

**Language of Opportunity, But Not Well Taken Care of:
Motivational Factors Affecting English Language Instruction
Secondary Level in Bangladesh**

G. M. Abu Taher

Abstract

Despite the growing opportunities of economic development offered by English language, Bangladesh as a nation yet seems to be unaware of the modes of operation of making English language education widely popular. Facts such as low level of learner motivation, inadequate level of public awareness, and below average level of teacher competency act as affective factors, even though English has gained an enviable social status in Bengali context, these days. It plays an important role in the administration, mass communication, and the pursuit of knowledge. Further, it is popular in each and every walk of international relations.

This paper tries to trace the area of problems in teaching and learning English as the second language at secondary level schools of Bangladesh with an analytical approach in particular. Bangladesh is a south Asian over populated country. An evaluation has been made for the assessment of the current status of the teaching English language in this region and of course the problems faced by the learners.

The teaching of English language in Bangladesh, where predominant languages are Bangla, Chittagonian, Sylheti, Rohingya and Chatgaya (dialectical language in tribal areas). The provincial governments have been trying to develop awareness about the utilitarian aspects of English as a global language. However, several governmental initiatives have failed to attract the interest of the students at secondary schools. Although Bangladesh is situated in a place where English native speakers come to visit the sea port, the largest hills, the scenic beauty of the valleys, forests and so on, the people of the areas especially teachers and students hardly take any interest to interact and communicate with them. It has been observed that lack of availability of adequate and well-trained teachers, the socio-economic backwardness of the population etc. do hinder the government initiatives in spreading the use of English as a language of opportunity.

This paper attempts to go into some depth, exploring the reasons of the cultural distancing attitude of the common public towards English language and its use.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Secondary School, Language, Second Language Teaching.

Objective

The main objectives of the study are to highlight the English Language teaching -learning scenario of secondary level schools in Bangladesh. The article also replicates the situation of English literature classes as well as the English Language classes in various private schools, missionary private schools, and government schools in the entire Bangladesh. How the private schools giving the workloads to the teachers at the same time, pressuring to complete the syllabus within the stipulated period of time. Sometimes even the teachers do not get sufficient time to take language classes separately so, they merge the literature and language classes in a single class. It can be one of the reason behind the students' weakness in learning English Language. It is also identify the challenges of implementing English Curriculum effectively at the secondary level in Bangladesh.

Introduction

A broad goal of English Language programs is that of developing the communicate ability to convey and interpret a message via written or spoken modalities to another person. The main purpose of using language is to communicate ones needs, necessities, feelings, thoughts and ideas with others. Basically, English provides two purposes: (1) gives linguistics tool for administrative purposes of the country, bringing all kinds of people to a common plate form to become united and (2) it is a language of wider communication. English in Bangladeshi scenario seems somehow difficult and expensive to access. Even, after acknowledging the importance of English, the poor folk of the country feel that they will not be able to bear the expenses of English education.

Bangladesh is an over-populated country. Most of the students are influenced by local languages. In order to keep standardization in education, Government of Bangladesh has taken initiatives by building various government agencies which guide what to teach, why to teach, how to teach and what level it should be taught. Moreover, it is difficult to frame syllabus for English at the secondary level for more than one reason. The question of designing syllabus for teaching English is a challenging one, as English varies from L1, L2 to L3 for Bangladeshi. So, while preparing syllabus one has to keep in mind that the students of diverse linguistics groups should feel associated with the syllabus. Secondly, the themes of the chapters should be secular in nature and national integration should be maintained, as it is the need of our country. Thirdly, the mental age of the learners of secondary level in Bangladesh i.e 15 years to 20 years mostly should be considered as the prime time for building the foundation of one's bright future. To learn language comprehension strategies need to be more explicitly discussed and individual interpretation of text need to be inside the classroom (Nath and Hossain, 2005)

Global Context and English Language Teaching

The global distribution of English is often described in terms of three contexts such as English as a Native language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a foreign Language (EFL). The main objectives of teaching English at the secondary level education in Bangladesh are to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions and request in English and carry them out. For the development of the communication ability the government of Bangladesh, in corporation with national curriculum and Textbook (NCTB) has implemented a language policy to foster a communicative approach to English Language teaching at the secondary level schools under Bangladeshi educational system (Ahmed 2012). Although NCTB prepared English curriculum for the students of the secondary level schools to

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consider proper approaches and methods, unfortunately the curriculum are not implemented properly. There are approximately only one fifth of the schools of this country are English medium. However, most of the students of secondary schools are unable to attain the primary English Language competencies due to prevailing challenges in our education system.

Method and Procedure

The method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language materials. The queries regarding what should be taught and how should be taught are related in an intimate manner, for implementing better methods of teaching. If wish to gain better result, we must reckon those methods that assist us in achieving the desired aims. However, methods are never ends in themselves and no method is good or bad in itself. Students studying Bangla medium schools especially in local areas find easier to learn English through grammar translation method and it is predominant since decades. Apart from Bangla medium schools, some private schools, some missionary schools following communicative language teaching method which seems comparatively better. This study has been conducted on the basis of secondary data. For this, two sets of questionnaires (teacher & students) here were used for survey. (1) English Language teaching session of each school was observed using observation checklist. (2) Some data needed for this study we also collected from published book, Journal, research paper and reports.

Problems of English Curriculum at the Secondary Level School

All of the interviewees consent that there are lots of problem to implement English curriculum at the secondary level school in Bangladesh such as high ration of teacher student and small size of classroom. Insufficient of teaching aids is a common problem for which they cannot follow effective teaching learning approach and lack of subject based training is the of the main problem to implementing the secondary English curriculum . Teacher has to conduct six or seven classes in a day. Because of this, they cannot take well preparation for the classes. All of the teachers claim that they have no language lab facilities and students are unable to practice lessening skill which is one of the authentic sources of learning English Language. It is also admit that infrastructures such as school building, classroom size, electricity supply library & books availability etc. Thus insufficient infrastructure affects the teaching and learning management tremendously and it is one of the serious challenges for curriculum implementation process in rural areas in Bangladesh. There are some other problems available in teaching English Bangladesh such as

1. Lack of efficient teachers
2. Lack of teachers training,
3. Lack of teachers motivation
- , 4. Problem in proper Teaching method,
- 5 .Unfavorable environments,
6. Much preference give in Bangla to English
7. Lack of quality materials
8. Over emphasis on Grammatical Accuracy etc.

Current Scenario - English Language Teaching at Secondary Level

English is now a compulsory subject in Bangladesh. Our government has realized the importance of English a new in all spheres of life. Recently the policy of government is to

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encourage and emphasize the learning and teaching of English at all level. The secondary education bodies have been managing a huge number of school s (20,297 in 2015) where 243,117 teachers are providing education to nearly 10 million students where teacher student's ratio is 1:41. Girls constitute 55 percent of secondary enrolment, outnumbering boys. But of the huge number of secondary school there are 804 public management schools. More than 96 are privately managed. Basic teacher training in the secondary level takes the form of three month teaching training. It is again a great concern that many of our schools do not have sufficient learning environment. More over in the introduction in the introduction of English textbook for class 6-10 claim that these have been written following communicative approach where student's active participation in interaction through individual work, pair work, group work is stressed. Here most of the teachers want to work as a facilitator rather than traditional teacher s and they should teach through chart, song role play, game, information gap activities and many other interactive tasks in order to teach all four other language skills. As far as English language skills and methodology are concerned in many project workshops, secondary teachers are said to lack basic teaching skills, target language skills, preparation time, resource and motivation.' In some cases incompetent teachers are employed (USAID, 2002). Thus there creates a vicious circle in which we have the badly taught pupils of secondary schools becoming in efficient teachers and in their turn raising another generation of failure. Rabindranath Tagore had a subtle reaction in which he criticizes the ability of secondary schools teachers. Those who teach in the lower level are only Entrance (S.S.C) pass) and some of them have not English language norms and etiquettes and literature are not familiar with them (Haq, 1997). By holding teachers responsible we can develop our critical awareness of one the most important aspects of the prevailing situation , However there are others factors in this scenario. A similar kind of urgency of an ELT policy in the country is also expressed. The above scenario of English language teaching clearly displays that although there have been a number of stray moves to improve the teaching standard, no definite, well-coordinate or well concerted effort has so far been taken to formulate language teaching policy befitting the country.

Nature of the Classroom and Students Teachers' Observation

Despite some progress in secondary education deficiencies still exist, we need to identify what major problems of English Teaching in secondary level have to determine from pragmatic point of view. It becomes obvious that the large majority of children of Bangladesh as many as two out of three are growing up into adulthood without basic literacy and numeracy skills and preparation for life (World Bank 2000). Bangladesh is being a monolingual country where the mother tongue plays a vital as well as influential role in national and cultural life of the people deserves better care in educational scheme. In 1952 people sacrificed for mother tongue Bangla. On the other hand, for local and international communication as well as professional and academic development English will be continuously taught.

The results are one the basis of questionnaire that I have circulated among 200 students and more than 40 teachers of the secondary school in Bangladesh. Their response is cited here in the form of percentage. Among those 52% consent that they read English regularly, where 48% consent that they do not read English regularly. 80% believe that English is hard, 10% do not pay interest in English, 15% remark that teacher do not make them understand clearly. Most of the students claim that teacher do not make writing exercise in the classroom. Only 15% consent that English teacher make writing exercise in the classroom. Among them 20% claim that teacher

make reading exercise in the classroom. Only 9% consent that teacher make speaking exercise. Unfortunately, all students report that no English teachers make listening practice in the classroom.

Table: Basic facts from English learners Interviews

Students	Percentage
Studying English regularly in the classroom	58%
Speaking exercise in the classroom	9%
Reading exercise in the classroom	20%
Writing exercise in the classroom	15%
Listening exercise in the classroom	00

Source: Field visit April 2016

Another result is seen according to their response in different methods and perspectives. 65% of the students in secondary schools feels that they are week in their pronunciation. We have been seen that even the teacher have do have problem in pronunciation and directing the learners with wrong concept. The research shows that 80% of the students found themselves that their vocabulary is too week. Regarding the identification of the parts of speech, 52% students unable to identify the parts of speech marker and while identifying adjectives and verbs. The results prospects that 82% of the learners believes that the Audi-visual aids will help them understanding and learning English as a second language in a better way. According to our observation Audi –visual materials are available in most English medium schools but we find least use of it in government and private schools. We asked regarding the use of English in the classroom by the teachers. Interestingly, some student’s seems that they are scaring about their teachers and gave positive results. There is a positive things that the students have at least listening the native English but the folks feel themselves the English from the native speakers mouth which is so smooth and fluent are beyond their capacity of understanding.

Table: Basic facts from English learners Interviews

Observation of the students	Percentage (%)
Week in English pronunciation	65%
Week in vocabulary	80%
Unable to identify POS	52%
Audio –visual aids	82%

Source: Field visit April 2016

Conclusion

Bangladesh is the only one country in the entire world whose scarified their lives for the sake of mother tongue Bangla. It is true that our people are more emotional about their language. However it is absolutely true that now our every level have become desperate about getting skilled in English language. The motive and objectives of teaching English is to enable the students to acquire or grasp an ability to use English effectively. Sadly, in our country English is taught like other subject’s our students cannot achieve overall competency which is mentioned

by NCTB. In order to achieve this aim, it needs some changes which can be calculated with the system viz: syllabi, methodologies of language teaching, materials including audio and video materials. The teaching of English as second language in secondary schools classroom in Bangladesh has become complex due to multiple reasons. So, no single method or approach can be applicable to the whole class. It can be suggested to all those who are associated with teaching English especially in Secondary schools can follow the three steps: first, know the ways that students are passionate to learn by asking questions. Secondly, catch in your consideration regarding the different purposes of their learning English. Thirdly, be vigilant and keep a look into the presence of the different learners in the classes.

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