

**CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN LEARNING
ENGLISH IN GRADES 11 AND 12 IN
BANGLADESHI MADRASAHs**

By

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

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September 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and all the sources have been quoted and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Mary Scott, whose encouragement, supervision and support from the preliminary to the concluding level enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

Secondly, I thank my parents M N Huda Azad, Jannatul Ferdous Azad, brother ABM Kamrul Huda Azad and my sister Shahnaz Azad for their support in the research.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me (specially the teachers and the students) in any respect during the completion of the project.

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Abstract

English language learning in Bangladesh has suffered a great deal in all the schools which are each designated by one of the three mediums of teaching: Bangla medium, English medium and Arabic medium. Only recently have there been some notable changes in the system of teaching and learning English in the country. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has developed new communicative syllabuses for classes 6-12 for Bangla (state schools) and Arabic (Madrasahs) medium school but learners are still facing difficulties in learning English especially in Madrasahs.

The English language is considered a global lingua franca these days in the modern world. So, learning the language well is important. My MA dissertation intends to investigate the possible reasons behind the students' failure to learn.

The purpose of this study is to explore the problems faced by the students in Learning English in Madrasahs, and to evaluate the communicative competence in English language of the students. (Communicative competence is the ability to use the language system appropriately in any circumstances, with regard to *functions* and the *varieties* of language, as well as shared *sociocultural* suppositions)

In this study I want to reveal the challenges faced by the students of Alim (grades 11 and 12) in learning English. Finally, in the study I will suggest some possible solutions to the problems.

This research involves some particular domains which are related to applied linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT): materials, syllabuses and curriculums, teaching methods and approaches, level of language proficiency (i.e. the level of competence at which one can be able to utilize a language for

both fundamental communicative tasks and academic purposes) of the instructors, teachers' preferred learning (i.e. the cognitive process of acquiring a language. Krashen (1981) uses this term for formal learning in the classroom), techniques, testing and evaluation, awareness of the importance of English and so on.

For this research, I collected information from 256 Alim students who are about 16-17 years old and 20 teachers of English of the same students from 11 urban and rural Madrasahs. Questionnaires for teachers and students were used to collect data for the study. The research demonstrates that the main obstacles in learning English are the textbook materials, (It is usually the core material for a course. A course book or textbook usually focuses on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking) the teaching method, the teachers' lack of subject knowledge, the omission of two important skills (speaking and listening), the lack of appropriate equipment, large class sizes and so on.

Literature relating to the research is reviewed to draw parallels and support the study.

Based on the results of this research a number of recommendations are provided for National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (BMEB) and for the teachers of English Language for the development of learning English in the Madrasahs in grades 11 and 12. Finally, suggestions for future research are given.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BISE :	Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
BMEB :	Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board
BTEB :	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CA :	Communicative Approach
CC :	Communicative Competence
CLT :	Communicative Language Teaching
DSHE :	The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education
EFL :	English as a Foreign Language
EFT :	English For Today
EL :	English Language
ELTIP :	English Language Teaching Improvement Project
ELT :	English Language Teaching
ELLT :	English Language Learning and Teaching
ENL :	English as a Native Language
ESL :	English as a Second Language
ESOL :	English for Speakers of other Languages
FL :	Foreign Language
GTM :	Grammar Translation Method
HSC :	Higher Secondary Certificate
L1 :	First Language
L2 :	Second Language
LSRW :	Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
MEB :	Madrasah Education Board
MOE :	Ministry of Education
NCTB :	National Curriculum and Textbook Board

NTRCA:	Non-Government Teacher Registration and Certification Authority
ODA :	Government Oversees Development Administration
S :	Student
SL :	Second Language
SLA :	Second Language Acquisition
SSC :	Secondary School Certificate
T :	Teacher
TEFL :	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL :	Teaching English as a Second Language
TTC :	Teachers' Training College
UGC :	University Grants Commission

Chapter 1

Introduction

In this chapter I would like to introduce the present system of education in Bangladesh as background to my study of ‘**Challenges Faced by Students in Learning English in Grades 11 and 12 in Bangladeshi Madrasahs**’. I will outline the purpose of the study and its importance.

1.1 Preliminaries

Language can be described as any form which can be written, spoken or take some other form (e.g. visual) in communication between people. Language is most significant because-

- the limits of language are the limits of knowledge.
- a particular language provides one of the identities of a linguistic community, and of an individual.

But learning a language is not an easy task, language is a complex phenomenon which usually takes years to learn. Appropriate ways are necessary to learn and teach a language. Learning a second language (a language other than the mother tongue that a person or community uses for public communication, higher education, trade and administration) or foreign language (a foreign language is a language not spoken by the people of a certain place: for example English is a foreign language in Bangladesh) is even more difficult as the students do not usually get a language-rich environment in which to learn the target language.

Sapir (1921) says “Language is a primarily human and non-human inborn method of communicating ideas, emotion and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”.

1.2 Sequential History of English in Bangladesh

McArthur (1996) places Bangladesh in the ESL territories. However, he describes English in some places in Bangladesh as neither a second language nor a foreign language. To give a picture of the ELT context of Bangladesh, the following sections present a historical outline of ELT in Bangladesh.

1.2.1 Pre-colonial period

The South Asian subcontinent became familiar with English in the 18th century. When Englishmen developed their own company, the East India Company among others, English became more popular among the elite people of the South Asian continent for communication with the Englishmen. English was not Creole or Pidgin as at the time as it was only used by the elite people. (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995)

1.2.2 Colonial Period

The necessity of English in the South Asian continent was first mentioned in the colonial period in Lord Macaulay's Minute of 1835 (See Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995). Christian followers came to India in 1759 and Rev. Swartz became anxious to establish schools for teaching English. Thus the socio-historical context for the supremacy of English was slowly taking place by the end of 18th century.

The importance and value of teaching through the medium of English was highly emphasized by Macaulay in his Minute of 1835. Through the process he wanted to establish the culture of Englishmen. Gupta (1970) expresses this aim as follows: "They attempted to prove that English language, culture,

literature and people were superior to anything, and this was the primary purpose for introducing English as the medium of instruction and as a subject of study”.

The English language, being the language of the colonial power, was the medium for the colonial administration, education and business throughout the time of British rule. English was the only medium of communication between the ruling English and the educated people of the Indian subcontinent. After that the position of the English language developed rapidly with the establishment of universities in Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Dhaka.

1.2.3 Post-colonial period

In the post-colonial period English remained as important as before because the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan used English language for communication between the two parts. English was widely used in government, legislative, courts, higher education and so on. English was the second language of Pakistan and was taught as a functional language in secondary schools and Madrasahs. (Curriculum Committee 1962). English was one of the compulsory subjects in the secondary and post-secondary levels of education. Also, the language was highly used in court and public administration.

1.2.4 Present situation

In spite of having a very long history in Bangladesh learners of English still face a lot of problems. There are many reasons for the problems. History has left major problems for Bangladeshi learners of English. Although British Colonial rule ended in the then India the English language continued to rule the

linguistic domain. Pakistani rulers tried to establish Urdu rather than Bangla in 1952. At that time East Pakistanis (now Bangladeshi) opposed them. As a consequence, the language movement of 21st February 1952 took place. In 1956 Bangla was announced as one of the state languages of Pakistan. Bangladeshi people are proud of the Bangla movement because in 2000 UNESCO declared the day as International Mother Language Day. After that movement the official activities were in English in order to avoid language clashes between the two parts (East Pakistan and West Pakistan) of the country. In 1971 West Pakistanis along with their Urdu language were removed from Bangladesh after nine months of bloody war. However, English remained strong in the language behaviour of Bangladeshi people. ‘Bangla Introduction Act’ (*Bangla Procholon Aaeen*) was established by the then President Hossain Muhammad Ershad in 1987. From then Bangla has started to be used in all official activities. As a result Bangla has been used much more widely than before. However, although there is no declaration in the constitution of Bangladesh about English, yet the use of English is found in some government activities where it is necessary; for example, in most cases Bangladesh Bank uses English for correspondence.

Now I come to the education system of Bangladesh. There are four levels in the education system

1. Primary (from grade 1-5)
2. Secondary (from grade 6-10)
3. Higher Secondary (from grade 11-12) and
4. Tertiary

The Madrasah (religious institution) board also follows the same education system.

The government took a decision to set up English as an obligatory subject from class 1 in 1990. It was executed in 1992 with the new syllabus and new books. English education has been reintroduced in the B.A., B.S.S., B.Com, and B. Sc. courses as an obligatory subject of 100 marks since 1993. Yet, another alteration was put in place by the Commission for the Foundation of Education policy in 1997 which proposed that English should be taught from class III. English is a compulsory subject for Madrasah students as well from classes 3-

14. In 1992 the Bangladesh government approved an act to reintroduce English at the tertiary level.

In 2001 a new policy was established and the government introduced new books with a communicative approach (the approach helps the learners to develop communicative competence in a particular language (i.e. the ability to use the language effectively) namely *English for today*, for classes 11 and 12 of general education system and the Madrasah education system.

Now in every level English is a compulsory subject. There are more than 23 public and 54 private universities in Bangladesh. In all the private universities the medium of teaching is English. Although ‘the private universities have no reference to the language of instruction to be used, what is interesting is that all these are English medium institutions... in fact private universities are a natural extension of the English medium schools’ (Banu and Sussex, 2001). There are some English medium schools in urban areas which follow Edexcel Examination Board or Cambridge International Examinations or the National Curriculum for English in England and Wales. At those English medium schools students usually can learn the target language. The school authority prescribe

several helping books with interesting pictures and stories which students read with much interest and pick up the language spontaneously and form a reasonable footing of English and develop the necessary skills for maintaining communication. But in Bengali Medium Schools the students are given only one book, *English for Today*, which mentions in the preface that the book contains everything necessary for developing all the four skills. If the book really contains everything, the English Medium Schools would surely not have introduced more books to develop the necessary skills of the students and the Bangla medium students would not face any difficulty to learn English language. The people of Bangladesh are curious enough to learn English to get higher education, good jobs and so on.

English is used as an international link so it is purely functional in the country. However, there is no possibility at this point in time of English being a *lingua franca* (any language that is widely used as a means of communication among speakers of other languages) in Bangladesh now as it is not used for interpersonal and inter-institutional communication in most cases. However, during British period and Pakistan period, English enjoyed the status of official language. It served as a *lingua franca* between people of two different nations

(Source: <http://www.southasiablog.com/2010/02/condition-of-english-language-in.html>). After getting independence from Pakistan in 1971 the use of English decreased. However, as the nation has been using English for centuries for different reasons, gradually it is taking a place in the socio-cultural system; for example, code-mixing and code-switching are very popular among people from every walk of life in Bangladesh to express themselves clearly. As people are using English in everyday life in different forms, there is a significant use of English along with Bangla as code-mixing and code-switching (Banu and Sussex, 2001) However, because of Bangla the use of English is limited in the socio-cultural domain and many people criticize code-mixing. They consider it a hotchpotch language.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:6 June 2017

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Now politicians have started thinking differently, President Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui (2003) said that the nation lacks a definite national policy on language, based on consensus of the people and that is the main reason for the apparent decline in the overall standard of both in English and Bangla.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

From time to time the government of Bangladesh had taken steps to develop the English Language skill of the students. In spite of various efforts by the government English education in Bangladeshi Madrasahs is still suffering.

“This number (the number of passes in the given test) is even lower (i.e. 33%) for English. Interestingly, the performance is far from satisfactory even if we consider performance in the general knowledge test: only 39% of the questions were correctly answered on average” (Asadullah, M. N, Chaudhury,

N, Josh S.R, 2009 source:
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVIALOGUE/Resources/Bangladesh_MadrassaReportFinal.pdf).

The reasons behind the failure of the learners should be identified. Also, it is important to evaluate their performance level. Most of the teachers in Madrasahs are not familiar with the communicative approach; as a result, they are following the old Grammar Translation Method to teach English. Many students who participated in the study I undertook complained that their teachers are just translating the text into Bangla in the whole class rather than emphasizing the target language.

The main aim of the textbook, as mentioned in the preface of the Teachers' Guide, *English for Today*, for classes 11 and 12, is to develop the language skills. And the book is written in a communicative way, for example, different lessons suggest peer work and group work, further, the syllabus is designed as

Communicative Language Teaching (the term is related to the requirements of students to communicate outside the classroom; teaching techniques reflect this in the choice of language content and materials (materials can be any object that is used to assist in teaching language, for example, a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD/ DVD-Rom etc), communicative language teaching stresses role play, pair and group work and so on).

Communicative language teaching represents a difference from current practice in the Madrasahs. It is also found in the present study that the teachers do not teach English through the medium of English. Furthermore, most of the learners do not have the necessary fluency and grammatical knowledge. It is also seen the classes are teacher centred. The teacher is the only speaker and the learners remain idle and simply listen to the teacher. The textbook is also found problematic as the students show a lack of interest in the lesson and the method of teaching. After studying English for long 12 years in the process many students fail to pass the Alim board examination. Most of the students said if they cannot pass the Alim board examination the reason will be only English subject. Currently 30% of the total students in Bangladesh have been studying under the Madrasah Education Board (Source: Madrasah Education Board, <http://www.bmeb.gov.bd>). Madrasah education system is the second biggest education provider in the country. Though it is providing education to a large number of people there is no formal research found till now. As a result, the problems remain unsolved.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is important in the sense that it intends to investigate the continuing problems in learning English at Alim level in Bangladeshi Madrasahs. The necessity for the research is stated by Johnson (1982), He says “Industrialization and technological innovation are a major aspect of national development in many countries in Southeast Asia today, and educators are increasingly facing

with the problem of how English teaching programmes can most effectively meet the challenge created by these changes”

In Bangladesh higher secondary education plays an important role because after that level the students get admitted into medical colleges, universities or into other institutions, for example, engineering college etc. So an investigation to find out the problems in learning English in Bangladeshi Madrasahs is crucial. Furthermore, it is hoped that the present research can play a significant role in developing English language education in grades 11 and 12 in Madrasahs.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

English has been an important subject to study all over the world as it is considered as global lingua franca. The objectives of the study are:

- to identify the challenges faced by the students in the process of learning English,
- to know which method is followed to teach English.
- to know what kind of textbook materials the students study for learning English.
- to find out whether the students practise the four basic skills of English language in the class.
- to find out whether the English textbook materials are appropriate for the learners,
- to investigate the teachers’ motivation, teaching method, teaching competence, and finally
- to suggest recommendations for the authorities concerned with the improvement of the teaching and learning English at grades 11-12.

1.6 Outline of the dissertation

The main aims of the research under the heading ‘**Challenges faced by students in learning English in grades 11 and 12 in Bangladeshi Madrasahs**’

focus on different issues which are related to Applied Linguistics. This research paper comprises six chapters along with a bibliography and some appendixes.

A brief discussion of present education system of Bangladesh is concisely provided in the second chapter. A brief discussion about the different streams of education, the sequential history of Madrasah education, Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, ELT policy of Bangladesh, the qualification of the teachers, the materials used in learning English, assessment and testing etc. is given in the chapter.

In the third chapter of the dissertation there is a literature review

The fourth chapter brings out the research design and methodology of the present study which describes the criteria of sampling, the list of selected Madrasahs for the research, research instruments, and data collection procedures and data analysis methods.

Presentation of findings and interpretation of data are in the fifth chapter. Work in the field by others is drawn on to support the findings of the investigation.

And the sixth chapter comprises the conclusion, limitation of the study, and recommendations for the authorities concerned.

Finally , future research is suggested.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I am going to describe the present education system in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, the history of Madrasah education in Bangladesh, the textbook materials used in Madrasahs, the qualifications of English language teachers, the system of assessment and testing, the environment of the classroom and so on.

2.1 Structure of the Education System in Bangladesh

Education in Bangladesh has four major levels: primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education. The education system is categorized into two streams: primary education (Class I-V) and the post-primary education covering all other levels from secondary to higher education. The post-primary level of education is again sorted into four types in terms of the curriculum: general education, Madrasah education, technical-vocational education, and professional education. Higher education is carried out by the universities, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for overseeing the activities of the universities concerned. In the general education stream, higher secondary education is followed by college/university level education through the Bachelor Degree (Pass/Honours) courses. The Master's Degree is a one year course for Bachelor (Honours) degree holders and two years course for Bachelor (Pass) degree holders. Higher education in the Madrasah education system begins after passing Alim (grades 11-12) level education. Alim is followed by the 3 year Fazil course, and Fazil comes after the 2 year Kamil course. Engineering, agriculture, business, medical, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are the major technological education in Bangladesh.

2.2 Different Streams in Education

Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements: general, and Madrasahs, while secondary education has three major streams: general, Madrasahs, technical and vocational education. Likewise, higher education has three streams: general, Madrasahs and technology education. Technology education includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology, and ICT. Madrasahs affair parallel to the general stream of education (primary, secondary and higher education) along with additional stress on religious studies.

According to the Ministry of Education, the structure of education of Bangladesh at the different levels of attainment is as follows:

Flow diagram of Education Structure of Bangladesh

Age	Grade														
26+															
25+	XX											Ph D (Engr)	Ph D (Medical)		
24+	XIX			Ph. D	PostMBBS Dipl							Ph D in Edu.			
23+	XVIII		M. Phil		M.Phil(Medical)										
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA			LLM	MBBS BDS	MSc (Engr)	MSc (Agr)		MBA	M.Ed & MA (Edn)		MA (LSc)		
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)	LLB (Hons)	BSc. Eng BSc. Agr BSc. Text BSc. Leath	BSc Eng	BSc (Tech Edn)	BBA	B.Ed & Dip. Ed	BP ED	Dip. (LSc)	Diploma in Nursing	Diploma in Comm	Kamil	
20+	XV		Bachelor (Pass)												
19+	XIV														
18+	XIII														
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination		HSC		Diploma (Engr)	HSC Vocational	C in Edu	C in Agri	Diploma in Comm	Diploma in Nursing	Alim		
16+	XI		Higher Secondary Education												
15+	X		Examination		SSC										
14+	IX	Secondary	Secondary Education				TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational	ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS						Dakhil	
13+	VIII		JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION												
12+	VII														
11+	VI														
10+	V	PRIMARY EDUCATION												Ebtedayee	
9+	IV														
8+	III														
7+	II														
6+	I														
5+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION													
4+															
3+															

Table – 1: Education of Structure Bangladesh

(Source: Ministry of Education)

2.2.1 General Education

General education is considered the biggest stream of education in Bangladesh and consists of four stages: primary education, secondary education, higher secondary education, and higher education.

2.2.1.1 Primary Education

The primary level education comprises 5 years of formal schooling (class I - V). This stage normally begins in 6+ years of age. Primary education is generally carried by primary schools. However, other types of institutions like kindergartens and junior sections attached to English medium schools also impart primary education in Bangladesh.

2.2.1.2 Secondary Education

The secondary education comprises 7 years of formal schooling. The first 3 year (class VI-VIII) is termed as junior secondary; the next 2 year (class IX -X) is secondary. At this level, there are three streams of courses: Humanities, Science, and Business Education, which start at class IX, where the students are to choose their courses of studies. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Educations (BISE) conducts the S.S.C. examinations. There are seven such boards at different places in Bangladesh: Dhaka, Rajshahi, Jessore, Comilla, Chittagong, Sylhet, and Barisal. These Boards are responsible for holding S.S.C examinations and issuing certificates for successful candidates.

2.2.1.3 Higher Secondary Education

The higher secondary education comprises two years of formal schooling (class XI -XII). At this level, there are also three streams of secondary education: Humanities, Science, and Business Education. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Educations (BISE) deal with the S.S.C. and the H.S.C. examinations. There are also seven such boards which offer certificates to the successful examinees.

2.2.1.4 Higher Education

This stage of education consists of 3-6 years of formal schooling. H.S.C. certificate holders are qualified for admission to 3-year degree pass courses and 4-year bachelor degree honours courses at the degree level colleges or universities. Master degree course comprises one year for bachelor's (honours) degree holders and 2 years for bachelor's (pass) degree holders. Some Public universities provide M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees in different fields.

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) directs non-campus distance education programmes. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University is the only medical university which offers courses on medical education.

2.2.2 Madrasah Education

The Madrasah education system was first developed in 1780 with the establishment of Calcutta Madrasah. In the Madrasah education system, learners have to practice Islamic education along with the general education complementary to each other. Madrasah education system consists of four levels: Ebtedaie (Grades 1-5, primary level), Dakhil (Grades 6-10, secondary level), Alim (Grades 11-12, higher Secondary level), Higher/Tertiary level (Fazil, Kamil).

2.2.2.1 Ebtedaie (Primary level) Education

The Primary level is known as Ebtedaie education. This is equivalent to primary level of general education; it includes grades 1-5. The primary level of Madrasahs education comprises 5 years of schooling (class I - V). Usually, children of 6+ years of age start in class 1 and finishes in class V. Ebtedaie education is provided in independent Ebtedaie.

2.2.2.2 Dakhil (Secondary level) Education

The secondary level of Madrasah education comprises of 5 years of formal schooling. It is named as Dakhil and is equivalent to secondary in general education system. Students study the same books in grades 9-10 and after the completion of year 10 they sit for a board exam under the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board. There are four streams (general, muzabbid, science, hifzul Quran) of education. Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board is responsible for holding Dakhil examination, and issuing certificates for the successful candidates

2.2.2.3 Alim (Higher Secondary level) Education

Alim is equivalent to higher secondary (HSC) education in the general education system. It is a 2 years course, and has four branches: general, muzabbid, science and business studies. The students can choose any course of the streams. The Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (BMEB) holds Alim public examination and issues certificates for the successful candidates.

2.2.2.4 Tertiary Level / Higher Education

Fazil (equivalent to Degree Pass Course in general education)

This level comprises 3 years of formal schooling. They follow the syllabus of BA (pass course) of National University along with their religious subjects. English is a compulsory subject for the Fazil level students.

Kamil (equivalent to MA in General education)

Kamil syllabus is completely based on religious education; it is a two years course which is considered as the highest level of education in Madrasah education system.

Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board is responsible of conducting the board exams and providing certificates to the successful candidates.

2.2.3 Technical and Vocational Education

Formal vocational education and training starts after Class VIII. The VET system consists of three levels of skills development below that of a higher education degree, namely basic skills, certificate and diploma levels. The first level, basic skills, is a two year course centring on manual skills, which is offered both inside and outside of schools. Prospective students must have finished grade VIII. At the certificate level, the two-year Secondary School Certificate, SSC (Voc), covers a similar set of skills and also needs grade VIII completion. Learners may go beyond the SSC (Voc) to the Higher Secondary Certificate, HSC (Voc), demanding an additional two years of secondary schooling after grade

10. Business Management courses are also provided as a two-year Higher Secondary Certificate, HSC (BM), but as a distinct stream. At the post-secondary level, there are four-year diploma-level courses, which are provided through polytechnic institutions (such as the Textile Institutes). The basic skills and certificate level courses can be classified as vocational education, while the diploma level courses can be classified as vocational (post-secondary) training.

2.3 History of Madrasah Education

The word *Madrasah* is descended from an Arabic word *darsun* meaning lesson. In its general usage, the term indicates an institution specializing in the teaching of the Arabic language and Islamic studies. The primary/ Ebtedaie stage of Madrasah was known as Maqtab or Nurani Madrasah or Furqania Madrasah. The first Muslim ruler of Bengal, Ikhtiaruddin Mohammed - Bin

Bakhtiar - Khalji, established a mosque and Madrasah in his capital 'GAUR' in 1197, according to some historians, 1201 AD. Sultan Giasuddin I established a Madrasah in 1212 AD. Later, his descendant Sultan Giasuddin II founded another Madrasah. Hussain Shah and his son Nusrat Shah established a number of Madrasahs in Gaur. In 1664 AD, with the initiative of Subedar Shayesta Khan, a Madrasah and a mosque were constructed the bank of the river Buriganga in Dhaka. Nawab Zafar Murshed Ali Khan founded Murshidabad Madrasah. Munshi Syed Sadruddin al-Musawil established the Burdwan Madrasah at village Buhar in 1178 hijri.

2.3.1 Colonial Period

Madrasah education took a new turn during the British rule. Most of the *lakheraj* lands were given to Madrasahs, and to teachers. Accordingly, many Madrasahs were shut down in the early nineteenth century. Governor General Warren Hastings established an official Madrasah called Calcutta Madrasah in 1780. Being deprived of official support, Madrasah education declined in the nineteenth century. In 1280 hijri Dewband Darul Ulum Madrasah of India was built. There are many braches of Dewband Darul Ulum Madrasah in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. In 1780 Alia Madrasah was established with the initiative of British government and formed Madrasah Education Board of Bengal. Madrasah education then started formally. A new type of Madrasah was established by the colonial government in the 1890s. It was called New Scheme Madrasah. In its syllabi were included all Islamic subjects and vernaculars. English language was made compulsory.

2.3.2 Pakistan Period

Shere-E-Bangla A. K Fazlul Hoque who was the prime minister of the time announced to spread out and modernise the Madrasah education in this part. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947 some committees /commissions were coordinated for the development of Madrasah education. Among the committees West Bengal Educational System Reconstruction Committee in 1949 and the Arabic University Commission in 1963-64 are remarkable.

2.3.3 Post - Liberation Period (Bangladesh Period)

After the independence in 1971 some changes were brought out, Bengali, Mathematics, English, Social science, General Science were made mandatory. In 1978 Madrasah Education Board was organized under Ordinance for the Modernization of Madrasah Education.

The Madrasah Education Board began its action independently in 1979. In 1978 humanity and science faculty are included in Alim level and in 1980; Fazil degree was given the standard of Education of H.S.C level. In the sequential step of Education in 1985 Dakhil level was given the standard of education of S.S.C. and in 1987 Alim level was given the standard of education of H.S.C for monumental regeneration of total education system. Later, humanity, science, business and technical education has been introduced in Madrasah Education. Now, Fazil is equivalent to BA pass, at present English is mandatorily taught up to Fazil level of Madrasah education system. Kamil is equivalent to MA. Fazil and Kamil board exams held under Islamic University Kustia.

2.4 Place of English in the Madrasah Curriculum

English is taught as a foreign language in Bangladesh.

It is a mandatory subject of 100 marks in Dakhil and Alim and Fazil classes. In 2000 the government introduced communicative English textbook for every class. The communicative language teaching is introduced to both the general and Madrasah education in the same year.

The following books are prescribed for different classes of the Madrasah education curriculum:

- *Beginner's English Book One For Class-3*
- *Beginner's English Book Two For Class-4*
- *Beginner's English Book Three For class-5*
- *Dakhil English for Today, For Class-6*
- *Dakhil English for Today, For Class-7*
- *Dakhil English for Today, For Class-8*
- *Dakhil English for Today, For Classes 9 - 10*
- *English for Today, For Classes 11-12*

The National Curriculum Committee designed posters, charts, maps, advertisement, etc. for better learning. The committee also proposes that video and audio cassettes should be developed along with the textbook

2.4.1 Curriculum of English in Alim Class (as mentioned in the Preface to *English for Today*)

It is claimed that *English for Today*, for Classes 11-12 is written in accord with a communicative view of learning. It is mentioned in the preface to the book *English For Today* that this new English textbook has been written by a team of writers trained in the UK under ETIP over a period of one and a half years for classes 11 & 12 It was part of the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) together with and funded by the Government of Bangladesh and DFID of the UK Government.. The whole process of writing, trialling, and

evaluation the manuscript was carried out by national and expatriate consultants of ELTIP in cooperation with NCTB.

The book for Alim is based on the principle that has guided the writing of the *English for Today* books from class 6 to onwards – the principle of learning a language by actually practising it. This practice which is carried out through the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, usually in an interactive mode, also underlies the communicative approach to language learning.

As the focus is on the communicative functions of language, the principal intention of the textbook is to render ample opportunities for students to use English for a variety of functions in interesting situations. The book is divided into units. Each unit, based on a theme, has several lessons that comprise reading texts and a range of tasks and activities designed to enable student to the different skills, sometimes individually and sometimes in pairs or groups. Some literary texts have also been included. However, the emphasis in such cases is not just on content but on the exploitation of the texts to trigger a variety of language activities.

The stress on the communicative approach, however, does not ignore the role of grammar. Instead of dealing with grammar as a set of rules to be learned in isolation, the book has incorporated grammar items into the lesson activities allowing grammar to play a more meaningful role in the learning of English. Thus students acquire their language skills by practising language activities and not simply by knowing the rules of the language.

The book includes a wide range of topics from both national and global contexts. A unit on population education has been added to the book to raise awareness about the adverse effects of over-population on the socio-economic conditions of the country. It is expected that the new textbook will be an

effective resource for the learning of English at this level. It is hoped that the topics are appropriate and interesting to the learners thematically, culturally and linguistically. Adequate grammar elements are also integrated with language skills so that learners can transfer the elements to the real life situations. The objectives of the textbook are to-

- set up enough practice in four basic language skills : listening, speaking, reading and writing,
- make the grammar really operational and communicative,
- conform the existing topics to make them more enjoyable and acceptable,
- make more chances for interaction,
- introduce “work book” component for improving writing skills at an appropriate pace, and
- propose a clear teaching methodology within the framework of actual lessons,

2.4.2 Syllabus of English in Alim Class

Alim level and HSC level the same book *English for Today*, published by the NCTB as the textbook for Alim class. It is seen that only the prescribed textbook is used for teaching. The book *English for Today* is consist of 24 units, all the 24 units are taught in HSC level but only 12 out of 24 units are taught at Alim level of Madrasah education which carry 100 marks. The 12 units contain 79 lessons. The contents of syllabus for Alim class are:

- Unit- One : Families Home and Abroad
- Unit- Two : Learning English
- Unit-Four : Pastimes
- Unit-Six : Our Environment

- Unit- Eight : Towards Social Awareness
- Unit- Nine : Getting Educated
- Unit- Thirteen : We and our Rights
- Unit- Fourteen : Human Resources
- Unit- Seventeen : Modes of Communication
- Unit- Twenty : Jobs and Professions
- Unit- Twenty Three : Challenges of the New Century
- Unit- Twenty Four : People, People Everywhere

2.4.3 Marks Distribution in the Alim Examination

The items and the marks allocated for each item are shown at the right hand margin.

a) Seen Comprehension:	25
i) Objective questions:	15
ii) More free questions:	10
b) Unseen comprehension:	25
i) Objective questions:	15
ii) More free questions:	10
c) Vocabulary:	10
iii) Cloze test with clues:	5
iv) Cloze test without clues:	5
c) Grammar:	10
i) Cloze test with clues:	5
ii) Cloze test without clues:	5
d) Writing:	10
i) Guided:	10
ii) More free:	10

e) Population Education (Unit 24): 10

Total marks: 100

2.5 Evaluation of the textbook *English for Today*

Textbooks give the objectives of language learning; textbooks work as a lesson plan as well as working agenda for teachers and learners. Sheldon (1988) proposes that "textbooks represent the visible heart of any ELT program". Allwright (1990) says that materials should help students to learn; they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers principles for what they do. Sheldon (1988) describes three principal causes for using textbook. (a) Developing classroom materials is an exceedingly hard, arduous process for teachers. (b) Teachers may have shortage of time in which to develop new materials. (c) And sometimes external pressures limit many teachers and as a result they cannot develop class room materials.

Hutchinson and Water (1996) suggest that contents of English textbooks should be useful, meaningful and interesting for students. Difficulty of materials should be a bit higher in their level of difficulty than the students' present level of English proficiency. English textbooks should have clear instructional procedures and methods, that is, the teacher and students should be able to understand what is expected in each lesson and for each activity. The EFL textbook *English for Today* needs to be evaluated.

Litz (2005) proposes that the value, content, layout and design, activities and the tasks' scope for practicing language skills should be considered in evaluating a textbook. For evaluation, the following questions are important:

- Do the textbooks represent what the authors claim?

- Are the textbooks appropriate for the level of students and the context?
- Do the activities help the students to develop the four language skills?
- Are the teachers aware about the teaching styles showed by the teachers' guide?
- Are there enough guidelines?

Apart from the above mentioned questions some other aspects can be analysed, for example-

- Performance of the learners in the classroom.
- Teachers' approaches in relation to the use of the textbooks,

2.5.1 Checklists and evaluation of *English for Today*

The following checklists have been selected for the evaluation of *English for Today*. For this present study, the checklists for evaluation of the textbook are developed on the basis of suggestions of Cunningsworth (1995), Dickins Germaine (1992), and Litz (2005).

Checklist 1: Is the layout of the book clear, attractive?

Checklist 2: Is the layout of the exercises clear?

Checklist 3: Are there opportunities for practicing language skills?

Checklist 4: Is there sufficient vocabulary explanation and practice?

Checklist 5: Are appropriate visual materials available?

Checklist 6: Are the topics and tasks interesting?

Checklist 7: Are the instructions clear?

Checklist 8: Is the traditional Grammar Translation Method (A traditional technique of foreign-language teaching based on explicit instruction in the grammatical analysis of the target language and translation of sentences from the native language into the target language and vice versa.) avoided to teach English?

Checklist 9: Is the lesson relevant to everyday activities?

Checklist 10: Are the activities student centered?

2.5.2 Description of the checklists

Checklist 1: *Is the layout of the book clear, attractive?*

English for Today looks good and satisfactory with its clear layout, and orthographic beauty. However, the binding of the book is of poor quality.

Checklist 2: *Is the layout of the exercises clear?*

The lessons of *English for Today* are of the presentation-practice-production type. Moreover, the book creates scope for sufficient exercise.

Objectives

Clear objectives for each lesson are mentioned at the beginning.

Example: Objective – By the end of the lesson you will have

- read two letters
- discussed the contents of the letters
- practiced using WH-questions

(*English for Today*, Lesson 1: Unit One)

Practice

The lesson emphasizes practice. For language practice, students have to do a variety of activities. These include pair work (a process in which students work in pairs for practice or discussion), group work (group work a form of cooperative learning). It aims to cater for individual differences, develop students' knowledge, generic skills (e.g. communication skills, collaborative

skills, critical thinking skills) and attitudes) working as whole class and solo work.

Pair work:

A good number of exercises for pair work and group work of different nature are presented in the book. For example: “*Read the two following letters taken from the problem page of a weekly English magazine. The Rising Sun, to identify the problems the two writers are facing*”.

“The Rising Sun

Wednesday 5 January

The Rising Sun

Wednesday 12 January

Dear Mita Apa,

I’m a first year college student and my annual exams are close at hand. I need to study a lot. However, conditions (...) shoulders. On top of that, my aunt (my father’s sister) has just and a new baby boy. He screams all (...) a lot on me and so do my grandparents. It seems that I am at everybody’s beck and call. The house hasn’t yet shed (...) family. I even have to share my room with my younger brothers and sisters and at times, with my cousins, I wish I were in a small family. Tell me what should I do?

Nazneen

Aminpur, Sirajganj”

“Dear Mita Apa,

I read Nazneen’s letter published in
understand Nazneen’s problems about

your column on 5th January. I can
living in a large family, but (...) the

fence. From my experience, I know how awfully boring life can be in a nuclear family. I'm also a college student like Nazneen. My only brother goes to university in the morning and comes back late in the evening. Everybody is too (...) uncles, aunts, and cousins. I hope Nazneen realises that having a small family does not necessarily make one happy.

Zinnia

Rajabazar, Dhaka”

(*English for Today*, Lesson 1: Unit 1)

Checklist 3: Are there opportunities for practicing language skills?

The preface claims that practice is accomplished through the four skills of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The tasks are designed in such a way so that learners can practice the four skills. For example, in most of the lessons, there is dialogue writing item. ‘In pairs write a short dialogue between them to show how they interact (communicate) with each other. Then in pairs do roles play using the dialogue’. (*English for Today*)

Checklist 4: Is there sufficient vocabulary explanation and practice?

Every lesson contains vocabulary lessons. Vocabulary is explained through defining the word or and providing synonyms. The major techniques used in the book are: cloze test with clues, cloze test without clues, matching column, etc.

Example:

Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the text.

The ability to form ----- utterances and them ----- properly as ----- communicative competence. In a ----- ways of developing -----
-

competence. The first one is ----- . Acquisition is ----- to the way as people learn ----- tongue.

(English for Today, Lesson 1: Unit Three)

Checklist 5: Are appropriate visual materials available?

There is no facility to use visual materials. The textbook itself does not encourage the teachers or students to use visual materials.

Checklist 6: Are the topics and tasks interesting?

Learning takes place pleasantly if the lesson is interesting. The textbook consists of stories and articles on social, historical, educational wonders, heritage, space, communication, challenges, profession, sports issues, etc. of which most of the topics are likely to be attractive to the grades 11 & 12 year students. The textbook can be considered as interesting. Many tasks in the lessons are enjoyable, and the cultural and historical content is known to the learners.

Checklist 7: Are the instructions clear?

The given instructions are clear and easy to understand for the students. The given model exercises provide contextual clues to the students so that they can understand what to do. However, some of the instructions lack the needed contextual information in terms of linguistic contextual complexity. An example of poor exercise is-

Now look at the picture of Mr Fraser, Managing Director of multinational company situated in Dhaka. What kind of a person do you think he is? Why?
Discuss in pair

(English for Today, Lesson 4: Unit Seven)

Checklist 8: Is the traditional Grammar Translation Method (A traditional technique of foreign-language teaching based on explicit instruction in the grammatical analysis of the target language and translation of sentences from the native language into the target language and vice versa.) avoided to teach English?

The book does not encourage the use of Grammar Translation Method, rather grammar items and their functions are included within the text in each lesson in a problem-based manner, i.e. identification, right form of verb, fill in the gaps with clues, fill in the gaps without clues etc.

Example

Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the words in brackets. Add any preposition if necessary.

- a) Nazneen is (worry) her exam.
- b) Nazneen cannot give (concentrate)..... her study.
- c) To study well in a big family is beyond imagination.

(English for Today, Lesson 1: Unit One)

Checklist 9: Is the lesson relevant to everyday activities?

Many topics found in *English for Today* are collected from the local, cultural, social, educational and historical background; but again many lessons are based on topics that are likely to be new to the students, e.g. Unit 1 lesson 2, 3 etc.

Example

E. Think about your own family. In pairs ask and answer questions about your families. E.g. how many members are there in your family? What do/doesdo? Does your grandfather live with you? Etc. (*English for Today*, Lesson 1: Unit One)

Checklist 10: Are the activities student centered?

It is written in the teacher's guide that the teacher should try to remember that they are no longer 'lecturing' to a class; instead they must allow students to do as much as possible. The textbook encourages the students to practise the language. In all the activities, the learners have to comprehend and/or produce language, i.e., they have to use language, "do the exercises either individually" or "in pairs or in groups".

2.6. Qualifications of Madrasah English Teachers

In most of the Madrasahs in rural areas there are no English teachers rather the Madrasahs usually hire part time teachers from Madrasahs.

An M.A degree in English with good results is required to teach at Alim level. To ensure better education, and to strengthen the teaching learning activities, the government of Bangladesh has enacted the "Non-Government Teacher Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA) Act 2005". The National Parliament of the People's Republic of Bangladesh approved the bill on February 2005. The act suggests, the NTRCA will hold and qualifying test for proposed teachers, and issue certificates. As per the hand-out of The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (DSHE) and NTRCA the qualification of secondary and higher secondary level English teachers should be as following:

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	QUALIFICATION FOR TEACHERS	
---------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

	Non-government Institution	Government Institution
Secondary Schools/ Madrasahs	B.A. with English	B.A, B. Ed. with elective English at graduate level or M.A. in English
Higher Secondary College/ Madrasahs	M.A. (2nd Class) in English	M.A (1st class) in English or B.A (Hons) M.A (2nd Class) in English
Bachelor Degree / Fazil course	M.A (2nd Class) in English	M.A (1st Class) in English or B.A (Hons) M.A in English with 2nd Class

Table-2 Teacher’s Qualification (Source: DSHE and NTRCA)

The Madrasah governing body appoints the teachers according to this table but the teachers hardly get training to teach English.

It is also found that some teachers of other subjects also teach English in rural Madrasahs when the Madrasah has no English teacher.

2.7 Assessment and Testing System

The main purpose of testing is to evaluate teaching and learning. Bartram & Walton (1991) suggest “learning ability varies from person to person and all language learning is based on continual exposure, hypothesizing and, even with the correct hypotheses, testing and reinforcing the ideas behind them”.

2.7.1 Objectives of Assessment and Testing

A number of items are found in the Alim question paper. It is seen that the items are basically to test the students’ accuracy rather than fluency. There is no item found which can test a student’s speaking and listening skills. The

tests do not measure how much a student is able to communicate in his or her everyday life.

2.7.2 Kinds of Tests

The national curriculum suggests three kinds of evaluation:

- i) Continuous assessment
- ii) Internal examinations
- iii) End-course examinations – e.g. Alim examination, H.S.C. examination,

In most of the Madrasahs every test that takes place is summative test as no feedback is given after the test. No sign of *Progress Test*, *Proficiency Test* and *Aptitude Test* is found in the testing system in any rural Madrasahs.

2.7.3 Internal Examination

Two terminal examinations in each academic year are taken usually in Madrasahs as the curriculum also suggests it. The question setters usually follow the prescribed style and format of Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board.

2.7.4 Question Paper Layout for the Alim Board Examination

The following is the prescribed question paper layout given by BMEB;

Seen Comprehension: 25 marks

There will be a seen comprehension passage from the textbook followed by a choice of questions. The question type includes the following;

a) Objective Type: 15 marks

(1) Multiple Choices (2) True /False (3) Filling the Gaps with Clues (4) Information transfer (5) Making sentences from Substitution Tables (6) Matching Phrases/pictures etc.

Note: Question will be set on any five of the above types. Each type will carry 3 marks (3×5=15) and each question will carry 1 mark.

b) More Free: 10 marks

(7) Open Ended (8) Filling the Gaps with the Clues (9) Summarising (10) Making Notes (11) Re-writing in a different form.

Note: Question will be set on any two of the above types. Each type will carry 5 marks (5×2=10) and each question will carry 1 mark.

Unseen Comprehension: 25 marks

There will be an unseen comprehension passage followed by a choice of questions. This passage will be of different from the *seen comprehension* It will include the following;

a) Objective Type: 15 marks

(1) Multiple choices (2) True /False (3) Filling the gaps with clues (4) Information transfer (5) Making sentences from substitution tables (6) Matching phrases/ pictures, etc.

Note: Question will be set on any five of the above types. Each type will carry 3 marks (3×5=15) and each question will carry 1 mark.

b) More free: 10

(7) Open ended (8) Filling the gaps with the clues (9) Summarising (10) Making notes.

(11) Re-writing in a different form.

Note: Question will be set on any two of the above types. Each type will carry 5 marks (5×2=10) and each question will carry 1 mark.

Vocabulary: 5+5=10

A gap filling task is given to test the students' ability to use different types of vocabularies.

Grammar: 5+5 =10

A gap filling task is used to judge student's grammatical knowledge; the task can be with clues or without clues.

Writing: 20 marks

a) Guided: 10

There will be a number of writing tasks; the following types of exercises should be included;

- i) Producing sentences from substitution tables
- ii) Reordering sentences

Note: There will be no alternative questions.

b) More Free: 10 marks

The following types of exercises should be included;

- i) Answering questions about themselves
- ii) Continuing a passage

Note: There will be no alternative questions.

Population Education: 10 marks

The unit 24 entitled "People, People Everywhere" is the mandatory unit. This part may include multiple choices, filling the gaps, answering questions matching phrases, writing a short paragraph.

Chapter 3

3. Literature Review

I will now describe some of the work that is related to this area of English language teaching in order to outline the context of the present study.

Hasan (2005) in his dissertation on “English Language Curriculum at the Secondary Level in Bangladesh - A Communicative Approach to Curriculum Development” found that the students are not aware of the importance of learning English language. 59% of the selected students are not interested in speaking English, because they like their mother tongue which is easier for them to understand. The difficulty of understanding is one of major reasons for avoiding the English language. He discloses that 82% of rural and urban Madrasah students at Dakhil level complain that the teachers do not use English sufficiently in the class. Moreover, most of the teachers (68%) do not arrange any practice classes for speaking and listening skills. Also, he discovered that the syllabus and the actual curriculum of education are examination oriented, which prevent the learners from acquiring language competence.

Nisha (1995) as cited in by Chidambaram (2005) investigated the problems in acquiring communicative competence in English, and the areas of incompatibility between the language syllabus, language teaching and linguistic performance of the first year degree students in English in Tamil Nadu state. Her study exposes that the parental education, situational and psychological factors play an important role in the development of the communicative competence of the learners, while the socio- economic factors play a lesser role. Furthermore, she has identified some of the communication strategies applied by the learners when they face difficulties in the process of communication.

Ghrib Maamouri (2002) found that 84.61% of the students said that they had problems in English; the 6th graders who rated themselves as more proficient than the 7th graders surprisingly complained a bit more than the 7th graders (86.58% & 81.25% respectively), and the girls slightly more than the boys (85.71% & 82.05%). The mid socio-economic groups, which seemed confident, complained more than the rest (Mid groups: 91.30%, Low: 87.75%, and High: 79.31%).

When asked to give an order of difficulty for the various skills, learners, generally speaking, classified listening and writing among the hardest tasks/skills, and speaking and reading among the easiest. This matches their ability order in the various skills, and also conforms to what they told the field worker orally. This also matches the teachers' perceptions of the learners' difficulties.

Subramanian (2002) cited by Chidambaram (2005) assessed all the four linguistic skills of the graduate students in English in Punjab. However, he emphasizes the writing skill of the graduate students and discovers in his study phonological, grammatical and orthographical errors in productive skills; and in the comprehension skills he identifies the ability of remembering words and sentences that were taught earlier. His study finds that 68% graduate learners are interested in correction of error in written production. Moreover, he thinks that introduction of the audio-visual instrument for language teaching would be good and wise at collegiate level. Also, he encourages the group discussion and language games in the class hours.

Kavaliauskiene (2003) investigated the practice and performance of the students in English and carried out research among the second year university students in Lithuania which reveals that 68% students are weak in listening; 73% students

are weak in speaking; while 72% students' reading status is satisfactory. It is also found that 65% students admit that the teachers have tendency to avoid speaking; and 57% students comment that listening practices are not done in the class.

Karthiyayani (1995) investigated the reading comprehension of the students studying at the higher secondary level in Iran. She has observed that the parental economical position and the student's previous academic record play a crucial role in the performance of the students. She notices that the reading performance of the students in English is better when the answers are explicitly stated in the passage, and the students find difficulty if the answers are scattered in the passage.

Chandran (1999) assessed some techniques of teaching English, the textbook materials used for the higher secondary students. He has identified that phonological, grammatical, and discourse (Discourse is a unit of language relatively greater than a sentence) based errors are the major problems. Based on his finding, he proposes that tests should be taken on spelling, word building, grammar, phonology, reading and writing comprehension. Furthermore, he recommends that the text should contain more lessons written by Indian writers and the poems should be minimised in the text and the examination should test the mastery of the students over the four skills of language.

Uzpaline and Kavaliauskiene (2003) disclose that grammar mistakes and poor vocabulary reduce the quality of students' written work and oral presentations. Self-correction of written work is easier for learners than self-correction of oral presentations, because the former is less threatening to learners and the latter demands note-taking because of shorter memory spans.

Malaka (1998) has researched the motivational problems in teaching – learning English as a second language at the high school level with particular reference to 9th, 10th, 11th standards in Brazil. And the research showed that the motivational problems are comparatively less in the higher classes than in the lower classes. 55% 9th grade students and 52 % 10th grade students suffer from motivational problems.

Jayanthi (2002) cited in Chidambaram (2005) discovered that interaction with text, smartness of the students, psychological conditions, shyness, evaluative capacity, commitment, world knowledge, time factor, interactional awareness, etc., play a vital role in the effective and efficient interaction of the higher secondary students in the classroom in the Punjab. According to her study the shyness of the students, psychological conditions, especially past failures, etc. leads to the avoidance of interactive performance.

Sobana (2005) researched the communicative competence in written English among higher secondary students in India. The researcher assesses the competence based achievement of the of the learners on the basis of the marks obtained by them to the given tests items like identification of sounds and letters, word meanings, application of word meaning in sentences, letter writing and composition. Her study exposes that the instruction and parental economic and educational background have a direct impact on the competence based achievement and ability to use written English.

Pande (2005) studied the teachers teaching English to the higher secondary students in the Tamil Nadu state and finds that 72% teachers teach English through the medium of Tamil, the mother tongue. She finds the clear interference of the mother tongue in practicing English in the class.

Chidambaram (2005) carried out a study on the Learning Process of English by Higher Secondary Students with Special Reference to Dharamapuri District in India and discovered that in the process of learning to speak, the students follow certain strategies in their communication to conceal their linguistic inadequacy. 62% of the students avoid talking with the researcher in English and speaking on the given topic due to the anxiety, language shock, cultural shock and the linguistic inadequacy. It has been found in the same study that some of the students have invented certain new words in their oral communication, when they cannot use an appropriate word or for the word which is absent in their mental lexicon. Sometimes, the students follow the code switching strategy. Approximation is yet another strategy in which the learners use the approximate items instead of the correct one. However, these approximate words are semantically close

Johnson (2001) in his study on the secondary English language teachers in Ukraine found that the trained teachers are more efficient than non-trained teachers in handling English classes. It is found that the teachers who have a very good English medium background are found to be the best teachers for the students to acquire a language. The researcher proposes that teachers should avoid taking narrow steps in teaching English by giving clues. He finds that only 29% teachers at high school level are fully trained, while 71% teachers do not have any training in teaching.

Rashid (1998) investigated the strategies to overcome communication difficulties in a target language situation- Bangladeshis in New Zealand. His study reveals that some typical new features have come out as to the difficulties and the possible use of strategies in the target language communication. The study shows that the subjects have high positive motivation towards the target language and its culture which can give a renewed impetus to their

communicative language proficiency. Majority of the interviewees (85%) admitted that a great deal of anxiety, hesitation and inhibition play a negative role among those who are not relatively fluent in conversation.

The study of Stapa (2003) on learners' perceptions on self- or peer-correction finds, 23% of respondents would not mind correcting their own work, whilst 77% would mind correcting their mistakes. It also shows that only 36% of learners would not mind having their written work corrected by peers, while a vast majority, 64% are against peer-correction.

Shethi (2004) carried out a study among the students at the Loknath Women College in Uttar Pradesh. Her study reveals that in a 'one and a half hour' English class with an interesting lesson, 125 out of 128 students remained active and stayed in the class until the class finished. Another day, with the 131 students of same class with the same teacher in a substantially less interesting lesson, 21 students went outside with or without the permission of the teacher, 9 students felt dozy, 33 students stayed busy among themselves. 5 students were imitating the teacher's lecture being out of the teacher's range of attention; and when the class ended after one and a half hours there were only 37 students in the class.

Chapter 4

4. Research Design and Methodology

Quantitative research methodology is used for data collection in the research. “Quantitative research is used to measure how many people feel, think or act in a particular way. These surveys tend to include large samples - anything from 50 to any number of interviews. Structured questionnaires are usually used incorporating mainly closed questions - questions with set responses. There are various vehicles used for collecting quantitative information but the most common are on-street or telephone interviews” (source: http://www.marketresearchworld.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11&Itemid=64).

The research work draws on both primary and secondary research.

Secondary research normally represents an activity whereby no new original data is collected but where the research project draws an existing sources alone. Secondary data can be collected from books, journals, statistical reports from government and other document. In order to access relevant data, it was essential to use a variety of different sources of information.

4.1 Sampling

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the functions of a study.

The current research has followed random sampling in selecting the respondents. In random sampling all populations have the same opportunity to be chosen in a study. Morris (1996) proposes that the advantage of random

sampling is that it is easy to apply when a big population is involved. Students and teachers are the two samples in the study.

4.1.1 Students

The selected students have already passed Dakhil board exam and they are now in grades 11 and 12 of Madrasah education system. 256 Alim students who are about 16-17 years old from 11 rural and urban Madrasahs are involved in the research.

4.1.2 Teachers

20 teachers of English of the same students from 11 urban and rural Madrasahs are randomly selected for the study. Among them experienced teachers, semi-experienced teachers and newly qualified teachers participated.

4.2 Research instruments

Survey is considered as a popular and comparatively easier research method to get data in the field of English language education research, and the most common survey technique is the questionnaire. Questionnaires are the most widely used research method for the collection and comparison of appropriate data. But the results of the questionnaires entirely depend on how the questions are designed. According to Bell (1999) 'it is far harder to produce a good questionnaire than you might think'. Questionnaire is used in English language education for a wide variety of purposes, for example; students' performance, practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), etc. (Park, 2003).

Two different questionnaires are provided to teachers and students to gather information on how the students like to learn, what they learn, and what kind of text book they follow. On the other hand questionnaires for the teachers try to find out how they teach, whether they encourage their learners to use four basic

skills of English language in the class or not, what method they follow to teach English.

Interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people (Kahn and Cannell, 1957). Non-structured interview is used to get the more reliable data for the purpose of the research through phone and Skype. I merely summarise some of the key themes from the non-structured interviews where necessary in analyzing the data.

Models of Brindley (1984), and Nunan and Lamb (1996) are followed to design the questionnaires, moreover, some websites are also used to make the questionnaires valid, reliable and practical. The questionnaires are easy to understand and straight forward. See Appendix 1 and 2.

4.2.1 Student Questionnaire

The questionnaires used for the students were intended to be clear and simple. And the students had no difficulty in understanding the questions and instructions. Furthermore, embarrassing questions are avoided. Syllabus, textbook materials, practice of English language skills in the class, performance in English, teaching method and approaches, etc. are given priority in the questionnaire. The questionnaires are prepared on the basis of the objectives that are mentioned in chapter 1. See Appendix 1.

4.2.2 Teacher Questionnaire

The questions of the teacher questionnaire are closed. To make the questionnaires the models of Brindley (1984) are followed. The questions are designed to be simple and easy to understand and not to be personally intrusive.

Multiple choice questions are widely used in teachers' and students' questionnaires apart from some 'Yes/ No' questions. Closed format questions do not require much time and effort. Moreover, in the closed format questions

the answers are restricted; hence, it is easy to calculate numbers or percentages and other statistical data over the whole group or over any subgroup of participants. The student questionnaire comprises 22 items and the teachers' questionnaire consists of 23 questions. Each questionnaire covers different issues on ELT, such as; syllabus, textbook materials, practice of English language skills in the class, performance in English, teaching method and approaches and so on. See Appendix 2.

4.2.3 Reliability and validity issues

Joppe (2000) says the extent to which results are logical over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is believed as reliable.

According to Joppe (2000) validity determines whether the research really measures that it was supposed to measure or how truthful the research results are. Researchers normally decide validity by asking a series of questions, and will frequently look for the answers in the research done by others. Here the questionnaires are designed to explore the objectives mentioned in the first chapter. The questions are related to the check lists as well.

The present research intends to find out the obstacles that are faced by the Madrasah students at Alim level in Bangladesh and to show the problem. Moreover, neither the teacher nor the questionnaires provider intervened

while the students were choosing the answer at the time of data collection to make the research more valid and reliable.

4.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data has been collected from 256 urban and rural Madrasah students of grades 11 and 12 and from 21 teachers of the same students. The data is mainly collected through the questionnaires and non-structured interview via electronic means. Data is collected over one month in June 2010 and July 2010. Sometimes the questionnaires' provider translated the questions into the students' mother tongue Bangla. For the non-structured interview with some of the teachers I phoned them in their free time.

Chapter 5

5. Data analysis

In this chapter I am going to analyse the findings of the present study. In the analysis I have focused on the questions which are most relevant to my overall aim of identifying the challenges to the teaching of English in the Madrasahs. I have therefore focused on the findings which match the main issues noted by ‘experts’ in the field of ELT—motivation, perceptions of relevance and perceptions of enjoyment and interest provided by the tasks. The experts’ views are included in the discussion

5.1 Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

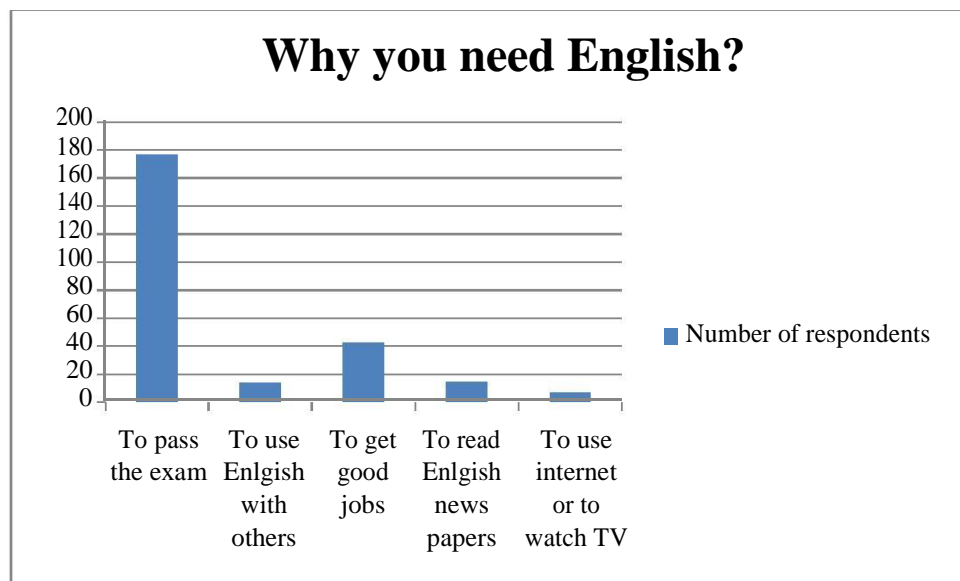


Figure 1: Needs of English viewed by the students

Motivation is the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal. It includes the reason for the action, i.e. that which gives purpose and direction to behaviour, and also 'integrative' motivation which

occurs when the learner wishes to identify with the culture of the L2 group.

(Source: <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/motivation>).

Motivation for learning English language plays a vital role. The bar chart shows that 177 out of 256 students think they need English to pass the exam only, where 43 of them consider English to get a good job. 15 students think English is needed to read books and newspapers and according to 14 students English is required to use English with others.

The above statistics demonstrate that most of the students want to learn English because it is a curricular subject, and they have to read it to pass the examinations. However, the second largest number of students who are aware of the actual needs of English in practical life is not too small either. In a non-structured interview with some of the teachers most of them mention that the students need English to pass the exam whereas some of them think the subject is important for higher education and jobs. Although the number of students and teachers who consider the actual or practical needs of English is not great, with the introduction of communicative syllabuses, this number is increasing. Hasan, 2005 also found in his study that some of the students are also becoming more aware of why they need English. The present study reveals that the use of Internet and watching TV programmes by the students also promotes learning English. A study by Malaka (1998) reveals that the motivational problems are comparatively less in the higher classes than in the lower classes. He found that 55% 9th grade students and 52 % 10th grade students suffer from motivational problems.

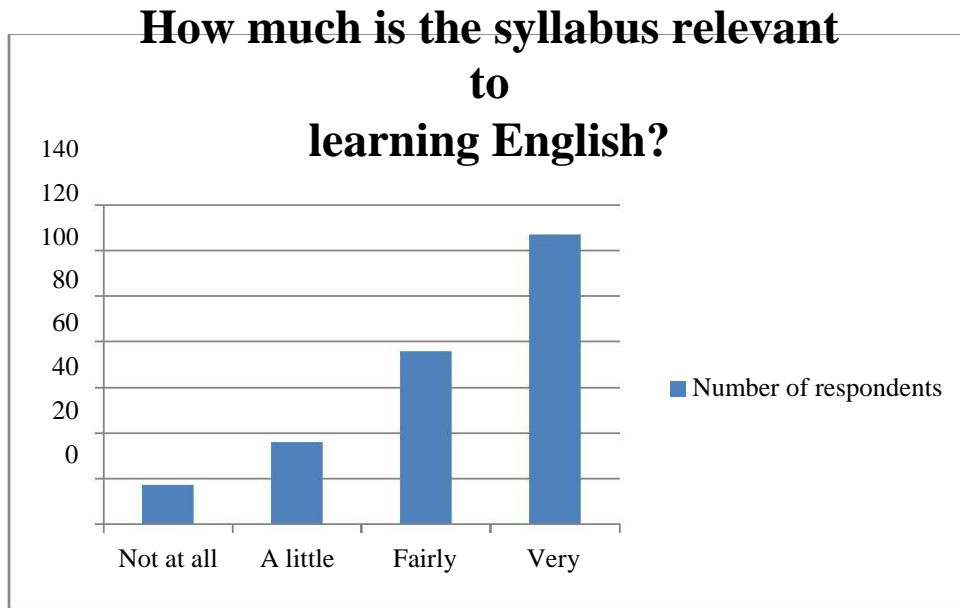


Figure 2.1: Relevance of the syllabus viewed by the students

The bar chart shows that 127 out of 256 students choose ‘very’. 36 students select ‘a little’ and 76 of them consider the syllabus as fairly relevant. However, 17 students do not think the syllabus is relevant at all.

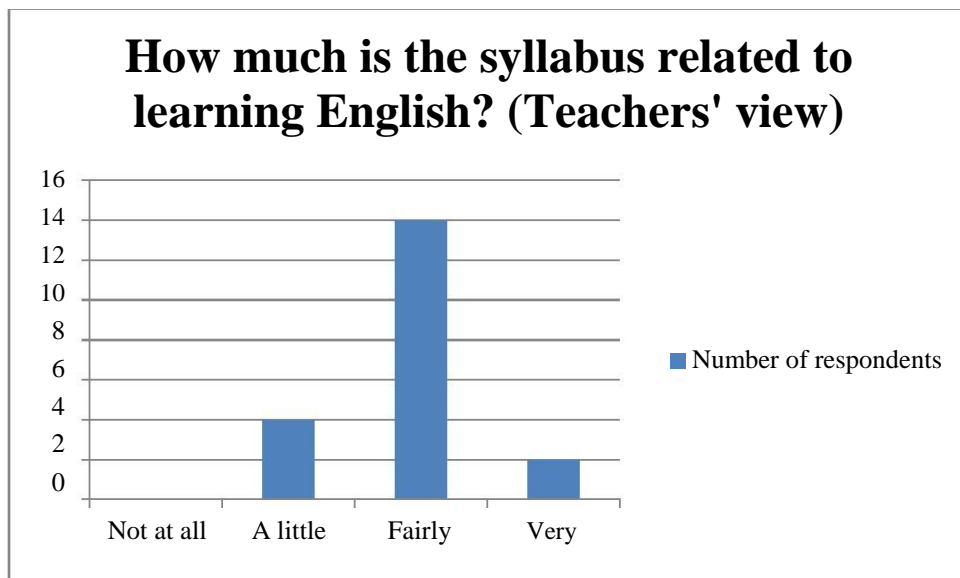


Figure 2.2: Relevance of the syllabus viewed by the teachers

The above bar chart indicates most of the teachers (14 out of 20) think the syllabus is related to learning English to a fair extent, while 4 of them consider

it as of little relevance. The rest of the teachers believe the syllabus is very much relevant to learning the language. It is seen that both the teachers and the learners are aware of the fact that their syllabus is not very suitable for learning English. This study reveals that teachers' view regarding the relevance of the syllabus is not too high. A study by Osunde (2005) found that a lack in teachers' attitudes (attitudes refer to some beliefs, thoughts, likings, disliking of learners about language learning) towards innovation, and their dependence on the traditional content/knowledge oriented curriculum, and irrelevant exercises cause students' poor performance in English language.

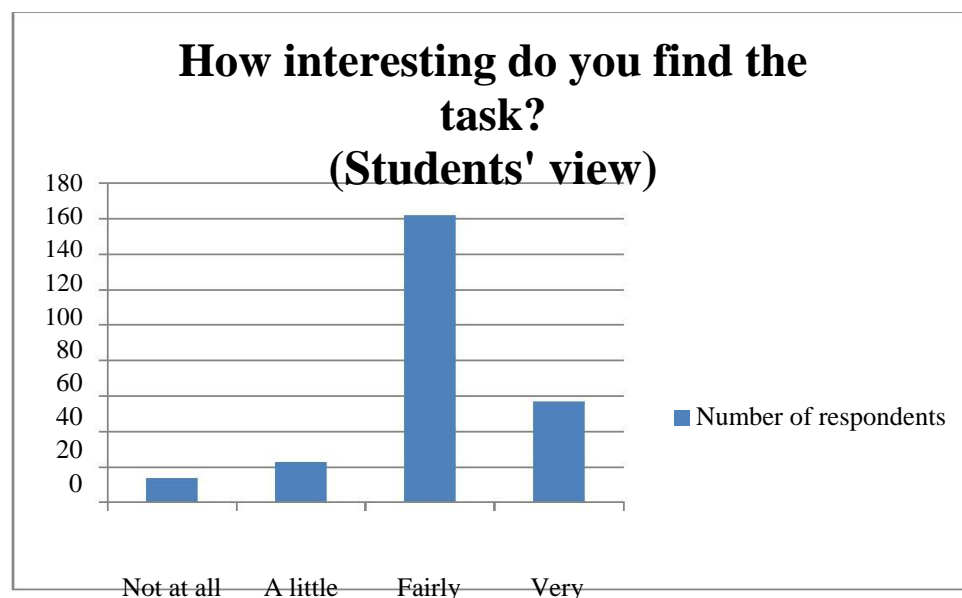


Figure 3.1: Task interest viewed by the students

The graph shows that 162 students out of 256 consider the task as fairly interesting where 14 of them do not think it is interesting at all. However, 57 students find the task very interesting and 23 learners believe the task is a little pleasurable.

From the statistics it is revealed that the majority of the students believe the task is not interesting which according to published studies affects their learning. Better learning takes place when the task is interesting.

Similarities in the relevant literature

(Hutchinson and Waters, 1996) found that contents of syllabus should be useful, meaningful and interesting for the students. Shethi (2004) also found that the students usually avoid English language class if the lesson is not interesting.

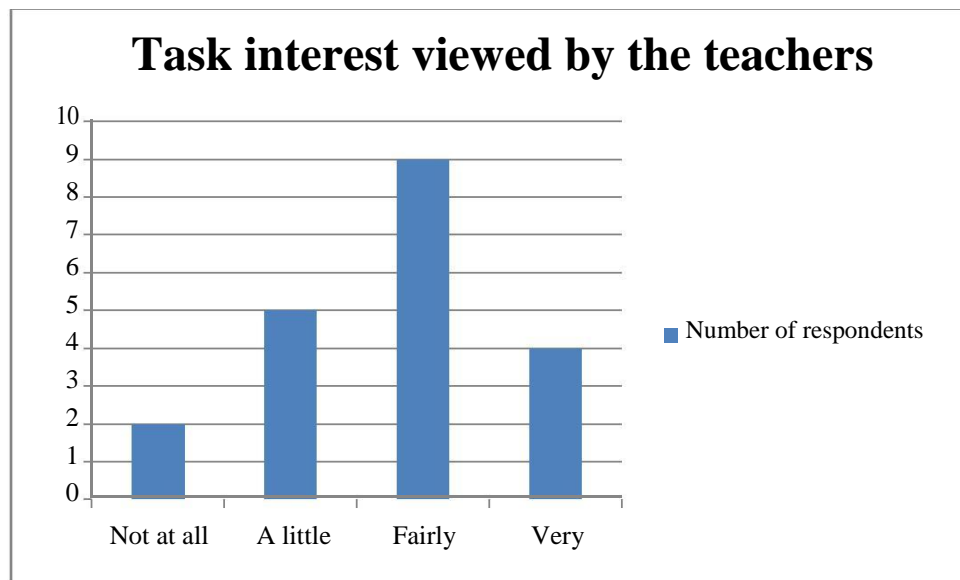


Figure 3.2: Task enjoyment viewed by the teachers

From the above graph it is clear that most of the teachers (9 out of 20) consider the task as fairly enjoyable, most of the students also think the same. ‘A little’ is ticked by 5 teachers and ‘very’ is by 4 teachers. Only two of the teachers think the task is not interesting at all. Both the teachers’ and the learners’ view of task interest is the same.

Enjoying a task is very important as spontaneous learning takes place if the lesson is interesting. Grimm (1986) in his study proposes that it is teachers' responsibility to a large extent to make the lesson interesting and efficient teachers who have training are mostly able to make the lessons interesting. Moreover, similarities in the relevant literature by Hutchinson and Water (1996) suggest that learning easily takes place if the subject matter of the lesson is familiar to the learners; therefore, it is important for the syllabus presenter to construct the lessons with items from learners' known activities.

Other relevant findings from the current investigation

The current investigation finds that very few Madrasah English teachers are proficient enough in English language, question number 3 from teachers' questionnaire reveals the problem as most of the teachers did not put tick mark in 'very good' box in any skill. Moreover, they use Bangla language widely in the classroom for instruction. Most of the teachers face difficulties to understand, speak, read and write English. Also, many teachers acknowledged their pronunciation is below standard.

Other studies suggest that while the very aim behind introducing the new communicative syllabus of English was to teach English as a language, giving special attention to idiomatic and phonetic aspects of the language, the whole idea gets lost in the wilderness as the teachers have poor knowledge of phonetics (Abdus Selim and Tasneem S. Mahboob, 2001).

In the non-structured interviews of the present study by Skype 7 teachers out of 11 complained that they have to handle a big class; moreover, they hardly get any training in classroom management. As a result, in most of the cases they fail to make the class successful.

A similar conclusion is found in Johnson (2001); viz., that the trained teachers are more efficient than non-trained teachers in handling English classes.

Many students complained in the present study that their teachers are not friendly and do not allow too many questions (question number 17 from the student questionnaire). The learners do not get any courage to ask questions as their teachers do not like the students who talk much in the class. Moreover, the teachers are not punctual and they usually come after about 10-15 minutes of the selected time and leave the class early as well.

In the present study most of the teachers and students reveal that they use Bangla in the classroom. In non-structured interviews, with the teacher many teachers from rural areas said the students use their dialect (dialect is a regional variety of a language, differing from the standard language, in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or idiomatic usage) in the classroom.

Similarities with other studies: Hasan (2005) also found in his study that the students do not like to speak English in the classroom as they face difficulty in speaking the language. Pande (2005) found the clear interference (the patterns of the learner's mother tongue (L1) get in the way of learning the patterns of the L2) of the mother tongue in practicing English in the class.

In non-structured interview of the current study some of the teachers reveal that they avoid conducting the class in the medium of English because of their poor fluency in English.

Similarity is found with Rashid (1998) that most of the interviewees in his research admitted that a great deal of anxiety; hesitation and inhibition play a negative role among those who are not relatively fluent in conversation.

The students' from urban Madrasahs are found to be more competent than the rural ones (Hasan, 2005).

In Bangladesh, most of the parents are educated and rich in urban areas compared to the parents from rural areas.

Similar studies: Nisha (1995) found in her research that the parental education, situational and psychological factors play an important role in the development of the communicative competence of the learners. Karthiyayani (1995) finds that the parental economical position and the student's previous academic record play a crucial role in the performance of the students. Sobana (2005) also found the same thing in her study that was conducted in India.

In the current study 183 students out of 256 say that they do not want to be corrected by their classmates. On the other hand, most of them want to be corrected by their teacher while speaking.

The study of Stapa (2003) also shows that only 36% of learners would not mind having their written work corrected by peers, while a vast majority, 64% are against peer-correction.

In the current study most of the teachers (14) say that they prefer Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Many of them think that the class becomes more effective if the class is conducted in GTM.

The present investigation reveals that English teachers usually follow the GTM as they are not efficient in teaching in the communicative approach. Most of the learners who took part in the study complain that their language teachers are not qualified and competent enough in teaching English in grades 11 and 12.

It is found in the investigation that the teachers of English in both urban and rural areas follow GTM in teaching English. The teachers simply translate given passages into Bangla and the learners listen to them like listening to stories. Though the textbook is written from a communicative view the teachers do not follow the guideline, even many teachers did not see the *Teachers' Guide*.

Also, the classes are teacher centered. The teacher is the only speaker according to most of the teachers and students. The teachers do not use any task that involves the students in interaction. Speaking and listening skills are avoided. Aids and equipment (whiteboard, overhead projector, posters, flashcards, word cards, puppets, tape recorder, TV or video player, computer, CD Rom, language laboratory ,etc. are considered as teaching aids and equipment) are too poor in the classroom. No class room is found in any Madrasahs with audio equipment. Many teachers are not even familiar with Audio-Lingual Method (Audio-Lingual Method considers listening and speaking the first tasks in language learning, followed by reading and writing) or direct method (In this method the language is taught through listening and speaking. There may be little or no explicit explanation of grammatical rules or translation into the mother tongue of the student).

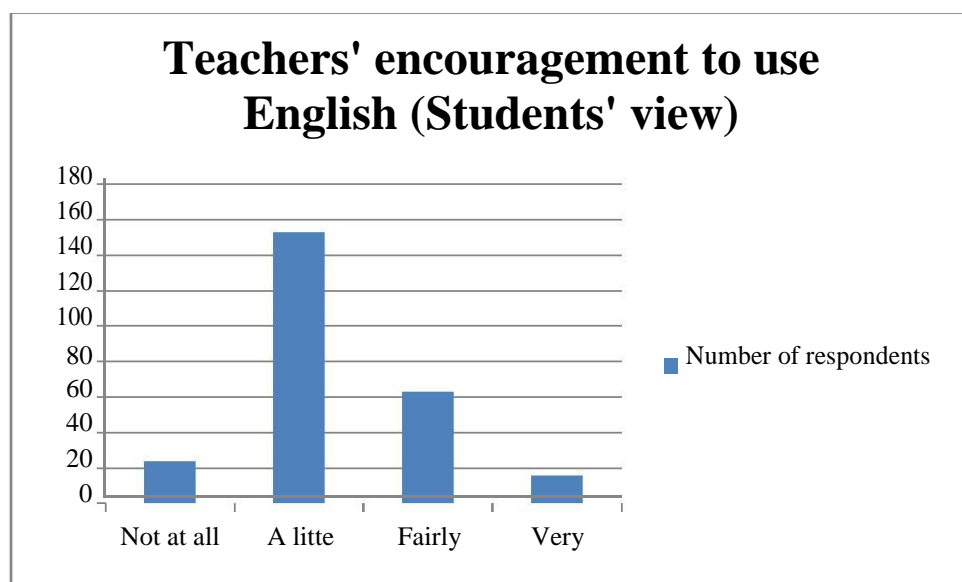
ELT experts express the same idea, for example- Subramanian (2002) thinks that introduction of the audio-visual instrument for language teaching would be good and wise at collegiate level. Also, he encourages the group discussion and language games in the class hours. Kavaliauskiene (2003) also found that as no listening classes are conducted in the class the students' performance in listening so too poor in a Lithuanian university.

In terms of preferred learning style most of the learners ticked 'individually'. Only 7 students ticked 'in a large group'.

Similarity found in the study conducted by Januleviciene and Kavaliauskiene (2005) that 33% students prefer learning individually, and another 33% students want to learn in pairs.

Although 14 out of 20 teachers claim that they explain the text and vocabulary items in English to a fair extent, most of the student 159 students say the teacher explains them in English a little.

In another study Gao Jiajing (2005) reveals that 72% learners prefer to develop their vocabulary through reading the new texts with the explanation of text in the target language.



The graph shows that 153 students out of 256 say their teachers encourage them a little to use English with their classmates but 13 teachers out of 20 say they encourage them to a fair extent. 24 learners mention their teachers do not encourage them at all, on the other hand no teacher ticked 'not at all'. Several writers emphasise the importance of teachers' encouragement in learning a language. For example, Dörnyei (1990) says "good enough motivator" is a

concept that means that a desired outcome by students can occur if the teacher acts on this concept. Also, Katayoon and Tahririan (2007) found that 59% students blame their teachers for not encouraging them in speaking English in the class or outside of the class.

The present study reveals that 20 teachers out of 20 think that the students fail to acquire the expected level of proficiency in English as there is little/ no scope to use English in a real life situation. On top of that, 13 of them think the students come with very low level of proficiency in English. Also, 16 of the teachers say the learners fail to acquire the language as they are more akin to preparing for their exams rather than learning.

In this final part of the chapter I will refer to other comments which help to fill out the main findings or make the problem in teaching English more specific. For example some of the CLT teachers in the study stated that a large number of students in the class and duration of the class are the main problems in ELT in Madrasah education.

They also noted that resources, like teacher's book, and audio-visual aids are not available in most of the Madrasahs. In fact, no opportunity was made for the practice of listening, although learning outcomes were spelt out in terms of four skills. Practice in all four skills is considered significant. However, many lessons are found stereotypical, monotonous and boring.

Chapter 6

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The main aim of the research under the heading ‘**Challenges faced by students in learning English in grades 11 and 12 in Bangladeshi Madrasahs**’ was to find out the difficulties faced by the students of grades 11 and 12 in learning English in Bangladeshi Madrasahs. The study reveals some challenges encountered by both the teachers and students in learning and teaching English which are mentioned in chapter 5. For example, the modern method of teaching English language is not used in the class rather the teachers are still following GTM in the age of communicative language teaching, the textbook, *English for Today*, is not very interesting to the students.

Difficulties in learning English in Bangladeshi Madrasahs lay in different issues. The study reveals some of the factors that are responsible for the failure in learning English. For example, the students do not practise all the four skills of English language in the class, also, teachers’ poor knowledge is also responsible for the failure in learning English, students are not aware of the necessity of English.

6.1. Recommendations

Recommendations for the NCTB, BMEB, Recommendations for the Test and Assessment, students and teachers are provided below:

6.1.1 Recommendations for the Test and Assessment

- Questions should not be set from any notebooks or guidebooks available in the market. Rather, they should be new. Students will answer them using their knowledge of English.

- Question format should go on changes each year so as to encourage students to read to learn instead of memorising the textbook-content, presently, which they are tended to do.
- Validity and reliability should be highly emphasized while designing the question paper.

6.1.2 Recommendation for the NCTB

- The textbook should be useful and interesting.
- Authentic materials (The term indicates some unscripted materials which are generally written for classroom use, though they may have been edited) should be included in the textbook contents.
- Syllabus and contents of syllabus should be based on needs of English;
- All the four skills should be included in the textbook with audio tape.
- Communicative grammar books should be developed in English. Goodey (1997) suggests that grammatical rules and explanations are necessary; grammar should be taught in the context of communication, not as passive knowledge.
- Before approving any books, the content and approach of the book should be carefully examined.

6.1.3 Suggestions for Teachers

- The teacher should engage the students in the leaning process and activate them.
- Teachers should create student - cantered class, and take step to increase students' involvement in the teaching learning process.
- Teachers should be friendly and sympathetic to the students in the all ways of learning.

- Teachers should take class in the target language and should encourage the students to speak English in everyday activities.
- The teacher should create environment where students will use English.
- Teacher must get special training as how to make the students to learn grammar, without having disinterest towards the language.
- Teaching listening and speaking should not be ignored by any means.

6.1.4 Suggestions for Students

- Students should not hesitate to speak whether it is correct or wrong. No one can learn a language if he/she does not use it.
- Students should watch English movies to be familiar with English accent and intonation.
- They should read various books and newspaper.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

The current study is based on only grades 11 and 12 of Madrasah education. It has some limitations and inadequacy because of time limitation, limitation of necessary data, information, literature and other important materials. As no helpful research paper is found it is difficult to associate and support the current investigation.

The followings are considered as the restrictions of the current study:

- The research is only based on English language learning problems of grades 11 and 12 students of Madrasahs.
- The present research is based on only 256 students and 20 teachers of English from 11 Madrasahs in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh.
- The provided questionnaires are too long and not focused sufficiently on the reasons for language teaching and learning.

6.3 Further Research

Future research might employ more rigorous designs to replicate the findings of this study; or even better, it may collect more quantitative data to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues surveyed in this study. Apart from findings of the challenges faced by the students in learning English there were limitations in the study. Future studies might also explore the problems more widely. Furthermore, study on the learning preferences, strategies and styles might be helpful in the search for improvement in the teaching of English in the Madrasahs

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 17:6 June 2017

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Appendix - 1

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to carry out a survey on the topic ‘Challenges faced by students in learning English in grades 11 and 12 in Bangladeshi Madrasahs’ at London Metropolitan University for the partial fulfilment of MA TESOL. Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality.

1. Where is your Madrasah situated?

Urban area Rural

2. Are you?

First year student Second year students

3. Why do you need English?

to pass the exam to use English with others to get a good
job to read English books and newspapers to use internet or to
watch TV

4. How much is the syllabus relevant to learning English?

not at all a little fairly much very much

5. How interesting do you find the task?

not at all a little fairly much very much

6. Which language(s) do you mostly use in English classes?

English Bengali English and Bengali

7. Which language(s) does your teacher mostly use in English classes?

English Bengali English and Bengali

8. Do you exercise the four skills of English in your English classes?

Listening Yes No

Speaking Yes No

Reading Yes No

Writing Yes No

9. Evaluate your different skills in English. Tick appropriate

	boxes.	Very good	Good	Medium	Weak	Very weak
Listening						
Speaking						
Reading						
Writing						

10. How do you like to learn?

individually in pairs in small groups in a large group

11. Do you feel any difficulties with the lessons?

not at all a little fairly much very much

12. Are your lessons relevant to your day to day activities?

not at all a little fairly much very much

13. Who speak more and remain busy in the class?

students teachers

14. How much does the teacher explain the grammar rules?

not at all a little fairly much very much

15. How much does your teacher encourage you to speak English with your classmate?

not at all a little fairly much very much

16. How much does the teacher explain the text and vocabulary items in English?

not at all a little fairly much very much

17. How much is the teacher sympathetic and friendly to you?

not at all a little fairly much very much

18. How much is your teacher competent and qualified?

not at all a little fairly much very much

19. Does your teacher give you sufficient contact hours after class?

not at all a little fairly much very much

20. Which of the following teaching aids are available in your classes? (You choose more than one options)

White board/ Black board

Over head projector

Audio cassettes

Video facility

Others (please specify)

21. When you speak do you want to be corrected by the teacher?

yes no

22. Do you mind if other students sometimes correct you?

yes no

Thanks once again for your response

Appendix-2

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to carry out a survey on the topic ‘Challenges faced by students in learning English in grades 11 and 12 in Bangladeshi Madrasahs’ at London Metropolitan University for the partial fulfilment of MA TESOL. Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality.

Designation _____ Full Time / Part Time _____

Male /Female _____ Age _____

Academic qualification _____

1. Where is your Madrasah situated?

Urban area Rural

2. Have you received any pre-service or in-service training on ELT?

Yes No

3. How is your English? Evaluate your different skills in English. Tick in appropriate boxes:

	Very good	Good	Medium	Weak	Very weak
Listening					
Speaking					
Reading					
Writing					

4. How will you evaluate your English language teaching skill?

Very good good Average Weak

5. What is your opinion about the communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology? Tick one.

It is a better than traditional grammar translation method (GTM).

There is nothing new in this approach.

It is rather worse than GTM.

It is difficult to apply this methodology in our country.

6. Have you read and understood the *Teachers' Guide*?

Yes No

7. How much is the syllabus relevant to learning English?

not at all a little fairly much very much

8. How interesting do you find the task?

not at all a little fairly much very much

9. Which language(s) do you mostly use in English classes?

English Bengali English and Bengali

10. Do you exercise the four skills of English in your English classes? Listening Yes No

Speaking Yes No

Reading Yes No

Writing Yes No

13. Do you face any difficulties in teaching the lessons?

not at all a little fairly much very much

14. Who speak more and remain busy in the class?

students teachers

15. How do you teach grammar lesson?

Translating the grammar Giving the students exercise

16. How much do you encourage the learners to speak English with their classmate?

not at all a little fairly much very much

17. How much do you explain the text and vocabulary items in English? not at all a little fairly much very much

18. How much are you sympathetic and friendly to the learners?

not at all a little fairly much very much

19. Do you give sufficient contact hours after class?

not at all a little fairly much very much

20. While teaching what do you give more emphasis on? Give a rating from 1 to 5. 5 is the highest.

Grammar rules	
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Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	
Explaining the textbook	
Actual use of English	
Translation	

21. Which of the following teaching aids are available in your classes? (You choose more than one options)

White board/ Black board

Overhead projector

Audio cassettes

Video facility

Others (please specify)

22. Why do, you think, the students fail to acquire expected level of proficiency in English? (You can tick more than one box.)

Because there is little/no scope of using English in real life situations.

Because the new textbook is not suitable for this purpose.

Because the new methodology is not appropriate for our students.

Because the new syllabus does not meet needs of our students.

Because our teachers cannot carry out teachings effectively.

Because the students come with very low level of proficiency in English.

Because the students are more interested to preparing for their exams rather than learning.

Others. Write your comment here.

23. What are the main problems of English Language Teaching in your institution? (You can tick more than one box.)

A large number of students in the class.

Time provided for English class is not sufficient.

Textbooks are not suitable for the students.

Teachers are not well trained in teaching English.

Teachers are weak in English.

Thanks once again for your response

Appendix 3

English (Compulsory) for Alim class

The English syllabus of Alim class includes the following 12 units of the *English for Today*, For Classes 11-12, published by National Curriculum & Textbook Board, Dhaka.

Unit One : Families Home and Abroad

Unit Two : Learning English

Unit Four : Pastimes

Unit Six : Our Environment

Unit Eight : Towards Social Awareness

Unit Nine : Getting Educated

Unit Thirteen : We and our Rights

Unit Fourteen : Human Resources

Unit Seventeen : Modes of Communication

Unit Twenty : Jobs and Professions

Unit Twenty Three : Challenges of the New Century

Unit Twenty Four : People Everywhere

Distribution of Marks

f) Seen Comprehension : 25

i) Objective questions : 15

ii) More free questions : 10

g) Unseen comprehension : 25

i) Objective questions : 15

ii) More free questions : 10

c) Vocabulary: 10

iii) Cloze test with clues : 5

iv) Cloze test without clues : 5

h) Grammar: 10

i) Cloze test with clues : 5

ii) Cloze test without clues : 5

i) Writing: 10

i) Guided : 10

ii) More free : 10

j) Population Education: 10

Total - 100 marks

Appendix 4
Syllabus English (Compulsory)
Alim Examination

Seen comprehension : 25 marks

According to the syllabus of the board there will be a seen comprehension passage from the textbook followed by a choice of questions. The question type includes the following;

a) Objective : 15 marks

(1) Multiple choice (2) True /False (3) Filling the gaps with clues (4) Information transfer (5) Making sentences from substitution tables (6) Matching phrases/ pictures, etc.

Note : Question will be set on any five of the above types. Each type will carry 3 marks ($3 \times 5 = 15$) and each question will carry 1 mark.

b) More free : 10 marks

(7) Open ended (8) Filling the gaps with the clues (9) Summarising (10) Making notes
(11) Re-writing in a different form.

Note : Question will be set on any two of the above types. Each type will carry 5 marks ($5 \times 2 = 10$) and each question will carry 1 mark.

The question should test the student's ability to comprehend / understand the passage as a whole. These are not to test their ability to copy sections/parts from it. Although the *seen comprehension* passage will be from the set textbook, it will not, in any way encourage memorization/note learning. The reason is that (i) the passage will be reproduced on the question paper and (ii) the question will not be from the textbook, rather these will be new.

Unseen Comprehension : 25 marks

There will be an unseen comprehension passage followed by a choice of questions. This passage will be of a different type than that used in the *seen comprehension*. The question type should include the following;

a) Objective : 15 marks

(1) Multiple choice (2) True /False (3) Filling the gaps with clues (4) Information transfer (5) Making sentences from substitution tables (6) Matching phrases/ pictures, etc.

Note : Question will be set on any five of the above types. Each type will carry 3 marks ($3 \times 5 = 15$) and each question will carry 1 mark.

b) More free : 10

(7) Open ended (8) Filling the gaps with the clues (9) Summarising (10) Making notes

(11) Re-writing in a different form.

Note : Question will be set on any two of the above types. Each type will carry 5 marks ($5 \times 2 = 10$) and each question will carry 1 mark.

Vocabulary : 5+5=10

There will be question on vocabulary contextualized in the form of short cloze passages with and without clues. In order to facilitate/provide more communicative contexts, the topics should be related to those already encountered by the students in the *seen* and *unseen comprehensions*.

Grammar : 5+5 =10

There will be question on grammatical items contextualized in the form of short cloze passages with and without clues. In order to facilitate/provide more communicative contexts, the topics should be related to those already encountered by the students in the *seen* and *unseen comprehensions*. There will not be any question to test the

student's explicit grammatical knowledge. Explicit grammatical terms will not be used in the question paper. The questions will rather test the use of grammatical items within specific and meaning full contexts.

Writing : 20 marks

a) Guided : 10

There will be a number of writing tasks; the following types of exercises should be included;

iii)Producing sentences from substitution tables

iv)Reordering sentences

Note: There will be no alternative questions

b) More Free: 10 marks The following types of exercises should be included;

iii)Answering questions about themselves

iv) Continuing a passage

Note: There will be no alternative questions

Population Education : 10 marks

The unit 24 entitled “People, People Everywhere” is the compulsory unit for the Alim students. The students must answer the question set on this unit. The questions may include multiple choices, filling the gaps, answering questions matching phrases/pictures, writing a short paragraph.

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