and how it can better bridge the gap between practice and statements.

## 5. Conclusion

Methodologically, the study shows the value of qualitative research with a longitudinal element as it involves in-depth interviews with a reference to the classroom observations in studying how EFL teachers implement ELT curriculum in particular ways. This study examined six EFL teachers' implementation of the English language curriculum in Higher Secondary Colleges. It also shed light on the beliefs which influenced how teachers implemented and made sense of this curriculum. The observational data showed that teachers' practices deviated considerably from those claimed by them, and also recommended by the curriculum. The interviews with the teachers revealed that the beliefs and desired instructional approaches led to the incongruence between teachers' practices and their statements. This mismatch between the statement and classroom practices leads to negative washback on teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teacher training and development programs to provide teachers with opportunities to uncover their beliefs which can be reflected upon their classroom practices.

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# **The Academic Year of the Secondary Schools in Bangladesh: A Quest for a Better Alternative**

Sheikh Shahbaz Riad\*

## **Abstract**

*This study was conducted to verify how the present academic year and total working days of secondary institutions were being used in Bangladesh. A semi-structured interview and a questionnaire survey were administered to 80 teachers from different secondary level institutions for collecting data. Additionally, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with the same respondents covering different subject-teaching backgrounds such as Bangla, English, Mathematics, Bangladesh and Global Studies, Business Studies, Science, Islam and Moral Studies, Hindu Religion, and Computer Studies. Moreover, National Curriculum 2012, weather characteristics and variation of different parts of Bangladesh were studied to understand which months of the year were friendly for conducting teaching-learning activities unhampered. The major findings of the study included - most of teaching-learning supportive months of the academic year were used for internal and public examinations; most of the teachers liked winter, autumn and late autumn for conducting teaching-learning activities with vigour. The schools which are utilized as the examinations centres are adversely affected.*

**Keywords:** Academic year, working days, class routine

## **1. Introduction**

An academic year refers to the annual period during which students attend schools, colleges or universities. It is divided into several terms where school activities including classes, exams and co-curricular activities are held during that time. These terms may be called semesters, quarter, or trimesters depending on the institution and the country. In Bangladesh, academic or school year of primary and secondary level is from January to December and follow the semester system. But in higher secondary classes, academic year starts on 1st July and ends on 30 June.

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Some universities follow the yearly system for four years of bachelors, while some follow the semester system dividing the academic year into two terms, each with six months and most of the private universities follow trimester system using spring, summer and fall. Like academic year, working days are also different among the countries, all over the world. Working day or school day means "any day, including a partial day that children are in attendance at school" for instructional purposes and when different academic activities are taken place. In Bangladesh, National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) recommends 247 working days per year. It includes 218 days for all kinds of teaching-learning activities, five days reserved for national day observation celebration, and 24 days for two internal examinations. However, it is observed that there are four big public examinations in every year and a large number secondary schools are used as exam centres. As a result, teaching-learning activities are seriously affected in those exam centre-schools. Besides, in the present academic year, learning friendly month January is generally used as a season of sports, admission, and book distribution. This study was carried out to discover better ways to use the available working days and academic year ensuring unhampered teaching and learning in the secondary educational institutions.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

This study was carried out to examine the following objectives:

- a) To analyse academic year and working days of different countries.
- b) To identify the actual working days of secondary institutions of Bangladesh.
- c) To analyse the number of classes per teacher per day and per week.
- d) To discover the best ways to use the working days.
- e) To find education friendly academic year considering weather condition.

## **3. Research Methodology**

It was a mixed method research which used questionnaire survey, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and document analysis. Questionnaire survey was conducted with 80 secondary level teachers working in different secondary schools of Bangladesh studying Master of Education (M.Ed.) at Teachers' Training College, Dhaka. Out of 80 teachers, 5 were teachers who teach Bangla, 16 teach English, 8 teach Mathematics, 24 teach Bangladesh and Global Studies, 9 teach Business Studies, 7 teach Science, 5 teach Islamic Religion, 2 teach Hindu Religion, and the rest 4 teach Computer Studies. Most of the questions of the questionnaire were open-ended. The collected data were coded and categorized based on

similarity and dissimilarity. Moreover, the researcher analysed academic year of different countries, the curriculum document 2012, annual holiday list, public examination routines and weather characteristics of Bangladesh.

#### **4. Findings and Discussions**

During coding and categorizing the data, the following findings emerged: academic year and working days differ from country to country; actual annual class activity days are far less than the expected activity days in Bangladesh; 218 annual class days were not available in reality; most educational institutions did not follow the class routine prescribed in the curriculum 2012; and institutions did not practise Continuous Assessment (CA) properly.

##### **4.1. Academic Year and Working Days Followed Worldwide**

Different countries start their academic years in different times of the year. In India, the academic year normally starts from June 1 and ends on May 31. In Nepal, it starts from July 15. Academic year of most Australian schools and universities starts in late January or February and ending in October to December. The school year in Brazil usually begins during the first week of February and ends in December. The school year in the Philippines begins between the first, second or third weeks of June and lasts until the last week of March. Among all the countries of the world, working days of Japan are the highest (243 days), South Korea and Germany are in second position (220 days). Average working days of the countries like Thailand, Scotland, and Netherlands are 200, although most developed countries of the world have comparatively lesser working days. For example, in England it is 192, New Zealand 190, France 185, and the United States 180 days.

Table 1: Academic Year and working days world-wide (Source-Wikipedia)

	Name of Country	Academic year	Working Days
1	Bangladesh	January to December	220
2	Brazil	February to December	200
3	Canada	September to June.	200
4	Finland	August to June.	190
5	France	September to July	180
6	Hong kong	September to July	195
7	England	September to July	192
8	India	April to March	200-235
9	Japan	April to March	200-243
10	New Zealand	February to December	190
11	Singapore	February to December	200

12	South Korea	March to February	220
13	Thailand	August to June.	190
14	United States	September to July	180
15	Australia	February to December	195
16	Pakistan	August to May	192
17	Russia	September to May	294
18	Iran	September to June.	243
19	Mexico	August to June	200

In Bangladesh, National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) recommends 218 working days from January to December academic year. The number includes all kinds of activities like admission, book distribution, and class activities. These 218 days can be used in teaching learning activities in those institutions which are not used as centres of public examinations such as Primary Education Certificate (PEC), Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC), and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Schools used as public examination centres get smaller number of class days. It is observed that all the leading schools of capital city, divisions, districts and even upazillas are being used as public examination centres every year.

Table 2: Expected Working Days in Bangladesh

School closing days	Days closed, celebrated	Terminal and Final Exams.	Annual class activity days	Total days of the year
118 (32.4%)	5 (1.4%)	24 (6.4%)	218 (59.8%)	365 (100%)
	Total working days		247 days (67.6%)	

Source: National Curriculum

Academic activities would continue for 218 days which comprise 59.8% of a calendar days. Five days for national day celebration and 24 days for two examinations make the total working days 247 which is 67.6% time of an academic year. The new curriculum decided that school shall remain open on the Independence Day, the Victory Day, the Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Dibash) and on the International Mother Language Day, the National Mourning Day(The death anniversary of the father of the nation), and the Birth Day of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman keeping class activities suspended and observing the days with added importance. On the other hand, the institutions shall remain closed a total of 118 days (32.4%) in a full academic year.

## 4.2. Working Days and Class Activity

In Bangladesh there are four big public examinations from class five to twelve. These are PEC, JSC, SSC and HSC. Though these public examinations take place throughout the entire academic year, there are no specific exams centres for that examinations to be held. Educational institutions are used as examination centre hampering the teaching-learning activities and reducing annual class activity days severely.

Table 3: Exams Centres 2015 (Source: Dhaka Education Board 2015)

Sl	Exams	Total Participants	Duration of Exams	Days used for Exams	Exams centres
1	PEC	28,39,238	22 November to 29 November 15	8 days	6,791
2	JSC	23, 25,933	4 November to 20 November 15	18days	2525
3	SSC	16,45,201	2 February to 10 March 15	38 days	2942
4	HSC	13,41,374	April to June15	63 days	2352
5	Total	81, 51,746	November to June	127 days	14,610

Table 3 shows that about 8 million students are sitting for four big public examinations every year. Total 127 days of 218 expected class activity days are being deducted every year from 14,610 schools used for public examinations centres. As a result, the actual class activity days for those schools are only (218-127) 91days. This statistics shows that there is a big gap between expected and actual class activity days of secondary institutions in Bangladesh. On the other hand, those schools which are not used as examination centres directly, have to send benches, chairs, teachers for effective management of public examinations; and thus, indirectly hamper the teaching-learning activities of those institutions.

## 4.3. Influence of Seasonal Change and Weather Variation

In Bangladesh, there are already instances of very negative impact on educational infrastructure due to severe cyclones and floods damaging infrastructures, disrupting transport, and interrupting teaching and learning. These kinds of natural disasters increase risk of diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and water-borne infections for both students and teachers due to these. River floods affect from 20% to 65% of the country every year:

Sl	Seasons	Months	Characteristics
1	Summer	April - June	It is very hot in this season. It is getting hotter day by day. People become tired because of excessive heat. In this time electricity goes out often. Teaching-learning activities disrupted for the load shedding.
2	Rainy season	June - August	70 percent of the land remains under water - water from rivers, the sea, rain, tidal waves and floods. Sometimes, it rains for 24 hours continuously. humidity is from 90% to 95%
3	Autumn	August - October	The sky becomes clear the weather is hot and humid.
4	Late autumn	October - December	It's beautifully dry and cool. Dews in the evening and fogs at dawn. Perfect running.
5	Winter	December - February	Winter is the best and most enjoyable season in Bangladesh. Often a warm dry wind during the day and cool nights.
6	Spring	February -March	The spring season is very short in Bangladesh and practically prevails during March only. The climate at this time is very pleasant and inspires people to work more.

#### 4.4. Impact of Seasonal Variation on Teaching and Learning

According to Banglapedia (2016), Bangladesh is located in the tropical monsoon region and its climate is characterised by high temperature, heavy rainfall, often excessive humidity, and fairly marked seasonal variations. The most striking feature of its climate is the reversal of the wind circulation between summer and winter, which is an integral part of the circulation system of the South Asian subcontinent. From the climatic point of view, three distinct seasons can be recognised in Bangladesh - the cool dry season from November through February, the pre-monsoon hot season from March through May, and the rainy monsoon season which lasts from June through October. The month of March may also be considered as the spring season, and the period from mid-October through mid-November may be called the autumn season. In Bangladesh, there are already instances of very negative impact on educational infrastructure due to severe cyclone and flood that had destroyed school infrastructure, disrupting transport, and interrupting teaching and learning. Rahman (2014) opined that the flood water into the educational institutes had great negative impacts in education sector as well as in livelihood. During flood, the educational institutions are used as flood and cyclone shelters for the affected people. As a result all kinds of educational activities need to be closed. Just after the floods, the class rooms get unusable because of unhygienic floors, walls, and broken furniture. It

requires more time to start the academic activities. Also because of rehabilitation activities teachers and students have to be engaged at home.

Table 4: Impact of flood on education in 2004

	Nature of damage	Damage status
1	Schools damaged (partially)	23439
2	Schools Closed	5000
3	Schools destroyed	1225
4	Districts affected	39 Out of 64
5	People affected	36 million people (25% of the total population)
6	Duration of the Flood	From April to mid-September

Source: Post-flood needs assessment summary report 2004

Teaching-learning materials, equipment, and uniforms were lost both in schools and at homes, and no alternative arrangements were made to continue children's education. All schools, even those which sustained severe damage, have now restarted classes with insufficient teaching-learning resources.

#### 4.5. Findings from Questionnaire Survey

The 80 participant teachers were asked several open-ended questions. What are the best and friendly seasons in terms of weather, convenient teaching-learning environment? In response to the questions 72 teachers (90%) considered winter as the best and summer as the worst seasons for carrying out teaching-learning activities. The second, third, fourth and fifth teaching-learning friendly seasons are spring, late autumn, autumn and rainy seasons respectively.

Table 5: Friendly months of teaching-learning as per teachers' choice

Teachers' Choice	Grading of months based on the teaching-learning suitability
1	January
2	February
3	March
4	April
5	November
6	October
7	December
8	September
9	August
10	July
11	June
12	May

Table 4 shows that classroom teachers have different choices and rationales for reconsidering academic year. They argued that, though April to September is considered pick season of academic activities, it is very hot in these seasons, teachers and students become tired for excessive heat, and frequent load-shedding and teaching-learning activities are disrupted. Therefore, they believed that, from October to March are the best months for effective teaching-learning activities.

#### 4.6. Findings from Focus Group Discussion

With a view to exploring the thoughts, opinions and feelings about research objectives, FGD was conducted with ten selected teachers, out of eighty. The participants of FGD were asked to opine on their daily and weekly work load. Besides, they were asked to disclose the number of everyday classes in their schools. The findings were:

Table 6: Teachers: Class average ratio

Number of Schools	Number of classes per day	Number of classes per teacher	Number of classes per week
6	6	4	22
2	7	5	26
2	8	6	32
10	21	15	80

Table 5 shows that out of 10 schools, 6 schools follow NCTB prescribed class routine where the duration of every class is 50 minutes and number of classes per day is 6. Rest 4 schools follow traditional class routine. Number of classes for every teacher is minimum 4 and per week 22 out of 33 periods.

#### 5. Recommendations

Analysing different documents and findings of questionnaire survey and FGD, the following recommendations have been placed:

- Present academic year “1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December” may be redesigned starting from 1<sup>st</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> September considering weather (temperature, humidity, length of day time) and power supply. Sharat, Hemanto, Seet, Bosanto seasons are the best times of the year for intensive work.
- Learners and teachers feel more healthy and energetic in autumn, late autumn, winter, and spring than the summer and rainy season. So, 60% class activities can be completed in those months.
- Emphasis should be given on School Based Assessment (SBA), Continuous Assessment (CA), morning Schools, laboratory and practical works in summer and rainy seasons.

- d. All public examinations can be held in September, the last months of academic year. It may save a great number of working days. If PEC examinations are held in the morning, JSC examinations could be organised in the afternoon. The following day, if the SSC examinations are held in the morning, the HSC examinations could be held in that afternoon. In that way, it is possible to organise four public examinations in 30 days.
- e. Every public examination should be of 2 hours. Two hours test is enough to assess learners' achievement and creativity.
- f. There should not be any half day schooling in Bangladesh context as there is huge traffic jams all over Bangladesh. It will be better to start full day schooling for 5 days a week. In that case, weekly school holidays may be Thursday and Friday.

## 6. Implication

The purpose of this study was to discover a better academic year and explore the ways to ensure the best use working days of our academic year. Based on the observations, document analysis, questionnaire survey, and FGD, the researcher has developed a proposal for an alternative academic year which may create an opportunity for different stakeholders of secondary educations in Bangladesh such as head teachers, class room teachers, teacher educators and policy makers to rethink about restructuring the academic year.

Table 7: Proposed Academic Sessions and Implementation Plan

Proposed Academic Year	October —September	Reasons/ways
	First semester October to March	Weather is warm, temperature is moderate no electricity crisis
	Second Semester April to September	Special emphasis on SBA/CA activities. Teachers Training All public examinations will be held in September
Total W. Days	230	Shortening examinations days
<b>Total working Days</b>	<b>200 days</b>	
Ways to increase working days	HSC, SSC, JSC and PEC exams will have to conduct in same time and within 25-30 days.	Every exam should be for 2 hours. One exam may be for 3 hours like comprehensive exam. More emphasis on SBA Assessment
Weekly	day to Wednesday (5)	All prominent schools like Notre

Working days	days) • No half schools • Non-vacation department	dem, Holy-cross and Vekharunnesa Noon are for 5 days in a week.
Weekly holidays	Thursday and Friday	For individual, Family, social and official activities of teachers-learners and guardians.

## 7. Conclusion

It would be better if we could extend our school hours per day, class days or working days per year. But it is not achievable for climatic reasons. Present Academic Session ‘January – December’ may be shifted October - September; it may be the best solution to get the best result from the academic year. An academic year and working days in it are considered as important issues all over the world before planning a schedule. Therefore, the authority can put more emphasis on class tests, practical work, and assignment which reduce teachers’ work load; it can make the learners active throughout the year. If the available working days of the year can be utilized through engaging learners in different learning activities, the standard of secondary education may certainly improve.

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# An Analytical Review of *Introduction to Linguistics*

*Khandoker Montasir Hassan*<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

*Introduction to Linguistics* by M. Maniruzzaman is a well-written textbook introducing the important topics of basic linguistics. The chapters take up a somewhat original format which has made the book more accessible to general readers of varied interests. The book covers various fundamental aspects of language study, including phonetics and phonology, pragmatics, syntax, morphology, semantics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. In addition, the author provides many exercises throughout the textbook to assist undergraduate and postgraduate learners in the learning process by allowing the reader to put theory immediately into practice. The book clearly serves various academic purposes for both novices and experts in the fields of Applied Linguistics and English Language Studies.

**Keywords:** Linguistics, textbook, language study, phonetics and phonology

## Book Review

<i>Reviewer:</i>	<i>Khandoker Montasir Hassan</i>
<i>Book Title:</i>	<i>Introduction to Linguistics</i>
<i>Book Author:</i>	<i>Professor Dr. M. Maniruzzaman</i>
<i>Publisher:</i>	<i>Friends' Book Corner, Dhaka, Bangladesh</i>
<i>Linguistic Field(s):</i>	<i>Applied Linguistics and General Linguistics</i>
<i>Subject Language(s):</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>ISBN Number:</i>	<i>984-70020-0314-8</i>
<i>Year of Publication</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>Number of Pages</i>	<i>405</i>
<i>Price</i>	<i>BDT. 295</i>

## Introduction

*Introduction to Linguistics* is a well-written introductory textbook that aims at introducing undergraduate and postgraduate students to fundamentals of language and linguistics and offers a general account of the applied linguistics— its levels, branches and schools. Disciplines like

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Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics have also been touched upon. Its main purpose, according to the author, is firstly, to help the students studying linguistics and ELT (English Language Teaching) courses at the public and private universities particularly in Bangladesh and other comparable settings. Secondly, the book is “specially planned and written to help the readers interested to know the fundamental aspects of language and linguistics in general, and English language in particular”. Moreover, it is designed in accordance with the syllabus of BA Honours Course in English at National University of Bangladesh. Before entering upon any more detailed discussion of the book, it may be appropriate to give a brief introduction of the author and an indication of the book’s contents. The book *Introduction to Linguistics* is framed in a systematic way and consists of nine chapters and each chapter is devoted to a distinct area and/or aspect of language and linguistics divided into its basic topics and/or parts.

Chapter 1 is concerned with the discussion of some basic and essential aspects of language presented in the section – origin of language, definition of language, characteristics of language, and language being specific to humans. After having engaged with the basic information on the origin, definition and characteristics of language, the readers are prepared to move on to Chapter 2 which deals with definition of linguistics, linguistics as a science, levels of linguistics, branches of linguistics, and schools of linguistics. Thus, a very difficult and complex discipline like linguistic science; and, the sub-fields of linguistics: phonetics and phonology in chapter 3, morphology in chapter- 4, syntax in chapter 5, pragmatics in chapter 6, semantics in chapter7, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics in chapter 8 and 9 have been introduced and discussed methodically in an easy, simple, clear, and straightforward language and manner. All the nine chapters, thus, introduce, discuss, and explore different distinct branches of the field and each chapter commences with the specification of the “learning outcomes” and concludes with “tasks and practices”. The final chapter of the book chapter 10 includes a glossary of linguistic terms to make the readers aware of the fundamental aspects of language and linguistics of in general, and English Language in particular.

### **Critical Evaluation**

The book’s primary audience is the undergraduate and postgraduate students studying linguistics and ELT courses at public and private universities in Bangladesh and other comparable settings. Secondly, as the book is concerned with a wide variety of topics covered – English language, linguistics, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and so forth, it

could serve as a handy reference book as well as a general text for the non-academic reader who is simply interested to know about language and linguistics for personal enjoyment. In other words, it is meant to teach basic linguistics to beginners, whether professional students or interested readers.

The title of the book *Introduction to Linguistics* itself adequately and successfully encapsulates this message of the text. Moreover, in the “Preface” and “Table of Contents”, the author has appreciably provided all the revealing information about the text. The clear and straightforward presentation of these two sections will definitely spark the interest of the readers to read all chapters of the book. Although the intended audience of the book is the undergraduate and postgraduate students and interested readers, while reviewing the book, it is found as an invaluable resource for college and university teachers who want to introduce their students to accessible readings on various fundamental concepts of linguistics.

**Chapter 1** introduces the basic and essential aspects of language like its origin, definition and characteristics which is very common as the main idea behind writing this book is to enable undergraduate and postgraduate as well as all the interested readers “to understand language and linguistics in general, and English language in particular”. In tackling this task, the author has been admirably successful. While coming across the first chapter of this book, the first notable feature that attracts the attention of this reviewer is the disciplined and very systematic organization or framing of the contents. A glance at the systematic presentation of the contents of the first chapter is sufficient enough to make the readers interest available. The concluding of every chapter with “tasks and practice” is undoubtedly another unique feature of this book to assist in the learning process by allowing the reader to assess their learning achievements. Incorporation and exploration of a wide variety of topics related to linguistic study is the next noteworthy feature of this book. Moreover, the successful exploitation of easy, clear and reader-friendly manner of the author has made the book more accessible not only to those related to linguistic study but also to the non-academic readers. Linguistics – its definition, levels, branches and schools are the focus of the second chapter. Like the first chapter, the use of study questions and tasks; the methodical presentation of the contents; and easy, clear and reader-friendly manner of discussion – all these characteristics have been maintained here. These notable features of the text will successfully prepare the readers to move on from the first chapter – “Language”, to a comparatively difficult and complex discipline, “Linguistics”.

**Chapter 2** offers a synopsis of all the terms related to linguistics and the readers are prepared to study the seven distinct areas from chapter.

The style of his presentation is very systematic and he tries his best to make the topics clear in a simple and easy language and a sufficient number of illustrations and examples are given to make the basic concept easily understandable. For example, while defining the term “linguistics” the author at first presents some definitions offered by different linguists and then, summarizes “linguistics is the scientific study of language and everything it relates to” (p. 44). To make the difference clear between language and linguistics the author states, “knowledge of linguistics, however, is different from knowledge of a language. Just as a person is able to drive a car without understanding the inner workings of the engine, so, too, a speaker can use a language without any conscious knowledge of its internal structure. Conversely, a linguist can know and understand the internal structure of a language without actually speaking it”. (p. 44)

**Chapter 3** “Phonetics and Phonology” deals with definition, discussion and explanation of all the necessary components related to phonetics and phonology with special reference to their differences, branches, vowels, consonants, places and manners of articulation and so on. Moreover, for explaining the technical features and some key points and leading the readers to a full understanding the author provides sufficient use of figures, diagrams. Following this same technique of easy, clear and reader-friendly manner of systematic presentation, discussion and explanation all the subsequent chapters of the book.

**Chapter 4 to Chapter 9** is densely packed with relevant information and illustrations to make the readers easier to absorb and digest. In fact, all these noteworthy features that have strictly been followed throughout the textbook will make the readers feel like a comfortable journey while going through the text. The other noteworthy and very helpful features of the text that will make it accessible to all types of readers are as follows:

*Firstly*, every chapter is followed by extensive checklist of “learning outcomes” at the beginning to alert the reader to the upcoming content as well as to ensure s/he is getting from the text. For example, in chapter – 7, the first learning outcome is mentioned, “ Exposed to relevant material in 7.1 and 7.2, the readers including undergraduates should be able to understand the meanings of meaning and difficulties in studying meaning with substantial proficiency”(p. 261).

*Secondly*, the text can be considered as an evidence of the author’s particular or distinctive style that is the identification of some fundamental questions. In attempting to address these questions, the author actually tries to give the readers a gist of the topic; to help the readers understand some of the complexities of the topic as well as to maintain focus as the chapter progresses. Through this process of asking questions and

attempting to provide answers, the author unfolds all the important information, definition and theories related to that particular topic and the readers get a clear picture after finishing their reading. For example, in section 7.1 of chapter 7 (Semantics), entitled with “Meanings of meaning” he starts:

“What is ‘meaning’?- this very small question is obviously found to have a big problem in the study of meaning. Philosophers have been debating the question with particular reference to language for several centuries. No one has yet been able to propound a satisfactory answer to what is ‘meaning’?” (p. 263).

In chapter 1, at the commencement of the text before explaining some theories about the origin of language, usually unfamiliar to the readers, the author formulates the question “when did language commence? In answering the question, he introduces “The mama theory”, “The ta-ta theory” and so on.

*Thirdly*, every linguistic topic is followed by study questions and exercises with some answers provided. These provide excellent revision for the chapters, especially helpful to the undergraduate students.

*Fourthly*, “A Glossary of Linguistic Terms” in chapter-10 of the text defines the widely used linguistic terms. It is included to serve a handy function; to make the basic concept intelligible and to help the author reaching the intended audience successfully.

Again, another very effective and helpful component of the text is the incorporation of “Select Bibliography and Further Reading”. After having engaged with the knowledge in this introductory book, the readers should be able to move on to more advanced books, research articles, dissertations and other printed and online materials, such as those recommended in this section for an advanced level of understanding. However, there are a few shortcomings. As Varshney (1977) states “there is little or nothing original, except perhaps the choice of topics and their arrangement; nor should there be” (Preface to the First Edition). Similarly, the author of the present book also makes no claim of originality, as he mentions in the “Acknowledgements”, “I must first express my thanks to those writers, linguists, scholars, researchers, proponents and practitioners whose views, findings and materials have shaped this book. I have just put things together!” In fact, the focus of this book is not on originality, rather on clarity.

The book is not an exhaustive presentation of all the branches of Linguistics and, which is obviously beyond the capacity of a single book and, may be beyond the capability of a single scholar. So, it is just a comprehensible and explicit presentation of the basic components of

language and linguistics. But, for an in-depth and advanced level of understanding, the readers need to undertake further reading. The next point of difficulty is, as the book deals with a variety of topics, many of which will be new to the reader, further explanation of some key concepts by a classroom instructor or someone with a deeper understanding of linguistics would likely be required.

In conclusion, the book clearly serves many useful purposes and admirably leaves the readers with a basic and clear understanding of the key components of language and linguistics and, thus, it fulfills as well as justifies the basic purposes of the author of writing the book. It is hoped the author's endeavour would prove to be rewarding and successful to those for whom it is meant.

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# Adult Learning: Pathways for Education, Career and Life

Mohammad Majharul Haq<sup>\*</sup>

## Abstract

*Career plans provide a structured way for students to gather, analyze, synthesize and organize self educational and occupational information. The students of the Master's Degree courses are treated as adult learners in this study. Hence, their education and future career plan have been investigated in the present study. The adult education classroom or learning setting is a natural environment for individuals who wish to seek and receive help with career planning. The present study was designed to explore how adult learners prepared themselves for their careers. The participants of the study were 30 adult students studying MA in English, Accounting, and Management. The participants were selected randomly from three public universities. The participants were 23-25 years old. Among the participants, 15 were male and 15 female. The study conducted in-depth interviews on how the participants planned their careers before they finished their formal study. A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to collect information from face-to-face interview. The interview took 22-25 minutes each. The same set of interview schedule was used for all the participants. The data received from the interview was analysed in a constant comparative method. The remarks and statements made by the participants during different interview sessions were compared and evaluated. The study found that the participants were aware of their future careers they would have. The study also found the learners from the solvent families had relatively better plans to build their respective careers. The study also discovered teachers and friends played important roles in choosing and building careers.*

**Keywords:** Adult learners, career planning, education, qualification, learning

## 1. Introduction

In childhood, learners read a composition on the “Aim in Life” which paves the way to weave the career planning of the young learners. When a planning is failed, a new plan is undertaken to follow. Because career development is a lifelong process, adults frequently need career

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planning rebuilt. The adult education classroom or learning setting is a natural environment for individuals who wish to seek and receive help with career planning. Adult education and learning are seen as two different dimensions of understanding. Merriam and Brockett have put it thus: for a comprehensive understanding of adult education the two terms must be distinguished from each other. All the planned activities can be applied to adult education while learning can be both an incidental and planned process of activities. To continue discussion on this area the practice of adult education are also linked up with the term, facilitator and practitioner. What role is applicable for adult educator at a close proximity relies heavily on what setting or level of profession an adult educator sets in him/her. Being a teacher of Bangladesh, it is not very possible to have enough opportunity to work with the learners of education because of the reluctance of the students whose only goals are to pass the exam in order to get a better admission at the higher studies or to get a good job. But one must realize that it is the right place to implement theory and practice for a better education practice.

The main responsibilities of the adult educators lie in the involvement of the social movement and the social works in the existing socio-political context of a country. In spite of being a democratic country people at every stage in Bangladesh have to struggle for humanitarian or social rights to be translated into reality. For building solidarity and a positive social change teachers play a vital role at every stage of development. A teacher being an expert is found to be liable for organizing experiences to motivate the students to be socially aware of learning social and academic skills and a sound way of democratic living. The responsibilities and the roles played by the teachers as social agent go on organizing experiences and social changes that belong to the entire community. From this point of view, it can sure be safely asserted that a teacher can boost up the learners to actively take part in building organizational skills, the power of lobbying and advocacy.

Depending on the type of course, it may also be appropriate for teachers to provide instruction in specific job hunting skills. Such instruction would include locating information about job openings, completing job applications, and preparing for the interview process. Keierleber and Sundal-Hansen (1985) have identified three models of career and adult development that "relate most directly and practically to the issues adult students are concerned about: life roles, concepts of age, and transitions" (p. 252). The life roles model refers to the need to develop priorities for balancing a variety of roles including those of student, child, parent, spouse, worker, and citizen. Decisions about careers are an integral part of the life roles model; in fact, some have come to equate the term "careers" with the ongoing development and integration of an adult's life

roles. The concepts of age model affect career development because adults may feel that career decisions should be age-related and as a result, they may impose constraints on their own career development. For example, a 30-year-old male may think he should stay in his original career field rather than "start over" because he feels men should be established in their careers by their early thirties. The transitions model refers to the fact that life events or changes, such as transitions, frequently trigger the need for career planning. Such events include unemployment, dissatisfaction with current job or career, promotions, lack of career mobility, and so forth.

Given the heterogeneity of the adult population, the career development needs of adults cover a wide range. Those adults who have good self-knowledge, who are knowledgeable about employment situations, and who have good decision-making skills are likely only to need information in order to make career decisions. There are many adults, however, whose career development has been characterized as "late, delayed, or impaired," who have very different career development needs (Manuele, 1984, p. 101). These adults need to develop more positive self-images, to increase their knowledge of careers and career choices, to increase their ability to use resources, and to improve their decision-making skills before being able to engage in career planning activities.

## 2. Literature Review

According to Deems (1983), adult career development is a process with specific phases or stages, often paralleling human development stages. Career development involves a number of career decisions which occur throughout a lifetime. This means that adults can plan and influence their own careers. However, self-concept as well as the extent to which an individual feels responsible for his or her own future strongly influence the career development process.

According to Herr and Cramer (1979), teachers and instructors can provide "much of the attitudinal support and knowledge from which more motivated and informed career development may flow" (p. 259). In the area of instruction, this can be done by including information and experiences that link general educational activities to specific vocational or occupational tasks. Some suggestions on how to do this are: include concrete examples of relevant theoretical ideas from occupational settings; help students to acquire and apply appropriate vocabulary; and support attitudes of personal mastery or competence among students.

According to Deems (1983), adult career development is a process with specific phases or stages, often paralleling human development stages. Career development involves a number of career decisions which occur throughout a lifetime. This means that adults can plan and influence

their own careers. However, self-concept as well as the extent to which an individual feels responsible for his or her own future strongly influences the career development process. Heaney (1993) suggested that adult educators' role in building a new nation is to homogenizing and socializing immigrants for the prospect of business and industry. And it is one of the reasons the study tries to put focus on the learners in order to keep pace with the education related activities to the competitive field of learning and to make them aware of the future needs in the society. . Whether it is the individual or society that can be reflected on practice is one of the doctrines of Merriam and Brockett (1997) and it is termed as one of the core tensions of adult education.

Keierleber and Sundal-Hansen (1985) have identified three models of career and adult development that "relate most directly and practically to the issues adult students are concerned about: life roles, concepts of age, and transitions" (p. 252). The life roles model refers to the need to develop priorities for balancing a variety of roles including those of student, child, parent, spouse, worker, and citizen. Decisions about careers are an integral part of the life roles model; in fact, some have come to equate the term "careers" with the ongoing development and integration of an adult's life roles. The concepts of age model affect career development because adults may feel that career decisions should be age-related and as a result, they may impose constraints on their own career development. For example, a 30-year-old male may think he should stay in his original career field rather than "start over" because he feels men should be established in their careers by their early thirties.

The transitions model refers to the fact that life events or changes, such as transitions, frequently trigger the need for career planning. Such events include unemployment, dissatisfaction with current job or career, promotions, lack of career mobility, and so forth. Given the heterogeneity of the adult population, the career development needs of adults cover a wide range. Those adults who have good self-knowledge, who are knowledgeable about employment situations, and who have good decision-making skills are likely only to need information in order to make career decisions (Herr and Cramer, 1979). There are many adults, however, whose career development has been characterized as "late, delayed, or impaired," who have very different career development needs (Manuele, 1984, p. 101). These adults need to develop more positive self-images, to increase their knowledge of careers and career choices, to increase their ability to use resources, and to improve their decision-making skills before being able to engage in career planning activities. Teachers may also serve as "networkers," providing links between adult career developments and counseling services in both the institution and the community. Through classroom interactions, teachers are frequently able to identify individuals

who need further career services. They should be knowledgeable about the variety of career services and resources available to their adult students and be able to refer them to the appropriate sources. Instructors may also plan career exploration activities and discuss the importance of capitalizing upon certain personal characteristics in making career decisions.

Career exploration often includes examining past experiences to evaluate both vocational and non-vocational successes and failures. This type of exercise can help in identifying skill strengths and weaknesses that may be important in future job decisions. Career exploration may also involve the process of values clarification, which assists individuals in identifying priorities related to life-style choices, including choices concerning careers and occupations (Vetter et al., 1986). Career exploration activities may be included as part of a unit on life skills.

### **3. Research Design**

The present study was designed to explore how adult learners prepared themselves for their career. The participants of the study were 30 adult students studying MA in English, Accounting, and Management. The participants were selected randomly from three universities located in Dhaka, Tangail and Camilla. The participants were 24-27 year old. Among the participants 15 were male and 15 were female. The qualitative study conducted in-depth interviews on how the participants plan their career before the finish their formally study. A semi-structure interview schedule was designed and collected information from face to face interview. The interview took 25-30 minutes each. The data received from the interview was analysed in constant comparative method (Hoque, 2011). The remarks and statements made by the participants during different interview sessions were compared and evaluated. The same set of interview schedule was used for all the participants.

### **4. Findings and Discussions**

The present study conduct the study the in-depth interviews, and the questions were semi-structured; they participants were allowed to discuss any issue relating to the subject area of the study. Therefore, the interview sessions were very lively and interesting. The participants were from different socio-economic background. The interviews covered the areas of family background, present and future education, training, supplementary and additional courses, financial and funding opportunity, choices of government and non-government services, career plan help, present financial status, family liability, entrepreneurship etc. The findings of the study are summarized in the following sections:

#### **4.1. Present Courses and Their Relevance to Career Plan**

The participants were interviewed face to face; it was not traditional in nature. The participants answered the semi-structured questions and gave their opinion and expressed their own beliefs and future plan. The participants had been studying Masters in three major disciplines: 10 English, 10 Accounting, and 10 Management. Out of 30 students, 20 were highly pleased with their study subject; 4 students were found displeased and would not find interest in it. The rest of the 06 students remarked they studied the subject as a course of study, nothing else; they did not have prior choice and likings. Of the participants, 15 students preferred to build their career related to their study subjects and career; 20 participants preferred to join Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) even if their service and job assignments would not match with the subject studied in the university. Only 03 students wanted to build their career as an entrepreneur; the rest 02 students opined that they would need a job after completion of the study either it might relate their study subject or not; they need job for living.

The findings showed that the learners were not much career oriented; they studied the subjects just to acquire a degree. Their admission to the subject was not their options; their subject was selected by the university authority at the time of admission based on their Admission Test Results. However, the most of the participant were pleased the subjects they were studying; they maintained that very good results in any subject and knowledge in varieties common issues would help them find a good job.

#### **4.2. Additional Courses as a Means of Future Career Opportunity**

The participants of the study were adult learners of post-graduate courses. They have good understanding on different types of jobs and their facilities, salary level, requirements, challenges, security, and other opportunities. During interview, 9 participants informed that they completed the advanced level computer literacy, networking, data entry and analysis programmes, and web-design. Of them, 3 participants completed IELTS considering that it would additionally contribute to their future study and job opportunity. The study revealed that out of 30 participants, 28 learners achieved certain level of computer literacy for everyday use; unfortunately 02 female students had no computers knowledge but achieved ability in using Facebook and Smartphone. A number of 12 students commented that they did not complete or doing any formal courses along with their present study. A total of 11 students informed they need job as soon as they would complete their Master Degree; 07 students planned to do job related courses after they would have complete their master degree. Most of the participants agreed that

the learning must be benefitted to the learner's future job policy and better employment.

However, all the participants believed that additional but relevant job-oriented course would certainly help in getting job or developing their own business. The study showed the most of the participants (except two) were equipped in modern technology with advanced level computer literacy; even, they were preparing themselves with a plan to study additional courses that might benefit them in selecting their career. Some students also planned to study abroad; so, they went for IELTS exam after their completion of MA degree. Depending on the type of course, it may also be appropriate for teachers to provide instruction in specific job hunting skills. Such instruction would include locating information about job openings, completing job applications, and preparing for the interview process.

#### **4.3. Influence of Scio-economic Status on Future Career Plan**

Socioeconomic status (SES) can have a negative effect on a variety of aspects of an individual's life including, education, learning, and future career design. SES is most commonly measured in two ways, material resources and nonmaterial resources. Material resources consist of quantifiable assets, such as savings or property, while nonmaterial resources encompass family education or occupation. The present study explored some vital issues that contributed to building careers of the learners. The parents (both father and mother) of 05 students were found service holder and could earn their living adequately; another 4 parents (either father or mother) were in service; 6 parents were businessmen (moderate); 7 parents were farmers, and the rest 8 parents were engaged in small earning activities or unemployed being dependant on relatives or other family members.

During interview sessions, 12 participants informed that they needed job immediately after they would have finished their master degree; they would sit for the BCS exams or any other suitable job; they did not think of career planning. They highlighted that they would have to take the responsibility of their family. A number of 6 participants informed that they planned to do further study such as M.Phil. and PhD Degrees at home or abroad where possible; they did not have family burden on their shoulders. However, they informed that they would be happy if they could join any service and continue their higher study. A number of 4 participants informed the researchers they wanted to build their career as an entrepreneur after their study. While interviewing, 06 students informed that they were doing part time jobs including outsourcing as they had to bear their own expenses. Only 2 participants exchanged views that they

leave Bangladesh and looking for immigration because their relatives were presently staying there.

The study found that the socio-economic conditions have strong influence on learners' education and career planning. It is noticed that socio-economic status of the learners influences their career planning. Some learners desired to achieve higher degrees before they entered the service, who were financially solvent especially whose parents were service holders and business men. The statements of the participants indicated that most of the participants were financially insecure; therefore, they needed any job but their priority was on the BCS cadre service. The participants commented that they needed power and money. The study also indicated that the socio-economically secured learners had relatively better planning for carrier development.

#### **4.4. Career Planning with Classmates or Friends**

The researcher gave the participants opportunity and encourages them to express their unbiased opinion on their career planning. Almost all the participants (27 participants) disclosed that they shared future career plan with their close friends and classmate. The interviewed adult learners told they usually discussed about their career opportunities, problems, barriers, etc. They admitted the discussion with their friends and fellow mates about their future plan which might have influenced them. A total of 8 participants informed that they completed a 3-month BSC course as the preparation for the job. They strongly believed discussion with their friends gave the new and innovative ideas that made them confident, hard working and to some extent target oriented.

#### **4.5. Roles of Teachers in Career Planning**

Teachers and instructors can provide much knowledge and support from which more motivated and informed career development may flow. Some suggestions by the teachers on how to do this are: include concrete examples of relevant theoretical ideas from occupational settings; help students to acquire and apply appropriate vocabulary; and support attitudes of personal mastery or competence among students. All the participants remarked that a few teachers always advised them to study hard to make good results, so that they can join university or other good jobs like BCS cadre service. A total of 19 participants informed they had their most favoured teachers who advised them to stay updated on the contemporary world issues of great interest of people. Of the participant, 17 students acknowledged that 10 % - 20% teachers are very friendly and always provided counseling for career development. They considered their teachers Guardians; the teachers gave them training in job-seeking skills,

resume writing, and interviewing techniques are part of all full-time adult education programs at no additional cost.

The teachers have ongoing contact with their students; they can play a key role in helping adults access and use career planning information. To support career planning teachers might want to provide the information on bright future. Teachers may also serve as "networkers," providing links between adult career developments and counseling services in both the institution and the community. Through classroom interactions, teachers are frequently able to identify individuals who need further career services. They should be knowledgeable about the variety of career services and resources available to their adult students and be able to refer them to the appropriate sources.

## **5. Conclusion**

The Adult learners in Bangladesh remain under huge pressure due to financial constraints and limitations. They cannot make any concrete career planning for a good number of reasons such as socio-economic vulnerability, and social challenges. They need to think of earning before they finish their formal education. In Bangladesh, there is almost no opportunity for the career counseling. Developing a career plan is an effective way to not only determine what people will need to do climb the ladder, but also to plan a road map to get there. In addition to taking positive steps to improve your skill set, learn how to deal with pitfalls and roadblocks. The adults of today face challenges in preparing for an ever-changing world of work. The youth should find a career path that interests and motivates them, they should first engage in the three phases of career development: self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management. Families should play constructive roles to ensure their son or daughter is adequately prepared to pursue his education and employment goal immediately after graduation and continuing throughout adulthood. As a teacher educator, the role of a teacher is mainly to motivate the students for the future need of social integration and the education that can be best suited for the organizational context of the country.

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# Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Students' Attitudes

Ayesha Siddiqua\*

## Abstract

*Vocabulary learning involves activating students' apprehension and use of words that the students are likely to learn to improve their language proficiency, with the goal of increasing students' receptive and expressive vocabulary, year by year, in order to support reading comprehension, listening, speaking and enjoyment. As vocabulary learning is essential in achieving the target language competence, the common attitudes of the learners towards the target language and the use of the mother tongue need to be investigated. Thus, this study purported to examine how foreign language learners' attitudes and achievements are associated with vocabulary teaching and learning techniques in English language. The data for the present study were collected from 10 higher secondary colleges located in urban and rural areas in Bangladesh. The respondents were 100 higher secondary students studying English for 200 marks as a compulsory study subject. Data were collected through questionnaire survey and analysis of the documents. The investigation revealed that the majority of the respondents were positive attitudes towards learning new words in isolation and in context. The study also disclosed the need for the use of the learners' mother tongue when situation demanded.*

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, teaching and learning, achievement, attitude, EFL

## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary learning is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms. It is also central to language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Positive attitude facilitates the learning, though attitude necessarily does not determine behaviours. It is only one variable which determines success or failure in anything.

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Learners are usually motivated towards learning English as it is closely related to employment opportunity and better earning. They know that English and vocabularies of the target language will help them more than their mother tongue. This attitude covers some specific types of social and psychological phenomena of the learners, which are somehow directly or indirectly related to learning a second or a foreign language, the target language community, culture, and that may have either positive or negative impact upon the learners' achievement in the target language.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) demands learners' interests and the target language teaching methods focus directly on *learning* factors. Learning *outcomes*-oriented teaching is another process of competency-based language teaching. Communicative competence involves acquiring both sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge and skills. In a classroom, a teacher must follow a teaching method to produce a successful result. The method mentioned in the *English for Today* for class xi and xii is CLT. The textbook is based on the principle of learning a language (the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing) through continuous practices. Language skills, functions, grammar, structures, and new vocabulary are presented in an integrated manner in CLT approach of teaching and for that reason; the learners cannot separate them according to their needs which directly affect their achievement negatively.

In classroom, most of the teachers do not deliver lectures in English for the better understanding of the learners. Teachers and students translate texts and the new words from L1 (mother tongue) to L2 (target language) and students memorize them. In order to teach the communicative textbook, teachers employ the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to make the lessons easily understandable to students. As a whole, the attitude of teachers and students towards teaching vocabulary communicatively is not positive. To attain proficiency in English language, curriculum at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level has been changed to corroborate CLT. With the change of curriculum, attitudes and motivation of teachers need to be changed. According to Allport (1954), a person's beliefs about the object, feelings towards the object, and action tendencies with respect to the object make up his/her attitudes towards the object and an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related.

In Bangladesh context, learning English has got an important place and students are intrinsically and instrumentally motivated to learn English in the classroom for various reasons. Teachers' and learners'

attitudes play an important role as belief and attitudes accelerate the outcomes. Learners' learning outcomes are influenced by the interpretation of teachers' interpersonal behaviours; how teacher acts and asks students to act. When the teachers believe that English is a skill-based subject, they will involve students in language practices and their reaction to students' mistakes will be positive. If the teachers believe that English is a knowledge-based subject, they themselves and their students will tend to use mother language and show negative attitudes towards CLT. Before the introduction of CLT, teachers used to teach English language applying the GTM. CLT focuses primarily on teaching the meaning, functionality and use of language in a learner centered manner utilizing real life situations in order to develop learners' communicative proficiency in English. But because of both learners' and teachers' attitudes, communicative competence has turned into linguistic form.

CLT was introduced to HSC level in 2001 and the textbook were designed creating opportunities for students to practice English in communicative way. But, due to the complexity of the approach, the teachers, students, teaching students cannot march together to implement the objectives of the curriculum. The quality of the students is very important for learning the target language. Therefore, the study attached importance to Foreign Language (FL) learners' attitudes towards learning vocabulary and their achievement in English.

## **2. Literature Review**

Vocabulary knowledge is often considered as a critical tool for foreign language learners because a limited vocabulary in a foreign language impedes successful communication. Underscoring the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" p. 55) Nation (2001) further describes the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge.

The importance of vocabulary is demonstrated constantly in the schools and out of the schools. In classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary. Researchers such as Read (2000), Nation (2011) and others have postulated that the acquisition of vocabulary is essential for successful second/foreign language use and plays an important role in the formation of complete spoken and written texts. In English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2011). Rivers and (Carter, 1987). furthermore, argue that the acquisition of an adequate

vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, learners will be unable to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communication.

Research has highlighted that second language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge and the lack of that knowledge is the main and the largest obstacle for L2 readers to overcome (Pinter, 2006). “When students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries” (Krashen, as cited in Hoque, 2010, p25). Many researchers argue that vocabulary is one of the most important-if not the most important-components in learning a foreign language, and foreign language curricula must reflect this. Scott and Nagy (1997) states that: “There is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say ... While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” p97). A large vocabulary is of course essential for mastery of a language. It may possibly reflect that the open-endedness of a vocabulary system is perceived to be a cause of difficulty by learners. Another possible reason is that, unlike syntax and phonology, vocabulary does not have rules the learners may follow to acquire and develop their knowledge. In other words, it is not clear in L2/FL vocabulary learning what rules apply or which vocabulary items should be learned first. Oxford (1990) claims that vocabulary is by far the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language whether a foreign or one’s mother tongue, because of tens of thousands of different meanings.

Despite these difficulties that language learners face in L2 vocabulary, they still have to deal with it in their examinations as “vocabulary has traditionally been one of the language components measured in language tests” (Schmitt, 1999, 189). Moreover, many learners see second/foreign language acquisition (SLA) as essentially a matter of learning vocabulary and therefore, they spend a great deal of time on memorising lists of words and rely on their bilingual dictionary as a basic communicative resource. As a result, language teachers and applied linguists now generally recognise the importance of vocabulary learning and are exploring ways of promoting it more effectively. Some of this research takes the form of investigation of strategies learners use specifically for vocabulary (VLS), which is our focus of attention. Hoque (2011) suggests that making the learning a fun is a key to any teaching situation and especially to teaching vocabulary. One way to generate enthusiasm and excitement about words is to create many opportunities to interact with words in risk-free, safe, and non-evaluative settings (Hoque, 2016). Therefore, the present study tried to explore how the Bangladesh

learners would act in learning English vocabulary to improve their proficiency in the foreign language.

### **3. Research Design**

The study was carried out at the Higher Secondary level among 100 respondents randomly selected from 10 HSC level colleges located in the urban and rural areas. Of the respondents 50 were male and another 50 were female students studying English as a compulsory subject. The participants were representative from Science, Humanities, and Business Studies groups. Their age ranged from 16 - 17. All of the participants were native speakers of Bangla studying English as a compulsory subject. The data was collected through questionnaire survey and the analysis of the achievement test scores in English. The study analyzed the data using the SPSS for Windows 21 version.

#### **3.1. Instruments**

The study used two instruments: questionnaire, and achievement test scores, to investigate the learners' attitudes towards vocabulary teaching and learning and their learning outcomes. The response items were generated in the light of theoretical aspects of attitudes by the researcher. The questionnaire on attitudes involved 5 close-ended items built on a five-point Likert scale (1932) having the options: strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree to ensure spontaneous participation and for better understanding. The researcher used the translated form (Bangla format) of questionnaire.

#### **3.2. Data Analysis**

In order to investigate the study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied. To ascertain the learners' attitudes towards the teaching methods, a questionnaire was developed for gathering data; students' first year test scores in English language were analyzed to check the achievement of the subject. The study carried Descriptive and Inferential statistical analysis of gathered data using the SPSS for Windows 21 version. Descriptive statistical analysed the patterns among the data; and thus they made sense of that data to describe the population or data set under the study. While descriptive statistics told the basic information about the population or data set under study, inferential statistical analyses produced more complex mathematical calculations, and allowed the study to infer trends about a larger population based on the study.

## 4. Findings of the Study

Structurally, there were four essential components of vocabulary instruction that was the concern of the study: (i) providing rich and varied language experiences, (ii) teaching individual words explicitly, (iii) teaching word-learning strategies, and (iv) fostering words consciousness. The findings emerged from the statistical analysis of the data collected through a questionnaire and document analysis has been presented below:

### 4.1. Findings from Test Score Analysis

The study was conducted among 100 Higher Secondary students, and their test scores in the Year Final Examination in English was analysed and presented in the following table:

Table 1: Test scores and of participants

Test scores range	Frequency (N=100)	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
31-45	51	51	45.966	8.363
46-60	42	42		
61-75	7	7		
Total	100	100.0		

It was found that the achievement of the learners was not satisfactory because 51% students attained nearly 40% marks which was nearly 'C Grade' according the present evaluation system. The study disclosed that only 07% students achieved above 60% marks, and no one obtained 80% marks in English indicating no one secured 'A+' in the examination. A number of factors such as teaching methodology, students' merit level, student practice, non implementation of the proposed CLT, learners attitudes etc. are responsible for this poor performance; the most important factor is probably the teaching methods and testing system.

Results of the study showed that majority of the respondents approved that teacher of English are not qualified and well trained, teachers of English do not teach English in a proper manner, Audio-Visual aids are not used in English class, the course is not compatible to the present time, and the EFL teachers are not well equipped. It was recommended that Qualified and well trained teachers may be appointed for English, teachers of English may use modern teaching method instead of traditional methods, Audio visual aids may be used such as language lab, gramophone, English course may be made compatible to the present time, Teachers may be encouraged to get linguistics knowledge.

Table 2: Analysis of test score of the respondents

	Mean attitude score by different Category of marks obtained (N=500)			Std. deviation
	31-45	46-60	61-75	
1	3.101	4.445	4.515	1.375
2	3.191	4.398	4.515	1.253
3	1.582	1.748	1.545	0.666
4	4.480	4.469	4.636	0.700
5	3.953	4.364	4.363	0.644
	16.30	19.42	19.57	3.027

(\*\*) Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Practice makes perfect. Focus on learning a new set of words each day or practicing English skills either through writing and/or by speaking with someone in English would certainly the students proficiency and test scores. These activities will help the learners feel more comfortable and learn the language faster. If something feels difficult, it means that the learners need to practice it more often. By forcing to do these activities each and every day, the learners will reach their goals faster.

#### 4.2. Findings from Questionnaire Survey

The present study had a strong focus on the fostering words consciousness. A more general way to help students develop vocabulary is by fostering word consciousness, an awareness of an interest in words. Word consciousness is not an isolated component of vocabulary instruction; it needs to be taken into account each and every day (Scott and Nagy, 2004). It can be developed at all times and in several ways: through encouraging adept diction, through word play, and through research on word origins or histories. According to Graves (2000), "If we can get students interested in playing with words and language, then we are at least halfway to the goal of creating the sort of word-conscious students who will make words a lifetime interest" (p.135). The study posed 5 questions representing a number of instructional issues related to vocabulary teaching and learning. The findings derived from the questions are presented below:

##### *Question-1: I want to learn new vocabulary items-*

In response to this statement, a large number of students responded that they liked to learn new vocabulary items. 36% respondents strongly agreed and 40.6% agreed and their grand total was 76.6 % (Table 2). 10.4 % respondents opined that they disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed to learn new words. 23.4% of the respondents had no interest in

learning new vocabulary. This finding showed that learning new vocabulary items had a strong positive significance ( $r = 0.507$ ) on the achievement of the learners. Without knowing many words, second or foreign learning is impossible. To be efficient in SL/ FL, learning new vocabulary items has a strong positive significance on the achievement of the learners. Students who get poor marks in the achievement test, they do not know the meaning of more words. Moreover, the responses showed that the students did not always try their best and in many cases, they blamed themselves for their failure in learning English.

Table 3: The statement of respondents' attitude towards teaching vocabulary

No.	Frequency				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %
Q- 1	36	40.6	0	10.4	13
Q -2	34.2	40.8	0	19.6	5.4
Q- 3	0	3.6	0	54.2	42
Q- 4	56.2	40.2	0	3.2	0.4
Q- 5	29.2	57.4	13	0.4	0

*Question- 2: I like how my teacher teaches me new words –*

In reply, most of the learners showed positive attitude towards the technique their teacher would teach vocabulary. 34.2% respondents strongly agreed and 40.8% agreed. A small number of respondents showed negative attitude towards current teaching style of new words. 19.6% disagreed and 5.4 % strongly disagreed (Table 3). Teaching and learning new words in a foreign language is an important factor which affects the achievement of the learners. According to the finding, most of the respondents were satisfied with their teachers' method of teaching new words. Attitude towards teaching new vocabulary and achievement of the respondents was highly positively related. Most of the respondents agreed that their teacher should use L1 while teaching the SL or FL and should also translate those words and phrase that were rather difficult to comprehend in their second/foreign language classrooms.

*Question – 3: My English teacher teaches me in context–*

Only 3.6% respondents agreed their teacher taught contextually and no one strongly agreed. Most of the respondents showed negative attitude towards it. 54.2% learners disagreed and 42.2% strongly disagreed with teaching method of new words (Table 3). Most of the teachers did not teach new words in sentences in the classroom.

*Question-4: My English teacher teaches me new words in isolation-*

Question 3 and Question 4 directly determine teachers' attitudes towards teaching vocabulary. The frequency measurement of Q.4 showed that 56.2% strongly agreed, 40.2% agreed, 3.2% disagreed and 0.4% strongly disagreed with teaching method of new words in isolation (Table 3). This finding showed that teaching new words applying the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was widely applied among students in the classroom. This finding showed that L1 must be fully utilized to help them understand the meaning of those new vocabulary items. The students opined that their English teachers used satisfactory amount of L1 to ease them in the learning of foreign languages. In such a practice, vocabulary items were taught in isolation and then were memorized by the students in their own time.

*Question- 5: Learning vocabulary improves my language proficiency*

Most of the students want to have command on the four skills of language. They expressed positive attitudes towards it and considered the learning new words helpful to developing their four skills. Only very few weak students (13%) could not provide their decisions. The learners who were strongly agreed belonged to 29.2 % and agreed 57.4%. This finding is supported by the finding of the Question1.

## **5. Recommendations**

There are several effective explicit (intentional, planned instruction) and implicit (spontaneous instruction as a learner comes to new words in a text) strategies that learner can employ with readers of any age. On the basis of the findings the study put forwarded some recommendations to be implemented by the EFL teachers to improve the present situation.

1. The EFL teachers should review the vocabulary they teach through a game or activity and encourage their students to do the same at home.
2. The teachers may encourage autonomy in their learners, and encourage them to read, watch films, listen to songs etc and note the useful words
3. For teachers, it is a good idea to teach/learn words with associated meanings together
4. Teachers should encourage their students to listen to sports commentary and use class time to highlight the benefits of this.
5. Teachers may teach their students the grammatical names for the parts of speech and the phonemic script.

6. Teachers should encourage reading of different interests and areas.
7. Teachers need to give extra examples sentences to the students if they are unsure and encourage them to write the word in an example sentence (maybe for homework)

## 6. Conclusion

Students, teachers, materials, teaching methods and techniques, and evaluation are the essential components for language teaching and learning. The study has revealed the attitudes of learners and teachers towards the CLT and the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). The use of mother tongue helps them understand the lessons more clearly and quickly same as (Zhao, 2005). Thus, L1 serves as a medium in effective foreign language delivery and the needs of learners of various mother languages has to be taken into consideration prior to actual classroom teaching. This attitude has a strong positive significance on the achievement of the learners. Most of the learners firmly believe that teaching and learning new words helps develop their four skills and is an important factor which affects the learners' achievement also. Attitudes towards learning new words always depends on learners' teaching and learning environment, desire of learning, industry, motivation etc. Though the test scores are not the same to all learners, both instruments provide the result that a vast majority of learners and teachers show their positive attitudes towards learning of new words for language acquisition.

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# ***The Flipped Classroom in South Korea at the Undergraduate Level: An Investigation***

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## ***Abstract***

*The flipped classroom is a pedagogical model that provides prerecorded lectures followed by in-class exercises. A growing number of secondary and higher education individual faculty have begun using the flipped model in their classes. To cope with this trend of teaching English language effectively, a variety of digital technology comes to afford serendipitous learning that allows teachers and students to be more likely to transform their class into a manner of less teacher-centered and more learner-centered. The present study tries to highlight the positive influence of flipped classroom for university students with the special focus on Chung-Ang University of Dongjuk-gu, Seoul, South Korea. The population of this study includes 17 undergraduate English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. They were 21 years to 28 years old majoring in English, Music, Science, Design, Paintings, and Sports. The results illustrated that only the flipped classroom produced significant changes in both vocabulary and grammar knowledge of learners. The flipped classroom was found positive in terms of students' satisfaction, in-class constructive activities, and utilization of class time.*

**Keywords:** Flipped classroom, learner friendly, language teaching

## **1. Introduction**

In South Korea, there are several foreign language programmes (FLP) implemented. All these programmes try to bring forth positive reformations in different fields such as reformation of teacher, curriculum, and students in regard to learning and teaching English. Moreover, Korean Ministry of Education has been inviting a number of native speakers from various countries to teach English at different academic levels. The main drive is to make the students internationally competent. In South Korea,

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learning a foreign language starts from the first grade of high school to grade 10 and continues majoring for the next three years. So, from undergraduate to graduate level, Korean students study English for at least 10 years on an average: three years in middle school, three years in high school and four years at a university. Despite this situation, the overall learning outcome of the students is not satisfactory. From this urge of bringing innovations, Flipped classroom has got its entrance in English Language Teaching (ELT) context.

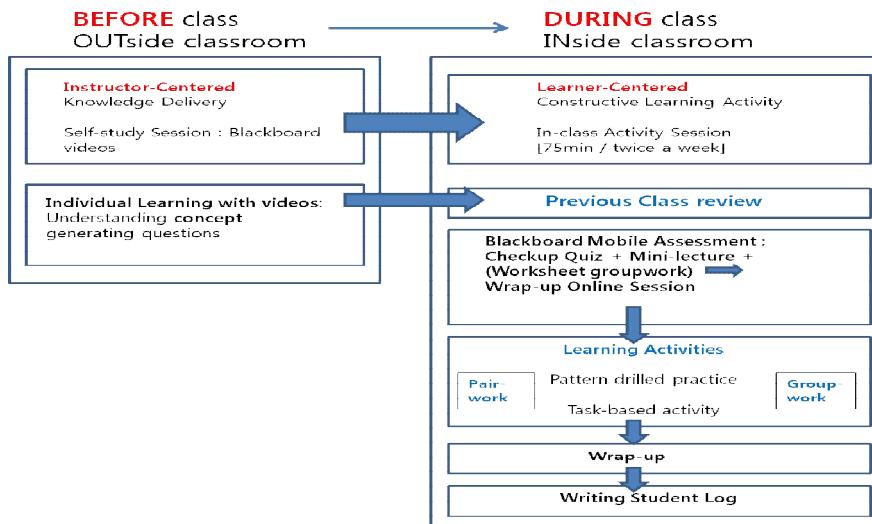
Actually flipped classroom is one of the most rapidly emerging trends in e-learning. In such classroom, teachers are allowed to make the best use of time substantially charged with tasks or activities to encourage students' internalization, preparation and motivation for engagement and achievement at their own pace (Knowles, 1975). There is a general consensus among educators about flipped classroom. Since pre-preparation assignments are given for grammar and vocabulary knowledge and listening skill, homework or review can be done at home, on campus, or in office as many times as the learners want by the benefits of permanently archived materials on blackboard or some other digital sources. Moreover, in Korea there are many Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that contributes to part of the flipped classroom's immense popularity.

## **2. Literature Review**

According to Chow (2015) and Naik (2015), flipped learning is more likely to draw self-regulated or self-directed learning. In that sense, great attention has been paid to MOOCs. So the traditional teaching and learning method seems to appear skeptical (Bae & Known, 2013). However, instead of massive, non-credentialed nature of the MOOCs trend, TOQES (Teaching Online Qualified Engaged Students) has been emerged as a new breed in educational sectors (Dunsmore and Meekons, 2013). According to Barr's study (as cited in Anderson and Burns, 1989:3), teachers are expected to fulfill a variety of roles. A teacher can be seen as a director of learning, a friend or counselor of pupils; a member of a group of professional workers; and a citizen participating in various community activities at local, state, national; and international levels. In addition Harmer (1991) viewed "the teacher" as an intrinsic motivator. In flipped classroom, teachers' role is to facilitate learning through some technology based materials such as teacher crafted videos that permit students to repeat and watch as much as they want (MC Bride, 2015). Lee (2014) illustrated a flipped learning and teaching model that was applicable in university courses especially for EL (English Language) courses. Sometimes both the teacher and students can share a common website where teachers post materials to be taught before their class, students get knowledge prior to the class. During class, a checkup quiz is

implemented to check assignments and a mini lecture follows with a view to wrapping up an online session. Small/whole group activities or discussion are carried. Thus we get a great difference of flipped classroom from the regular one. Lee's study has clearly reflected this issue in the figure below:

Figure : Flipped classroom process



From the above figure, it is apparent that there are differences between regular classroom and flipped one. Teachers need more time, skill and digital sources to materialize such flipped classes.

### 3. Research Design

The study applied a mixed method triangulating a number of instruments. The research was carried out for eight weeks of the first half of the Spring Semester from March to April 2016, at Chung-Ang University, Dongjakgu, South Korea. As noted earlier, the participants of this study were 17 EFL university students taking a general English course. All the students were involved in pre- and post tests, the post questionnaire and the interview. In each class, the student log was recorded too. Two of the students got job after the third half of the class, so they did only self-controlled online video homework with check-up quizzes. The student log was designed to measure how well pre-preparation assignments and in class activities were blended and integrated for learning. Two types of pre-preparation assignments were crafted by the instructor/researcher. Grammar sections in each unit were scanned, visualized in the form of power-point slide show and then recorded in the instructor's narration. This approach represents a more and more modern style of teaching where the new grammatical structures and rules are

presented to the students in a real language context. So students learn the rules prior to attending classes.

#### **4. Findings**

From the students' responses regarding flipped classroom and regular classroom, it was found that 12 out of 15 students preferred flipped classroom because it was more effective for them to learn English language. The rest 2 had mixed comments. It was also observed that students who were more skilled do not prefer flipped classroom. They rather preferred regular classroom. But the overall performance of the students who attended flipped classroom was better than the students who attended regular classroom. The students agreed or strongly agreed that the flipped assignments were more helpful for increasing their grammar ability (78.3%), listening ability (73.95), and vocabulary knowledge (60.8%). In the last section of the post questionnaire survey, the students answered about the missing homework and benefits or disadvantages of the flipped classroom, and commented about the flipped classroom. The students, especially, who were studying music, were frequently late or absent for class because they usually stayed up late or all night to practice together in groups in studios on campus or frequently took part in performance. English class was allocated in 9:30 to 10:45 in the morning that was too early for them to wake up and come to the class. Therefore, they sometimes didn't show up in class, but performed checkup quizzes and filled out their student logs out of class whenever they could access Blackboard or Blackboard Mobile. From the questionnaires prepared for students, we get several mixed comments. Some of their direct comments are quoted below:

1. (Today we covered) lots of (activities with) small topics (related to the context) and they flew so quickly, they are helpful to remember. It was cool!
2. I have previewed the video, and I've already known the content, so I have no problem or fear before participating in the English class. Previously I was panicked as I knew nothing about the topic in regular class.
3. Watching videos before coming to class helped me to understand the class more intensively.
4. I was absent, but I could get the contents of class lessons from teacher crafted videos. Thanks for the videos!
5. I've learned practical English expressions that are used in a real life.
6. I hope to use the hotel expressions when I visited English-speaking countries. Due to lack of English communication skills, I was in trouble to complain in the hotel. But due to practicing this time at home, it becomes easier.

7. Reading the texts including prepositions was not a big deal, but using them was really confusing. I've learned more how to use them.
8. The expressions can be used in a different meaning depending on context.

The beauty of a flipped video is that it can be re-watched, paused and rewound. "What we are finding around the world is that teachers who flip are able to meet the needs of a broader group of students. Advanced students are pushed and struggling students are helped. Students' who attend both in line and off line classes regularly get the best input from teachers. Korean teachers prefer practical contents for teaching. They tag notes on the topic of teaching through the four walls of their classroom. The entire class is designed and well equipped for language teaching. Based on the relatively positive result of quantitative data and the responses of student logs, questionnaires and interviews, the key of the successful flipped classroom model could rely on how pre-preparation assignments and in-class activities were well-integrated to acquire the benefits of synergy effect of both of them. The pre-preparation assignments with short videos and highly comprehensible worksheets served as a catalyst for maximizing class time, retaining more interaction between the instructor and the students, giving ample chances to communicate in class and achieving learning goals in the end. Blackboard<sup>TM</sup> and Blackboard Mobile were instrumental of affording a flexible environment for assignments anywhere anytime, mobile checkup quiz in class and technology-based activities in and out of class. Blackboard and Blackboard mobile-based instructions could offset the negative effects of the students' low participation rate in off-line class as shown by grammar and vocabulary knowledge improvement in the flipped classroom. Their archived function was the most critical role and the students' preferences toward mobiles, even at home, could be understood in this sense. But everything should be arranged more properly.

## 5. Drawbacks of Flipped Classroom

There are many drawbacks of flipped classroom but these drawbacks do not exceed the positive sides. There were students who did not submit assignments timely and neglect classes. Videos usually have a disadvantage in which learners cannot ask the questions. The worst disadvantage of flipped classroom was 'not doing their assignments' which caused to make the students uncomfortable to participate in class and ended in disturbing group work. To prevent it, a special observation, checking program or an alert function was suggested. Flipped classroom seems to be less interesting to the teachers and students of less developed countries where utilizing digital sources successfully takes procrastination. Teachers' role of motivating students remains poor in comparison with

regular classes. There was limitation of video instructions too. Some students could successfully ‘log in’ while others could not. Linguistic barriers were there. The most important difficulty for teachers to overcome is for them to re-think what the classroom should look like. Then they will need training on how to flip a class effectively. So instead of pronouncing /rat/, they pronounce /lat/. Videos sometime neglect this.

## **6. Recommendations**

Further study for the large number of experimental participants in a variety of educational settings should be carried out. To implement them, technology-based professional training course should be preceded for a richer and more inclusive understanding of the applicability of flipped classroom in EFL for other South Asian Countries. In Conclusion it can be said that there are more dissimilarities than similarities with Korean ELT system & Bangladeshi ELT system. We can share their recent updated innovations like flipped method, trained up teachers & student friendly environment etc.

Flipped Classroom has started its journey in Bangladesh very recently. According to the recent newspaper report, Access to Information (a2i) project has experimentally started flipped classrooms in four secondary schools in Dhaka city. The authority developed teacher-crafted videos and other lessons to provide those to students so that they can acquire some prior experiences about the lesson to be taught in the next class. More schools, colleges as well as universities may come forward to adopt this trend in ELT.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion it can be said that flipped classroom has both negative and positive effects. However as a pedagogical model it has its own significance. In Korea's ultra-competitive environment, flipped learning not only leads to better test scores, it also leads to deeper learning. This model is also known as the “blended learning” that can be treated as hybrid teaching method that combines classroom and online learning. Students review these materials at home and at their own pace. Classroom periods are then transformed into hands-on work periods. This method can be implemented in Bangladesh. To adopt such type of teaching and learning system for English Language Teaching (ELT) at undergraduate level in Bangladesh research and pilot study are needed.

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# A Study of the Application of ICT in EFL Classes

Paritosh Mondal\*

## Abstract

*The history of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use in Bangladesh is comparatively brief. It is being used in many sectors including language teaching and learning. Different teaching methods failed to teach English language in Bangladesh for many reasons. The use of ICT has much potential to promote techniques of learning and teaching English. Both teachers and learners have scope of practice, options of error correction, platform of increasing vocabulary and therefore mastering the four skills of the language. The present study aimed at examining the status of ICT uses in English language learning in Bangladesh. The participants were 36 secondary students randomly selected from three secondary schools. The data was collected through questionnaire and analysed statistically. The participants responded to the issues of ownership of ICT tools, perception regarding the ICT integration in language learning, barriers behind ICT in teaching and learning. The study revealed that students used ICT for English language learning and other purposes. Some barriers to integrating ICT in language learning were found. The study concluded with some recommendations for the successful integration of ICT in English language learning.*

**Keywords:** *ICT, teaching, learning, language, secondary, CLT, ELT, education*

## 1. Introduction

The present study aimed at examining the application of ICT in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at the secondary level in Bangladesh. The paper is related to the detailed analysis of ICT tools, their uses in learning language. In Bangladesh, English is taught as a compulsory subject at almost all levels of education since the British Regime. Curriculum, syllabus and methods of teaching and learning English have been changed and updated with the course of technology invention. Teaching technique and learning process have also changed in

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tune with curriculum and methods and these are to some extent, different from that of thirty years ago. The infrastructural development of the classrooms has been occurred. Instead of traditional teaching material such as blackboard, chalk and duster, classroom teachers have started using modern tools like white board, marker, and eraser in some cases. Moreover, smart board is also being used in the classroom. So ICT helps change classroom environment and therefore new techniques appear to the classroom parliamentarian to use in teaching and at the same time learners are getting familiar with these tools.

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has been dominating English Language Teaching in Bangladesh for a long time. In 2000s CLT approach to teaching English was introduced in primary, secondary and tertiary levels and this method of teaching is still continuing. Some researchers think that CLT has also failed as the students have less interest in learning grammatical items in junior grades. The present English text book (classes 9-10) has been designed in 14 units and its 13th unit is about media and e-communications. The issues like the Internet, e-mail, important social media (such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, and LinkedIn), technology, e-learning etc. have been brought to make the learners introduced with ICT tools and information technology. The learners are thought to get an idea about the virtual campus of an educational institution and the first Virtual University of South Asia that is going to be established in Bangladesh. After completing reading the text, the students are expected to enable themselves to surf the Internet and write an e-mail for easy communication and get familiar with those ICT tools. The study was designed to look into the scenario of use of ICT feasible both for the students and teachers.

ICT tools particularly computer, mobile phone, tablet are very popular with present language learners in the world. Because these modern devices are portable having easy access to Internet and human communication. ICT can work as a tutor when learners get help for tutorial program step by step through drill and practice in that program (Tayor, 1980). ICT acts as a tutee when students browse computers in order to gain more understanding about the topic. ICT integration in language learning also attracts many researchers. Roblyer (2004) emphasized that ICT integration was not a simple application but a necessity to contribute to the (language) learning process for the students. Most of the developed and developing countries in the world use ICT in teaching and learning English as a SL/FL. In those countries, teachers use ICT tools for different purposes ICT is used for teaching materials to be used in teaching grammatical items (Lee, 2002). Teachers also use ICT tools for acquiring grammatical items. The use of ICT can reduce students' foolscap paper or load of exercise book back home. Teachers can check their work online. E-

assessment saves time of the people of two parties. ICT turns printed assessment into e-one. E-assessment can be done by the teacher wherever and whenever they can. It is more convenient to the teachers than printed one. Adebayo (2014) mentioned the Computer-Aided Language Assessment (CALA) package as an automated package used for assessing students' understanding of language instructional skills. The absence of ICT equipment in most secondary schools leads students to resort to cybercafés for Internet Access.

English as a compulsory subject has been taught to the students for ten years before sitting for the SSC examination. Now the students face Primary School Certificate (PEC) Examination and Junior School Certificate (JSC) Examination. Prior to that, they are taught English additionally at pre-primary school to make their base strong for grade 1. The pass rate of SSC examination is gradually increasing but the achievement rate in English language is not satisfactory as it should be particularly when their language skill is tested lower in secondary (school) level. So it is clear that quality learning of English language is not tune with the pass rate of SSC examination in Bangladesh. A number of factors directly or indirectly stand behind this incongruity between learning outcome (quality) and certificate gain (quantity). The study intended to be examined how ICT used in secondary education influences learning language and help increase quality education.

Since 2001 CLT method as “the best” and “the way to teach” (Bax, 2003) has been introduced in teaching/learning English in classes 6 to 10 in Bangladesh. GTM is still the norm of ELT in many institutions where teachers emphasize on grammatical rules, vocabulary memorization and where most sentences are decontextualized by the learners while translating them into English. CLT has not been fully implemented in the junior classes as its proper application is usually interrupted due to the teachers' approach to teaching the language and the students' lack of real interest for contextualization of grammatical items. Therefore, difficulties in attaining a good command in English are found among the students. As a result, the recent tendency of learners has been towards eclecticism, choosing materials, techniques and classroom activities for touch-and-pass method (Maniruzzaman, 1998). Application of practical English is hardly seen at the working level. Hence it is time to explore the ICT based techniques for mastering the skills of English as a foreign language.

In secondary education, lecture method is very popular with teachers. About 70% teachers in this level follow this method (Banu, 2012), some teachers add some discussion and questioning with it and few teachers try to apply the leaning by doing method. This method does not produce teacher-student, student-student interaction and make learning

active so much as it is required in communicative approach. Teachers have provision to practice outside classroom. But it is hardly seen. However, it is ICT that mostly encourages the CLT method based on student-centered approaches. The techniques are promoted by technology devices and form proper dual interaction and make learning circle easier and straight. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the ICT in learning language. The present study is important in a number of ways. It has its potential to manifest why the government needs to build ICT infrastructure in educational institutions for the improvement of English curricula and teaching practices that incorporate the modern tools of instructional technology. In light of global trends towards the integration of ICT in schools, the study is expected to show ICT based language learning techniques found from the literature worldwide.

## **2. Literature Review**

Empirical studies on Internet and e-mail, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Web 2.0, L2 learning, the barriers of using ICT in language learning and Bangladesh ELT have been reviewed to scrutinize the understanding of ICT literacy and to justify the uses of ICT of Bangladesh perspectives with those of interactional situations.

‘Internet’ is an important ICT tool which is being used to acquire English as a foreign language by the speakers of the other languages in the world. Pickersgill (2003) explained how Internet can be effectively utilized to help students become experts in searching for information rather than receiving fact. Chen (2008) saw new possibilities of Internet use to bridge the gaps between English Language Learners (ELLs) and native English speaking students. Mills (2010) investigated the impact of an Internet program to improve basic writing skills on grammar and punctuation through using English ‘Competency Tests’. Alshehab (2013) examined the impact of Internet and E-Learning methods in improving students’ ability in translation from English into Arabic. As a tool, CALL is more attainable for the learners to enhance their language efficacy as the computer is the most important invention in this era. Bakar (2007) investigated how computer-based activities are organized in a school that is totally dependent on the framed syllabus. Liu (1996) investigated the attitudes toward computers in a sample of Chinese students at an American university. Mobile phone has become accessible for language learning. Such inexpensive and sophisticated device has rather changed the landscape of e-learning in many ways. In fact, mobile learning is considered as the next generation of e-learning (Sharples, 2000). Beazley (2000) investigated how 761 females and males used Web sites for courses at a large public university. Mullamaa (2010) also focused on how the

web-based environment can be used for supporting student-centred learning, increasing student motivation, individualisation and cooperation in creating the study-materials. Jung (2006) gave an account of an inquiry into 591 Chinese University students' ICT use for English learning purposes and their perceptions of ICT applications. Salehi and Salehi (2012) examined the challenges and integration of using ICT into the curriculum. Farooqui (2014) investigated why changes in English Language teaching in Bangladesh have brought about by the government and educational policy makers. Shohel and Power (2010) looked at teacher perspectives in context of technology introduction in teaching and learning in Bangladesh. Banu (2012) attempted to identify the qualifications and competencies of the Computer Education (CE) teachers in 42 secondary schools.

### **3. Methodology**

The study obtained the data through questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was divided into some sections consisting comprising fifteen questions. Only close-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. Three secondary schools in Khulna District were selected for the research. 'Shahpur High School' of Dumuria Upazila, 'Fultala Govt. Girls' High School' of Fultala Upazila and 'Khulna Govt. Girls' High School' of KCC were visited by the researcher. Two were government girls' schools; and the other was non-government general school for co-education. The simple random sampling was used in the study. The participants were 36 secondary students but 29 students took part in the questionnaire survey. The questions were simple and understandable to all the participants. Of them, 24 respondents were selected from two girls' schools and the rest 12 is for both boys and girls. They were found interested in participating in the questionnaire survey.

### **4. Findings and Discussions**

Findings of the study revealed the present status of ICT use in language learning and general purposes as well. These focused on ownership of ICT tools, students' perception regarding the ICT integration in language learning, barriers behind using ICT in learning and expected facilities from the institute head and the government. The results are presented in sections.

#### **4.1. The Ownership and Purpose of ICT**

The respondents responded to the issue of the ownership of the ICT devices. Most of the students have Smartphone at least one with each family. The result indicates that 93% respondents possess Smartphone. Next to it, stands possessing cell phone. The lowest numbers of

respondents (14%) have electrical music device or mp 3 player, iPods. About 72% students use ICT in learning purpose. Among them, equal amount of respondents consented that they use ICT 25% both for learning and non-learning purposes. In case of 50% ICT use, 32% students opined for learning and 10% for non-learning purpose. 75% of ICT is used in learning purpose by 24% students and in non-learning by 10%. Hundred percent use of ICT for non-learning purpose is done by none of them whereas for learning purpose ICT is used by 32% students. 28% students use ICT for many other purposes rather than learning. Non-learning activities include checking e-mails, exploring social media like Facebook, Twitter, Viber, Whats App etc, reading news on Internet, using chat applications with friends, downloading video/ games, watching You Tube for audio/video, using Google map, playing games on mobile phone and laptop and watching cricket/football match. Among these activities, 86% students play games on mobile phone and ICT is used by 76% students for downloading video or games. Only 24% students use ICT in checking e-mail. A good number of students use ICT in watching cricket/football match.

Students engage themselves in different learning activities using ICT. They search internet for information to support their assignment. They learn vocabulary from e-dictionaries available on mobile phones. They seek ready-made answers of the questions for examination. They practice listening on BBC or CNN and speaking following the native speakers. 69% students use ICT for knowing the meaning of new words or neology while practicing writing on a topic. Listening is practiced by about 66% students. For language learning, students use different ICT tools. These tools include desktop computer, digital camera, electronic music device (mp3 player, ipod), laptop, smart phone, television and radio. 79% of the respondents use smart phone for learning activities and the lowest amount of them (14%) use electrical music device for the same.

#### **4.2. Internet Access**

All students have Internet connection either in mobile or with desktop computer. It means that Internet is very important and popular to them.

#### **4.3. Use of ICT in Language Learning**

The use of ICT in language learning has been examined on different parameters. Students were asked why they think that the use of ICT improves language skill. It is a vital question that was answered positively by a good number of respondents. They opined that learning language with ICT is fun and an important source of collecting learning materials. The use of ICT saves learners' time.

Table 1: Students' attitude towards the use of ICT  
 (Key: Strongly Disagree =SD; Disagree = D; No Opinion =N; Agree =A; Strongly Agree =SA)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	(M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation)	
Statement	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	M	SD
Using ICT improves language skill	0	2	3	17	7	4.00	.80
ICT in learning language is interesting	1	0	3	4	21	4.52	.95
The use of ICT in learning language	0	1	2	8	17	4.46	.79
Using ICT in language learning is important	0	1	4	18	6	4.00	.71
Using ICT for information in language learning saves time	0	2	1	17	8	4.11	.79

The table 1 shows that students agreed to the idea that the use of ICT improves language skills. It was pointed positive that using ICT in language learning is important and saves time. Many students strongly supported that they want to use ICT in language learning as it is interesting.

Table 2: Students' attitude towards the use of ICT in language learning

Statement		(Key: Strongly Disagree =SD; Disagree = D; No Opinion =N; Agree =A; Strongly Agree =SA)					
		SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Using ICT improves language skill	0.0	6.9	10.3	58.6	24.1	100
2	ICT in learning language is interesting	3.4	0.	10.3	13.8	72.4	100
3	The use of ICT in learning language	0.0	3.6	7.1	28.6	60.7	100
4	Using ICT in language learning is important	0.0	3.4	13.8	62.1	20.7	100
5	Using ICT for information in language learning saves time	0.0	7.1	3.6	60.7	28.6	100

The table 2 illustrates that 60.7% students strongly agreed that they found using ICT in language learning as interesting. 72.4% students think that using ICT in language learning is interesting. 58.6% students agreed to the idea that the use of ICT improves language skills and 62.1% think using ICT in language learning is important. 60.7% students also agreed that using ICT for information in language learning saves time. The figure points out that 72.4% strongly agreed that using ICT in language learning is interesting, 14% normally agreed to the idea, 10% students were neutral, 4% strongly disagreed to the statement.

#### **4.4. Barriers to Integrating ICT**

Studying obstacles to the use of ICT in learning and teaching environment is important in developing countries like Bangladesh because identifying fundamental barriers may help teachers and educators overcome these barriers and become successful technology adopters. Among many barriers that hinder learners from using ICT properly in language learning/ education are high price of ICT tools, parents' resistance, teachers' obligation, lack of ICT knowledge and time, high cost of internet package, low speed of internet and insufficient supply of electricity. The survey result indicates that 66% students think the main barrier to integrating ICT in learning is high price of ICT tools such as mobile, computer, laptop, TV, radio. The price of these digital devices is too high for the common people to purchase and thus use in learning. Due to the socio-cultural status, parents do not allow their sibling to use smart phones with internet access. Several studies indicate that students have competence and confidence in using computers in the classroom but they still make little use of technologies because they do not have enough time. Electricity is also a problem that disturbs functioning ICT in education. 52% students agree to this problem.

The successful integration of ICT depends on the strong recommendation of the higher authority. The most common finding in the study is that ICT implementation is a complex process and involves a large number of influencing factors that come from the decision making of the government and the institution head. The students of those schools expect mainly three things from the institution head. They prefer making the campus Wi-Fi zone (52%), making multimedia set-up for every classroom (48%) and allowing them to keep ICT tools with themselves in the classes (66%). The students' expectation from the government is also mainly three-folded such as modern ICT infrastructure set up in schools (62%), introduction of ICT based software for language learning (62%) and reducing the price of ICT tools like mobile set, computer, laptop etc. (72%).

## 5. Conclusion

Feedback from the students showed that the majority of them use ICT. They use it for language learning and other purposes too. They also feel obstructed using ICT in learning. Hence, actions need to be taken to promote motivation to use ICT in their language learning, because ICT could provide variety of learning opportunity for the students. The government should remove barriers on the way to integrating ICT in schools. More campaign or seminar on ICT should be organized to give awareness to the students on the variety of exercises and also information in the website. Besides, teachers in school need to play their role to keep reminding students to use ICT for searching for information. Findings from the survey showed that most of the students are aware of the various benefits which ICT can provide. However, many students still lack of awareness on the use of ICT resources to help them especially in learning English. Thus they use ICT in non-learning purposes. Therefore, it is important for the teachers in school to encourage and guide the students to use ICT tools for enhancing students' language development. Most importantly, students must change their attitudes towards the use of ICT in learning before they can successfully use it.

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# **Evaluation of Higher Secondary EFL Teachers' Performance in the Light of Implementation of CLT**

SK. Obaidullah\*

## **Abstract**

*EFL teaching is a multifaceted activity; it has several dimensions and must rise to the challenge of its enhanced responsibilities. In recent decades, many EFL countries have shifted from the typical traditional grammar-based teaching method to communicative-focused instruction. Even in Bangladesh, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has introduced the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in its curriculum for teaching and learning English at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level. The study aimed at exploring the major limitations of the EFL teachers teaching English at the Higher Secondary level in Bangladesh. This study conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 English teachers teaching English at the higher secondary level in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. The study explored some challenges related to the efficiency of the teachers in teaching English in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The findings indicated that the problems related to teachers' competency include misconceptions of CLT, following traditional grammar based teaching approach, teachers' English proficiency, lack of training, classroom size, inability to use technological tools, and lack of training on CLT.*

**Keywords:** Problems, competency, EFL teachers, HSC level

## **1. Introduction**

At the HSC level, the English course is designed following the Communicative Language Teaching Approach with a view to developing the English language skills in learners: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The objective of the HSC English course is to make the students competent in English. But the output is unsatisfactory to the expectation. Many stakeholders are involved in curriculum policy making and its

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subsequent implementation; and they all are responsible to some extent for the poor level of success. In this process, English language teachers are the most crucial part of this curriculum development and implementation. Therefore, the role of the teachers is very important in communicative language teaching as a facilitator in a CLT based classroom. The 21st century EFL teachers must be well-educated, trained, technologically sound, having challenge taking attitudes, friendly, and hard working (Hoque, 2016). In a CLT classroom, teachers may adopt various roles of manager, facilitator, planner, motivator, group organizer, etc (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Hence, the teachers' responsibilities are now much more demanding. If the teachers have problems in competency and proficiency, achieving the goals of the language curriculum may be impossible. Thus, the research work tries to find out the challenges that the EFL teachers face at the HSC level in Bangladesh. Schulman (1986) has identified seven types of knowledge that highly effective teachers must have: (i) the content they are teaching; (ii) the curriculum, materials, and programs; (iii) the broad principles and strategies that constitute classroom management and organization; (iv) the student population; (v) the particular educational context they are teaching in; (vi) educational aims and values, and (vii) pedagogical content knowledge, which is a special mix of content and pedagogy unique to teachers.

The relationship between a student and teacher is the most important factor difference for EFL students. A teacher who openly welcomes students and accepts the cultural differences can help with an easier acceptance by the school environment. Quality professional training development opportunities need to be available to help these teachers and other staff members who teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. Students who more actively engage outside the classroom in extracurricular or community activities cultivate friendships and interests which help with broadening language acquisition. When students feel more confident and have some degree of language skill, they can be encouraged to join other school- and community-related activities. Being active and also volunteering to help towards some larger purpose can also build relevancy to learning and involvement.

## **2. Literature Review**

According to Pasternak and Bailey (2004), teachers need both declarative and procedural knowledge to function effectively in their classrooms. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge about the content area they are teaching whereas procedural knowledge refers to the ability to do things in the classroom. As a part of sustaining sound professional knowledge, teachers must recognize the importance of professional development and keeping up-to-date with technology. Hoque (2016) found

that teachers who genuinely care about their students have a significant impact on the students' attitudes, motivation and behavior. These students work harder and are more successful learners. They learn English faster and display stronger skills.

Therefore, in teaching and learning process of a language, teachers must have some competencies as well. But as seen in Bangladesh as well as in many other countries teachers' competence is not up to the mark. In their 1994 survey of 216 native and nonnative EFL teachers in different countries, Reves & Medgyes (1994) found that 84% of the subjects acknowledged having problems with vocabulary and fluency aspects of the language; other areas of difficulty included speaking, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and writing. Similarly, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) report that 72% of their nonnative speaking graduate subjects admitted that their insufficient language proficiency impeded their teaching. Alongside these issues for students, teachers' behaviour also plays a significant feature in the success of implementing CLT. Ellis (1996) argues that the successful adoption of CLT into EFL classrooms depends on the teachers English language proficiency and teaching resources to implement it. Most of the EFL teachers believe that they do not have adequate English knowledge and skills to facilitate communicative activities which might be considered as another barrier inhibiting the adoption of CLT into their classroom (Karim, 2004). To support this statement, Penner (1995) observes Chinese teachers teaching in this study and find that their English knowledge is limited while CLT requires teachers to have high proficiency in English in order to modify the textbooks and facilitate students.

In relation to this, Li (1998) further explains that CLT requires them to be fluent in English and most of the teachers in this study generally feel that they only have high proficiency in English grammar, reading and writing, but they have inadequate abilities in speaking and listening in English to conduct communicative activities in their classes. Iftakhar (2014) has pointed that teachers' deficiency in spoken English is also a challenge in applying CLT in their classroom in Bangladesh. It is a matter of great regret that many English teachers in Bangladesh do not have the ability to speak in English fluently and they do not use English while teaching English the classroom. Besides, "misconceptions about CLT" among teachers in Bangladesh also act as an obstacle to make use of communicative activities in their classes (Ansarey, 2012, p. 72) As a result, teachers' lack of English language proficiency is identified as a major difficulty in the adoption of CLT into EFL classrooms around the world.

### **3. Research Design**

The study is qualitative in nature, and applied a comprehensive approach for conducting the research. This study was designed to investigate the problems and limitations of the language teachers related to their efficiency in using CLT methodology in the classrooms. The study was conducted with in-depth interview with 10 EFL teachers teaching at the HSC level in Bangladesh. The teachers for the interview were chosen randomly from different rural and urban area colleges. The participants included both male and female teachers.

#### **3.1. Participants**

Of the participants 6 were male and another 5 was female teachers. All of the participants completed M.A. degree from public universities. For the purpose of observing research ethics, the names of participants were kept secret. Hence, the 10 participants were given pseudonym name as R1, R2...R12. The demographic information of the participants is as follow:

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

<b>Sr. No./Names</b>	<b>College location</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>
R1	Urban	Male	M.A.	10 years
R2	Urban	Female	M.A.	10 years
R3	Urban	Male	M.A.	10 years
R4	Urban	Male	M.A.	12 years
R5	Urban	Female	M.A.	12 years
R6	Rural	Female	M.A.	10 years
R7	Rural	Male	M.A.	10 years
R8	Rural	Female	M.A.	10 years
R9	Rural	Male	M.A.	10 years
R10	Rural	Male	M.A.	12 years

#### **3.2. Instrument**

The study collected data through in-depth interviews. The study confirmed the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework adapted from Hoque (2016) comprised of a four-phase process for systematically developing and refining an interview protocol. The four-phase process included: (1) ensuring interview questions align with research questions; (2) constructing an inquiry-based conversation; (3) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (4) piloting the interview protocol. The interview protocol included 6 open-ended questions covering 6 different areas. The interview would enable the researchers to get in-depth information by the questions followed by a lively discussion.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis**

It is critically important how the interviewer is to document the contents of the interaction with the respondent. The researcher used systematic methods to accomplish this. He tape-recorded the entire interview and discussion, and then transcribed the text word for word. The transcribed text then becomes the data that were analyzed. The study tape-recorded the interview and took notes at the same time; later he reviewed the tape and notes, occasionally writing down direct quotes that were deemed especially relevant. The researcher took extensive notes during the interview. It would have appeared that the strategy the study involved saved time and energy. On the other hand, it was sufficiently reliable and appropriate choice.

The open-ended questions of the interview were discussed in qualitative method. In other words, these items and comments were analysed very closely line -by- line or even word-by-word. As the researcher belongs to the same professional group, and has a similar background as those of the participants, he holds an insider understands of the participants' beliefs and perceptions. His teaching experience in EFL settings was valuable in perceiving and interpreting the data obtained in the interviews and observation. Finally, conclusion and recommendation were given based on the findings obtained from the research work.

## **4. Findings and Discussions**

The findings of the study arranged in the context of previous research and theories. The findings of the study are presented in the following sections:

### **4.1. Teachers' Academic Fitness**

The study found that all the participant teachers were academically qualified and completed M.A. in English. They had long years of experience in teaching English, but their skills in teaching English didn't contribute much to their teaching. Moreover, it was found that the teachers, especially, who were above fifty years old were not interested in developing their skill in CLT. They were confident that the way they were teaching was proven and successful. The analysis of the interviews showed that the four out of ten teachers did not have any training on CLT. Four of them attended short term training on ELT at National Academy of Educational Management (NAEM); but, the concept and idea they had from the training, found no effect on their teaching activities. Only two of the respondents attended a 3-month long training on ELT, but they had no specialized training on CLT. However, almost of every teacher claimed that they were well qualified to teach English.

## **4. 2. Language of Instruction**

In response to the question of instruction of language, the most of the participants (80%) informed that they frequently used Bangla along with English as a medium of instruction in the class. The interview responses showed that 8 out of 10 teachers used English in limited scale while delivering their lecture in the class. Of the respondents, 2 teachers used English throughout the entire class though they had English pronunciation shortcomings. The teachers even didn't inspire the students to speak in English among themselves. Some of the English teachers said that the students couldn't understand their lecture if they used English in the class. However, it was observed that the teachers actually didn't have much confidence in speaking English. It is suggested that the teachers used more than one method in their classroom during teaching. Surprisingly, it was found that out of the 10 participants, 8 teachers still liked to teach English following Grammar Translation Method. A teacher mentioned:

I try to combine the techniques of some traditional methods and CLT to enhance students' speaking fluency and writing skill in the classroom.

Therefore, it can be said that the method of their teaching doesn't foster the students' speaking and listening ability. The teachers are not risk takers and stay hesitant in using target language. Even they are not confident in their own level of language proficiency.

## **4.3. Instructional Activities in the Classroom**

The answers of the questions on the instructional activities drew frustrating pictures as 50% teachers were unaware of the activities of a CLT approach, and even they did not have clear concept about the participatory and student-centered classroom. The activities the teachers performed in the classroom sometimes could not fulfill the basic requirements of CLT approach. Most of the teachers did not know how to apply communicative activities in the classroom. They hardly arranged peer work, group work, role play etc. in their classroom. It was a matter of surprise that students were not good followers. Various kinds of activities should be used in classroom such as role play, interviews, information gap, games, language exchanges, survey and pair work for effective language teaching and learning.

Active learning is not a new concept. Active learning is defined as the extent to which students are involved in experiences that involve actively constructing new knowledge and understanding. Engaging students in these forms of learning is at the heart of effective educational practice.

#### **4.4. Use of Modern Technology in the Classroom**

English Language is itself a technology; and any powerful technology makes a classroom more interactive, interesting and participatory. Two teachers claimed that they frequently used power-point slides for presentation of lessons. The study found that the use of technology was not easy in the class for a number of reasons such as the non-availability of technology, and lacks of knowledge of using the technology. Of the 10 participants, 8 teachers disclosed they had basic knowledge and skills in computer literacy and operation. 7 teachers disclosed that their colleges did not have the equipment such as multimedia facilities, projectors, CD/VCD facilities, LCD monitors, Internet connection, etc. Moreover, many of the teachers were still using age-old blackboard and chalk in classrooms, and they did not have adequate idea on the use of smart board or electronic board.

#### **4.5. Teaching and Learning Styles**

The findings suggested that most of the teachers used more than one method simultaneously and incoherently. An important finding was that 8 teachers still did not know which teaching methods they actually followed. No teachers prepared lesson plan rather they were following some guidebooks in the class. A number of 4 teachers confessed that they didn't arrange classroom activity, such as pair work, role play, group work etc.; however other 06 teachers claimed that they implemented pair works and group works. It shows that the teachers have different teaching styles and preferences. Thus, their responses proved that the classes they conducted were not student-centred rather they were teacher-oriented.

Higher Secondary students should involve in English speaking inside and outside classrooms. English is not being used for language instruction in classrooms, nor as a tool of communication during social interaction. It is a large responsibility of English teachers to ensure students to practise English in a supportive atmosphere, and bring successful language learning into the classroom. The large size of the class size is one of the biggest challenges in teaching English in CLT approach. Though the teachers are academically qualified, they are not adequately trained up for the challenges of the 21st century concepts. Some teachers received short term training on CLT. However, many of them still teach in the class in their own way. It is a matter of hope that the interviewed Higher Secondary teachers achieved computer literacy to a certain level, though they are not well equipped in using modern technology. The lack of equipments in the institution is a big problem, because without modern equipment and technology teachers are unable to deliver technology based teaching. Moreover, the examination system at the HSC level in Bangladesh encourages 'Teaching to the Test' (Hoque, 2016) rather

teaching a language. The government has introduced CLT approach in Bangladesh but adequate steps have not been taken to implement the approach for achieving curriculum objectives.

## **5. Recommendations**

Based on the findings the study puts forward a number of recommendations to improve the existing problems with EFL teachers:

1. Adequate teacher training programmes should be arranged by the government and non-organizations to improve the teaching and learning of English, the curriculum, methodology and the subject itself;
2. Training on using technology must be made compulsory;
3. Modern technology and supportive equipment should be made available in every colleges;
4. Pre-service and post service compulsory training should be introduced for intending and current teachers;
5. The existing exam system should be reconsidered so the language skill can be tested integrated ways.

## **6. Conclusion**

In the light of the above discussion, it can be said that there are some significant problems related to the competency of the EFL teachers. In this case, an English language teacher should be self-guided, motivated, and risk takers. The EFL teachers should gain the knowledge and skills in practising Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to build their career as effective language teachers. Training is also necessary to develop their knowledge, skills and attitude so that they can function effectively in the English language classroom. This study makes recommendations to improve the quality of the teachers. In particular, teacher training program, curriculum reform for developing language knowledge and language teaching skills, are required. In addition, improving the teachers' teaching practicum, teacher educator professional development, and teaching and learning resources are crucial in Bangladesh situation.

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# **Impact of Age and Attitudes on Digital Contents: A Study with the Trainee Teachers**

Dr. D. M. Feroz Shah\*

## **Abstract**

*The preparation and use of digital contents are gaining momentum as more and more schools are transitioning to one-to-one computing environment. With the introduction of the Internet, access to digital content in the classrooms became easier for teachers. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a part and parcel of modern life and education. The government of Bangladesh has set up a goal to build Digital Bangladesh by 2021. For this purpose, multimedia classrooms have been established in 22,500 secondary schools and madrasas and at least one teacher from each school and madrasa has been trained so that teachers can conduct technology based teaching using digital contents. This study aimed at identifying relationships between age and attitudes of trainee teachers towards digital contents preparation and use. Data was collected from 85 trainees using a questionnaire, observation, and informal interviews. Findings of the study revealed that there was a correlation between age and attitudes in digital content preparation training. The participants under 40 years of age were more interested than the teachers who were above 40 years. Younger teachers could give more attention to training, understand trainer's instruction quickly, and prepare digital contents than the older ones. All the respondents suggested that the younger teachers should be preferred for digital contents preparation training although all teachers needed digital content preparation training to achieve the Digital Bangladesh by 2021.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Content, Multimedia Classroom, technology, younger teachers, older teachers*

## **1. Introduction**

Digital content typically refers to any type of content that exists in the form of digital data. Digital content is stored on either digital or analog storage in specific format that are available for download or distribution on electronic devices. Digital contents include information that is digitally

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broadcast, streamed, or contained in computer or other electronic devices including, multimedia, projectors, mobiles, and television. The major digital contents include PowerPoint slides, popular media files, videos, audio files, news items, images software, advertisement, question answer sites web-mapping, and many more. However, a broader approach considers any type of digital information as digital content. Various types of digital content have seen an increase as people now have access to the Internet. Therefore, it is easier for people to receive their news and watch TV online in their electronic devices, rather than from traditional platforms. Because of this increased access to internet, digital contents are commonly published through individuals in the form of eBook, blog, posts, and even facebook posts. As part of its development aspirations, the government of Bangladesh set Vision-2021; and came up with the National ICT Policy-2009. National Education Policy-2010 was designed to act as a catalyst to build Digital Bangladesh by 2021. In pursuit of Digital Bangladesh by 2021, it is important that Bangladesh invests in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to develop its human capital to prepare skilled and well-educated manpower as human capital which is the key tool to boost the country's development.

Bangladesh is trying to make economic and social development by using education and transforming its huge population through the teaching of ICT skills. Digital Bangladesh means, any person of this country gets any kinds of service needed to his door step by using ICT devices. Teachers play a vital role in disseminating and popularizing ICT to the younger citizens of the country. Therefore, the government has set projects like ICT project, TQI-2 project to train teachers of secondary schools and madrasas in preparing and using digital contents. The study was carried out among those teachers who were receiving digital contents training from Teachers' Training College, Dhaka. The study was undertaken to find out the relationship between age and attitudes towards digital content, and to identify the causes of that correlation in using Digital content (DC).

## **2. Literature Review**

Education is one of the main key factors to economic and overall development; technology (ICT) plays a vital role in spreading and developing quality of education; and quality education plays an essential role in the development of modern economy. The UNESCO uses the term ICTs to describe:

“...the tools and the processes to access, retrieve, store, organize, manipulate, produce, present and exchange information by electronic and other automated means. These include hardware, software and telecommunications in the forms of personal computers, scanners, digital cameras, phones, faxes, modems, CD

and DVD players and recorders, digitized video, radio and TV programs, database programs and multimedia programs" (UNESCO Bangkok,2003).

The use of ICT offers powerful learning environment and can transform the learning and teaching process so that learners can deal with knowledge in an active, self-directed and constructive way. At present ICT is considered as an important means to promote new methods of instruction. It should be used to develop students' skills for cooperation, communication, problem solving and lifelong learning (Plomp et al., 1996; Voogt, 2003). Although computers and other technologies are prevalent throughout our society (Cuban, 2001), developing countries are far from reaping their benefits because of certain barriers. At present, digital contents have permeated into every part of personal, professional and social life, and have become a valuable resource to make life easier although the preservation of the digital contents faces challenges for technological problems.

The Government of Bangladesh in an effort to harness the power of ICT, formulated its National ICT Policy in year 2002. A revised National ICT Policy was passed in the parliament/cabinet in 2009. The National ICT Policy 2009 has incorporated all the components of the National ICT Policy 2002 in a more structured manner to establish an ICT Center of Excellence with necessary long-term funding to teach and conduct research in advanced ICTs; enhance the quality and reach of education at all levels with a special focus on Mathematics, Science and English; boost the use of ICT tools in all levels of education, including early childhood development program (ECDP), mass literacy, and lifelong learning. Digital learning environments are the key to addressing what one might call the "three Cs" (Cs: consume, collaborate, create) of learning today. The 21st century students are required to be sophisticated consumers, interpreters and users of contents. The schools need to teach them to: consume (read and interpret text and imagery); collaborate (share what they've learned and work with others to extend their knowledge); create (demonstrate understanding by synthesizing and using higher-order thinking and creativity skills to build new content). Merely consuming content - from printed or digital texts - is an internal and passive way of learning and neglects the other two Cs - collaboration and creation.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

In spite of the importance of the digital contents in the classroom teaching with the presentation of modern technologies, the teachers still have some barriers in using the DCs. Therefore, the study was undertaken

to investigate the impact of age and attitudes of teachers towards the application of digital contents. The objectives of the study were:

- a. to investigate the attitudes of trainees towards digital content considering their ages;
- b. to evaluate the relationship between age and attitudes of trainees based on acquired ICT skills;
- c. to identify the leading force of trainees to develop digital content with full attention.

## **4. Methodology**

Mixed Methods Approach was used for data collection. A questionnaire was designed for collecting data based on six questions; and they were both close and open ended. The questions were set in relation to objectives of the study. The study also employed training session observation, and semi-structure interview. During the training period, researcher observed some trainees were above 50 years and below 40 years old as considering the objectives of the study. Within this observation, researcher follows their attention, body language and physical movement considering their age. Researcher also informally interviewed some trainees on what was their thinking about training program. Pre-test and post-test results were used as it was very important for training program to see the achievement of the training program. So, pre-test and post-test results were considered for the study. The trainees were divided into different age groups ( 25-30, 30-35.....45-50) to achieve the objectives of the study. And this data was compared to analyze the role of age towards Digital content training programmes.

### **4.1. Respondents**

Total respondents of this study were 90. They were the trainees from 32-34 courses, batch no 12, and each course consisted of 30 trainees. All trainees were selected for only the research purpose. 85 trainees out 90 submitted their filled up questionnaire, and 5 questionnaires were missing. So, the actual respondents were 85 instead of 90. The observation and interview were conducted among the same participants.

### **4.2. Analysis of Data**

Collected data were analyzed on the basis of the objectives of the study. Qualitative data were tabulated and presented in percentage and presented in tables. And for qualitative data, it was recorded as per nature of statement, and its priority.

## 5. Findings and Discussions

The Trainees were asked the questions regarding their concept about computer use, role of age to participate Digital content (DC) training, use of digital contents in the classroom, their personal opinion on how they joined the programme, etc. The findings of the study were presented in the table below:

Table 1: Teachers' concept and attitudes

Questions	Answers	Participants (N=85)	%
Concept about computer use	I have previous skills of operating computer	52	61.18
	I have handled the computer in training programme.	33	38.82
Is there role of age for accepting Digital Content training?	Age doesn't a factor	60	70.59
	Age is very important. Those who are in less age can give more attention in training.	25	29.41
	Can't pay attention due to age	0	0
Personal opinion in participate Digital Content training.	Joined training with high expectation.	82	96.47
	Bound to join the training.	2	2.35
	Not join training if there any alternative.	1	1.78

The questions were close ended. A number of 52 trainees out of 85(61.18%) confirmed that they had previous knowledge and skills on computer use before attending the training, and 33 persons said they had no idea on computer before join the training. They used computer in the training program. The findings showed that huge number of secondary school teachers did not have knowledge in operating computer.

The answers were close ended and 60 trainees out of 85(70.59%) disclosed that age did not affect in participating training but 25 persons differed with above statement. They said that age was a vital force for taking training on use of technology and digital contents; and age was not a factor (Either young or middle aged). Actually, observation showed the difference. Working as a master trainer, the researcher observed that, the teachers who were near 50 or around, they could not pay attention properly. They fell tired and went outside for many times. Early in the morning or after lunch season, they fell drowsy. The same thing also happened to some young teachers.

The study found 82 trainees out of 85(96.47%) said that they participated the training with high expectation. They thought that they learned many things from that training. And very interesting that, no one

said that they could not pay attention due to their ages. Actually, observation showed the difference scenario. The researcher observed that, the teachers who were near 50 years old or around, they did not pay attention to work. It might be they didn't enjoy it or fell tired due to age and weakness. At least 2 trainees out of 85 gave different disclosed that and that's they would not join the DC training programme if they were not compelled (question 3).

Table 2: Relation between Age and Attitude based on answers

Age Structure	No. of Partic ipant	Question No-4 (Concept about computer) and answers		Question No-5 (Is there role of age for accepting Digital Content training?) and answers		
		A- Previous knowled ge and skills	B- Physically touch and movement	A- Age doesn't a factor	B- Age is very important	C- age barri er
21-25	02	01	01	02	-	-
26-30	13	11	02	08	04	-
31-35	13	09	04	12	01	-
36-40	19	15	04	13	06	-
Sub-total (A)	47	26	11	35	11	-
41-45	22	08	14	12	10	-
46-50	12	05	06	09	02	-
51-55	04	02	02	02	02	-
Sub-total (B)	38	15	22	23	14	-
Total	85	92	66	116	50	-

Table-2 revealed that 26 participants out of 47 (age below 40) had previous concept about computer and 35 of them thought age was not a factor to participate the DC training program. On the other hand, 15 participants out of 38 (age above 40) had no previous idea and 23 of them think age doesn't a factor to participate the Digital Content (DC) training program. That means age is somehow important to participate in DC training program.

Teachers were asked some open questions to give their opinions regarding the issue. They made their comments in different styles of languages but the meaning was almost same. Questions and answers are shown below - What are the reasons some of the trainees couldn't pay their attention in DC training programme? Trainees identified several causes of disinterest in DC training. Their comment were summarized and shown below:

1. Lack of interest, lack of self-confidence and will-power
2. Lack of skills on the use of computer,
3. Lack of sources of digital contents;
4. Lack of literacy in developing digital contents,
5. Having no personal computer/laptop,
6. Familial and socio-economical problems,
7. Fail to recollect difficult functions of computer/DC development
8. Lack of proper internet facilities
9. Quick instruction given by the trainers
10. Lack of vast concept on subject matters

Participants of the training courses were asked the question- Which types of teachers need training and we get good results? Answers made by trainees are very interesting. They mentioned all teachers should need ICT training but in different way.

They mentioned-

1. Need ICT training for all teachers/ Teachers who have interest/ Math teachers/Science teachers/ Active teachers
2. Young/ newly appointed teachers
3. Teachers who operate computer/ practical experience in computer
4. Head teachers
5. Teachers who have their own computer
6. Teachers who lag behind in ICT
7. Teachers who have minimum 10 years service ahead

The participants were requested to give their opinion how to enhance the quality of Digital Content Training, and they mentioned their opinion shown below-

1. Enhance training time, training allowance,
2. Need uninterrupted hi-speed internet connectivity,
3. Need compulsory training after 6 months and arrangement of follow-up training programmes,
4. Select teachers who have pre-experience in computer,
5. Distribution of free laptops among Trainees,
6. Need online facilities to solve problems instantly
7. Enhance skills and management power of co-ordination committee
8. Give more time/ special care to the backward trainees.

The study applied pre-test and post-test scores collected from co-ordination committee. The data was analyzed based on age vs. performance relationship that shown in table-3.

Table 3: Age vs Performance Relationship

Age	No. of Participants	Achieved Pre-Test Scores (out of 75)	Average of PTSs	Achieved Post-Test Scores (out of 75)	Average of PTSs
21-30	13	30,15,73,51,28,15,26,16,27,41,29,73,51	36.54	62,75,72,62,69,63,75,72,57,56,42,4,2,57	60.00
31-40	27	16,22,51,16,20,24,15,59,18,36,16,17,15,14,16,23,31,23,15,52,20,38,24,20,24,15,59	25.44	43,53,56,50,46,58,40,74,40,56,28,4,9,40,54,33,60,70,70,34,73,50,60,51,46,5,8,40,74	52.02
41-50	32	15,28,15,16,15,16,15,16,56,19,18,29,23,15,15,15,15,15,15,28,19,16,21,16,16,16,15,16,56,19,18,27	20.06	28,58,27,48,24,39,39,59,75,50,49,5,3,51,49,37,40,35,41,38,58,45,42,33,34,44,54,39,59,7,5,50,49,53	37.31
51-60	04	15,16,20,46	24.25	38,31,47,71	44.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>				

◊ Source: College record 2014

Table-3 revealed that 32 trainees belonged to age group 41-50, and they scored very poor in average and individually in pre-test and in post-test, which were 20.06 and 37.31 average respectively. On the other hand, 13 persons from age group 21-30, and they were better than previous group. Their average score was 36.54 in pre-test and 60.00 in post-test. The above table (table-3) showed that their progress was very significant. Age group 31-40 was near about same as 21-30 age groups. A few number participants attended from age group 51-60, and their personal scores were not up to the mark.

So, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between age and performance in digital contents use. A young teacher is more capable than an aged teacher in Digital Content training though there are some exceptional.

## 6. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, some recommendations are put forwarded below:

- Priority should be given to young teachers for ICT Training (age below 40 years);
- Digital contents should be made available for the classroom teaching;
- The schools should be well-equipped with all modern devices and technologies;

- Teachers motivation is needed so that they co-operate each other;
- Introduction of follow-up and monitoring activities ; and
- Uninterrupted electricity supply and high speed internet connection is needed.

## 7. Conclusion

To establish Digital Bangladesh and achieve the goals of Vision 2021, ICT knowledge and skills of using digital contents are essentially needed for teachers at every level of education. The country needs skilled ICT teachers, and if the teachers are technological skilled, it must be transmitted to their students. The government of Bangladesh has already established 20,500 multimedia classrooms having one laptop, one multimedia projector, one screen, one modem, a USB drive and sound boxes in each school and madras all over the country. As the aged teachers are not doing well in digital content training, the concerned authority can invite the younger teachers for training. Young teachers embraces the DC develop training seriously. They can quickly adjust themselves with learning environment to improve their career. If the younger teachers are trained properly, the vision of Digital Bangladesh may be materialized by the targeted time.

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# Teaching Social Business for Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

*Md. Hussin Alam\**

## Abstract

*Teaching the rural women is considered as a great venture to generate social business as a tool of women empowerment. The current study aimed at exploring what Brac did to empower the women of the village in Magura; how Brac has been able to empower the destitute of the area they worked in. Moreover, the researcher paid attention to different social business Brac introduced in Bangladesh in order to create value for women in the society. The study tried to explore how brac taught social business to the rural women of Magura; how learning social business empowered destitute women in the village areas of Bangladesh; what challenges brac faced in teaching social business to the women they worked with; and what the enablers were in teaching social business to women. The researcher interviewed 08 rural women who participated in learning social business in Magura, and three brac Managers who taught social business and gave micro-credit to the women for business. The major findings showed that trainings and motivation influenced the women's life and living; increased financial ability. The study found that the women's financial movement contributed to the family, and the society. The study also revealed that religious misconception, superstition, and gender issues were the major barriers. It discovered women were brave and resilient to address challenges.*

**Keywords:** *poor women, empowerment, social business, learning, brac, motivation*

## 1. Introduction

Women empowerment is a sensitive topic in any part of the society in the third world countries. Women empowerment can be termed as the total of spiritual, political, and economic strength of the women. Nazneen and Tasneem (2010) claimed that when the women were empowered, the women community got control of any actions and enjoyed

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the right of taking decisions in the family as well as in the society. At the present era, it is very important for any women to get at least basic education so that they are not deceived any people. The education which they receive from any NGOs, helps a country develop and contribute to make a better-living place in the world. If the women take the courage to come forward and join any NGO to learn and get educated, they can improve the financial condition of their family by doing their own business without depending on others. Sagot (2010) alleged that some NGOs have always been the agents of change-making for the womenfolk of the country.

Women Empowerment is such strength of a woman community, which is essential in every society to establish their rights. Tadros (2014) believed that the concept of women empowerment comprised of understanding the self-worthiness, rights to choose, rights to decision making, rights to applying decisions based on circumstances, and getting the ability to influence other women in the society to help others by growing a better society. In the Vedic period, women used to have equal rights to do anything like any men but gradually the situation got declined with the passing of time. In order to improve the situation, some Non-Government Organizations (NGO) have taken attempts to help the poor woman community to get back their rights by providing them education so that they get the courage to take their own decision and can fight against any injustice against them. The main aim of the current research was to determine the role of NGOs, especially brac in arousing sense of the importance among the poor women living in rural areas. Brac played a great role through conducting various surveys in the village areas to know about the woman community and to provide them with education through different educational programs. According to Esther (2010), providing women with the education is basic requirement of the destitute to empower them.

Any NGO that works for the women empowerment has a tendency to work as a non-profit organization by giving the woman a chance to think about herself, take any decision and pull out her own resources to start a business of their own. This will improve the women society and will influence other women to get educated in the same way. Sardenberg (2011) claimed that the NGOs were the only way by which the community of women would get the strength of their own and would be able to make a better world. The NGO initiatives, especially the initiatives taken by brac had an observable impact on the lives of women in the village areas of Bangladesh. In fact, women in Magura needed education for their decent survival. Therefore, brac, an NGO working in Bangladesh, has taken an

initiative to help the destitute women live an improved and decent life where they would have their say implemented.

## **2. Literature Review**

Sholkamy, (2014) opines that in general, empowerment refers to the gradual increase of spiritual, political, social as well as economic strength of the individuals and communities or of societies. The empowerment often involves the empowered the development of confidence in their own capacities. As a whole, it can be said that women empowerment is a continuous process and by which the women challenge the gender biasness or the gender based discrimination against the men/women of the society in all types of institutions and the structures of the society. Sholkamy (2011) defined empowerment as a multidimensional social process, which solely helped the people to gain the control over their own lives.

As per the view point of Tadros (2014), the rise of gender sensitivity is one of the most prominent issues of the recent times. Women empowerment is one of the most important issues to be discussed in the present day scenario. Women as a motherhood of the nation should be strong, aware as well as alert which is one of the main motto of the women of women empowerment (Yunus, and Weber, 2010). It is unlikely to say that UNDP focuses largely on the gender equality and the women empowerment not only as the basic human rights but also they consider that women are the pathway to achieve to millennium development goals along with the sustainable development. UNDP targets to reduce the gender biasness and that is why coordinates global and national efforts to amalgamate gender equality and women empowerment into various poverty reduction agendas, democratic governance, crisis prevention as well as recovery along with the sustainable development of the environment (Cornwall, 2014).

Through their global network, UNDP works to ensure that all the women have a real voice in all types of governance institutions that is from the judiciary level to the civil services, not only that, from the private sector to the civil society. They targets to make sure that all the women get a fair chance to participate equally with the men in the public meeting and decision-making process and can effectively influence the decisions which will determine the future of the families as well as the countries (Debdatta and Dutta, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that the empowering of the women are important as it involves the participation of the women fully in economic life across the all sectors which is very essential in order to build up the stronger economies, achieved the desired goals for the sustainable development. Besides, it generally includes the improvement of the life for

the women, men, families, communities, societies as well as nations (Duflo, 2012).

According to Esther (2010), social Business is the business, which believes in the fact of creating a world without poverty. It is a kind of capital investment, which serves the human kind by fulfilling their needs. It prefers mainly two major areas of humanity, their selfishness as well as their selflessness. As the nature of human being differs from person to person hence, their humanity factor will also differ from person to person. Social Business perhaps can be called the selflessness institutions, which do not make the innocent people their business tycoon (Johnson, 2010). Social business like NGO understands a particular problem and works on it and it is particularly self-financed company, which do not work for the people of different communities especially the poor and needy ones, without estimating any profit of their own. Whatever profit it gains is invested in improving its business in a better way. Social Business is fairly dependent on the donations and the funds given to the NGOs by different organizations having interest to help the poor and wanting the country to get educated so that the people can do something for their own life (Khattak, 2010).

### **3. Research Questions**

The study tried to know the answers to the following research questions:

- How did brac teach social business to the women of Magura, Bangladesh?
- How did the learning of social business empower poor women of Magura?
- What were the challenges faced by brac in teaching social business to the women of Magura?
- What were the enablers in teaching social business to the women?

### **4. Research Design**

The study was a qualitative research which employed interview, observation, and document analysis methods in collecting data. Although there was a list of interview questions, the researcher used some probe questions based on the demand of the situation. The observation was mainly on what business the women were engaged in, what family chores they performed, how was the financial condition of the family, and what the children were doing. The respondents include eight women from Magura village, and three brac managers who were involved in teaching

social business to the destitute women and providing capital for starting the social business. Moreover, documents were studied to collect data. Collected data were descriptive in nature. The data were coded and categorized based on similarity and dissimilarity, and the data not important for the current study were separated and put aside. During the studying of the data, the findings emerged. Most data were descriptive and so the findings were presented in a narrative way. Although the interviews with respondents were in Bangla, they were translated into English.

## **5. Findings and Discussions**

The findings emerged during the coding and categorizing of the data. The findings included - repeated training and motivation influenced the women; financial ability and contribution to the family established women's rights in the family; social, gender-related and religious challenges were the major barriers; and women were brave and resilient. The findings have been presented in the following sections:

### **5.1. Training and Motivation**

Brac worked with the poor women to establish their rights and for improving their status in the family and society, and for the sustainability of the development. One of the core programs of brac is Community Empowerment Program directed towards the establishment of women rights and empowerment of women. The brac had been working in Magura for opening women's eyes on different adverse social issues like under eighteen marriage, dowry, divorce, rape, murder, throwing acid, family planning, and immunization. It emphasized the active participation of women in the local power structure of the village and also in the decision making process, equitable distribution of resources, and equal pay for men and women.

In order to open the eyes of the destitute, brac organized educational campaigns in different parts of Magura. First of all, they organized rally with the women, and then the brac Managers went to the residences of the targeted women. It is worth mention that the brac recruited more female employees so that they could approach the women and discuss their problems intimately. The employees of brac visited eight poor and illiterate destitute women's houses and talked to them to find out the main problems that they were facing at that point of time. One of the three Managers alleged that the illiterate women did not even know what their problem was. The women thought that the life they were leading was normal; they thought there was no problem. The brac Managers worked to make them understand that their life was valuable and poverty was not their fate; they could change it if they wanted. Brac has conducted

three/four times training sessions a week with the eight women to improve their level of courage and confidence. Additionally, the brac trainers used to teach strategies and skills to fight and address the barriers on the way to their development; and how to convince the family to come out for attending training. In the sessions, they were asked which skills they practised without any barrier. The brac trainers used to give them tips how to be mentally and physically stronger; how to face any adverse situation boldly; what rights they can enjoy; and how they can get legal help from the government if there was committed injustice to them by anyone. One of the three brac Managers commented that if women got fair chance to take part in the work-field, the society would witness a high and steady rise of the economy in Bangladesh.

As a result of the training and discussion in the weekly meeting, the eight women were aware of their rights in the family as well as society; they were mentally stronger than they were before; and they started to take part in the decision making of the family. The English translation of one of the eight women's words was-

Now my husband talks to me if he wants to anything; at least he informs. But before, I did not know what he was doing; and I also did not ask him about anything in fear. Now, I send my daughter to school although my husband does not like to educate the females. I know how important education is.

## **5.2. Financial Contribution to the Family**

After brac training, the eight women believed that they were not born only to give birth to children, take care of their husband's family, and to do the household chores. They were much more outgoing and they started to work in the fields with their husbands or sometimes alone avoiding the social and religious threats. Sharma and Sudarshan (2010) claimed that in many fields, it had been noticed that the women had been able to establish their own role coming out of the social stigma they were in. One of the empowered women said to the researcher-

Life was like a hell before; I started to dream of better future and my life was spoilt by wrong decisions from my illiterate poor family. I got married being under family pressure when I was fourteen. After marriage, I could understand that nobody of my husband's family loved me and wanted to work for them day and night. When brac came to our area and offered me an opportunity to learn social business, I took the offer without my husband's permission although it was highly risky for my life because my husband used to beat me if I did anything without his consent.

Brac gave me some training and money for social business and they gave me lesson for how I could run business and make profit.

She had four cows, a little grocery shop, and two kids. The woman said that her life had changed a lot because of the profit of the shop and the money through selling milk. These eight poor women became the models to other women in Magura wanting to be empowered. Other poor women of Magura also started to begin social business which had changed the economy of the poor women. Tsikata and Darkwah (2014) claimed that after being trained by brac, many destitute women of Magura knew about world, were aware of the social services, social psychology, public health, and community development. Lewin (2010) claimed that women empowerment and the economic development were very closely related to each other. As the women in Magura started to generate income, their 'say' was being honoured in the family as well as society which indicated that the women had been empowered.

In order to continue the women empowerment, females must be allowed to receive education. Johnson (2010) claimed that female education was the foundation of women empowerment. Unless and until women can establish the right to education, the women empowerment is not possible because women constitute almost 50% of the total population. It is not possible to reach the desired goal ignoring half of the total population. Sholkamy (2011) alleges that it is education which uplifts, enflames as well as ennobles the human spirit.

### **5.3. Social and Religious Misconception**

Twenty years have passed away after the historical Beijing Conference on Women's Rights in 1995 but still in more than 170 countries of the world have strong legal barriers that prevent women from experiencing the same rights, protections as well as liberties that all men enjoy. The Eight empowered women confirmed they had to face a lot of religious, socio-cultural, and gender related barriers for starting social businesses. One of the women said that she was born to poor parents and married to a husband who belonged to a conservative Muslim family; the family rules were to stay home only for cooking, cleaning, giving birth, and taking care of children. The conservative family did not like women to do any social business, job and go out for anything.

Two women said that they were discriminated in their works because of being females. They did the same work but at the end of the day men received higher pay than women worker. Till now in some parts of Bangladesh, women are being suppressed in any way. Debdatta and Dutta (2015) alleged that despite enacting laws for women, the females

were exploited largely in the society and the religious, societal norms were some of the barriers that most of the women faced in case of women empowerment and Johnson (2010) claimed that those social and religious interrupted the proper implementation of the women empowerment in Bangladesh.

#### **5.4. Building Confidence in Women**

To some extent, the empowered eight women suffered from malnutrition which was found during the researcher's visit to their homes. However, their mental strength was strong probably because they had to suffer a lot from over work, lack of enough food, and torture from the husbands as well as family. When they received training from brac, their confidence level rose, and they became braver than before. As their lives were full of poverty, they had to struggle throughout their lives which made them resilient. They could understand their actual problems and they learnt from brac how to overcome the problems of life gradually. All the eight women had gathered the courage to break all barriers emerged from their families and society. Although, it was difficult to get out of the family at the beginning, the eight women were liberated from all kinds of religious, social, and gender discriminations. Brac had taught them how to establish their rights in the family as well as in the society. The bravery and resilience of the eight women had helped them to win poverty and other odds with the help of brac although women empowerment was not always appreciable in a country like Bangladesh. All the women claimed that after learning social business they enjoyed much honour in the society; they can invest money for their children's education and family affairs which ultimately empowered themselves as well as children. It had been observed that women were better risk managers and crisis controller and they could easily take care of the situations in the work place.

### **6. Conclusion**

This study explored that brac initiated social business contributed to the empowerment of the destitute women in Magura, Bangladesh. Brac used to train and give capital to the women; taught them how to run social business; how to make profit through the business; and how to face the difficulties. It was revealed that the family tradition, superstition, social custom, and the local tradition were barriers for women to be empowered. As the social business has been effective in Magura, similar initiatives could be replicated in other areas of the country. The experiences of the brac employees could also benefit others working in the field of women empowerment.

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# Call for Papers

Dear Colleagues/Researchers,

Education and Development Research Council (EDRC) is a government affiliated research organization established in 2004. EDRC currently publishes a **double-blind peer-reviewed Quarterly Journal** titled *The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching (EJLT)* especially for college and university teachers, trainers, researchers, instructional designers, e-learning developers, and practitioners. The Journal emphasizes academic excellence, research rigidity, knowledge dissemination, and reciprocated scholarly efforts in order to endorse theoretical, empirical, experimental and practical research at the national and international levels.

The EJLT invites original and unpublished research papers from the scholars and researchers around the globe. The journal seeks to embrace the entire areas of applied linguistics and language education, education policy, syllabus and curriculum, especially on teaching and learning to meet the criteria of research excellence for publishing in forthcoming issues of the EJLT. Authors are encouraged to submit papers as per the following structure:

## Structure of a Research Paper

Though academic disciplines vary on the exact format and style of journal articles in their field, most articles contain similar contents and are divided in parts that typically follow the logical flow. The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching highlights the essential sections that a research paper should include:

### 1. Title of the Paper

The title should be specific that indicates the problem the research project addresses using keywords that will be helpful in literature reviews in the future. The title of your paper may be 10- 12 words long.

### 2. Abstract

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

### 3. Introduction

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

### 4. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to describe past important research and it relates specifically to the research problem. It should be a synthesis of the

previous literature and the new idea being researched. The review should examine the major theories related to the topic to date and their contributors. The researchers are required to know the research that has already been done in their field. The Literature Reviews examine previous related research. It should include all relevant findings from credible sources, such as academic books, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

## **5. Research Design/ Methodology**

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

## **6. Findings and Discussion / Results**

In this section, the results are presented. This section should focus only on results that are directly related to the research or the problem. Graphs and tables should only be used when there is too much data to efficiently include it within the text. 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 of information in APA style 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **Information for Submission:**

- Submission deadline: Open
- Submission Method: Electronic submission to: [edrc.bdesh@gmail.com](mailto:edrc.bdesh@gmail.com),
- Research Article: not exceeding 5000 words including references
- Articles/Papers formatting, citation, and referencing: The APA Style, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

Kind regards,  
Dr. M. Enamul Hoque  
Executive Editor