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## **Causes of Secondary Students' Failure in Learning English in Bangladesh**

**An M.A. Dissertation\***

**by**

**Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir, M.A. ELT, Doctoral Researcher**

**The English and Foreign Languages University**

**Hyderabad – 500605**

**Andhra Pradesh, India**

**[naushaadk@gmail.com](mailto:naushaadk@gmail.com)**

*\*The dissertation submitted here is the slightly modified version of the dissertation that was submitted for the degree of M.A. ELT. The modifications include stylistic changes and corrections of the printing mistakes that were present in the earlier manuscript. No modification was made on theme or content or data analysis or their interpretation.*

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English Department  
Institute of Modern Languages  
University of Dhaka



## Causes of Secondary Students' Failure in Learning English

Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir

Supervisor

Professor A.M. M. Hamidur Rahman  
English Department  
Institute of Modern Languages  
University of Dhaka

THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
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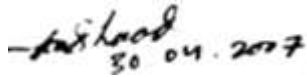
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation in the matter and has not been submitted partially or fully for any other diploma or degree at any other university.

Researcher:



Naushaad Kabir  
30.04.2012

Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir

Supervisor:



Hamidur Rahman  
20.6.07

Professor A.M. M. Hamidur Rahman

English Department

Institute of Modern Languages

University of Dhaka

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To

My Ammu—my first teacher  
My Abbu—my second teacher

And

To

The memories of  
(Late) Abdus Salam,  
One of my most influential teachers  
In life.

I don't want to pay my debt back to them.

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Thanks to my Allah just for being with me all the way. I now believe, "Fortune favours the brave."

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## **Abstract**

English is one of the most used languages in the world. In Bangladesh, English is introduced here at the primary level and its inclusion continues till the tertiary level of education. A student has to study English as a compulsory subject for ten years to pass the S.S.C. exam. At the secondary level in Bangladesh, English is taught for five years followed by the curriculum of the primary level that includes the learning of English for five years as well. However, after ten years' schooling of English, most of the students fail in English in the S.S.C. exam. Even if they pass, they get very poor marks. However, the students who pass and somehow get good marks do not seem to reflect their achievement practically. They can neither speak fluently and naturally nor understand English when they are not spoken to nor comprehend the meaning of what they read nor can they interpret the reading materials. They cannot write correctly and speak out their feelings and opinions. As a result, they do not learn English at all and reach the target stage that they were supposed to by the end of their curriculum. They pass the examination but actually they are unable to use the language. An empirical study of the causes of the secondary students' failure in learning English is done. Schools are visited, and data are collected through questionnaire surveys and interviews of the teachers, students and guardians; data are analysed, and finally presented to reveal the causes of their failure.

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# Chapter-1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

English is one of the most used languages in the world. It is used not only by the maximum number of people but also in so many different areas of the world. In Bangladesh, English as a subject and a medium of instruction is given maximum priority. English is introduced here at the primary level and its inclusion continues till the tertiary level of education. A student has to study English as a compulsory subject for ten years to pass the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C.) examination. The secondary level of education starts from class six and continues till class ten. Here the researcher chooses the students of class ten as his samples, and he means them when he refers to Secondary students because they are at the final stage of the Secondary level and they have a complete experience of undergoing that level. They are mature enough to speak about themselves and to evaluate and express their opinions regarding their education.

However, everyone knows a language course is different from any other courses as it is skill-based whereas the other courses or other subjects are more or less content based. As for English, different techniques and procedures have been followed to teach and the learners also learned through them. Considering the outcome, several changes for development of learners' learning process have been suggested. In the history of the language teaching, some principles and techniques got immense success and popularity e.g. Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching, and some received adverse criticism e.g. Grammar-Translation Method and also some could draw the deep attention for some time and finally brought no major successful results e.g. Suggestopedia.

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In Bangladesh, the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was used in teaching English but due to the huge success of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method, CLT was adapted here in 1995 and first introduced in class IX and X in 2000 and 2001. Class IX must be mentioned here as the textbooks of all subjects of class IX and X are same and both the curriculum and the syllabus follow a shuttle programme throughout these two classes. When, in GTM, the knowledge about the language, its grammar, and rules are focused, communication or the ability to perform is emphasized in CLT. CLT is a modern method also as Julian Edge says. "Communication is at the heart of modern English language teaching (Edge, 1993: 17)". Now the language teachers are teaching English to their students to communicate spontaneously and moving away from their earlier typical knack for teaching the definitions, patterns, structures, grammar, vocabulary, literature, translation and so many things about the language other than the language itself.

At present, English is used as a foreign language in Bangladesh, which is a monolingual country. Before 1971, when Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan, English possessed the position of a second language and Pakistan was a multilingual country. Hence English was the *lingua franca*. Even before that in 1947, Pakistan was a part of the British India. However, the great 1952 Episode brought a huge rise to the use of Bangla; the importance of English was decreasing.

From the historical perspective of Bangladesh, English was not welcomed as it was the language of the colonizers—the Christians; as it replaced the prominence of Arabic and Persian which are thought to be sacred languages to the Bangladeshi Muslims—the religious majority. Later on, it was highly welcomed as for being the *lingua franca*. It was neglected a bit when Bangladesh got liberty at the back of which strong nationalism and linguistic fervour worked. But even then the importance of English was not totally ignored as the country's constitution was written and published together in Bangladesh and English. Presently, English is taught-learned, practised as a compulsory subject till the tertiary level of education; viva-voce examinations of almost all the

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organizations are held in English; the recently established science and technology universities are using English as their medium of instruction; a lot of coaching centres and English medium schools are growing fast. Yet the primary objectives are not reached and students are not learning English according to expectation.

## **1.2 Teaching and learning of English at the secondary level in Bangladesh**

The British first introduced English as a compulsory subject in this region. The British also learned some prestigious ancient languages like Latin and Greek using GTM in their country. Therefore, they introduced the same method in teaching English here. In India, some second language teaching methods were in vogue and they had a great semblance with GTM. The Hindus had to learn Sanskrit and the Muslims, Arabic and Persian through their mother tongue. However, in GTM, reading and writing skills are given emphasis. Grammar, the knowledge and accurate application of those rules are given maximum priority. The basic aim was to provide learners with a sound knowledge of the language rather than to communicate in that language. Therefore, both the viewpoints and the procedures were not natural in language learning. Mother tongue was used in giving instructions. No lesson on listening and speaking skill was or is present. The stock of words is appreciated as having mastery and skill in translation is highly expected. Learners were taught to write personal letters, business letters, essays and paragraphs. Comprehension of a reading text was checked. Literary texts were used in teaching language. The teacher imparted his knowledge of grammar and in most cases he or she used 'prescriptive grammar'. Teachers were highly authoritative and teacher talking time had a lion's share in the class room. The teaching of grammar took place deductively. The teacher, himself, was taught in that way and had been teaching in the same way. However, as a drawback of GTM, some negative results came out e.g. students memorised rules without understanding; instead of writing their own answers, they observed the questions and reproduced the corresponding lines of the reading comprehension passage; memorised essays and paragraphs in lieu of learning the rules to

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write; also memorised the formats of letters without connecting it to the language, meaning and purpose; answered questions from the literary texts made at the house by the private teachers' help or through guide books and reproduced in the examination hall. Sometimes, due to excessive practice, they could, however, produce the correct answer but could not explain the reason. They learnt the English words without knowing their forms and functions and also the use in a sentence and so they could not form another sentence using the same word.

As a consequence, GTM proved to be unsuccessful in teaching English. Learners also had some knowledge of the language but they failed to use it appropriately, in accordance with their necessity. But, the root of this method is so deep and strong that it can not be uprooted easily. Therefore, attempt to replace this method was taken and in 1982, the Audio-lingual method appeared. A new syllabus with amendment and improved curriculum was introduced. It concentrated on teaching sentence, structure and vocabulary through repetition and drill. It included the development of the reading and writing skills. It also included literature and poetry as it descended GTM. But this method failed as well and finally in 1995, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in class VI—the first stage of the secondary level. This frequent change of methods is described to show that students failed to learn English and they fail to do so even now. It is mentioned to justify how far unplanned use of methods are to be blamed for students' failure.

### **1.3 Necessity of learning English in Bangladesh**

Learning English is a crying need for the Bangladeshi people. A sound competence in English can enable people to communicate at the international level. By Learning English, a person can become to a cosmopolitan citizen. He can communicate and cooperate with others. Understanding among different nationalities with so many differences can be made. Many foreigners are coming here. The natives who are going abroad for higher education are continuing their education in English. New branches of knowledge are being discovered and Bangladesh is also getting familiarity with them.

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The disciplines like Business Administration, Information and Communication Technology, Fashion Design are quite new here. The materials used for these subjects are written in English. If technology is mentioned, one cannot move without English even there. If a person knows English, he or she can use the best of internet facilities and other telecommunication technologies like mobile phone, digital video player, ipod and so on. Even in the commercial sector, the country is developing. The garments sector, the fisheries sector, the tapestry sectors have been able to draw the attention of the international body. Foreign investors are investing here and the market of these products are expanding worldwide. To make a good relationship with the buyers, to marketize the product, a good knowledge of, and ability to use English are needed. Then in new genres of knowledge, the native language has not developed much or is not doing so simultaneously. But English, being an international language is quickly adapting to the situation and enriching itself. So, English is more enriched than Bangla. A person skilled in English is highly evaluated home and abroad. The need for learning English has become basic and keeping it in mind, the Bangladeshi educationalists have introduced it as a compulsory subject, and been very keen to find out the expected outcome that is the practical use of English by the learners who went through the process and completed it.

#### **1.4 Outcome of learning English at the secondary level**

At the secondary level in Bangladesh, English is taught for five years and this secondary level also follows and reflects the curriculum of the primary level that includes the learning of English as well. However, after ten years' schooling of English, most of the students fail in English at the S.S.C. examination. Even if they pass, they get very poor marks. However, the students who pass and somehow get good marks do not seem to reflect their achievement practically. They cannot speak fluently and naturally. They do not understand English when they are spoken to. They cannot comprehend the meaning of what they read nor can they interpret the reading materials. They cannot write correctly and speak out their feelings and opinions. As a result, they do not learn English at all and reach the target stage which they were supposed to by the end of their

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curriculum. They pass the examination but actually they are unable to use the language. Learning a language does not mean to get pass marks but to learn to use the language practically. Finally, it is found that ten years of learning English proves to be useless in fact.

### **1.5 Drawbacks in teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh**

Language learning ability is natural and innate in human beings. A child born of a family speaking a language can learn a different language if he or she is brought up in another family speaking another language. But difficulty arises when the question of learning an L2 occurs. Inability to overcome these difficulties can be one reason of failure of the secondary students to learn English.

Students are to be held responsible for this failure as well. Their inattention, lack of seriousness, lack of motivation, negative mind set and negative attitude like fear towards English, negligence to study, lack of interest, the prejudice about the language that it is difficult—all these are prominent factors behind the failure. But learning is directed by teaching and the secondary students are not that much mature to be self-motivated, systematic and organized in their study.

At this stage, teachers play a vital role. They not only teach the students but can guide them, motivate them, change their mindset and negative attitude, make them more serious and cultivate their awareness about their study. But the teachers have limitations in themselves. Sometimes, the persons having educational background in other subjects teach English in schools. Mostly, they are not trained to teach a language course. They do not study themselves the modern teaching methods and techniques nor does the government take any vital step to train them up. As a result, they do not come out of the outdated conception of teaching. They enter the classroom with a stick and teach with authority.

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Sometimes, the teachers teach from the guidebook. They are also busy with their private tuition centres. Therefore, they do not give much attention to the students in the classroom.

The guardian's role must be mentioned. Bangladesh is an agro-based country having many villages. Most of the people are farmers and uneducated or less educated. They live in the villages where the urban facilities are absent. They cannot guide their children. Even, the young students do not get a familial support regarding their education. In some cases, education is not that much welcomed. After a certain age, the girls get married and the boys go to field to help the farming, leaving their education behind.

Bangladesh is largely a monolingual country and the various dialects of different areas are not much difficult to understand for any Bangladeshi. Hence, there is no need for any *lingua franca* other than the standard colloquial form of Bangla. Therefore, these young students find no direct, real scope to use English in their practical life.

Bangladesh is a poor country. She cannot provide all her citizens with all the facilities needed for education. Here the number of teachers is less. The teacher-student ratio is not ideal. The classrooms are poorly furnished and over populated. Ideal classroom set-up is absent here. Students are also deprived of the modern equipments of a classroom e.g. overhead projector (OHP), CD, DVD, cassette player, white board, multimedia system, display board, etc. Even some of the classrooms in rural areas do not have proper seating arrangements. Books are not colourful and hence less attractive.

Finally, English appears to be a difficult language to the Bangladeshi learners. There are different sounds in the letters that are absent in Bangla. The structure of sentences, the grammatical complexities, and vocabulary give birth to a kind of fear and repulsion towards that language. It is not any negative aspect of the language but every language is unique in its own regard. Most importantly, the culture associated with and reflected through that language appears alien to them. Sometimes, they receive it and

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sometimes they are not ready to receive. These negative factors slow down the process of learning English and work as a barrier to that.

## **1.6 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and secondary level of education in Bangladesh**

Of late, the Communicative Language Teaching has been introduced at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. Primarily, it was first introduced in class VI in 1996 but in classes IX and X in 2001. It was also introduced at the Higher Secondary level later on. But in different colleges and universities of undergraduate programmes, GTM is followed.

However, CLT chiefly focuses on the development of the communicative competence of the learners through the practice of four skills of language. According to CLT, learning a second language is not a matter of knowing about that language only. Rather it requires constant and regular practice of the basic language skills in that language. Hence, CLT emphasizes the practice, use and development of these four skills.

The present communicative curriculum aims at enabling the learners to use English efficiently not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. It enhances the use of the target language in the classroom. It also initiates the students to ask questions in English. It reduces the 'Teacher Talking Time' (TTT) and invites 'Students' Talking Time (STT) more. Democratic situation in the classroom instead of the one-way authoritative teaching is suggested here. More motivation from the teacher is expected and the classroom is supposed to be learner-centred. CLT invites more pair works, group works and lesson related activities instead of huge home tasks. Memorization is completely discouraged. Even the tests are designed to assess the knowledge, progress and achievement of the learners, not their ability to use the language.

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## **1.7 Aims and objectives of teaching and learning English at the secondary level**

According to NCTB Curriculum and English Language Syllabus for Secondary Classes 6-10, the English syllabus aims to focus on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centered activities within communicative contexts. Such contexts should not only convincingly reflect real-life social situations outside the classroom but also make the learning of English more relevant, interesting and enjoyable (P.7). Therefore, it is the four skills of the language, not the grammar, that get priority in CLT. CLT considers English as a skill-based subject and these skills are to be taught and practised through the context that must be the replica of the real life situation outside the classroom in Bangladesh, not of any imaginative situation in the UK or the USA. The theme and topic of these contexts must be relevant to the learning surroundings so that the overall situation and experience through that becomes enjoyable, interesting and motivating. The learning situation must focus the learners instead of the teachers. Through such activities, learners will be able to use the language appropriately and effectively in actual situations.

In the same booklet (appended at the end), the aims and objectives of Secondary English syllabus have been explained in terms of 'learning outcomes' (P.8). Then these outcomes are also defined in terms of skills. However, separate targets in these skills are set for separate classes. Here targets related to class IX and X are mentioned only. The earlier targets are not mentioned as they are not directly related to this research.

As for listening, students should be able to understand instructions and commands, participate in short and simple conversations and discussions at an appropriately advanced level on a variety of topics, understand narrative, descriptive texts, simple poetry, suitable literary texts, argumentative, authentic and realistic texts, and listen for gist, specific information, taking simple dictation, taking notes and finally

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distinguishing different sounds of English and recognizing intonation patterns of statements and questions within appropriate communicative contexts.

For speaking, students should be able to give instructions and commands, initiate and participate in conversations at an appropriate level, recount a series of events, describe people and objects etc, recite simple poetry with understanding, speak intelligibly in clear, correct English appropriate to the situation, express opinions clearly and logically, participate actively in debates, tell narratives and descriptive stories and talk interestingly about themselves and finally recite poetry with understanding.

In reading, students should be able to understand written instructions; narrative texts; descriptive texts and simple poems, informal letters, simple authentic texts taken from newspapers and brochures, dialogues, argumentative texts, formal letters appropriately selected and (if necessary) adopted literacy texts. They should be able to use reference sources like dictionaries, indexes or table of contents. They must be able to infer the meaning of words from their context, begin extensive reading using their 'supplementary reader', read with appropriate speed, and follow punctuation markers and graphological devices. They must be able to skim and scan, recognize topic sentences and cohesive devices and distinguish facts from opinions, detect conclusion and understand the significance of such cohesive devices as linking and reference words.

Finally, in writing, students should be able to write simple instructions, narratives, descriptions, informal letters, dialogues, summaries, clear arguments, write formal and informal letters, take notes, follow dictation at an appropriate speed, use punctuation and graphological devices, capitalization, use cohesive devices and reference words, write to express imagination and creativity, write practically i.e. in business and office, plan and organize their writing to communicate effectively.

With both the knowledge and practice of these four skills, students should have sufficient knowledge of grammar and structures. They should receive a deep knowledge about these skills and practice with their classmates and the teacher in the classroom and Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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thus will be able to use outside the classroom also. However, the knowledge of grammar is included but not emphasized. They are not meant to be known only but to be practised and used as well.

In fine, the secondary English Syllabus and textbook are designed in such a way that the secondary learners can possess a good command of the language and use it to communicate competently and effectively with mastery in practical and live situations.

## **1.8 Purpose and scope of the study**

English has an important place in our national curriculum as it is taught and learned as a compulsory subject from the primary to the tertiary level. Due to the previous failure in learning, the CLT method has been adapted at the secondary level and it aims at building and developing the communicative competences of the learners through the regular practice of skills in classroom, enabling them to perform outside the classroom. The multi-dimensional notions of the Bangladeshi learners and the nationals towards English and their relationship with it has been shortly described, analyzed and presented in terms of history, politics, religion, society and linguistics previously. The limitations have also been mentioned. Despite all the adverse situations, CLT was introduced to bring positive outcomes. A few years have passed in CLT and the outcome is not up to satisfaction. The learners, at the end, crosses the secondary level getting pass marks and not fulfilling the aims and objectives that they will be able to communicate naturally, spontaneously in real life.

Learning includes so many factors for its successful fulfilment. We do not know where the actual problems of the learners are and why they are failing to learn. A detail investigation of the total teaching and learning system has become crucial now for identifying the real problem. Hence, my study will include the role of the teacher and the teaching system, the role of the learners and the learning system, the role of the syllabus and the textbook and how the textbook is used, the classroom environment, other factors

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influencing the teachers and the learners, the role of the guardians, the role of the government and also the role of society. Whether CLT is used practically will be observed. However, the testing system can also be studied on the basis of its backwash effect on education and society.

However, a lot of study has been done to ensure the better learning situation for the learners. As a result, positive changes came out. But in our country, adequate research on this recent and important issue has not been done. Rather, some people say, CLT is a failure in Bangladesh and its performance is poorer than that of GTM. Whatever the allegation is, a research-based study can really reveal the actual causes of failure and hence find out the solutions likewise. This is why I have chosen this area of study hoping that this study will be helpful for the development of learning English in Bangladesh.

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## Chapter-2

### Literature Review and Background Study

Learning is not an independent course of action itself; it is an action of receiving training by learners. Learners cannot do it alone. It involves the teaching system, the teacher, the syllabus, the textbook, the learning system, the learners, the learning environment, and the course objective as well. In fact, learning is a very complicated and relative term to define. Hence, the causes of failure or success of learning, especially learning a second/ foreign language necessarily engulfs and depends on the close and appropriate relationship of these factors mentioned. As for the topic of my thesis, the relevant literature is huge. A brief survey and discussion of those follows.

Our general understanding of the term 'learning' does not go with that of the linguists. Ordinary people have a different understanding of the 'learning'. Bigge (1976: 1) differentiates learning from maturation saying, "Maturation or learning, or combination of the two, is the means by which lasting changes in persons occur. Maturation is a developmental process within which a person from time to time manifests different traits, the 'blueprints' for which have been carried in his cells from the time of his conception." He adds, "Learning in contrast with maturation, is an ending chain in a living individual that is not heralded by his genetic inheritance. It may be considered a change in insights, behaviour, perception, or motivation or a combination of these." Hilgard and Marquis (1961: 10) say, "Learning is basic to the development of athletic process, of tastes in food and dress, and of the appreciation of art and music. It contributes to ethnic prejudice, to drug addiction, to fear, and to pathological maladjustment. It produces the miser and the philanthropist, the bigot and the patriot. In short, it influences our lives at every turn, accounting in part for the best and worst of human beings, and for the best and worst in each of us." Krashen (1985), while propounding his theory of second learning, differentiates learning from 'acquisition'

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saying, learning is the conscious approach towards a language when 'acquisition' takes place unconsciously in a natural order for enabling people to use the language.

Learning is not an automatic and spontaneous process. It is directed by, and dependent on teaching. For Bigge (1976: 1), “. . . teachers can do little to influence the maturational pattern of students . . . their most effectual area of endeavor always centres upon learning.” However, teaching is not directed and controlled by the teacher only. She or he has to go by the aims and objectives of the syllabus, textbook and education policy. On the other hand, a teacher is not a programmed robot, but a human being with his own personal traits and characteristics. Teaching is a kind of performing arts that is also affected or influenced or interpreted by the philosophy of the teacher who is not a born teacher but who is taught by his or her teachers as well. Hence the teacher has a preconceived idea of teaching from the experience when he was taught. “A teacher simply taught the way he (she) had been taught when he was a child or youth (Bigge 1976: 3)”. Therefore, a clash of ideology between the teacher and the factors concerned with language teaching may occur. In fact, “. . . the way in which an educator builds his curriculum, selects his materials, and chooses his instructional technique depends, to a large degree, upon how he (she) defines ‘learning’ (Bigge 1976: 4)”. As Taube (1961: 2) said, "After all, if the fox twists and turns, so must the hound," the teachers are directly guided by their teachers. But the learners have their roles as well. We cannot make the horse thirsty . . . “only to the degree that a student is willing to think for himself, can he (she) emerge from his studies with something worth while (Bigge 1976:4)”.

However, apart from the educational policy, each and every teacher has his or her own theory of learning. It plays a vital role in his or her teaching. "Everyone who teaches or professes to teach has a theory of learning. However, a teacher is able to describe his theory in explicit terms or he (she) may not . . . So, the important question is not whether a teacher has a theory of learning but rather how tenable it is (Bigge 1976: 5)”. He adds, “. . . many teachers operate in this way and use only a hodgepodge of methods without theoretical orientation. However, this muddled kind of teaching undoubtedly is

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responsible for many of the current adverse criticisms of public opinion.” Hence, the consciousness of the language teacher about the theories is of maximum importance as it helps the teacher to be aware of what and how he is teaching, the persons he is dealing with. After all, students are not puppets. They are human beings. Therefore, the awareness of the teacher eases the process. Quoting Bigge (1976: 14) again, we can say, "Each learning theory represents a more or less comprehensive psychological system or outlook. Or to say this is in another way, each systematic psychological system or basic outlook has its unique approach to learning." Allport (1981: 84) adds, "Theories of learning (like much else in psychology), rest on the investigator's conception of the nature of man. In other words, every learning theorist is a philosopher, though he may not know it. To put the matter more concretely, psychologists who investigate (and theorize about) learning start with some preconceived views of the nature of human motivation." Therefore, one thing is evident that every theory or aim or philosophy is preconceived and they attempt to generalize the matter.

As we already know, teachers can vary from one another according to their personality; students, similarly, can differ from one another. They also possess their own differences according to their age, sex, motivation, attitude, expectation, and socio-economical background. Ellis (1994: 472) presents a lists of factors influencing individual learner differences in language learning in three surveys done by Altman (1980), Skehan (1989) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991). He also identifies three sets of interrelated variables related to learners’ belief, affective states and other general factors; learners’ strategies and language learning outcomes. Ellis (1994) also mentions seven factors of individual differences of the learner: beliefs, affective state, age aptitude, learning style, motivation and personality. Bigge (1976: 303) says, "When a person develops a state of tension resulting from unsatisfied need, we say that he is motivated”. He also adds, "Obviously, motivation plays a central role in learning. Consequently a teacher who can keep his students well motivated has won more than half the battle.” Ellis (1994: 508) says, “Language teachers readily acknowledge the importance of

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learners' motivation, not infrequently explaining their own sense of failure with reference to their students' lack of motivation. SLA research also views motivation as a key factor in L2 learning.” However, motivation can be chiefly of two types: integrative and instrumental motivation. In short, Ellis says (1994: 513), "Learners with integrative motivation are more active in class and are less likely to drop out” and " . . . learners with an instrumental reason for learning an L2 can be successful. In some 'second' as opposed to 'foreign' settings, an instrumental orientation may be the most important one. Providing learners with incentives (such as money) may also aid learning by increasing the time learners spend studying, but the effects may cease as soon as the reward stops.” Moskowitz (1978) in (Ellis 1994: 479) says, "Learners, it seems, had to feel secure and to be free of stress before they can focus on the learning task—the important of which is directly acknowledged in humanistic approaches to language teaching." “Anxiety (its presence or absence) is best seen not as a necessary condition of successful L2 learning, but rather as a factor that contributes in differing degrees in different learners (Ellis 1994: 483). " Keefe (1979 in Ellis 1994: 499) defines learning style as:

. . . the characteristic cognitive, affective and physiological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment . . . learning style is a consistent way of functioning that reflects underlying causes of behaviour.

Little and Singleton (1990 in Ellis 1994 : 499) confirm the possibility to help the grown-up "learners to explore their own preferences and to shape their learning approach to suit the requirements of a particular learning task." However, it is not possible to say which learning style works best. In fact, it varies from learners to learners. Learner trainers can make the learners aware of situations and eventually, the learners can find the more effective style than his own previous one.

Learner's personality is important too. The learner can be extrovert or introvert and this fact can affect the learning system. Eysenck and Chan (1982: 154) say,

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“Extroverts are sociable, like parties, have many friends and need excitement; they are sensation-seekers and risk-takers like practical jokes and are lively and active. Conversely introverts are quiet, prefer reading to meeting people, have few but close friends and usually avoid excitement.”

Mistakes are the commonest feature of a language learner at the time of learning. But these mistakes are to be handled properly. Quoting Stephans and Evans (1973: 156), Bigge (1976: 307) says, "A number of studies in the Thorndikean tradition, have been conducted in an attempt to determine whether it is more effective to praise students for what they learn or blame them for what they do not learn. After reviewing these studies, Stephans and Evans decide that the evidence is so conflicting that no definite conclusion can be drawn. “The only conclusion that seems warranted is that either praise or blame is usually more effective in promoting learning than a policy of ignoring the achievement or lack of achievement of students (Stephans and Evans, 1973).” Therefore, the dealings of the students and their mistakes by the teacher are highly important and the teacher must possess a methodology of teaching following, which, he or she would approach. According to Bigge (1976 : 370), "A teacher's program of evaluation not only governs his students' study habits, their manner of interaction in class, and the number and quality of their learning, but it also greatly influences the teaching-learning level upon which their learning efforts proceed." Therefore, a teacher has a greater backwash effect upon the learners. In this regard, Bloom (1963: 392) says, "The point to be emphasized is that type of mental process the students expect to be tested will determinate his method of study and preparation."

Similarly, testing influences the learning system as well. Bigge (1976: 308) says. "Of course, test employed as motivating devices functions primarily as extrinsic motivation. A student's primary goal in such a situation is not to learn the subject content for his own enlightenment but to pass the test. Generally speaking, the frequent and widespread use of tests for other than diagnostic purposes indicates a teacher's commitment to either a mechanistic or a disciplinary psychology."

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Any language course cannot be fully content based; otherwise, the course will fail. We cannot learn a language always metalinguistically. For learning or practising, we have to bring some tasks and also contents supporting the language items. In such case, the material design and its selection have a great influencing role. Cecco and Crawford (1974: 214) say, "Not only is meaningful material more rapidly learned than meaningless material, but also it is remembered for longer periods of time." In the case of a good language course, a good combination of materials is expected.

Citing the White-Lippitt experiments (1960: 51-55, 66 - 80), Bigge (1976: 324) talks about 3 kinds of relationships between a teacher and his students: i) authoritarian, ii) *laissez faire* and iii) democratic. He refers to the above-mentioned experiment where the democrat group could possess the maximum success. In the case of learning, the teacher-student relationship is vital, too. But it does not mean the teacher and the students will possess same roles. In fact, Smith (1994: 12) says, "The most important thing is to keep learning/ acquisition/ development separate from teaching; which is the attempt (usually by others) to make the learners' task easier etc."

The syllabus or curriculum is another factor influencing the teaching-learning system. Krashen (1985) talked about his 'natural order hypothesis' However, supporting Corder (1981) and Mager (1961 : 401-12), Smith (1994 : 24) says, ". . . the L2 learner may well have a 'built-in syllabus'; i. e. an internally programmed sequence for learning various aspects of the target grammar which may or may not coincide with the syllabus imposed on him or her by the teacher. Hence, learners will follow a sequence of development (the in-built syllabus) because of or in spite of, the sequence imposed on them from outside."

However, there is no hard and fast rule that organisation of language materials or items will always follow the 'natural order' nor is there any unanimous universal order of those items. In such a case, a good learner, instead of being shocked, would try to learn using his or her own strategies. Chamot (1987: 71) says, "Learning strategies are

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techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and central area of information". Rubin (1987 : 19) remarks, ". . . learner strategies include any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, rhetorical and use of information." Contrasting learning strategies with teaching strategies, Politzer(1965: 82) says, "Learning strategies are the reverse side of the coin of teaching strategies: a successful learning strategy user has in fact become a successful self-teacher." But the crux of the question is more concretely and lucidly answered by Chamot (1987: 81) when she says, "The fact that students identified as good language learners by teachers do use conscious learning strategies not only in ESL classrooms but also in out of classroom acquisition environments is an indication that teachers could profitably direct students to utilize learning strategies for a variety of language learning activities. Intervention by the teacher could help less able students profit from the strategies used by more able students, and even the more able students could be provided with opportunities to refine and add to their learning strategies so that they became as efficient as possible". "Chamot and O' Malley (1984: 1) further say, ". . . (Language) learning strategy enables students to take command over their learning and to apply procedures that will assist them in retraining and using important skills. Productive use of learning strategies, though, is an acquired skill." But every learner's acquisition of this skill cannot be alike. Hence, learner training is also essential. Brown and Palinscar (1982: 1-17) say. ". . . an ideal training package would consist of both practice in the use of task-appropriate strategies, instructions concerning the significance of those activities and instructions concerning the monitoring and control of strategy use". Language learning strategies aim for learner autonomy and for that reason, before applying that the learner belief has to be investigated as Horwitz (1987: 120) says, "Therefore, knowledge of student beliefs about language learning is an important step toward understanding the etiology of learning strategies." On the other hand Rubin (1987: 15) says, ". . . there is growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their own learning and in classifying how teaches can help students become more autonomous. She further adds, "Students who use

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effective strategies are better able to work outside the classroom by themselves. Once the teacher is not around to direct them or provide them with input." Hence, effective learner strategy reduces the teacher-dependence and enables the learner to learn using their own capabilities provided they know how to learn or they have learnt to learn.

The classroom is another important factor of language learning. van Lier (1988 : 47) says, the classroom is "the gathering, for a given period of time, of two or more persons (one of whom generally assumes the role of instructor) for the purposes of language learning". Gaies (1980 in Allwright and Bailey 1991) gives a new dimension to classroom, saying, "The classroom is the crucible—the place where teachers and learners come together and language learning, we hope, happens. It happens, when it happens, as a result of the reactions among the elements that go into the crucible—the teachers and the learners." Classroom conception includes classroom interaction, teacher-student relationship, students' seating positions, teacher's lecturing position, communicability, eye contact, etc. Allwright and Bailey (1991: 19) talk about the classroom atmosphere and emphasize it more than syllabus and method. They say, "... most teachers have a good idea of the sort of 'atmosphere' they would like to have in their classrooms, and do their best to plan to set up such an atmosphere (whether they want it to be relaxed and friendly, or brisk and business-like, or whatever)". Quader (1995: 3) says. "To bring about better and faster language learning, the classroom can give rise to interaction, particularly with qualified interlocutors who can give learners good quality input as well as accurate feedback for improvement." She further adds. "In the classroom, the input by the teacher should be as short as possible, allowing more time for students' interaction. Teaching should be devised around tasks where group work should be used extensively. Students should be encouraged to engage in as much interaction as possible in order to practise what they have learnt. The teacher's role here should be supervisory, overseeing that English is used, providing the appropriate word or structure when necessary (P. 18)." "Therefore, teacher's role is interrelated with the classroom (Rahman 1996-97: 5)". Rahman further says, "It is now accepted worldwide that the teacher is the vital

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component in the interactional process, the ultimate key to educational change and improvement". Hence Elbaz (1983: 7) criticizes the traditional pattern which, " specifies that one party (the developer), usually, prompted by the second party (the evaluator), writes objectives and prepare materials for a third party (the student) which almost by the way, are to be evaluated by a fourth party—the teacher. Rahman (1996-07: 6) also logically criticizes, saying, "This view of the teacher's role as an instrument in the curriculum process is simplistic and seriously inadequate considering the fact that teachers are the persons who translate educational concepts into practice and embody the curriculum in classroom event". Breen (1985: 151 in Rahman 1996-97: 35) compares the second language classroom as "coral gardens" that has to be approached with "a socio-cognitive frame of reference which will give access to mutual relationship between social activity and psychological changes." The role of classroom is multi-faceted on the basis of how the ideal of the classroom is turned and linked to L2 learning.

So far, we have tried to discuss and link the previous studies related to the thesis topic and in that case, most of works cited are done by the foreign linguists and researchers. True sometimes, some Bangladeshi researches are also mentioned. However, the above discussion tried to make an account of the second language learning truisms and theoretical base for further study. The following discussion aims to reveal how the local Bangladeshi researches, professors and linguists approach the situation and deals with the L2 learning problems related to the topic of this thesis.

Majid (1999-2000: 73) gives us some important information which represents the L2 situation in Bangladesh quite practically. Her samples are the learners at the Institute of Modern Languages. She says, "61% learners had English grammar explained to them in Bengali all the time." ". . . 36% people always needed extra help (P. 74)" from outside the classroom. ". . . the majority also said that they always rote-learned essays from books (P. 76)." 81% students were dissatisfied with the teaching method (P. 81). They also expected proper guidance from the teachers—an outcome of the close relationship of the teacher-student (P. 85). However, most of them thought to have knowledge in English Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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ranging from 'satisfactory' to 'not bad' (P. 86). But Majid draws our attention to the role of teacher in using the TL in the classroom saying. "The fact that not all learners had much experience in responding in the class in English is less serious than the fact that very little English was being used in the class (P. 87)." Pattison (1987: 15) observed that if the teacher did not use the TL in the classroom, the language becomes to the learners "rather like numbers in a mathematics lesson, a series of ciphers embedded in normal speech. It thus fails to convey to the learner the message that language is something alive and creative that could serve real purposes, instead of something mechanical to be studied only for passing exams." Majid (1999-2000) finally, revealed, "These learners had therefore, very little practice in all the four skills of the language and were dependent largely on the course book and the syllabus, the teacher and the private tutors as the principal means of exposure to English (P. 89)."

In another study, Quader (2000-01) investigates the question of introducing curriculum innovation. Her study surveyed the pre-transitional and post-transitional effect from the grammar-translation method (GTM) to the communicative language teaching (CLT) method. In doing so, she as well revealed so many interesting factors related to learning. Markee (1997 : 47 in Quader (2000-01) says, "Curriculum innovation is : a managed process of development where principal products are teaching (and/ or testing) materials, methodological skills and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters." Unless or until, people have a positive notion towards the innovation, it loses its adaptability. Quader (2000-01 : 6) says, "Despite learning English for 1600 hours at the pre-university level, students cannot use English, and have been perceived to be at least six years behind the proficiency necessary to perform at the tertiary level of education." Hence the need for the change of method occurs. She mentioned the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) that aimed at communicative language teaching. She (2000-01: 8) said, "They (the teachers) will use the language practically, focusing on its, 'use' rather than 'usage' as they have been doing so that they get over the 'fear of English' that teachers report in all learners. Students should be aware and

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involved in learning. This would be very different from the existing mode of teaching where students sit passively bored as they listen uncomprehendingly to the teacher and later fall back on memorisation for examinations." We find that the examination system plays an influencing role in learning in Bangladesh. And, as she said about the teachers' duties, she also mentioned that the teacher could not do it alone. A teacher does not enjoy much liberty in taking decision about learning. Qudaer (2000-01: 7) said, "Here in Bangladesh, it would be the teacher in the classroom, the person who has autonomy over the classroom processes. But the person is inextricably bound to the role culture since the teacher works within the hierarchical system of the school, the head teacher, the other teachers, the syllabus, the larger society of parents and students." Therefore, the teacher is at the centre of power and of the more powerful surroundings at the same time in Bangladesh.

Quader reveals some interesting factors related to the teaching condition in Bangladesh. She reveals that syllabus completion is more essential to the learners and their guardians than learning the language. Examinations are given maximum priority. She also mentions, ". . . some senior teachers (who did not welcome change) told them that English was the language of Christian foreigners. If the students used English to talk to people, they would not remain good Muslims any more: they would become Christians (P. 12)". In this regard one head master (in Quader, 2000-01: 14) said, "Teaching language without teaching grammar first is never going to succeed." We can easily realise Markee's statement that innovation in language learning will not work if people do not expect change to happen.

In a study, Rahman (1987) presents an overall condition of the Bangladeshi learning condition. He (1987: 53) says, learning has some variables that are "student characteristics, teacher competence, classroom conditions and materials used." About each of these variables in Bangladesh, he presents his revelation. About the students, he says, "Most of the students at the primary and secondary levels of education are not well-motivated because of lack of success in learning English and of their inability to see any

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immediate implication of what they are learning”. About the teachers, he says, 50% primary and secondary school teachers do not have any professional training. Their command of English is poor and oral proficiency is quite poor. Teachers are unaware of modern methods of language teaching. About the classroom condition, he (1987) reveals, "classrooms at most schools and colleges are ill planned. There are usually a blackboard, a chair and a table for the teacher and a few benches for the students. Six or seven students are huddled together on one single bench. The rooms are not spacious and do not permit any movement for any language activity. The usual number of the students in any class at the schools level is 50; at the college it may well exceed 300.” So, he (1987: 54) comments “. . . on the one hand we have bad working conditions, untrained teachers and inadequate teaching materials; on the other, we have students with low motivation and unfavorable learning situations. This contributes to inefficient learning. It is difficult to think of any methodology that would work in such a situation." His final comment (1987: 54) is "A new development does not entirely supercede what proceeded; it co-exists or is adapted in such a way that we can see old practices in a new light of language." However, he also says, students hardly use NCTB textbook; a few students use dictionary or other supplementary texts. The classroom wall is bare and the teachers mostly use no teaching aids. Hence, we find all the variables of the learning process are inappropriately prepared in Bangladesh. In this regard, we can say, Selim's (1987: 64 - 78) findings of these four variables completely match with Rahman's findings. He further mentioned that the teachers were teaching privately and students were interested in using notebooks more than the textbook.

Stewart (1962 in Haque 1987) suggests seven functions of language in a society including official, group, wider communication, educational, literary, religious and technical, and further elaborates these terms. Haque (1987: 4 - 5) says, "Other than the purposes of religion and use within a particular community, English is needed in Bangladesh for all purposes listed by Stewart." McGinly (1983) wrote, "In the case of Bangladesh; unless something is done to shove up English language standards within the

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country, the tradition of its widespread use at fairly high level of competence will die out; something Bangladesh cannot take lightly, as facility in English is one of the things that makes its educational product (doctors, teachers etc), so marketable, especially in the oil-rich countries of the Middle-East, where English is valued". The situation has not changed rather expanded as we are now exporting garment products, shrimps, vegetables, medicine and necessary objects and the need for English using manpower is at its highest peak now. We have no other way but to learn English and to learn it without failure.

Strevens (1978: 181 in Salah, 1983: 41) talks about four principle components for improvement in language learning/teaching process: the learner, the teacher, the community and the language teaching profession. To him, the community consists of 'the public will' and 'administration and organization'. He also mentions that the profession has its own ethics and professionalism. As for the learners and the learning system, Corder (1977 in Salah, 1983: 39) says, unacceptable or inappropriate utterances hinder the learner from communicating adequately with other members of that community. The learner thus avoids communication due to the fear of failure to fulfil his ends, his failure to interact or be misunderstood, as well as the fear of giving an offence or making himself ridiculous." Salah (1987: 39) mentions the social factor saying. "Focus on the dimension led to an enhanced concern with the role of the learner, his needs, attitudes and motivation, personality, and his learning strategies and styles". She further accounts, for the shift from the teacher-centered to student-centered methodologies that took place in the 70's; several innovative methods emerged favouring the learners and focusing them. La Farge (1975: 10) says, "The students enjoy a democratic friendly atmosphere free from dominance, which encourages them to engage in receptive rather than defensive learning."

Therefore, we find, according to modern concept of language learning, learners are the most important variables on which the focus should be. On the other hand, in Bangladesh, we have a lot of shortcomings in implementing all the essential conditions needed for the variables of learning to work together unanimously and successfully.

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Learning is like a film, making the success of which, depends on the proper manipulation of skill or merit of all the crews, but it is the actors, like the learners, who are in the focus, sharing the praise and enjoying the clapping of the audience.

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# Chapter-3

## Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This research tries to discover the causes of the secondary students' failure in learning English in Bangladesh. The researcher became interested in this study because a lot of students fail in English every year. They cannot be called weak students as their results in other subjects are excellent. But their only failure in one subject causes them to lag behind. Hence, the finding of the causes can initiate a change in the curriculum, teaching techniques, content selection and most importantly the methodology of teaching in bringing about a positive change. Hence, the researcher intended to make an investigation of the teaching-learning situation of English in Bangladesh.

### 3.2 Purpose of the empirical investigation

The aims and objectives of the empirical investigation of this dissertation are to study and discover the actual causes of students' failure in learning English at the secondary level and to analyze them in order to find out the solution. For this purpose, an empirical investigation of the likings and dislikings of students; beliefs, mentalities, experiences, achievements of teachers, attitudes of guardians, teaching learning environments, and teaching techniques, were considered as all these factors are related to both the language teaching and language learning situation. The results of the discovery can change the teaching learning situation positively and students can be successful in learning English.

### 3.3 Research question

This research had three research questions. They are:

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1. What is the objective of the secondary students behind learning English?
2. Why do they fail in English?
3. How does it affect their learning and results?

Reasons for these questions are based on the following facts:

1. Positive attitude enhances language learning ;
2. Motivation plays a significantly useful role behind language learning ;
3. Awareness about the subject learnt helps form and build the right kind of attitude towards learning it ;
4. Learning environment facilitates learning.

### **3.4 Research hypothesis**

Students at secondary level are unable to learn English successfully because of their fear of learning English. They consider it a difficult subject. They do not see any benefit in learning it. They do not have the right kind of attitude towards learning English. Their main goal is, not to learn, but to pass the exam only. Yet they do not perform successfully. The research is based on the hypothesis that if right kind of attitude can be formed, students will be able to come out with successful results – i.e. they will be able to learn English.

### **3.5 Methodology of the empirical investigation**

The nature and purpose of this study matches with those at a descriptive study. Considering this fact the survey method was chosen for the empirical study. Three main techniques of the survey method—questionnaire survey, interview and observation-- were adopted for the study. Therefore, the methods for data collection employed for the

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study were – 1) Students’ Questionnaire Survey, 2) Students’ Interview, 3) Teachers’ Questionnaire, 4) Teachers’ Interview 5) Guardians’ Interview, and 6) Classroom Observation. These methods being kept in mind, instruments for the dissertation were designed and administered with care.

In this research, data were collected from different sources through the use of different methods for corroborating the findings. Particularly, the questionnaire survey, interview and observation methods were used for the survey to ensure triangulation and to enhance the accuracy, authenticity, validity and reliability of the data collected.

### **3.6 Instruments used for the empirical investigation**

The instruments used in this study include - 1) Questionnaire for Students, 2) Questionnaire for Teachers and 3) A Classroom Observation Schedule. However, interviews of students and teachers were taken in the light of responses to the respective questionnaires. Interviews of the guardians were taken on the basis of their opinions and reflections on the subject-matter. Hence, the interviews of the teachers and the students were semi-guided whereas those of the guardians were freer in type.

### **3.7 Construction of the instruments used for the empirical investigation**

The instruments used in the research were constructed in accordance with the purposes of the study. As the main objectives of this dissertation are to reveal the causes of failure of the learning system, the empirical study attempted to investigate the present factors related to the teaching–learning system of English in Bangladesh. In this regard, several books on research methodology in English language teaching, education, sociology and psychology were consulted. Besides, some instruments were modeled on previous instruments used by other researches in similar kinds of research.

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In constructing the questionnaires, the intelligibility of the statements used in the questionnaires was taken into consideration because the students were to answer them. Questionnaires for teachers were prepared in such a way that they would not cause any confusion or misunderstanding. Sometimes, questions in both the questionnaires – the students’ and the teachers’ – were the same and sometimes different depending on their relevance. However, difficult words and technical terms were avoided and if used, they were explained. Before administering the questionnaires, the instruments were piloted and necessary changes were made.

### **3.8 Detailed description and discussion of the students’ questionnaire**

The students’ questionnaire includes two sections. There are 23 statements. Description of the two sections is given here.

#### **3.8.1 Section –I: Personal information**

It is a brief section for collecting the personal details of respondents. The personal details include name, age, and the name of the school and class status of the respondents. The date of the survey is also included in this section.

#### **3.8.2 Section-II: Students’ beliefs, choices, opinions, achievements, experiences and expectations regarding learning English**

This section includes 23 questions. They were set to gather information about students’ beliefs, choices, opinions- achievements, experiences and expectations regarding the learning of English and various factors related to them.

Of the 23 questions, questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 21 and 22 are concerned with the students’ personal beliefs, choices, experiences, opinions and expectations. Questions 5, 15, 18 and 19 are set regarding the role of the teacher in the classroom.

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Questions 6, 13 and 14 are about the text book, and questions 22 and 23 are about the classroom situation. Of the 23 questions only 7 questions are ‘closed’ and the others are ‘open’. However, some open questions were constructed to ascertain their real opinions rather than confining them with any presumed options and some open ended questions were entailments of previous questions.

Questions were constructed on the basis of the research topic and the aims of the research. The questionnaire was constructed to investigate the actual practical situation of learning English at the secondary level in Bangladesh.

### **3.9 Detailed description and discussion of the teachers’ questionnaire**

The teachers’ questionnaire includes two sections. There are 22 questions in this questionnaire. Description of the two sections is given here.

#### **3.9.1 Section-I : Personal information**

It is a brief section, which describes the personal details of the respondents. The personal details include name, age, the name of the school, job duration, educational qualifications, information about their training in ELT and details of their training. The date of the survey is also included in this section.

#### **3.9.2 Section – II: Teachers’ beliefs, choices, opinions, achievements, experiences and expectations regarding learning English**

This section includes 22 questions but the first three questions are for information about the teacher. Therefore, the rest of the questions i.e. 19 – are set to gather information about the teachers’ beliefs, opinions, choices, achievements, experiences, expectations and activities regarding the teaching-learning of English and various factors related to them.

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Of the 19 questions, questions 4 and 5 reveal the opinions of the teachers on the results of the students. Questions 6, 7, 12 and 13 are concerned with classroom activities of teachers. Questions 8, 9, 10, 11 17 and 22 are related to the textbook. Questions 14, 15, 16, 17 and 22 are set on the basis of the objectives of the learners and the textbook. However, questions 19 and 20 are set on the class room situation whereas questions 20 and 21 are set on the number of the students. Of the 19 questions, only 3 questions are 'closed' and the rest 16 are 'open'. However, more 'open' questions were constructed to obtain the opinion of teachers rather than confining them to any presumed opinions. Some open ended questions are entailments of the previous questions.

### 3.10.1 Instruments for students' and teachers' interview

The same questionnaires used for students and teachers were used in the oral interviews. There some more important questions were emphasized and some other issues were discussed as they came in course of the discussion. The interviews were semi-guided.

### 3.10.2 Instruments for guardians' interview

Guardians were asked similar types of questions that were included in both the questionnaires. However, their general opinions on English, its teaching and learning, the text book, the teaching method, the learning objectives were discussed.

## 3.11 Instruments for classroom observation

A classroom observation schedule (see appendix–III) was made for observing classrooms. It includes statements on various aspects of teaching and learning English in the classroom. It also includes statements on teacher's role and students' participation. The main points considered for classroom observation are number of the students, size and condition of the classroom, medium of interactions of the students, method of teaching used in the classroom, classroom activities, teaching of the basic language

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skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, lesson aids, standard of the English used and so on.

### **3.12 Sampling plan**

In this study, the cluster sampling method was used because same curriculum, syllabus, textbooks and teaching methods are followed in all secondary schools except English medium schools. However, in all districts, the number of the government schools is less than the number of non-government schools. Hence, any district of the country can be considered a microcosm of the whole country.

In this study, Khulna was chosen only because it was convenient for the researcher to conduct the research there. Three schools were visited—one from the urban area, one from the semi-urban and one from the rural area. The English medium schools were not included in this study as they were not representative of the mainstream of the secondary educational system of Bangladesh.

For the questionnaire survey and interview of the students, the students of class ten were particularly chosen because they were at the final stage of the secondary level and they were mature enough to express their problems more specifically. However, these respondents were chosen from the Arts background because in Bangladesh, generally weaker students take arts And Humanities as their major at the secondary level whereas the stronger students choose Science or Commerce streams. As for teachers, an attempt was made to choose two teachers from each school: one, experienced and the other young.

#### **3.12.1 Sampling plan for students' questionnaire survey of students**

Three types of schools were chosen from three types of areas for the questionnaire survey of the students. The survey was conducted on 70 students. However, to avoid the gender factor, the researcher chose only girls' schools. A detailed list of the schools

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chosen and the number of students selected for responding to students' questionnaire survey are presented in table 3.1.

<b>Category of Schools</b>	<b>Name of the School</b>	<b>Students Present in the Class</b>	<b>Actual Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Urban School	Govt. Coronation Secondary Girl's school	33	35	94.2
Semi-Urban School	Daulatpur Muhsin Secondary Girls' school	27	33	81.8
Rural School	RRGGT Miloni Girls' High School	10	22	45.4

Table- 3.1: A detailed list of the schools and numbers of students selected for students' questionnaire survey

### 3.12.2 Sampling plan for students' interview

For interview, the same survey questionnaire was used. Discussion with the same students took place. In this section, they gave some more information, not thought of earlier. However, sometimes, they tried to give answers in English but most of the time, they spoke in Bangla.

### 3.12.3 Sampling plan for teachers' questionnaire survey

The teachers' questionnaire survey was conducted on 6 teachers selected from the three schools. As mentioned earlier, teachers were selected randomly only on the basis

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of experience. One from the young teachers and one from the experienced teachers were chosen.

#### 3.12.4 Sampling plan for teacher's interview

The same teachers were interviewed on the basis of the same questions. But in the interview some newer information came out. Interestingly, sometimes, other English teachers, who were not respondents of the survey questionnaire, took part in the interview and contributed as well.

#### 3.12.5 Sampling plan for guardians' interview

Fifteen guardians were interviewed separately. Each of them was selected from different schools. They were randomly selected as well.

#### 3.12.6 Sampling plan for classroom observations

Classroom observation was done in all the three schools. Six lessons by the six responding teachers were observed. The same observation schedule was used in every observation.

### **3.13 Administration of the empirical work**

The empirical investigation was conducted according to the sampling plan of this study. Brief accounts of the administration process of the empirical investigation i.e. administration of the students' questionnaire survey and their interviews, those of the teachers, interviews of the guardians and finally classroom observations are presented here.

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### 3.13.1 Administration of the students' questionnaire survey and interview

After taking the permissions of the concerned English language teachers and the heads of selected schools, the date and time of the survey and interview were fixed. Following the schedule, schools were visited and an introductory speech on this study was given. Questionnaires were given to the students and classified and explained for their convenience in Bangla. Questionnaires were collected after the answers were given. Then some questionnaires were read and the students were asked for further clarification. Some more information came out and the researcher took notes. The interview section began and proceeded thus.

### 3.13.2 Administration of the teachers' questionnaire survey and interview

The teachers' questionnaire survey was conducted through personal contact with them. Most of the questionnaires were handed to them and collected after some days. At the time of collection, some questions were asked to them again, and they gave some new information that the researcher noted down. Sometimes, the heads of the institutions were English language teachers and hence their interviews and responses were taken. During the interview, some other interested teachers made their valuable comments as well.

### 3.13.3 Process of classroom observation

Classroom observation was done in 6 six lessons of six different teachers who were the respondents of the survey. For this, their permission and the permission of the heads of the schools were taken. The researcher sat at the back of the classroom and filled in the classroom observation schedule and check list.

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### **3.14 Processing and analyzing data**

Most of the questions set in the questionnaires were administered to collect qualitative data as the paper basically attempts to analyse opinions and views of the people involved; the number of respondents is not considered to be important. However, some closed questions were asked and the results are presented quantitatively. Qualitative data are discussed and analyzed elaborately.

### **3.15 Limitations**

While conducting the research, the researcher personally faced many problems. The institutions did not want to allow the researcher even though the researcher tried his best to make them understand. When the survey needed for the research was conducted, students were nearly at the end of their academic year and they were busy with their preparations for the test examination. Furthermore, the researcher had to hurry as the regular academic activities of the schools were affected by series of religious vacations and political unrest in the country. Hence, the number of students was sometimes less in schools on the day of the survey. Despite these difficulties, the researcher tried his best to maintain the validity and reliability of the research and hence, every detail is provided. However, some more schools could be visited but the ongoing circumstances did not allow the researcher to go for that.

### **3.16 Conclusion**

This chapter presents the design and administration of the research work. It provides the details of the sampling plan, questionnaire construction, questionnaire administration and survey, interviews, classroom observation and the method of data collection and analysis. Research questions and hypothesis are also mentioned to show the relevance of the activities of the research to its objectives.

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## Chapter – 4

### Results of the Empirical study

#### 4.1 Introduction

The research instruments being prepared, necessary data were gathered through them for empirical analysis and field work was done as well. All the instruments prepared for collecting data are completely in harmony with the objectives of this study. The results are discussed and analyzed in detail here. First, the results of students' questionnaire survey and interviews are presented here. As for the students' questionnaire survey, analysis is done according to the questions whereas the summary and recovery information of the students' interviews are reported as the researcher took notes of important information. Similarly, the results of teachers' questionnaire survey and interview are presented. In the case of their presentation and analysis, the design of the students' questionnaire survey and their interviews followed the same procedure. Guardians' interviews are summed up and important notes jotted down from there are presented. Finally, the results of the classroom observation are presented.

#### 4.2 Results of students' questionnaire survey and interview

There were 23 questions in the students' questionnaire of which 7 questions were closed and the rest are open-ended. 70 students took part in the survey and they were interviewed. Of them, 10 students were from rural area; 27 from semi-urban and 33 from urban area. In the urban school 93% of the students passed in English whereas in the semi-urban school, 44% students passed and in the rural school the rate of passing is 70%. The data that I got from question No.2 shows that the highest marks in the examination vary from school to school. It is presented in the following table:

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<b>Rural school</b>	<b>Highest marks</b>	<b>Lowest marks</b>	<b>% of passing</b>
Rural	43%	25%	70
Semi-urban	60%	05%	44
Urban	76%	21%	93

Therefore, we see that the highest number is from the urban school whereas the lowest one is from the rural school. But that is close to the marks of the semi-urban students; however, the highest number of the urban school is more distinctive from those of the other two types of schools. In the case of the highest marks, the urban school is at the top as well and the rural school is at the bottom. Here, there is a greater difference between the marks of the urban and the rural school.

In answer to the question No.3, most students of all the schools gave similar types of answer. “English is very hard.” Only 10 students from the three schools said that English was ‘a bit hard.’ Question 4 presents the cause why students think English hard or a bit hard. Except those 10 students, all students said that English was hard because of its grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. One student said, it was hard for lack of regularity in study”, when another said, “English is not my mother language. So all time I cannot practise it. So its grammatical skill [sic] is difficult for me.” However, of those 10 students, one said, “I think English is not a very hard subject. Because if I read and learn that properly, it will be very easy.” Three of them said, “I am interested in English.”

Question No.5 has two parts. The first part is of closed type and the second part is an open ended question. 80% students said that the teacher helped them with extra-work. About 18% of them did not express their opinions. Only one student said that the teacher did not help them with extra work. However, a similarity was found in the answers that the students gave for the second part of the question. The things that most of students refer to as extra work are dialogues, reading; paragraph, letter , essay and letter writing; story telling, debating, doing role-play, pair work, discussion with others , summary

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writing; home task and memorization. All these things were mentioned by the students from all types of schools.

Question No.6 is on the textbook and almost all the students except 2 expressed their liking for the book. The following comments will present the general opinion about the book:

“It is a suitable book according to age, class and time. It is essential to study it. It plays an important role in maturing merit.”

“It is a good book. The stories seems [sic] realistic to us. They please us.”

The two students who did not like the book said that the book was hard and they could not understand the meaning.

Question No.8 is supplementary to the previous question. It is a closed question. All the students except one expressed their liking for the textbook directly. Only one student did not pass any comments though the book was hard for the two students.

Question No.9 and 10 are about their attitude towards learning English. Question No.9 is a closed question. The answers of the question No.9 are presented below:

<b>Category/Responses</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No Comments</b>
Rural School	1	8	01
Semi-urban school	21	02	04
Urban School	19	12	02

Therefore, 58.57% students are afraid of learning English. 31.4% students are not afraid of learning it and 8.57% students did not pass any comments. One thing is notable here that 80% of the rural students are not afraid of learning of English and the rate of their

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passing is 70%. In the Urban school, the rate of passing is 93% though only 36.37% students are not afraid of learning English and the majority is afraid of learning it. So it has become difficult to find any connection between success of language learning and negative attitude towards learning language.

Those who are not afraid of learning English reveals the reasons making the following remarks:

“There is nothing impossible for man. I think I can do better in English”.

“Because I want to learn and it’s essential for us”.

“Because, if I understand it, then it will be easy for me and I want to learn English.”

“Because I like this subject and I think practice makes a man perfect”.

“I think I could learn the minimum grammar of English that are needed. So there is no need to be afraid of”

“English is easy if we know the rules and the word meanings.”

Those who are afraid of learning English reveals the reasons, saying the following remarks:

“Because we cannot understand English rules.”

“It is a foreign language. So we are afraid of it. We don’t know meaning. We can’t spell and pronounce. We don’t know grammar.”

“I can it remember.”

“I think it is very hard.”

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Question no.11 is about learners' self-confidence. 92.85% students believe that they can do better results and 7.41% students did not pass any comments. This shows their doubt but none directly said they could not do better results.

Question no.12 is a supplementary question to the previous one. Here, a similarity in answer is found, too. The answers are like self-advice or auto-suggestion. They are presented below:

We have to –

- Spend more time ;
- Emphasize grammar;
- Do more exercises;
- Read and write a lot;
- Try their best ;
- Know the meaning of words;
- Know the pronunciation.

In answer to question no.13, most students said that they liked the textbook for its stories and biographies. They liked its pictures, tables, dialogues, true/false exercise, Mina's story, tables and realistic adventures. On the other hand, in answer to question no. 14, most students said that they disliked some items of the text book i.e. fill-in-gaps, poems, some diagrams, pictures, some boring items, tables, some chapters like junk food, re-arrangements of sentences, preposition, Feroza's story and difficult vocabulary. However, one student said, "stories are realistic and we often know them. Those are boring to read" Another student said, "Nothing in the text book is uninteresting".

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Sometimes, one item is not liked by a student but this can be taken as a matter of personal choice. This is not the general picture.

Question no.15 is on teaching method. An average picture is found from the students' answers. The gist of them is – the teacher teaches the textbook and then discusses grammar. Sometimes, pair work, role play, group work and conversation are done. Some students do not like their teaching in Bangla and some students do not like their teaching in English. Most teachers hurry up in the classroom and their class is brief. However, two remarks of the two students are mentionable and they are quite contrary to each other.

1. “There is no fault in present teaching system. We can learn English in this system properly” – a semi-urban student.
2. “Our teaching system is not developing” – an urban student.

As for question no.16, students' responses showed that their expectations were more result-oriented. They emphasized grammar and completing lessons most. Then they would like to play some language games. Some of them wanted to do some tasks like grammar tasks, story writing, doing role-plays, memorization, debate etc. One student said, “Subjects can be taught with amusement.”

While answering question no.17, students said they could sometimes, use the language practically, and sometimes, they could not. One student said that, they could write, read, speak, but could not listen and understand. Another student said, “I understand English a bit but I can't understand long sentences.” So, their expectations are not met.

Question No.18 reflects their expectations from the teacher. 57.14% students said that the teachers tried to improve their skills. But, in the case of the urban students, 27 of 33 students said that teachers do not try to improve these skills whereas all the rural

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students said that the teachers did. Hence it is evident either the performances of the rural teachers are different from those of the urban teachers or the expectations of the urban students are different from those of the rural students.

Two types of answers are found for question no.19. Those who said positively, said that the teacher taught them how to speak, converse; how to write and read. But they did not say anything about listening skill. On the other hand, some students replied negatively. They said that they expected their teacher to teach according to their opinions. Some of them expected the use of English always because thus they could develop their speaking and listening.

Question no.20 is about their attitude again. Most of them said that they had practised more for the skill-development; they were to watch cartoons, read newspapers, study grammar and know the meaning of words. While they were answering question no.21, some of them said that the teacher should use interesting techniques. He or she should inspire and should not frighten; he or she should give more time. They also said that their own labour, dedication and attempt were needed. They wanted a combination of all these things to eliminate their fear of learning English. However, one said that the teacher must behave well with them.

Question no.22 and 23 are about the classroom situation. The first one is a closed question. 67.14% students liked the classroom situation. All the rural and the semi-urban students excluding one semi-urban student liked their classroom situation but 18 of the 33 urban students did not like it and 4 of them did not pass any remarks. Only 11 students liked it. While answering question no.23, the rural students said – classroom situation was very good. It was cool. There was a good flow of air, good light, and no outside noise.

The semi-urban students liked their classroom for similar reasons. But the urban students did not like their classroom because –

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- Here the girl's thinking is low.
- If we talk in English, Other girls laugh.
- System of our classroom is not good.
- It is little.
- Teacher's talking is boring.

So, by the classroom situation the rural and the semi-urban students understood the physical factors, location etc. whereas the urban girls had a different interpretation.

When the students were interviewed regarding those questions, most of them kept silent as they thought they had to speak in English. But when they were allowed to speak in Bangla, they became interested. The data collected here were similar to the data gathered through the survey. Only one thing was more evident that they study English mostly to get marks though they knew its importance. Their purpose of learning was highly instrumental as they presently did not find any situation where English was necessary. Some students came to the classroom with their guidebooks. Some students also acknowledged that they did not have the textbook. They only read guidebooks. Most of them went to private tutors (in most cases, the school teachers were the private tutors) to learn English better as they thought the school-based teaching was not sufficient for them. One student expressed her interesting remark saying that, the same teachers taught English better when they taught them privately than when they taught in the classroom.

### **4.3 Results of the teachers' questionnaire survey and interview**

There are 22 questions in the teachers' questionnaire of which 4 questions are closed and the rest are open-ended. Six teachers took part in the survey and they along with some other English teachers were interviewed. According to the school category that

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is followed in this research e.g. rural, semi-urban and urban, two teachers from each category took part in the questionnaire survey.

In answer to question no.1, it is found that all the teachers except the rural teachers are M.A.'s in English. Question no.2 reveals that all of them received some training in English language teaching. Question No.3 reveals the type of the training that they received. The rural teachers got more training from ELTIP and BRAC when one of the semi-urban teachers and one of the urban teachers received ELTIP training. The rest two received training of 1 and 2 weeks at NAEM.

While answering question no.4, almost all the teachers said that they students' results were "not satisfactory" One of them further added, "... most of the examinees have no skill-based knowledge of English." However, only one teacher from the rural school, said, "I think the results of the students in English are good. Because at present most of the secondary schools follow the communicative systems [sic]."

When their opinions about the reason for doing so were asked in question No.5, they mentioned different things, some of which are noted below:

- a) "They are lacking in four skills "
- b) "Most of them suffer from English fear "
- c) "The syllabus itself is faulty "
- d) "Lack of skilled teachers "
- e) "They are not learning and being taught and tested properly "
- f) "I think lack of fundamental knowledge in English is one of the main reasons. Lack of practice, environment of teaching and frequent changing of syllabus affect the learning [sic]"

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Only one teacher said that students would be benefited much if the training received by the teachers was implemented.

All teachers said that they helped students with extra work while they were answering question no.6. Question no.7 is supplementary to question no.6 and all had similar kinds of answers of which one is quoted below:

I try my best to take the class in CLT method. Through this method, I frequently involve them to develop their four skills. It includes describing pictures or events, story felling, dialogue making, fill in the gaps, paragraph and composition writing, rearranging etc.”

However, one teacher said that he, sometimes, took extra classes beyond school time.

Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11 are about the textbook. In answer to question no.8, the two rural teachers expressed their satisfaction with the textbook. One of the semi-urban teachers said that the class hour was very short in relation to the textbook. Another teacher directly said, “The textbook, especially for class IX and X is not suited for developing the four skills.” However, both the urban teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the textbook saying, not in conformity with the classroom environment.” Therefore, 50% of them liked the textbook. (However, none of them liked the idea of teaching English without a textbook which happened in the case of English.

For question No.9, 66% of the respondents expressed their comments. They wanted to add some other items. One of them said, “In testing stories, poems, grammatical items, sentence patterns with sufficient examples and practices should be included in their syllabus.” Another teacher emphasized the proper use of the book.

Different answers came out from the question no.11. Two answers of the rural teachers emphasized the proper use of the textbook and the role of the trained teachers to use it. Another semi-urban teacher said that the book should be planned according to the

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learners' need but then the teacher might face problem whereas the second teacher partly emphasized the four skills of the language. Both the urban teachers expressed their partial satisfaction with the success of the book in emphasizing the four skills.

While answering question 12 , all the teachers said that they taught new words, spellings, sentence patterns, speaking, writing, asking questions and living answers, vocabulary through pair work, group work and elicitation techniques. However, one of them said, “ ...before examination, I help them pass or cross the examination.”

In answer to question no.13, the urban teacher said that their classroom activities to be skill focused. One of the two semi-urban teachers said that four skills are not always focused. Another teacher vitally remarked, “Skill focused at the beginning of the term but result oriented before the examination. The mentality of the students and guardians force me to do so.”

While answering question no.14, most of the teachers said that skill-based learning, method-based teaching, good preparation of the teacher and the students, combined efforts of the teachers and the students—all these can help them do better results. However, one teacher talked about arranging more mock-tests.

Teachers suggested group work, mutual cooperation, activity based techniques, introduction of practical examination could help them do better results while they were answering the supplementary question numbered 15. One teacher emphasized learning vocabulary, grammatical rules, sentence patterns and words and structures.

All the teachers said that the prime motivation of the students to learn English was “to pass the exam” and it is instrumental. However, the next question tries to reveal the objective of the textbook. All the teachers said that it was to teach the students to use language practically and to develop the four skills.

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Question no.18 is about the classroom situation and the next question is supplementary to that. Only 2 teachers were satisfied with the classroom situation because of proper ventilation and traditional seating conditions. They also proudly referred to the atmosphere of the classroom and of students. However, the other four teachers did not like the classroom situation because of so many students and lack of place. One of the rural teachers said that there were no electricity and fans during summer. They also said that the objections of the book could not be fulfilled in such a condition.

Question no.20 is about the number of the students and 21, is about how the number affects the teaching learning situation. In the rural school, the number of students was about 23 and the teacher could take care of all of them. In the urban schools, the number was about 70 and both the teachers showed their inability to take care of all students and to engage them in activities. In the semi-urban school, the number was about 60. It influenced the class negatively. One of them said, “Absolutely it influences because pair work and group work and monitoring are not being [sic] possible to practise in the class.”

The final question is about the objectives of the book and if they tie up with the motivation of students of learning English. In answer, the rural teachers said that the objectives of the book were not completely fulfilled and “motivation is not always proper.” They also said, “The objectives of book can be successful if all the trained teachers use the method of teaching to improve our English.” One of the semi-urban teachers said:

Most of the students and teachers do not use the textbook in the class. They use model questions from guidebooks to pass and get good marks in the exam because questions are normally being set from the guide books available in the market.

Therefore, students’ motivation gets priority over the objectives of the textbook. Another teacher expressed some interesting remarks:

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I. Government policy is to help the Ss to learn English at the communicative level.

II. Students want to learn at an advanced level so that they can go for high education. So, the tie is not made.”

However, both the urban teachers just wrote, “too much” while answering this question., When asked for further clarification, they said, the objectives of the book are too much to attain.

Therefore, it is found that the tie between the objectives of the book and students’ motivation is not made. Moreover, the book is not properly used as well.

While these six teachers were interviewed, it was found that all of them were engaged in teaching privately. Just after the pre-test examination, guidebooks are used instead of the text book. Sometimes, the schools suggested some particular guidebooks for commercial purposes. Instead of language learning, business related to that is getting priority.

#### **4.4 Results of the guardians’ interview**

About 15 guardians were interviewed. They were selected from all the three areas. Several points were noted during the interview and discussion with them. They are presented below:

The new book is not good. A student can never learn English without grammar. This book can be used to teach English to native students.

This book is good for getting marks. But students are not learning much. They cannot write properly nor can they translate any Bangla sentence.

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English is not so easy that so many students will get more than 60% marks. Previously, only some good students got high marks and they learned English excellently.

Children never watch English movies or listen to English news. They do not speak in English. As it is easy for them to get good marks in English only through the textbook and guidebooks, they only read them.

Teachers are busy teaching at coaching centres. In schools, they quickly finish the lesson but at coaching centres, they take much care.

English is a difficult subject. If they can pass, it's enough.

My daughter is getting more than 70% marks. Her knowledge of English is excellent.

*(The above sentences are translations done by the researcher)*

Therefore, it is found that the guardians want good performances from their children. By performance, they understand the results, and by the results or marks, they often think their children have learnt. However, none of them liked the new book. They have a lot of complaints against teachers and their teaching system. Some of them praised the opportunity of getting good marks and some of them did not. They were also conscious of the fact that their children were getting marks some how, but they were unable to learn the language in a real sense. Yet, marks were most important to them despite their criticism of the book, and tradition of getting high marks.

#### **4.5 Results of the classroom observation schedule**

Classes were observed. In most cases, the lessons of the book were taught in English. Only grammar was taught in Bangla. Students hardly talked in English. They

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only uttered their memorised lessons. However, the teacher-student ratio was not ideal. In most cases, it was more than 1:40.

Teachers did not use any audio-visual materials. They did not use any teaching aids or handouts other than the textbook or the guidebooks. The teaching method was GTM in most cases. Sometimes, teachers used CLT method according to the direction of the textbook. No variation in teaching method was found. All the teachers took their classes traditionally. The classroom was teacher-dominated. Interaction was lesson-based. Only a few activities took place. Pair work and group work were found sometimes. Teachers' own English was not good and their pronunciation was not correct. Skills were not focused; instead, lessons were followed traditionally. Therefore, students were unable to develop language skills. Grammar was taught through lecturing and doing exercisers.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the results of the data collected have been presented, analysed and discussed elaborately. The findings of this study form the basis of the discussions of the present practices of teaching and learning English at the secondary level in Bangladesh. In the next chapter the findings are presented more concisely and precisely, and sometimes recommendations are made.

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# Chapter-5

## Conclusion

In this research, I have studied and observed several factors related to the learning of English by students at the secondary level in Bangladesh. In addition, I have also tried to learn about teaching methods, teaching/learning materials, classroom situations, learners' expectations and guardians' expectations and a few other things related to them. The findings regarding students are summed up below:

- Most students think English is hard;
- Urban students get high marks;
- The passing rate of urban students is higher than those of the rural and semi-urban students;
- Most students say, teachers help them with their extra work;
- Most students like their text books and the items therein, although some items are not liked by students and hence, some modifications could be done;
- Most students are afraid of learning English. But it is not clear whether negative attitude or factors play an important role behind learning the language as is shown previously because fewer rural students are afraid of learning English and comparatively a higher number of urban students are afraid of learning it. But the urban students' results are better than those of the rural students;
- Most of the students are confident that they can learn it and they know what to do to learn it properly;
- Teaching methods are not liked;
- Teachers often frighten them while teaching and this is an example why the secondary students are not motivated to learn this language;
- Students like result-oriented activities;
- All students are unable to use the four skills of language equally well;

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- Sometimes students say that teachers do not behave well;
- Students expect much from the teacher; they are somewhat dependent on the teachers and the teachers do not do anything to make them independent as they have their own business regarding that. However, the students are not motivated to work hard as well;
- Except most of the urban students, all students liked the classroom situation;
- they are used to guide books and private tutors;
- All their teachers have private teaching centres.

On the other hand, I got some more information from the teachers, which are summed up below:

- Most teachers are somewhat trained;
- Mostly they are dissatisfied with the students' results;
- They are well aware of their duties;
- They help students with extra work;
- Only two rural teachers liked the textbook but the rest did no;
- None liked the idea of teaching English without a text book as is the case in English, second paper—a part of the course plan;
- They wanted modifications of the book as per learners' needs;
- Classroom performances are mostly result-oriented;
- They teach to use language practically;
- They prefer activities in the classroom;
- Most teachers did not like the classroom situation;
- The number of students affects learning;
- Objectives of the book are not fulfilled and the motivation of learners is not high;
- All the six teachers are engaged in private tuition;
- Sometimes, the school authority suggested the use of guidebooks.

After the interviews with the guardians, the information that I gathered are briefly presented below:

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- The book is not good;
- Learning a language without grammar is impossible;
- Teachers are more occupied with teaching at their coaching centres;
- Over marking in examination is going on;
- Though the guardians criticized the book and they knew their children were not properly learning to use the language though they appreciated the tradition of getting high marks.

From the classroom observation, I found that lessons were taught in English but grammar is taught in Bangla. Students can hardly converse in English; they only produce memorized lessons. The teacher-student ratio is unsuitable for language teaching. Audio-visual aids are not used. Teachers did not give any extra handouts. Only a few participatory activities took place in the classroom. Skills were not focused. Lecturing was the main method of teaching.

My research had three research questions. Regarding the first question, I found that secondary students learn English for instrumental purposes—to pass the exam only. In relation to the second question, I found that they fail in learning English not because of their fear but they fail due to their lack of motivation, the teaching method, teacher's inefficiency to teach, the syllabus and the textbook, the learning situation, guardians' lack of awareness, use of guidebooks and finally high competitiveness and commercialization of education.

With regard to my last question, I found that their failure was due to the fact that these factors had an impact on the learners. They neither learn a language nor pass the language course properly. Somehow, if they get good marks, they forget the knowledge of language they had acquired as they do not practice it and cannot find any practical application of those in their life.

Therefore, my hypothesis is partially justified as fear is not the only reason for their failure in learning English. They have self-confidence about learning it as well. But Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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the problem lies in many other factors mentioned above. For learning English successfully, students must be helped to form the right kind of attitude towards learning it. Moreover, it has to be ensured that the teachers implement their knowledge achieved through training; objectives of the textbook are to be followed, a good classroom environment is to be ensured, presented teaching methods are to be followed; students should not be frightened; more learner autonomy should be practised; learning strategies shall be taught to them and finally lessons should be presented interestingly as laughter lubricates learning – goes the proverb.

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# Appendices

Date: / /06

## Appendix I

### Questionnaire for the Students

Name : .....

Age: .....

Name of the School.....

Class Status.....

1. Did you pass in English in the last exam at your School:     Yes/No
2. What was the marks/ grade you got?.....
3. To what extent do you think English is hard?.....  
.....  
.....
4. Why?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
5. Does the teacher help you with extra work? Yes/No/No Comments  
If, yes, how?  
.....  
.....  
.....
6. How is the textbook?.....  
.....  
.....
8. Do you like it?     Yes/No/No comments
9. Are you afraid of learning English?     Yes/No/No comments
10. Why?.....

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- .....
11. Can you do better results? Yes/No/No comments
12. How?.....
- .....
13. What things in the textbook interest you?
- .....
- .....
14. What things in the textbook do not interest you?
- .....
- .....
15. What do you think of the way English is taught to you?
- .....
- .....
16. What would you actually like to do in the classroom?
- .....
- .....
17. Can you use the language practically (i.e. in speaking, listening, writing and reading)?
- .....
- .....
18. Do the teachers do any thing to improve these skills so that you can use them practically? Yes/No.
19. If yes, what are they and if no, what do you expect her/him to do?.....
- .....
20. How can you eliminate your fear of learning English?
- .....
- .....
21. How do you expect the teachers to help you to eradicate your fear?
- .....
- .....
22. Are you satisfied with the classroom situation? Yes/No/No comments
23. Why?.....

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.....  
.....  
*Thanks for your Participation*

N. B. Extra piece of paper will be provided if needed.

## **Appendix II**

**Date**     /     /06

### **Questionnaire for the Teachers**

Name:.....

Age:.....

Name of the School .....

Job Duration.....

1. Educational Qualifications:.....

.....

2. Did you get any training in English language teaching?     Yes/No.

3. If yes, give details.....

.....

4. What is your opinion about the results of the students in English?

.....

.....

5. Why are they doing so?

.....

.....

6. Do you help them with extra work?     Yes/No/No/comments

7. If yes, how and if no, why?

.....

.....

8. How is the textbook?

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.....  
.....  
9. Do you have any comments on it?

Yes/No/No comments

10. If yes, write them below.  
.....  
.....

11. How far do you think the book can emphasize the practical usage of the four skills of the language?  
.....  
.....

12. What are the activities you do to teach the language in the classroom?  
.....  
.....

13. Are your activities result-oriented or skill focused, and then why are they so?  
.....  
.....

14. What do you think will help them to do better results?  
.....  
.....

15. How?  
.....  
.....

16. What is their chief motivation to learn the language?  
.....  
.....

17. What are the objectives of the textbook?  
.....  
.....

18. Are you satisfied with the classroom situation? Yes/No/No comments

19. Why?  
.....  
.....

20. What is the number of the students?  
.....  
.....

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21. Does it influence the language teaching-learning process? Write below.

.....  
.....

22. How far do you think the objectives of book tie up with the motivation of the students of learning English?

.....  
.....

Thanks for your Participation

N.B. Extra piece of paper will be provided if needed.

### **Appendix III**

#### **Teaching Practicum Portfolio**

Name of Teacher:.....

Name of Observer:.....

Phase 1: Observation schedule

*After discussion with Supervisor note the following:*

No of observations:                      Dates:                      Time:

Observation:

Date:                                      Time:                      Place:

Level:                                      **No of Learners in Class:**

Class taught by:

*Recorded Details of Lesson Observed Below.*

Aims of the Lesson:

1.

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2.

3.

Skills Focus:

Language Focus:

Materials Used:

Observer:.....

Teacher observed : .....

Date : ..... Time :.....

School :.....

Unit:..... Lesson: .....

Class :.....Total No. of students:.....

Title of Lesson .....

Ss. Present .....Boys.....Girls.....

Teacher's activity	Yes/No	Comments/Examples
Was the lesson well-planned and the teacher well-prepared?		
Did the teacher appear relaxed and friendly during the class?		
Was the teacher's voice clearly audible at all times?		
Were the teacher's instructions clear?		
Did the teacher introduce the lesson clearly and attractively?		
Did the teacher make the lesson interesting and interactive?		

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Did the teacher do pair work with the students? Mention the activity.		
Did the teacher do group-work with the students? Mention the activity		
Did the teacher ask a variety of students of answer any questions?		
Did the teacher encourage the students to answer any questions?		
Did the teacher gently correct errors?		
Did the teacher make full and effective use of the blackboard?		
Did the teacher use target language only?		

*A diagram of the main stages of the lesson (tasks and activities, time spent on each).*

*General comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson.*

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**Correspondence details:**

Mian Md. Naushaad Kabir, MA ELT, Doctoral Researcher

Teaching Assistant

The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

Hyderabad- 500605, AP, India

[naushaadk@gmail.com](mailto:naushaadk@gmail.com)

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