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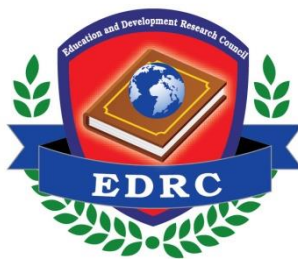
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Table of Contents	Page
<i>Firdissa Jebessa Aga</i> The Quality of Learning Assessment at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Views and Knowledge	01
<i>Sheikh Md. Muniruzzaman</i> <i>Md. Zubair Al Mahmud</i> <i>Mohammad Ashiquzzaman Bhuiyan</i> Teaching English Language Using Social Media at Secondary Level in Bangladesh	11
<i>Dr. Md. Enamul Hoque</i> <i>Ayesha Siddiqua</i> <i>Nusaiba Antara</i> Practices of English Language Skills at the Alim Level in the Madrashas in Bangladesh	19
<i>Dr. Ranjit Podder</i> <i>Amit Sen</i> <i>Abu Sayeed Shakil</i> Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh	35
<i>Dr. Md. Aminul Haque</i> Participatory Approaches to Enhance Teaching - learning Activities in English Classes	45
<i>Md. Rokonzaman</i> Causes of Inattention in the Civics Classroom: A Case Study at the Higher Secondary Level	59
<i>Sharmin Jahan</i> An Investigation on the Regular Speech and Language Therapy during COVID-19 for Children with ASD	69
<i>Sadikh Mohammad Salim</i> <i>Muhammad Istiaque Hasan</i> Online Education at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh: A Study of Students' Perception	77
<i>Md. Abu Abdullah</i> Teaching English Speaking Skills at the Higher Secondary Level in Rural Bangladesh	89
The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching- Call for Paper	99

The Quality of Learning Assessment at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Views and Knowledge

Firdissa Jebessa Aga*

Abstract

The study intended to investigate teachers' and students' views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment taking two Ethiopian universities as a case. The study employed a quantitative approach. Data were collected using two sorts of questionnaires from 161 subjects (72 teachers and 94 students) at two purposively selected Ethiopian universities. The results have shown that there was a robust and conjoint agreement on the views that assessment involves real learning, assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, and changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate. Publicizing and wide spreading the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality among pertinent communities at the universities, nonetheless, was not as it ought to be- indicating that there remains a long journey for making learning assessment quality a culture of HEIs wherein all community members make use of it purposefully and pragmatically. The case implies that there was dichotomizing assessment, teaching, and learning processes- ignoring their natural interdependence.

Key words: Quality, Learning Assessment, Ethiopian Universities, Views and Knowledge on Assessment

1. Introduction

Proper views and knowledge of teachers and students on the quality of learning assessment enhances the effectiveness of learning assessment by maximizing the potential benefits of assessment to inform teaching and improve learning. Effective assessment for Sanga (2016:1) “helps to improve student learning and informs the teachers of their teaching process”. Possession of proper views and knowledge by teachers and students materializes the constructive alignment among teaching, learning and assessment in such a way that change in one compels a sympathetic adjustment of the rest (Stiggins, 2007). That is why the quality of learning assessment has fundamentally attracted the interest of stakeholders who

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have different purposes. Notably, teachers as well as students develop confidence in using assessment data in their decisions respectively in teaching and learning. This in turn leads to the improvement of current and future teaching and learning. This is because, learning is an active process wherein learners need to know what, why, and how to learn under the facilitation of a teacher. For teachers to be able to properly guide their students, and facilitate learning properly, they need to be critical about their students' learning, their teaching, and the quality of learning assessment.

Assessment, therefore, should reflect the simultaneous demands of multiple audiences and/or actor groups for multiple purposes, among others: test takers, students, score users, teachers, the governments, university management, employers, financing bodies, funding stakeholders, and the society at large (Brown & Knight, 1994; Luoma, 2001; OET, 2017). This shows that there are different purposes for assessment. The purposes, nonetheless, are "neither separate nor entirely compatible" (Brown & Knight, 1994:13). The different purposes learning assessment lead to searching answer to a question: what is a quality assessment? Quality assessment for Ainslee (2018:1) "basically focuses on the targeted areas with complete precision". He went on describing that assessment in the education industry should have content validity, reliability, generating interest by the student, and consequential relevance. Reliability with reference to assessment signifies that each and every aspect of the assessment has a measurable outcome, and the quality of being accurately measured without the build-up of any flaw. Ainslee (2018:2) further explains that generating interest by the student deals with "the reason why tests should be objective in nature. Subjective tests are lengthy in nature not even generating interest of the teachers, leave alone the students. So, assessments should be explicit and creative which does not give a sense of boredom to the candidates".

Finally, consequential relevance deals with the reason for conducting an assessment, which requires a lot of time, dedication, and resources. This is because, "nobody would want so much of hard work to go in vain. By implication, assessment result should be so exact so that it can be used as a tool to compare and analyze the data for future reference of the candidate's performance (Ainslee, 2018: 2). The interests in the quality of learning assessment in higher education by stakeholders have come with due recognition of: 1) the fact that the quality of higher education graduates depends on what they have effectively learnt and authentically assessed; and 2) the need to account for the politics of accountability. The politics of accountability can be achieved by assessing quality outcomes of higher education, guaranteeing fair assessment practices responsive to human diversity, assuring success in higher education, and readiness to facing the technological future of higher education (Messick, 1999). Cognizant of the fast changing assessment practices and contexts, Ethiopia has put in place

curriculum requirements, and assessment modalities in which expected learning outcomes (LO) are pre-defined and stated in national and institutional curricula. Recently, nonetheless, Addis Ababa University has customized the Program to its context by reducing the duration to a maximum of intensive four months by integrating different competencies, truncating redundant topics, and arranging intensive schedules (Firdissa, 2021). Universities are no longer remote, *ivory towers*, and can no longer be regarded as *diarchies* whereby institutional autonomy and academic freedom seem to obscure accountability for inefficiencies including poor assessment practices. Inherent within the heightened interests in assessment matters (globally, nationally as well as institutional) is a quest for assuring quality outcomes of higher education one of which can be achieved through learning assessment quality.

1.1. Problem Statement

Possession of proper views and knowledge of teachers and students on the quality of learning assessment has been seen as a catalyst to maximizing the potential benefits of assessment to inform teaching and improve learning. There, however, are problems that teachers as well as students lack the required views and knowledge that would enable them balance the three processes, namely teaching, learning and assessment. Students' may fail to meaningfully learn, acquire skills and knowledge, and achieve mastery of the learning outcomes (LOs). Teachers also fail to properly prepare (self and professional) to make use assessment for the purposes it purports to serve and consequently abuse assessment practices by manipulating and invalidly subverting marks by raising scores without changing the phenomena and without enhancing learning and behavioral change to learners (Firdissa, 2021). This practice puts both teachers and students in dilemma to choose from either students' meaningful learning or earning high grades (Sanga, 2016). As the same authors indicate, most teachers "have survived this approach to professional learning reasonably unscathed but it is not a recipe for enhancement; it provides no reliable route for ensuring that research on assessment reaches those doing the assessing."

1.2. Objective of the Study

The study aimed at investigating teachers' and students' views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment taking two Ethiopian universities as a case. Connectedly, the extent to which the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality had been widespread among pertinent communities at the universities have been explored. The objectives are based on the assumption that views and knowledge can serve as surface symptoms for effective learning assessment wherein both teachers and students act reflectively rather than technically. Reflective action has the quality of reflective rationality, which entails empowerment, ownership and

commitment of the practitioners as opposed to the technical rationality (produced through the technical interest) that is based on the idea of power control (Firdissa, 2010).

1.3. The Research Methodology

Quantitative data* were collected using two sorts of questionnaires from 161 subjects (72 teachers and 94 students) at two purposively selected Ethiopian universities. For the sake of anonymity, the universities have been labeled as U1, and U2. Whereas U1 was selected based on its age and productivity in offering postgraduate programs, U2 was selected for convenience purpose. The data were generated both from teachers and students using close-ended questions of the questionnaires. All the returned copies of the questionnaires were numbered as: TR1-72, and SR1-94, representing respectively teacher respondents and student respondents. They were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23 and analyzed, analyzed, tabulated, interpreted, and discussed.

2. Results

Whereas 190 copies of the questionnaires were dispatched at the two universities, just 166 subjects (72 teachers and 94 students) returned. Forty-nine and twenty-three of the teachers were respectively from U1 and U2. Similarly, 53 and 41 of the student respondents were respectively from U1 and U 2. Of the 53 student respondents from U1, 5 were PhD students from other universities studying at U1; and two of them indicated that they were not employees of any university.

2.1. Biode of the Respondents

Student- and teacher- respondents were requested respectively to indicate their study programs and qualifications. Whereas, 85 of the students and 71 of the teachers properly filled and returned, respectively 9 and 1 were missing systems as can be seen from Table 1.

Table 1: The students' study programs or levels and Teachers' Qualification

		Students' study programs		Teachers' Qualification	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Valid	MSc/MA	52	61	19	27
	PhD	33	39	52	73
	Total	85	100	71	100
Missing	System	9		1	
Total		94	100	72	100

* The data for this article is part of an extended study, from which another article is under publication.

Table 1 shows that 52(61%) and 33(39%) of the students were respectively attending MSC/MA and PhD programs. It can further be seen from the Table that the majority (73%) of the teacher respondents had a PhD qualification followed by 27% master's holders. Five copies of the student questionnaires, nevertheless, were jettisoned as they were not properly filled. In analyzing the data, therefore, 161 (72 from teachers and 89 from students) of the properly filled copies of the questionnaires have been used. Requested to indicate their teaching/research experiences in years, all the teachers and 85 of the students responded properly whereas 4 was a missing system from that of the students.

Table 2: Respondents' teaching/research experience in years

Experiences		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Under 3	14	9
	3-6 Years	21	13
	7-10 Years	26	17
	Above 10 Years	96	61
	Total	157	100.0
Missing	System	4	
Total		161	

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents had teaching/research experiences of above 10 years. As can be seen from the Table, 96 (61%) of them had teaching/research experience of above 10 years. A further separate frequency analysis for the same has shown that all those who had under 3 years of teaching/research experiences were student respondents. Of those who had above 10 years of teaching/research experience, 85% and 43% respectively were teachers and students. Teacher respondents were also requested to indicate their respective ranks and the results have been shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Teacher respondents' Ranks

Rank	Frequency	Valid Percent
Associate Professor	13	18
Assistant Professor	41	57
Senior Lecturer	4	6
Lecturer	13	18
Assistant Lecturer	1	1
Total	72	100

Table 3 shows that the majority (57%) of the respondents had the rank of assistant professorship, followed by 18% associate professorship and equally lecturer.

2.2. Views and Knowledge on the Quality of Learning Assessment

The issue of views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment was explored using 10 closed items of the questionnaires. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the items is .89. This is very high from statistical point of view. The reliability for each of the items if item deleted, falls between .872 and .904. All the items are, therefore, reliable for generating dependable evidences. Nine of the questions requested the respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement by circling "1" for Strongly Disagree, "2" for Disagree, "3" for Neither Agree nor Disagree, "4" for Agree, and "5" for Strongly Agree against the views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment. The results have been presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Ratings on the Views and Knowledge

Views and Knowledge	1		2		3		4		5	
	Cnt	%	Cnt	%	Cnt	%	Cnt	%	Cnt	%
1. Assessment is a learning activity (mainly at universities)	5	3.4%	17	11.5%	16	10.8%	49	33.1%	61	41.2%
2. Teaching and learning at universities must be guided by assessable learning outcomes	5	3.3%	5	3.3%	13	8.6%	44	29.1%	84	55.6%
3. Assessment is a central element in the overall quality of learning in universities	4	2.7%	10	6.7%	22	14.7%	48	32.0%	66	44.0%
4. Assessment involves real learning	3	2.0%	15	10.1%	22	14.8%	57	38.3%	52	34.9%
5. Assessment has to provide comparable scores across administrations	2	1.4%	9	6.1%	33	22.4%	72	49.0%	31	21.1%
6. Assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners	5	3.4%	6	4.1%	14	9.6%	65	44.5%	56	38.4%
7. Learners benefit greatly when assessed through multiple forms of assessment	6	4.0%	5	3.3%	9	6.0%	39	26.0%	91	60.7%
8. Learning and teaching are modelled alongside the tasks assessed	6	4.0%	9	6.0%	20	13.3%	66	44.0%	49	32.7%
9. Changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them	4	2.7%	6	4.0%	28	18.7%	59	39.3%	53	35.3%

Table 4 shows that 91, 84, 66, 61, 56, 53, and 52 of the respondents indicated their strong agreement respectively to the views that learners benefit greatly when assessed through multiple forms of assessment, teaching and learning at universities must be guided by assessable learning outcomes, assessment is a central element in the overall quality of learning in universities, assessment is a learning activity (mainly at universities), assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them, and assessment involves real learning. In the same vein, 72, 66, 65, 59, and 57 of the respondents respectively indicated their just agreement to the views that assessment has to provide comparable scores across administrations, learning and teaching are modelled alongside the tasks assessed, assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them, and assessment involves real learning.

Table 5: Publicity of the instrumental roles

To what extent are the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality widespread among pertinent university community?	Frequency		%	Valid %
	Very low	3	1.9	2.9
	Low	19	11.8	18.6
	Somewhat	45	28.0	44.1
	High	31	19.3	30.4
	Very High	4	2.5	3.9
	Total	102	63.4	100
	System	59	36.6	
	161		100	

Interestingly, the respondents conjointly indicated their just agreement and strong agreement to the views that assessment involves real learning, assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, and changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them have been rated high. These are crucial in making student learning assessment effective. A descriptive analysis of the same data has given an average mean of 4.05 with standard deviation of 1.02 (see Appendix 1) indicating that the subjects overall agreed to the views on assessment quality. A further investigation was made regarding the extent to which the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality had been widespread among pertinent communities of the universities. Whereas 102 was valid, 59 was a missing system. A frequency analysis of the data has given the results in Table 5. Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (44%) indicated that the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality had been somewhat widespread among pertinent communities of universities. Whereas 30.4% rated the case as high, 2.9% and 3.9% respectively rated it very low and very high.

3. Discussions

The majority of the respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires on the issue of views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment had teaching/research experiences of above 10 years. Noticeably, no one from the teacher respondents had under 3 years teaching/research experiences. Also of those who had above 10 years of teaching/research experiences, 85% and 43% respectively were teachers and students. By all means, the respondents had reasonable teaching/research experiences that would enable them to judge teachers' and students' views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment.

Similarly, the majority of the teacher respondents (73%) had a PhD qualification followed by 27% master's holders. When it comes to their rank, the majority (57%) of the teacher respondents were assistant professors, followed by 18% associate professorship and equally a lecturer-ship. This, therefore, shows that the teacher respondents had reasonable qualifications and ranks that would enable them to gauge teachers' and students' views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the items is .89 and that of all if item deleted, fall between .872 and .904- showing that all the items are reliable to generate dependable evidences on the issue. Some also have shown their conjoined agreement and strong agreement to the views that assessment involves real learning, assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, and changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them. The frequency results have been augmented with a descriptive result of an average mean of 4.05 with standard deviation of 1.02- indicating that the subjects just agreed to the views on learning assessment quality. Moreover, the majority of the respondents indicated that the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality had been somewhat widespread among pertinent the communities at the universities-implying the swaying nature of level of the observed views and knowledge on learning assessment quality.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The fact that the majority of the respondents had above 10 years of teaching/research experiences, reasonable qualifications, and ranks shows that they are appropriate to reasonably judge the views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment. In addition, the very high Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the items being .89, and that of all, if item deleted, falling between .872 and .904 show that all the items are reliable for generating dependable evidences. The fact that the majority of the respondents indicated their strong agreement and agreement on the views and knowledge on the quality of learning assessment implies that the subjects are appropriate and had reasonable credentials that would enable

them to judge the issue under discussion. Their proper views and knowledge, therefore, could serve as a surface symptom for their actual practices in enhancing the quality of learning assessment, and to surmise their level of maximizing the potential benefits of assessment to inform teaching and improve real learning.

Specifically, the views that assessment involves real learning, assessment requirements have powerful motivating effects on learners, and changes in curricula become ineffective if assessment practices incommensurate them had been rated high. The frequency results have been augmented with a descriptive result of an average mean of 4.05 with standard deviation of 1.02- indicating that the subjects just agreed to the listed views on learning assessment quality. This, therefore, calls for reinvigorating proper views and knowledge of all pertinent parties. Though the case could be peculiar to the case universities, it might be also expected in other HEIs provided that many of the curricula, and pedagogical tasks and practices have been harmonized in Ethiopia. The results have shown that the robust views and knowledge on learning assessment quality had remained swaying as the instrumental roles of learning assessment quality had not been widespread among pertinent communities at the universities-resulting in dichotomizing assessment, teaching, and learning processes, and perceiving assessment as a one-shot.

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Teaching English Language Using Social Media at Secondary Level in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladeshi EFL learners at the secondary level spend a considerable amount of time on social media like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, Ticktock, Likee, Viber, Wechat, Messenger, Telegram, etc. mainly for entertainment purposes. The time spent for entertainment can easily be utilised for entertainment and education simultaneously. All the four skills in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) can be improved by using social media. Communicative competence in English is a much-needed skill for these learners. They can give Facebook status in English to improve writing skills, comment on and read others' posts in English, making English-speaking friends. This is a qualitative study and it investigated the extent to which social media is used in English language teaching at the secondary level in Bangladesh, ways in which teachers might apply social media in the English classroom, and ways in which secondary students can benefit from using social media in developing proficiency in English. Data were collected from the teachers and students of five grades (VI-X) from four secondary schools of Bangladesh using an interview schedule for teachers and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for students.

Keywords: *social media; secondary level; learner autonomy; communicative competence*

1. Introduction

In this digital era of technology, social media have become a popular medium of communication. In this globalized world, different kinds

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of social media like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Messenger, Whatsapp, Viber, Telegram, Snapchat, Wechat, and YouTube function as communication technology. Social media could be a good source of learning English for secondary students. Since all kinds of social media are used worldwide, students can easily establish communication with others, in fact with native speakers. At the secondary level, teaching English through social media would be a good way since most of the students use android phones nowadays. Teachers can easily apply the use of educational technology in the classroom and social media platforms could be a resourceful media of educational technology. Facebook is the most common social media platform where people share their feelings, daily activities, and experiences all the time. Students, therefore, can share their activities in English so that their English language can be developed. It will enhance learners' cultural intelligence and build a sense of mutual understanding between our culture and target cultures. All the English newspapers have Facebook pages and YouTube Channels that can be used for educational purposes both by secondary teachers and students since these are considered authentic materials. The EFL learners just need to subscribe to these pages, and they will receive the latest updates on their Facebook accounts and YouTube channels.

In Bangladesh, the secondary level is the foundation for further academic acceleration. The teenagers spend a considerable amount of time with social media and smartphones. This habit can easily be transformed into being entertained and developing proficiency in English simultaneously. It has been observed that teenagers like secondary students spend considerable amounts of time on different components of social media just for entertainment which badly impact their study hours. This time can easily be utilized for both English language learning and entertainment purposes simultaneously. Social media can be sources of authentic materials that might contribute to student learning of English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. This will also develop their technological literacy. This study will investigate the ways in which teachers might apply social media in the English teaching and learning at secondary level in Bangladesh. In addition to this, it will also investigate the possible ways in which secondary students can benefit from using social media in order to develop linguistic competence in English.

2. Literature Review

Educational technology is, nowadays, a popular issue and several researchers conduct research on the use of educational technology. Social media, therefore, are considered to be a good source of educational technology and learning materials. In the era of images and technology, several visual pictures can be used to teach writing to secondary level EFL students. Using visual aids in the classroom is a good way of teaching and

learning English writing skills (Navidinia, Ozhan, & Younesi 2018). They further add that using pictures in the classroom helps to develop the concentration and motivation of the students to learn writing. Most of the EFL learners face difficulties in learning proper and appropriate academic writing (Tardy, 2010). Learning English academic writing in higher education as L2 learners is quite difficult as Tardy has mentioned in his research whereas the current researchers attempt to introduce the importance of social media in developing writing skill for secondary level learners.

Akhiar, Mydin & Kasuma (2017) conduct research on university students' opinion regarding the use of one social media platform that is Instagram in English language writing. Their study shows that most of the students have positive views and attitudes towards the use of Instagram in developing their proficiency in English writing skill. Mobile learning can be applied through social media like Instagram to improve the EFL learners' writing proficiency (Akhiar, Mydin & Kasuma 2017). The students often share their photos and videos with written captions that could be written in English. Besides, they most often share their opinions through different posts also on different social media that are very popular media of communication and expose ideas, feelings, and thoughts at present. Therefore, the current researchers give their focus on the positive uses of all those social network sites in the secondary level classroom. Idris & Ghani (2012) analyze the patterns and structures of language that are basically used in Facebook by the students of Malaysia. The secondary level EFL learners/users can be motivated to generate creative thinking, accurate writing, and increase learning proficiency through Facebook posts (Idris & Ghani 2012).

Secondary and higher secondary students spend a considerable amount of time on social media and this time, therefore, can be used for their development in English writing skill. Thus the researchers' main focus of this paper is, however, on the proper and effective use of all social networking sites as the medium of learning English. Lee (2010) says that the internet and social media are now an essential part of our life, especially, these are the most important elements of the daily life of young people. Lee (2010) tries to show "how the writing of Facebook 'status updates' is developed from the practice of reporting personal activities and feelings in Instant Messaging" (p. 111). When young people start using new technology and new media, they can use their previous learning there and thus they gradually develop their language and learning. Lee (2010) further adds that "new media texts are indeed the result of an on-going process of learning the affordances, discourse functions and linguistic features of different writing spaces, as well as how identities are performed in previously encountered media" (p. 111).

3. Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that teenagers like secondary students spend considerable amounts of time on different components of social media just for entertainment which badly impact their study hours. This time can easily be utilized for both English language learning and entertainment purposes simultaneously. Social media can be sources of authentic materials that might contribute to student learning of English reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. This will also develop their technological literacy. This study will investigate the ways in which teachers might apply social media in the English teaching and learning at secondary level in Bangladesh. In addition to this, it will also investigate the possible ways in which secondary students can benefit from using social media in order to develop linguistic competence in English. This study will be an authentic source of study for the secondary teachers, students, policy makers, stakeholders and researchers. It will be a new source of knowledge regarding English language teaching at secondary level.

4. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- a. To what extent social media is used in English language teaching at Secondary level in Bangladesh?
- b. How can teachers apply social media in the English language classroom at secondary level in Bangladesh?
- c. How can secondary level students benefit from using social media in developing proficiency in English?

5. Methodology of the Study

This is a qualitative study and data were collected from four secondary schools in Bangladesh.

5.1 Participants

There are a total forty-eight respondents (5 teachers and 43 students) in this study. The researchers visited four secondary schools of Bangladesh. Majority of the students were female.

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by the researchers visiting the schools in person. The teachers interviewed were contacted earlier over the phone. On the data collection day, the teacher was made to understand the objective of the research and the queries of the interview schedule. Then consent was taken from the respective teacher in a printed form and the interview started. During the interview, one of the researchers recorded the response using pen

and paper. Then the teacher organized the students for the FGD and one of the researchers conducted it with the students. The concerned teacher was not present in the FGD session. The researcher first established rapport with the students, made them understand the objective of the research and different issues of the FGD whose responses were required. This is how five interviews with five teachers and five FGDs with students of five grades were conducted.

5.3 Instruments

There are two types of instruments for data collection in this study- a semi-structured interview schedule for secondary school teachers of Bangladesh and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for secondary level students. The interview schedule consists of six queries along with some information about teachers' teaching experience, teacher training, highest academic qualification, and professional degree. The queries covered the issues like the use of social media in teacher's everyday life, using social media to enhance English language teaching-learning at secondary level, if the teacher used any social media for teaching English in the classroom, classroom activities done by your students, home works usually given to the students, the use of social media for teaching English skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The queries of the interview schedule were rephrased to make some themes to make the FGD schedule. Thus, responses on the same themes were recorded both from the teachers and students.

Table 1: Research design of the study

Research Tools	Respondent	Nature of Data	Sample Size	Sampling Procedure	Mode of Analysis	Approach of Analysis
Semi-structured Interview Schedule	Teachers	Qualitative	Total -48 (5 teachers and 43 students)	Purposive	Organizing, Identifying	Thematic analysis, Content analysis
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Students	Qualitative		Purposive		

6. Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

The data collected using the interview schedule and FGD have been analyzed thematically on the basis of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and both types of data have been compared.

Listening

The interview schedule data show that when the teachers play any video in the classrooms, students listen and enjoy it attentively. The FGD data show that students do listening activities by themselves. Some students were found to listen to podcasts; others watch YouTube videos. One of the teachers thinks that "Social media is used to some extent in English language teaching at secondary level in Bangladesh. For developing students' listening power, social media can help a lot." He also adds that "As they are not native English learners, they have some limitations in developing their proficiency. But if they take help from social media, obviously it will help them develop their proficiency in a natural way."

Speaking

The interview schedule data show that social media is used for practicing English speaking skill. The FGD data show that social media is not used for teaching English speaking skill in the classroom. One male student said he used YouTube to learn speaking by himself. One of the teachers thinks that "Teachers can show some pictures or images from social media and they can ask them to deliver some speech on them."

Reading

The interview schedule data show that there is no clear indication if social media is used for English reading skill in the classroom. Teachers added that national and international newspapers are available on social media and if the students read daily newspaper they can improve their reading skill. The FGD data show that social media is not used for English reading skill in the classroom. Students think that posts by celebrities are interesting to read and reading post in English would be helpful. One teacher says that "It also can teach vocabulary. Students can learn modern English by caption of any post." He additionally shares that "Most of the students of rural area don't have smartphone. This problem has become more critical due to gaps between urban and rural educational system. Minimising the gap, social media is considered as the best educational platform for reaching the larger audience at secondary level."

Writing

The interview schedule data show that teachers instruct students to write different topics like paragraph, story, completing sentence using social

media. The FGD data show that social media is not used for practicing English writing skill in the classroom. Students think that writing tasks and paragraphs on Facebook group can be given by the teachers. One teacher adds that "Students will be motivated and interested if they have the opportunity to learn from social media in the English language classroom." Another teacher said that "They can share their feelings with their teachers. Teachers keep posts to create a group to teach the students. They also keep blogs to create a blog for their class and have students contribute regular posts." Another teacher responds as "Teachers might play a significant role in using social media in English language classroom at secondary level in Bangladesh. They can take online classes and arrange English exam by making a question in Google Docs and share the link in social media."

7. Recommendations

Competent use of social media improves English language competence. It also enhances our digital literacy and reduces digital divide. It develops the skills of both the teacher and learners. Teacher training on the applications of social media in English is recommended for secondary school teachers of English. Teachers can train the students then to use the social media skillfully to improve their English language skills. It will also make them autonomous L2 English learners. There is a blending of learning and entertainment possible if English is learned using social media. Teachers can develop the English language teaching materials from different modes of social media. Students should use social media in order to learn English language and culture of the English-speaking countries.

8. Conclusion

Social media is a good platform for academic development especially for English language learning. Thus, the secondary level students and teachers might accept this opportunity for their academic and professional development. It is expected that if the recommendations of this study are followed properly English language teaching and learning at secondary level in Bangladesh will be enhanced. In this postmodern era of digital devices and information technology, teachers must ensure an effective learning environment and learning strategy for students so that students will be able to use all social networking sites for education purposes. Besides this, since students spend a considerable amount of time on social media, they will be able to utilize their time in learning.

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Practices of English Language Skills at the Alim Level in the Madrashas in Bangladesh

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Nusaiba Antara‡

Abstract

The role of English language as a lingua franca makes it a unique language in the world. Alim is higher Secondary level education and equivalent to HSC in Bangladesh. This study intends to shed light on the state of English Language Teaching and Learning at Alim level in the madrashas in Bangladesh. For the present study, 125 Alim students and 25 English teachers teaching English to the same students are randomly selected from higher secondary colleges located in both urban and rural areas. The data for the present study is collected through questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews. The findings of the present are presented in the pie charts and tables. The data is analysed in the descriptive and the contextual methods. The study reveals that the major problems in English language teaching and learning at the Alim level lie with the textbook materials, syllabus, uninteresting lessons, method of teaching, avoidance of practicing listening and speaking, poor quality of teachers, etc. The present study, thus, claims to have social vitality, reliability and validity as it provides enough insights into the English language teaching and learning in the Alim class in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *English in Bangladesh, English in education policy, methodology, CLT, Language skills, English language teaching in Bangladesh*

1. Introduction

In Bangladesh, the EFL teachers and the learners use two types of materials such as textbooks prescribed by the authority, that is, National

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Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), and commercially produced examination related materials (e.g. guide books, suggestion books, model test papers, etc). An ELT textbook is not merely a set of sheets of paper fastened together to hinge at one side, but it is the beating heart of any education system whereupon the whole learning revolves. In many contexts, language teachers are heavily reliant on available materials and this is perhaps even more evident in the testing context where teachers may feel that following a test preparation book is the safest way to ensure all the crucial points are covered. As with other high-stakes tests, the Alim examination in English aims to assess students' general level of language ability and is therefore linked to particular materials or programme of instruction. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers in Bangladesh are dependent to a large extent on materials focusing specifically on examination preparation other than textbooks prescribed by NCTB. Alim is higher Secondary level education and equivalent to HSC in Bangladesh. The *English For Today for XI-XII and Alim classes* represents the English curriculum of Higher Secondary Level.

According to the NCTB (NCTB, 2012) the adoption of the first National Education Policy 2010 added with the changes in different aspects of life, knowledge, and civilization has called for a new English curriculum in Bangladesh. Therefore, the curriculum focuses on teaching-learning English as a skill-based subject so that learners can use English language in their real-life context by acquiring necessary language skills. The English Curriculum has theoretically been shifted to 'how to teach' from 'what to teach'; and it emphasises that language skills would be practised in an integrated manner - not in isolation:

- a) language skills would be practiced in classrooms;
- b) skills practice would be done in meaningful contexts (i.e. practice in language use, should go beyond the textbook and include real-life situations);
- c) interactive activities would be carried out between teachers and students, and; more importantly between students and students; and
- d) graded grammar would be taught through communicative approach.

The curriculum document suggests some themes/topics for providing suitable contexts for language practice in the classrooms. Grammatical elements will be integrated into the text materials too. Moreover, with a view to reinforcing learners' accurate use of language, communicative English grammar will be taught simultaneously. The objectives of the National Curriculum are designed to:

- a) acquire competence in four language skills, (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- b) use the competence for effective communication in real life situations locally and globally at intermediate level.

- c) acquire necessary grammar competence in English language for better accuracy.
- d) use English literary pieces for enjoyment and language learning.
- e) develop creativity and critical thinking through English language.
- f) become independent learners of English by using reference skills.
- g) use language skills for higher studies and technical education.
- h) be skilled in inter-cultural communications for better access to the globalised world.
- i) use English language skills for lifelong learning where necessary.

Based on the objectives, the textbook English *For Today* for Classes XI-XII and Alim is written and is being taught as the major prescribed English textbook for Alim Class. The English curriculum for classes 11-12, is consistent with the curriculum for classes 1 to 10 in respect of content and pedagogy. The National Education Policy 2010 has endorsed the need for learning English for communicative purposes that would help prepare the country's future generation for the competitive globalized world of the 21st century.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is bitter to notice that even though various efforts have been made by the government and educationists for the improvement of the English language teaching and learning condition in Bangladesh, a sorry state of affair still exists in the achievement of English linguistic competence of students. It is really important to identify the problems that the students encounter in the process of learning English. It is also necessary to evaluate their level of performance in English. The teachers do not explain the text in English, the target language; rather, they prefer to stay in Bengali, the mother tongue. They show reluctance in practicing English language skills.

Though the text book (*English For Today* for Classes XI-XII and Alim) is written with communicative thought and ideas, and the syllabus is designed with communicative language teaching contents and items, the language teachers are found unenthusiastic about the guideline of the book. The English teachers hardly speak English in the class. The present researcher finds that majority teachers neither speak English in the class themselves nor encourage their students to speak English with the classmates. It is painfully observed that after long years of learning English, most of the learners cannot speak English with necessary fluency, correctness of grammar, and pronunciation.

The present study finds that teachers talk more in the class and remain busy while students sit idle as inactive listeners. Problems are also found in the textbook items and contents. Students feel bore in the class and show disinterest in the lesson and the method of teaching. Sometimes, in the English language class students are taught textbook contents rather than

practicing English language skills. For all these reasons, a large number of students fail in the English subject in the higher secondary public examination, despite learning English as a foreign language for 12 years. Language instruction has five important components: students, teachers, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation; therefore, research or investigation should be carried out on the bases of these components, and research questions should be raised from them.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is the first study on English language teaching at the HSC in Bangladesh. Since the research on the English language teaching and learning is a global phenomenon, a huge number of studies have been conducted around the world. A good number of studies on ELT have also been carried out during the recent past under different public universities in Bangladesh. Furthermore, since the present study concentrates on the issues of teaching- learning of the four basic skills of English language, it presents a picture of English language of HSC students. It talks about the process and nature of ELT at the Alim level; it also investigates the learning problems of the students. It tries to unveil the problems encountered by the higher secondary students, sketch a picture of teacher-student interaction and their linguistic behaviour in the class, and evaluate the level of performance of students in the four basic skills of English language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The study suggests certain remedial measures to overcome the problems or hindrances lying in the process of teaching -learning activities. The present study, therefore, gains a social vitality and validity as it provides enough insights into the English language teaching and learning at the Higher Secondary level.

1.3 Research Questions

The present investigation addresses the following research questions:

- 1) Why do the students study for learning English as a foreign language?
- 2) How much are the learners proficient in English language?
- 3) Which method do the teachers follow while teaching English?
- 4) How much do the students practice the four basic skills of English language in the class?

2. Literature Review

Bangladesh is now considered as a lower middle-income country, because of the nation's consistent growth in the last decade (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The pivotal role of English language is undeniable in maintaining this growth and developing skilled workforces, who are

globally compatible (Hoque, 2010). Bearing the economic interest in mind, improvement in English language teaching and learning has become the prior concern of the government. Although various actions have been taken in recent years to standardize English language teaching (ELT) in the country, the outcomes are much disappointing (Ali & Walker, 2014). To point up, many-sided problems such as the politically forced decision in lowering the status and use of English in Bangladesh since the independence (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014), inconsistent language in education policies (Rahman & Pandian, 2018), implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) curriculum, teaching method and instructional materials in practice (Rahman, Pandian, & Kaur, 2018), implementation of assessment reform (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018), and English language teachers' professional development (Karim & Mohamed, 2019) are the most significant drawbacks that prevent ELT to meet national expectation in Bangladesh. The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh enacted in 1972, accepted Bangla as the only state language through article 3. This policy was widely hailed politically although it was a similar idea that once Pakistanis imposed against Bengalis by introducing Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. In Bangladesh, English is taught as a foreign language though it served the status of second language in all the national and international activities (Hoque, 2020, 2017).

After the independence in 1971, English language policies were repeatedly changed in different regimes; and so, it brought the changes in the course curriculum and text books (Hoque, 2016). The constitutional obligation narrowed down the use of English in the official, social, and educational spectrums of Bangladesh, and elevated the national language Bangla to a disproportionately higher level (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). Observing the conflict between English and Bangla languages in the state policy of post-independence Bangladesh, Hamid (2011) observed that the promotion of one was believed to be the demotion of the other. However, it is to be mentioned that, although teaching in Bengali was linked to the consolidation of national identity (Hoque, 2008, p. 1) in Bangladesh, a significant knowledge of English never lost its relevance because of its gatekeeping power to global education, career opportunity, and international exchanges. It has been reported that authority pressurises teachers to teach only those areas of the curriculum contents that are recurrently considered to construct English test papers (Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010). English is taught as the exam preparation effort and practiced those items which would be tested in the exam; therefore listening and speaking skills neither taught in the class nor tested in the exam (Hoque, 2016, 2011).

3. Research Methodology

The present study is a Mixed-method research in nature comprising in-depth interviews. In the present study, data is collected through two different sets of questionnaire constructed for teachers and students. The validity, reliability and practicality of the questionnaire were checked. Experts are consulted for validity, reliability and practicality of the questionnaire.

3.1 Participants of the Study

Questionnaire survey participants of the study were 125 Higher Secondary students and 25 EFL teachers teaching in the Alim class. Interview participants were 6 EFL teachers.

3.2 Instrument

The questionnaire surveys, so the questionnaire method and semi-structure interview schedule were adopted for data collection. The questionnaires consists of main items sub-items covering a number of 20 issues on ELT and Applied Linguistics, such as; syllabus, textbook materials, practice of English language skills in the class, performance in English, teaching method and approaches, etc. Each of the questions explores particular EFL topic. All the questions in the student questionnaire are clear, succinct, and unambiguous. The quality of a questionnaire is judged by three major standards: (1) validity, (2) reliability, and (3) practicality.

3.3. Data Analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, the raw data is fed into the computer for statistical analysis. The descriptive and the contextual methods are applied for the data analysis of the present study. Survey results were presented in different ways: by text, in figures in charts, in tables, graphs, and diagrams. For the qualitative data, the content analysis and thematic analysis method were used for analyzing the data received from the in-depth-interviews.

4. Findings and Discussion

The descriptive and the contextual methods are followed for the data analysis. The two methods are applied in the data analysis of the present study because these methods are inexpensive, time saving and easily understandable:

4.1 Findings from the Questionnaire Survey

The findings of the present study are shown in the pie charts and tables, and then narrative description is presented in the text in a quantitative manner. Finally, the data is interpreted in the contextual and the descriptive methods. The presentation of the findings of 25 questions is presented step by step in the preceding pages.

Item 1: Relevance of Syllabus

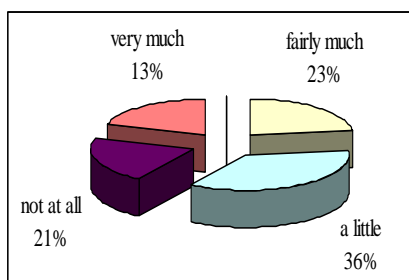


Figure 1: Student comment

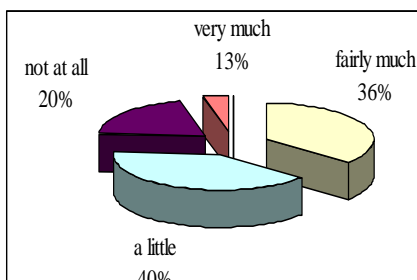


Figure 2: Teacher comment

The pie chart displays that 36% students consider their syllabus *a little* relevant to learning English; 23 % students term the syllabus *fairly much* relevant; 21% respondents consider the syllabus *not at all* relevant; 20% respondents think that the syllabus is *very much* relevant to learning English. The relevance of the syllabus is a precondition for the fruitful learning in the class. The primary purpose of a syllabus is to communicate to one's students what the course is about, why the course is taught, where it is going, and what will be required of the students for them to complete the course with a passing grade. Hoque (2008) reveals that syllabus designers should include the items of the four skills of target language: listening, speaking, reading and writing while formulating the syllabus. Richards and Rodgers suggest if assumption about the nature of linguistics and language learning is one of “language as communication”, then a syllabus based around activities and tasks which promote real meaningful communication will seem advantageous.

The above chart shows 40% teachers, the highest percentage, suggest that the English syllabus is *a little* relevant to learning English; 36% teachers comment that the syllabus is *fairly much* relevant; on the other hand 20% teachers blame the syllabus *not at all* relevant; though 4% teachers assess the syllabus *very much* relevant to learning English. The information given by the teachers and the students has correlation with regard to the relevance of syllabus to learning English. The both groups of respondents (teachers and students) come up with almost the same percentage 40% (t) and 36 % (s) suggesting the syllabus *a little* relevant to learning English. Stein claims the more the syllabus is relevant the more learning takes place. It is found that both the teachers and the students are aware of the fact that their syllabus is not *very much* appropriate in learning English. This finding supports the statement of Maniruzzaman & Hoque (2010) while evaluating the higher secondary syllabus at the secondary level, they find that lack of teachers' attitudes towards innovation, the traditional content/knowledge oriented curriculum, and irrelevant exercises cause students' poor performance in English language.

Item -2: Volume of Syllabus

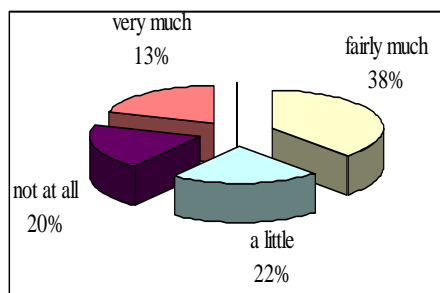


Figure 3: Student response

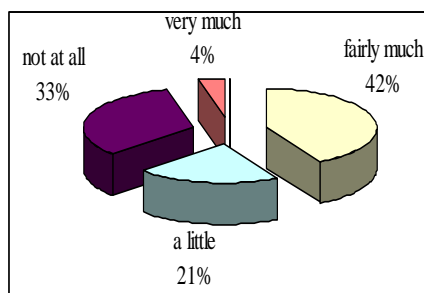


Figure 4: Teacher response

The students express different opinions about the size of syllabus. The results for the item suggest that 38 % students consider their syllabus *fairly much* heavier; 22% students, the second highest percentage, consider it *a little* heavier than they actually require; whereas 20% learners term their syllabus *very much* heavier; the rest 20% students suggest the syllabus *not at all* heavier for them. It may be mentioned that merely the size of syllabus cannot impact a great deal in learning English, rather syllabus with appropriate lessons/exercises and authentic materials can help students learning English. The HSC English syllabus contains 12 units comprising 79 lessons for two years of time which is not so big at all. This view is reflected in the respondents' opinions.

It is found that 42% teachers consider the syllabus *fairly much* heavier for the students; whereas 33% teachers think *not at all* heavier; on the other hand 20% teachers consider the syllabus a *little* heavier; the rest 4% teachers term the syllabus heavier *very much*. On this issue, almost similar percentage of the respondents from both the teachers (40%) and the students (38%) agree that the syllabus is *fairly much* heavier; ‘appropriate enough’ to study in two years. The statistics show that 20% students consider the syllabus *very much* heavier; yet, this opinion is supported by a small number (4%) of teachers. According to the highest percentage of respondents (t & s), syllabus is appropriate in size and contents. Syllabus should focus interim objectives. Contents of syllabus should largely depend on the course duration and the objectives of the course.

Item -3: Task Enjoyment and Interest

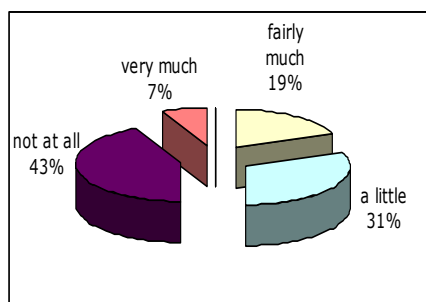


Figure 5: Student reply

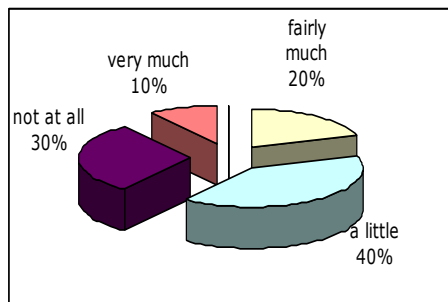


Figure 6: Teacher reply

The above statistics reflect that 43% of the learners evaluate that the task is *not at all* enjoyable; while 31% students consider the task enjoyable *a little*; 19% learners suggest the task *fairly much* enjoyable; whereas 7% learners acknowledge that the task is *very much* enjoyable. It is a very serious concern that the highest number of responding students (43%) consider the task uninteresting and boring. Learning takes place when the students find the task enjoyable and when it is presented by the teachers in coherent and simple manners. Hoque (2020) suggest that contents of syllabus should be useful, meaningful and interesting for the students. While no single subject will be of interest to all students, materials should be chosen based, in part, on what students, in general, are likely to find interesting and motivating.

The above pie chart depicts that 40% teachers think that the task is *a little* interesting; while 30% teachers consider the task *not at all* interesting; 20% teachers term the task interesting *fairly much*; and the rest 10% teachers evaluate the task *very much* enjoyable. A considerable numbers of respondents of both groups (S= 31%, T= 40%) acknowledge that the task is

a little enjoyable though the percentage is less than 50%. Here is a contradiction between the teachers and the students, because 43% students take the task as *not at all* interesting; while 40% teachers comment that the task is *a little* enjoyable. Therefore, the authority should prepare and introduce enjoyable tasks for the students to motivate effective learning. Spontaneous learning takes place if the lesson is interesting; therefore, new items should be presented in realistic contexts. It needs be ensured that the presentation is not stereotyped. Stereotyped presentation makes lessons monotonous and activities uninteresting. Hoque (2020) suggests it is teachers' responsibility to a large extent to make the lesson interesting and efficient teachers who have training are mostly capable of doing so .

Item- 4: Practice of English Language Skills (student)

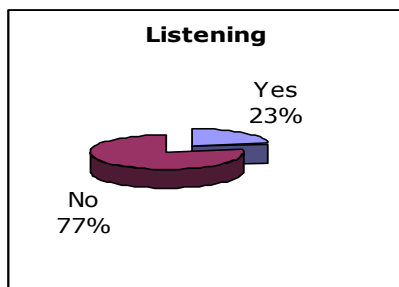


Figure 7: Student answer

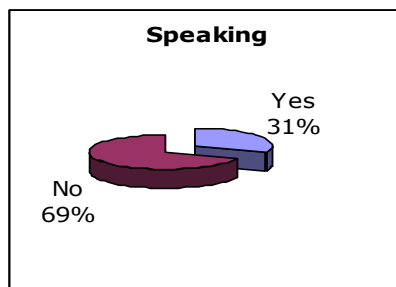


Figure 8: Student answer

The above figure (Figure 4.1.1) displays that 77% students respond *negatively* with regard to listening practices in the class; while 23% students reply in the *affirmative*. As shown in the figure (figure 4.1.2) 69% students disclose the fact of not practicing speaking in the class; whereas 31% students admit that they do practice speaking in the class.

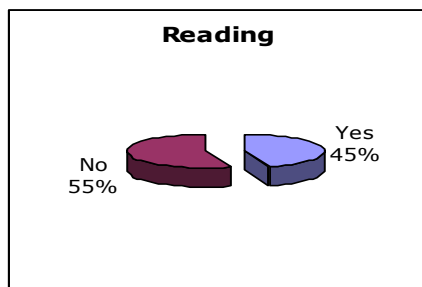


Figure 9: Student reply

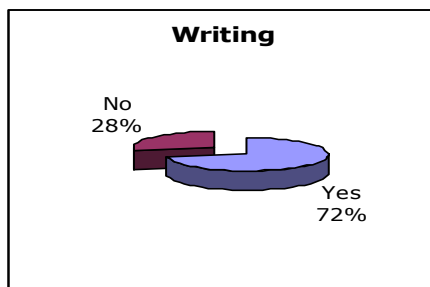


Figure 10: Student reply

In the above statistics (Figure 9), it is observed that 55% students disclose the fact of not practicing reading in the class; 45% students suggest that they do practice reading in the class. As found in the pie chart, 72%

students hold positive opinion with regard to writing practices; on the other hand 28% students comment negatively on the practice of writing skill in the class. This grim reality of teaching learning condition comes out through their opinions. The preface to the book *English For Today*, For Classes XI-XII and Alim claims that integrated exercises are carried out for achieving the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. But, in reality the study discovers that the most two important skills: listening and speaking either neglected or avoided by the teachers in the class. This study supports Galina (2003) which reveals that listening and speaking practices are avoided by the teachers in the classroom. Her study on the second year university students in Lithuania reveals that 65% students are with the opinion that teachers have avoiding tendency in practicing speaking skill; and 57% students unveil the truth of not practicing listening in the class. So, a strong correlation is observed between the findings of the present study and that of Galina (2003).

Teacher Item - 4: Practice of English Language Skills (Teacher)

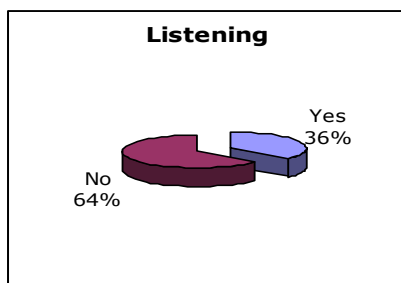


Figure 11: Teacher reply

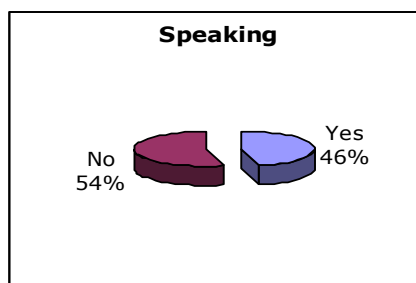


Figure 12: Teacher reply

The chart (Figure 11) indicates that 64% teachers confess of not practicing listening in the class; while 36% teachers claim of practicing listening while teaching. This study discovers the truth that the teachers are reluctant in practicing listening. The figure (Figure 12) displays that 54% teachers are unenthusiastic with regard to practice of speaking; whereas 46% teachers claim that they practice speaking in the class.

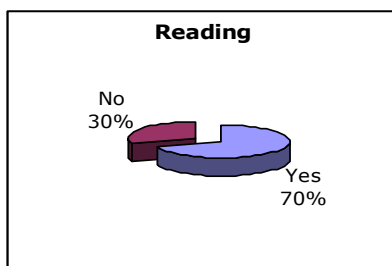


Figure 13: Teacher reply

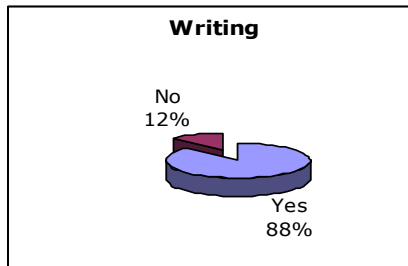


Figure 14: Teacher reply

As shown in the chart (figure 4.2.3) 70% teachers respond that reading exercises are arranged in the class; 88 % teachers claim (Figure 4.2.4) that they do arrange practice of writing in the class. A large number of teachers (64%) and students (79%) comment that listening practice is either neglected or avoided in the class. Therefore, a strong correlation exists between the teachers and the students with regard to practicing the listening and speaking by the teachers in the class. Hoque (2013) in his study on the teachers teaching English at the higher secondary level in study reveals that in the English classes the teachers speak Bengali frequently due to their inefficiency in English as a foreign language. The study of Hoque (2013) correlates the present study, because the present study finds that teachers teaching English in the Alim class are weak in both listening and speaking. Since the teachers themselves are not sufficiently fluent in listening and speaking, they feel reluctant and uncomfortable to speak English, and they avoid arrangement of practices of four skills of target language in the class.

Item -5: Roles of the Present Syllabus

SL	Item of response	Students' response	Teachers' response
1	passing examination	99%	92%
2	understanding teacher's lecture	21%	38%
3	using English with others	74%	78%
4	reading English books and newspaper	40%	40%
5	getting good job	32%	82%
6	using internet	9%	11%
7	watching TV programmes	42%	33%
8	writing letters	43%	52%

Table-1 : Role of the present syllabus viewed by the students and teachers

The above table states 99% students think that the present syllabus meets the need of *passing examination* ; 74% students answer that *using English with other* may be done by studying the present syllabus; 43% students believe that the syllabus may help them in *writing letters*; 42% students choose *watching TV programme* option; 40% students mark *reading English books and news paper* option; 32% students suggest that the syllabus may help them *getting good job*; while 21% students think that the present syllabus may help them *understanding teachers lectures*; 9% students mark(✓) *using Internet* option. The fact is, the most of the students study the syllabus with a view to passing the examination, which is considered a hurdle in the way of career formation; therefore, it is found that the teachings and learning in HSC class is examination oriented. It is stated in the preface to the book *English For Today*, For Classes 11-12 that the

book provides opportunities for practicing the four skills of English language: speaking, listening, reading and writing, usually in an interactive mode, and the textbook is to provide ample opportunities for the students to use English for a variety of purposes in interesting situations. Here, 92% teachers believe that the syllabus helps the students *passing examination*; 82% teachers assure that the syllabus may help them *getting good job*; 78% teachers think that the present syllabus can play the role of *using English with others*; where as 52% teachers tick (✓) the *writing letters* option; 40% teachers suggest that the syllabus plays role in *reading books and newspaper*; 38% teachers claim that the syllabus may help the students *understanding the lecturer*; 33 % teachers think that the syllabus helps the students *watching TV programme*.

The students as well as the teachers think that the present syllabus can do various functions, and they have common opinions on the role of the current syllabus, 98% students and 92% teachers think that the present syllabus aims at *passing the examination*; teachers (82%) and students (74%) suggest that syllabus may help them *getting good jobs*. Sysoyev (2011) reveals that designing a course syllabus should serve learners' interest and needs that should go into students' analysis, formulations of goals and objectives of the course, conceptualisation of the content, selecting the materials, course planning, evaluating the course.

Item -6: Learning Style

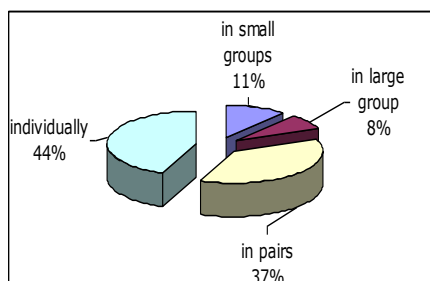


Figure 7: Students' reply

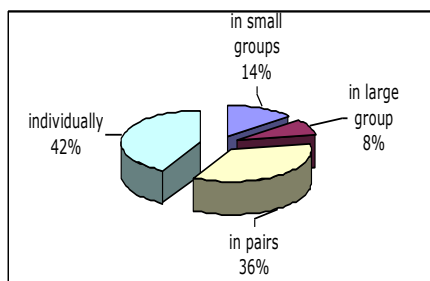


Figure 8: Teachers' reply

The results for this item suggest that 44%, students generally prefer learning *individually*; 37% students prefer to work *in pairs*; On the other hand 11% of students like learning *in small groups*; while, 8% students prefer learning *in a large group*. The findings support the study of Zuhail Okan and Erdogan (2010) which reveal that 50% students prefer learning *individually*, whereas 35% students prefer learning *in pairs*. The present study is also supported by the study of Januleviciene and Kavaliauskiene (2005) which discloses that 33% students prefer learning *individually*, and another 33% students have a preference in learning *in pairs*; 20% students like to learn *in small groups*.

It may be mentioned that the above three studies present almost same results indicating that students mostly prefer to learn *individually*; and in *pairs*. The data surprisingly contradicts the learner-centered approach which has been widely advocated by a number of English language practitioners, who are with the opinion that pairs or small groups work is indispensable. Lately, pair work has been considered as the most effective way of developing communicative skills in target language. The above statistics suggest 50% teachers believe that students prefer learning *individually*; and 42% *in pairs*; 6% *in small groups*; while 2% teachers think that their students like to work *in large group*. Students prefer learning *individually* due to shyness in one hand, and poor level of confidence on the other hand. The students do not like to disclose their weakness to their fellow mates. The study finds a strong correlation between the teachers and the students. The correlation indicates that the teachers are aware of their students' preference in learning style. It is obvious that students do not like working in a *large group*, and their teachers are aware of that. This is a clear message to the teachers that students feel more comfortable, productive and relaxed by working *individually* or *in pairs*, where their voices would be heard, and views listened to and valued.

4.2 Findings from the Interviews

The purpose of EFL teacher interview was to explore how the interviewed six teachers conducted their teaching with regard to the intended curriculum. From the interviews, the four EFL teachers (out of six) recognized their own lack of knowledge and understanding of the syllabus. Although the curriculum designers/ policymakers expected teachers to adhere to the objectives and specifications of the syllabus in their classroom teaching and to be knowledgeable and clear about the syllabus, the teachers also expressed their lack of interest in this curricular document. In terms of the student-centred approach, all the teachers interviewed attributed large class sizes, students' poor language proficiency, limited teaching periods, heavy teaching loads, and students' study habits as obstacles to their implementation of this approach. Maximum teachers stated that one hundred percent use of English in instruction would probably result in students' frustration, based on their students' language ability. They remarked that use of their first language was beneficial for their students. Regarding the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, these four teachers emphasized that they used Bengali to save time, to be clear in instruction, and to check whether students understood what was being taught to them. The teachers acknowledged the impact of this test on their curriculum implementation. The effects included teaching to the test, a narrowing of the intended curriculum by focusing on improving students' test scores, and paying scant attention to the cultivation of students' communicative skills. Indeed, both questionnaire surveys and interviews demonstrated a discrepancy between what was intended by the policymakers and what was enacted by the two teachers.

5. Conclusion

This study presents the findings of the present study, and the interpretation of the findings. An attempt has been made to discuss a number of issues related to English language teaching and learning in the Alim class in the madrasahs in Bangladesh. This chapter produces a large amount of information from the students and the teachers about many different issues on ELT such as; syllabus, lesson, practice of English language skills, performance in English, needs of English, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, attitudes and beliefs, etc. It depicts learners' attitudes towards: what they want to learn, how they intend to learn, which materials fit them, how they feel with the exiting material, etc. The teachers also articulate their opinion on the same issues in their own way. In many of the cases both the teachers and the students provide almost same opinions and expressions, yet in some cases they show disagreements and contradictions.

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Assessment of English Reading Skills in Secondary Schools in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This qualitative study tried to explore how Bangladeshi secondary English teachers assess English reading skill; barriers teachers faced in assessment; and the possible ways to improve assessment of reading in schools. The study employed semi-structured interviews with four English teachers from two secondary schools in Dhaka city; observed five teaching sessions of each of the four teachers; organised Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 40 students in four equal groups. 10 learners in each group were selected through lottery from grades IX and X of the schools. Additionally, the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); English for Today (NCTB, 2012b); Sample Test prepared by NCTB; Guidelines for the Test Setters and Markers for English were analysed. One curriculum specialist from the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and a teacher educator from Govt. Teachers' Training College, Dhakawas also interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule. The data were transcribed, coded, and then categorised based on the major themes of the research questions. During transcribing, coding, and categorising of the data, findings of the study emerged. The major findings of the study included-teachers did not comply with the curriculum guidelines regarding assessment; barriers include using commercially produced tests and seen passages, and insufficient training of teachers on testing and assessment, and lack of supervision, mentoring, and monitoring; the existing barriers could be minimised through rigorous training, supervision, and mentoring.

Keywords: reading skill, assessment, secondary level, seen passage, mentoring

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1. Introduction

Reading is one of the four basic skills of the English language and is vital to success in one's life (Billah, 2014). Being able to read with understanding is highly esteemed for social and economic development of a person (Cathrine, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). According to Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man" (Bacon, 1696 found in Dr. Sen, p. 146). Reading is an effective way of learning to communicate in the target language (McCray, Vaughn, & Neal, 2001). Bangladesh's primary and secondary curriculums attach added importance to the development of English reading skill of learners. All the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) would be practised in the classrooms (NCTB, 2012a). Although English reading skill development gets importance in Bangladesh secondary curriculum, assessment of English reading skill does not receive so much importance in the curriculum implementation process. The NCTB claims that the secondary school leavers will develop competence in all four language skills- listening, speaking, reading, and writing; use competence for effective communication in real life situations. However, little importance is paid to the assessment of reading skill in schools as well as in the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations.

1.1 Background of the Study

Although English is taught as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary level educational institutions in Bangladesh for a period of 12 years and beyond, most Bangladeshi students cannot comprehend when they read a piece of authentic text in English. In fact, Imam (2005) reports that the average level of English language skills of university students was equivalent to that which was set by the government for the students of class seven. English education in Bangladesh has not always enjoyed equal importance since the independence of the country in 1971. The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) suggests that there should be continuous assessment throughout the months instead of monthly tests, and teachers are advised to be careful to assess all the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the English language. However, assessment of English reading skill including other skills has never received proper judgment. The reading skills and two other skills are properly assessed neither in schools nor in the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ebrahim (2017) reports that teachers do not teach and assess English reading skill in the ways as suggested in the curriculum. The experiences of the first author (Dr. Ranjit Podder) as a formerly secondary school English teacher and later as a teacher educator show that assessment

of reading is neglected in schools and in the SSC examinations. Therefore, in order to get rid of the poor reading assessment situation, it should be investigated to learn what measures could be taken to improve the situation.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

This study selected only four secondary English teachers who taught English in grades IX and X in the two selected schools of Dhaka city. Moreover, 10 students were selected from each grade of nine and 10 from the stated two schools totaling 40 ($10 + 10 + 10 + 10 = 40$). Although generalization of findings is not expected from a qualitative study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), hopefully, the findings of the current research would be trustworthy because of the rigorous nature of the study.

1.4 Definition of the Key Terms

The key terms used in this study are reading skill, assessment, and secondary level. The terms have been explained below:

Reading skill

Although there are two kinds of reading such as silent reading and reading aloud, silent reading for comprehension has been considered as reading in this study.

Assessment

Johnston and Costello (2005) define assessment, with reference to Black and William (1998) as feedback provided by teachers on students' literate behaviours just as much as is grading students' work; classifying students as handicapped or above or below grade level; and identifying the areas of improvement. Educational assessment may include the process of documenting an individual's or a group's achieved skills, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. This study considers assessment of reading skill, not the four language skills. Assessment in this study includes formative assessment or assessment for learning (AfL); summative assessment or assessment of learning (AoL) in schools; and continuous assessment (CA) that teachers perform in the educational institutions during teaching and learning. Assessment in this study means assessment of reading skill by employing the strategies as suggested by NCTB in the Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English, and in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a & 1995).

Secondary level

Although secondary level spreads from the sixth to the 12th grades, grades nine and ten have been considered as secondary level for this study.

2. Literature Review

In education, assessment is a continuous process that involves a wide range of methodological techniques (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). There are mainly two types of assessment, assessment for learning (AfL) or formative assessment and assessment of learning (AoL) or summative assessment. Assessment for learning plays an important role for teachers to build reading comprehension instruction around the readers' interests, strengths, and their needs. Westwood (2001) claims that assessment should aim at finding areas where the learners need supports. Formative assessment is conducted during teaching in order to repair the weaknesses of the students and the teaching approaches and techniques.

Formative assessment is also called assessment for learning (AfL) or continuous assessment (CA) in Bangladesh secondary curriculum as it aims at providing supports to students for learning to happen. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of a course or year to give students grades. A summative assessment tries to measure the knowledge and growth of skill of a learner over a period of time; and that is why some linguists call it a summative assessment or assessment of learning (Harrison, 1986). Bangladesh secondary curriculum suggests two kinds of assessments: formative assessment or AfL which is called continuous assessment (CA) in the current curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); and the other is summative assessment (SA) or assessment of learning (AoL) usually held at the end of a term or a course or at the end of an academic year. For CA, 20% marks have been allotted for every subject including English. Areas of assessment and marks distribution have been shown below (NCTB, 2012a):

	Assessment area	Marks
a	Class work	10
b	Homework and investigation work	05
c	Class test	05
		Total 20

The students are expected to achieve the reading skill by the end of class 10 or SSC examinations through continuous practice during the school days.

3. Research Questions

The study proceeded to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) How do the teachers assess English reading skills of the students?
- 2) What are the barriers to assessing English reading skill in schools?
- 3) How can the assessment of reading in secondary schools be improved?

4. Research Methodology

The current research is a qualitative study. In order to investigate into the research problem, the researcher interviewed the four English teachers of two secondary schools in Dhaka city, and one Curriculum Specialist from the NCTB and a teacher educator from a Government Teachers' Training College in Bangladesh with separate interview schedules; observed assessment of English reading skill in schools; arranged Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 40 secondary students studying in classes nine and 10 of the selected schools. It is worth mentioning that in each FGD group, there were only 10 students selected through lottery. Additionally, documents such as the *English for Today* book (NCTB, 2012b) and the *National Curriculum* (NCTB, 2012a) were analysed. One school was government and the other was non-government secondary school; and one was high performing and the other was poorly performing in terms of the SSC results in the last five years. Out of the four teacher participants, there were one male and three female teachers who were teaching English in those two schools in classes nine and 10. It is worth mentioning that the teacher participants are given pseudonyms such T1, T2, T3, and T4. It should be noted that the language mistakes of the teachers were corrected during data transcription.

5.0 Findings and Discussion

The major findings have been presented below:

5.1 English Reading Skill Assessment in Schools

Assessment culture in an education system usually dictates the classroom practices (Biggs & Tang, 2011). It is alleged that reading skill is not practised properly and with added importance (Ebrahim, 2017) as this skill is not assessed properly neither in continuous assessment (CA) nor in the internal (half-yearly and year-final) examinations although Inbar-Lourie (2008) reports that classroom assessment promotes better learning. Although schools organise summative assessment a year, half-yearly in the middle of the year and the year-final examinations towards the end of the year, reading skill assessment does not get importance there. Regarding the summative assessment of reading, all the four teachers claim that they perform assessment of learning (AoL) in reading in half-yearly and year-final examinations but the way they perform the (AoL) is not as it should be or as per the curriculum guidelines. All the four teachers claim that, they perform CA during teaching of reading but the way the assessment activities are performed is not as is suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). T2's interview transcript provided below is a proof that their assessment practices are not as suggested in the curriculum. T2 claims:

I tell students to read the text aloud one by one so that all in the classroom can hear. Then I know who of the students has performed better and who has not. I also judge students' speed of reading and pronunciation.

T2 further claims regarding the (AoL) that she follows the Sample Question provided by the NCTB and follows the test items as suggested by the NCTB.T2 assets:

We conduct summative assessments of reading in the half-yearly and in the year-final examinations. We usually follow the structure of the tests (question papers) provided by the NCTB.

T3 fumbles for words when asked about CA and he hesitates to talk about continuous assessment mentioned in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). He says that he does not know anything about CA or continuous assessment and he does not perform any CA. He continues:

What is CA? Actually, I do not perform any CA; CA is rare in my class! Of course, we do it. Actually, CA is what we do in the classroom. I teach; I talk; I advise; I ask questions; I write answers on the board; I teach word meaning; all these activities are CA.

T3 is so puzzled that it seems to the researcher that he hears the term CA or continuous assessment for the first time. Regarding the summative assessment of reading in the half-yearly and year-final examinations, he claims that summative assessment of reading is done properly. However, he cannot tell anything in detail.

T4's perception about CA and her knowledge about the curriculum expectations regarding CA and AoL is sound. She knows what is said in the curriculum regarding CA and AoL. She claims:

In order to assess students' reading, I ask them to read the text and then answer the questions, say true or false, fill out gaps, etc. 5 marks are allotted for reading skill assessment and I give marks after testing their reading speed and pronunciation but this mark is not added to determine the final results of the students.

T1 further alleges regarding CA that she asks students questions during and after every activity but this she does not do always for giving grades to students; this is done so that she can give feedback to students; address the weaknesses in teaching and learning:

Actually, my school does not have provision to test reading skill during teaching. Reading skill is tested only in the half-yearly and in the school final examinations. The tests (question papers) are prepared by us based on the instructions provided by the NCTB.

However, T1 is apparently noticed to be more methodical in assessing reading skill than other three participants. Her AoL complies with the guidelines provided in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). What T1 says in interview proves that she understands what assessment aims at. She asserts:

CA is done to improve students' reading skill as well as to identify my weaknesses as a teacher; I can teach differently if a certain way of teaching is proved to be ineffective. I believe, CA is important but the school authority does not tell us to keep on assessing students' English reading skill continuously.

She continues that although she is aware of the nitty-gritty of assessment, she does not follow anybody. She claims, 20 marks allotted for all the four-language skills assessment in CA. Actually, we do not do that; none of the English teachers practices CA as suggested in the curriculum. However, T1 claims that they do summative assessment as per the curriculum guidelines. She asserts:

Students' improvement of reading skill is assessed on 40 marks in the half-yearly and final examinations. I prepare the tests (question paper) for the summative assessment following the curriculum guidelines and those tests are used in the school examinations. There are 3 pieces of texts followed by some questions.

None of the four teachers performs CA as per the curriculum expectations; actually, reading testing or assessment is neglected by the school authority or they are not aware of it at all. It also may be that the schools and the teachers do not want to take extra load of work that originates if CA is implemented. In some instances, teachers do not know what CA does mean although Inbar-Lourie (2008) asserts that CA promotes more learning than AoL. Teachers are not much aware of the CA probably because most of them do not have the opportunity to join the curriculum dissemination training. However, AoL or the summative assessment is performed as per the curriculum guidelines during the half-yearly and the year-final examinations. Teachers strictly follow the items provided in the sample test (question paper) which is attached at the back of the textbook. T1's better understanding of the CA and conducting some activities of CA as per the curriculum guidelines might be because of her added interest in teaching and learning English language which is obvious in her eagerness and engagement in students' debate practices and in English Language Club; sharing educational ideas with colleagues; attending training sessions whenever she finds an opportunity; browsing the Internet; and participating in the curriculum dissemination training.

5.2 Barriers in Assessing English Reading Skill

The barrier is that, teachers are not familiar with the curriculum-suggested assessment strategies. The teacher educator claims:

Unless the teachers know about how to assess reading, how is it possible to assess reading properly? First of all, the English teachers should be trained properly so that they can perform CA and summative assessments following the curriculum expectations.

Additionally, the school and the higher authority does not pay attention to the teaching and assessment of English reading. None from the education authority is in charge of looking after if the curriculum is being implemented properly or not. Another glitch is that, two seen passages carrying 22 marks are being set from the *English for Today (NCTB, 2012b)*. It is learnt from the teacher participants that they do not prepare tests for their schools; the school authorities buy commercially produced tests from different organizations. That is why, teachers' reading-assessment skill does not improve that much. During observations, it is noticed every time that T2, T3, and T4 never assess the students' reading skill but T1 does it methodically. This happens probably T1 follows the instructions received in training sessions and because of her proactive nature. Most of the teachers who take part in the study do not assess students; might be because there is no one to monitor their activities and to mentor them. Providing training and proper mentoring can improve the situation.

5.3 Ways to Improve English Reading skill Assessment

The curriculum specialist, alongside other matters, talks about how to improve the reading assessment situation in the country. He continues, if we want to improve the situation, we need to change the reading assessment strategy; provide sufficient training to teachers; and intensify supervision and mentoring. The curriculum specialist asserts that the curriculum-suggested CA must be implemented. All the teachers must be provided with rigorous training on assessment of English reading skill. He maintains:

So far as I know, only from 10 to 15 percent English teachers are well qualified and well-trained to teach English competently; there are many schools where there is no teacher with English language or literature background and teachers who were recruited to teach other subjects teach English without any training in English or on curriculum.

The teacher educator maintains that the English curriculum must be restructured in a way that will ensure the proper teaching and assessment of English reading skill in secondary schools of Bangladesh. The participating teachers also provide some suggestions from their experiences regarding how the reading skill assessment situation can be improved. First of all, all

the participating teachers express the need of training enabling them to teach and assess reading properly. T1 stresses:

We need training after a certain period of time to renew the ideas and to be familiar with the latest curriculum, modern methods and techniques of assessment strategies as planned in the curriculum.

Other than CA, T 2 claims that there is a seen passage set in the summative examinations. This seen passage has become a black spot in the English reading assessment. She maintains:

There is a seen passage' in the summative assessment of reading. This seen passage' culture should be repealed by the government for the sake of students' reading skill development. There needs a huge reform in the assessment system to bring a positive change.

All the four teachers suggest training on assessment; two of the teachers suggest creating additional reading opportunities in the curriculum; and a teacher demands academic supervision from the higher authority to keep the teachers on track. Without introducing continuous monitoring and supervision followed by constructive feedback and mentoring, the reading assessment situation may not be possible to improve. If teachers use participatory approach or the curriculum suggested CLT, teachers would have been able to teach and assess reading skills of the students.

6. Conclusion

This study tried to explore the English reading skill assessment situation at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh as reading is an essential part of learning English language. Therefore, the assessment of reading is important to track the progress in comprehension and to measure the achievement in reading. The researchers employed a qualitative research methodology to find answers to the research questions. Four English teachers from two secondary schools were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule; the teaching sessions of those four teachers were observed almost for a year; and four FGDs were organised with 10 students in each group of classes IX and X. Data were transcribed, coded, and then categorised based on the themes of the research questions. The major findings of the study included:- teachers and students were not much aware of the reading assessment strategies; most of the teachers were not found to implement formative assessment and the summative assessment of reading was faulty; teachers were not well-familiar with the curriculum suggested assessment strategies; and reading skill assessment situation could be improved through- providing sufficient training to teachers, and intensifying supervision and mentoring.

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Participatory Approaches to Enhance Teaching - learning Activities in English Classes

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Abstract

In the modern era of education participatory approaches are very effective for teaching and learning. Teachers and students participate in discussion, interaction, sharing ideas and exchanging views through group work, pair work in classroom. Teachers need to encourage students to participate in solving any problems in groups or pairs inside and outside the classroom and sometimes individually. Students require being active in classroom and teachers help them to develop knowledge and ideas in the respective fields based on student-centered learning. As a result, students will be greatly benefited and teachers' performance will come to a level of competence needed for students' learning skills. In this regard three learning theories namely cognitivism, constructivism and scaffolding have been discussed and in the light of these analytical discussion three lesson plans have been developed to ensure effective teaching and learning in our context. So, participatory approaches are important now-a-days for both teachers and students.

Key words: *participatory approaches, peer work, interaction, cognitivism, constructivism, scaffolding*

1. Introduction

Participatory approaches are essential for both teachers and learners because these refer to the act of taking part in the activities of a group of learners. For the classroom practices, participatory approaches are here hugely used. Teachers and students in accordance with these approaches take part in expressing their activities, feelings and contexts in the classroom (Eriksson and Granlund, 2004). As teachers we need to bring a change by participatory approaches in teaching and learning activities so that our teaching-learning will be effective for learners. The changes in teaching and learning methods will be brought by replacing the old and traditional methods in classroom practices. The teachers and students will be

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participatory and interactive in classroom. For the purpose, teachers will instruct students to work in groups, in pairs and sometimes individually. Now this paper seeks to explore the teachers and learners' views on participation in teaching – learning activities in my college named Government Edward College, Bangladesh. For the purpose, I along with my other colleagues need to develop our knowledge and skills in providing instructions by creating classroom environment so that all learners will participate in learning activities (Payne, 2006).

1.1 Development of Context

The institution namely Government Edward College was established in 1898 and its first name was 'The Pabna Institution'. But in 1906 its name was changed into 'Pabna College' in accordance with a new law. After the death of the British Emperor Edward the Seventh in 1910 the then British Indian Government renamed Pabna College as 'Edward College' in remembrance of Emperor Edward the Seventh in 1911 (Kundu, P.K. 2014: 17). Edward College was provincialized in 1968 during the Pakistan Period and after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 this provincialized college turned automatically into 'Government Edward College'. Government Edward College is situated in the district Headquarters of Pabna, Bangladesh. This college has intermediate (science, arts & commerce), degree pass (science, arts & commerce), honors (in 17 subjects) and masters (in 17 subjects) courses. English is one of the prominent subjects (ibid, 2014: 21).

1.2 Techniques of My Teaching

I use different methods / techniques in order to teach my students in classroom. I encourage students to be participatory and interactive in classroom. Teacher's dominated classroom is not expected now-a-days. Students and teacher are expected to participate and interact in discussion and sharing ideas and this method will help students to be benefited in learning activities enormously. I allow students to make group work and pair work in classroom. A group may usually consist of four students and a pair will be of two students. I encourage the observation team consisting of senior faculty members to observe my classroom while I am taking myclass. The duration of our class is only 45 minutes. The observation team observes how the class is going on, how I am taking class, how I am teaching students, what methods I am using with the students in the classroom, how the students are receiving and understanding my lecture, how much they are interacted with me and how the teaching environment is going on in the classroom. Peer work is one of the important techniques of teaching and learning. Peer work is necessary to achieve a recovery system of students' mental and psychological health and a peer is supposed to offer opportunity or support by virtue of relevant experience (Salzer, M. 2002). I recommend

peer work to provide peer support to my students in classroom. Peer observation is essential to watch or monitor a language lesson (Richards, J. C., & Thomas, S. C. F. 2005: 85). I use these above methods/techniques to make students participatory and interactive effectively in classroom. For the purpose, I would like to deal with some instructional practices needed for teaching-learning activities that guide interaction and participation in the classroom.

2. Instructional Practices

Instructional practices are specific methods that usually change old or traditional techniques of teaching and learning, improve new ones and achieve target results. Instructional practices are the vehicles used by teachers to move students forward efficiently in their learning (https://www.tpsnva.org/teach/best_practices/). For the purpose, I want to change old or traditional teaching and learning methods of my college. The traditional teaching and learning methods/techniques available in my college are described briefly below: (a) The teacher dominates in the classroom while he/she is delivering lecture; (b) The students are silent listeners in the classroom; (c) There is rarely teacher-students' interaction and participation in discussion and sharing ideas in the classroom; (d) There is no provision of making group work, pair work, peer support and observation in classroom; and (e) There is no evaluation system from students' side regarding teachers' performance in the classroom. I along with my colleagues and students would like to bring changes to the above systems of teaching and learning in my college. The changes are as follows: (i) As a teacher I would like to make the class participatory and interactive. So, students and teacher will be able to take part in discussion and sharing ideas in classroom; (ii) Students will be made dominant in the classroom where I along with my colleagues in each respective class share ideas with students and take part in discussion; (iii) Teacher-students' participation and interaction will be introduced in classroom; (iv) I encourage students to make group work and pair work and humbly advise the Principal to introduce peer support and observation in classroom routinely; (v) I recommend evaluation of teachers including myself from students' side annually regarding teachers' performance in classroom. These are the changes I would like to bring for teachers and students' teaching and learning. Through motivation the changes need to be implemented (Kumaravadivelu, B. 2012). To implement the change, I need to develop the theoretical ideas in the next section.

3. The Theoretical Ideas

The theoretical ideas will help achieve the aims so that I need to utilize learning theories, sets of principles that explain how learners achieve, retain and recall knowledge (Illeris, K. 2004). By different learning theories we can know how learning occurs. The principles of theories are generally

used as guidelines of instructional tools, techniques and strategies that promote learning. It is necessary to discuss three major learning theories in order to achieve the aims. The major theories are as follows: (a) Cognitivism; (b) Constructivism; and (c) Scaffolding. Now I will discuss these theories in details.

3.1 General Ideas of Cognitivism and Its Impact

Cognitivism is a theory of learning that usually occurs through internal processing of information. Cognitive theories grew out of Gestalt psychology. This Gestalt psychology was developed in Germany in the early 1900s by Wolfgang Kohler and it was brought to America in the 1920s (Soltis, J. 2004). This theory is based on the work of psychologists and psycholinguists (McLaughlin, B.1987:133). Cognitive information processing is based on the thought process behind the behavior. Learning is a cognitive process because it includes internal representations that guide learner's performance (Karmiloff-Smith, A. 1986). The theory relates to the idea that human beings process the information they receive. As a result, the changes occur in the learner's mind. The changes are generally observed in behavior and reflect on the learner's head. The learner's mind is a mirror where new knowledge and skills are reflected. Cognitive information processing is used when the learner plays an active role in finding ways to understand and process information that the learner receives in memory. Cognitive learning theories are credited to Jean Piaget, one of the most important authors of cognitive psychology. These cognitive approaches to learning theories pay more attention to the learner's portion of his/her head and focus on mental processes.

3.2 Ideas of Constructivism and Its Impact

Constructivism is based on the premise that we construct our own perspective of the world based on individual experiences and internal knowledge. Founded by Jean Piaget, constructivism gives importance on the active involvement of learners in constructing knowledge for themselves (Bodner, G., Klobuchar, M., & Geelan, D. 2001). Learning is basically based on how the individual interprets and creates the meaning of his/her experiences. Knowledge is constructed by the learner. Learning is unique and also different for each person. According to the constructivist theorists, learning is a process by which individuals construct new ideas or concepts based on prior knowledge or experience. We generate our new mental models. We resolve conflicts between ideas and reflect on theoretical explanations. So, learning is the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate our new experiences. Constructivism enforces students to learn deeply by listening to a teacher or reading from a book. It indicates that effective teaching environment should be created as if students can develop their good understanding in the classroom. The learning theorists

namely John Dewey, Maria Montessori and David A. Kolb are the founders of the application of constructivist learning theory in the classroom (Lombardi, S. M. 2011).

3.2.1 Categories of Constructivism

Constructivism is of different varieties such as active learning, discovery learning and knowledge building but all these varieties promote students' free exploration within a given framework of structure.

3.3 An Overview of Scaffolding and Its Effectiveness

Scaffolding means Vygotsky scaffolding that maximizes students' learning by teacher's guidance. Lev Vygotsky, Soviet psychologist (1896 – 1934) gave the idea of scaffolding. According to him, scaffolding is a teaching method that helps students learn more by working with a teacher or a more advanced student to achieve their learning goals. Vygotsky coined the idea “Zone of proximal development” and conducted many studies to instructional scaffolding. So, the concept is called “Vygotsky scaffolding”. Instructional scaffolding is compared to independent learning. Students learn more when they collaborate with others who have wider range of skills and knowledge than the students currently do. So, the instructional scaffolding is the support provided to the learners through the learning process which is tailored to the needs of the learners (Sawyer, R. K. (2006). The instructors or peers are the ‘scaffolding’ who help students expand their learning boundaries.

Vygotsky scaffolding is part of the educational concept known as “Zone of proximal development (ZPD)”. ZPD is a set of skills or knowledge that a student cannot do but he/she can do with the help or guidance of someone or his / her teacher. Example, a child knows all the letters of the alphabet only but cannot read or write words. It is no matter how much guidance he/she was given and he/shenever read a novel with own efforts but with the help or guidance of a teacher he/she can learn how to read or write. So, the students' ZPD is reading and writing words, and the teacher who helps him/her learn them (reading and writing) is the scaffolding. So, the above theoretical ideas i.e., cognitivism, constructivism and scaffolding will help us achieve our aims.

4. Critical Discussions of the Theoretical Ideas

It is necessary to discuss each of the theoretical ideas mentioned in the above chapter. The first theoretical idea is cognitivism that occurs through internal processing of information. It is based on thought process and guides learner's performance. Instructor processes information and learners receive that information. As a result, a change occurs in the learner's mind and this change is observed in behavior and reflects on the

learner's head. Cognitive learning theory has its impact on learners. Learners receive information internally and this information reflects on each learner's mind. This reflection is expressed in learner's behavior. The second learning theory is constructivism that emphasizes on the active involvement of learners in constructing skills and knowledge for themselves. Knowledge and skills are constructed by the learners through different sets of experiences and perceptions. So, learning is a process by which learners construct new ideas or concepts based on prior knowledge and experience. Every learner is not equal in learning equally so that he/she needs help or guidance from a teacher or a peer. So, teacher could provide his/her sufficient support to make students understand. In our context of Bangladesh, we need scaffolding for learners' better understanding and learning. So, scaffolding is one of the best methods in the teaching and learning situation. Now I would like to discuss why I have chosen these theoretical ideas.

4.1 Rationale for Choice of Theoretical Ideas

The theoretical ideas e.g., cognitivism, constructivism and scaffolding help us to achieve our aims in this paper. Both teacher and students have their important roles in the classroom. Through the cognitive approach I will process information and students will receive this information internally. Students will develop their ideas through discussion, interaction, participation, group work and pair work. Then they will construct their ideas or concepts following the constructivism theory. So, learning is a process by which learners can construct their ideas or concepts through prior experiences or perceptions. Some of the students do not learn equally.

5. Teaching the Lesson Plans

Primarily it is important to describe what a lesson plan is. A lesson plan is a teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction. A daily lesson plan is developed by a teacher to guide class learning. It includes how the goal will be measured and finally reached. As a teacher I need to design at least three lesson plans for my classes where I teach the students of intermediate, honors and master degree levels regularly. The class duration is 45 minutes only. Now I would like to show my lesson plans below.

5.1 Lesson Plan I

The first lesson plan designed for the students of intermediate second year has been shown in figure I below.

Subject: Paragraph writing on “**Air Pollution**”

Part B: Writing Section

Class: Intermediate Science II year

Duration: 45 minutes

Learning outcomes	Students will be able to write paragraph properly on “air pollution”.		
Teaching aids	white board, marker, projector, lap top, model, pen, paper etc.		
What ss already known	Students already know how to write it a little.		
Stages	Teaching-learning activities	Theoretical ideas	Time
Input	1. What a paragraph is; 2. How students will develop ideas on air pollution; 3. How they will be able to write on air pollution.	Internal processing of information, internal representations through learning, active involvement of learners’ learning, new ideas based on prior knowledge or experience, maximization of students’ learning by teachers’ guidance, instructional learning	10 minutes
Practices	Group work, pair work and individual work.	Do	25 minutes
Tasks	1. To develop thoughts in groups; 2. To discuss it combined; and 3. Finally, to write it individually.	Do	10 minutes

Table 1

The above lesson plan is based on student-centered learning because students will participate in discussions and interact with teacher and other classmates in the classroom. In different groups students will be able to develop their ideas on air pollution. Students are encouraged to use marker on the white board and lap top in the classroom. They will be able to develop their technological knowledge.

The formative assessment of the lesson is very significant. First of all, the learning outcomes have been designed in order to bring out the results of the lesson plan. Some teaching aids e.g. white board, marker, projector, laptop, model, pen, paper etc. are used in this lesson plan. I input teaching and learning activities so students will be capable of knowing what a paragraph is, how to develop ideas and how to write it properly. Students learn in groups, pairs and individually to write the paragraph well. Tasks have been given to students to develop their thoughts in groups and/or pairs on the specific topic and finally, they are successful to write the paragraph

individually. I have dealt with the elements of the theories of cognitive, constructivism and scaffolding in this lesson plan. Students learn through the internal processing of information. So, changes occur in behavior and reflect on students' heads.

I have used constructivism in the lesson plan. Here students construct their new knowledge or concepts and teachers facilitate them to learn new knowledge through prior experiences. I have dealt with scaffolding that means maximizing students' learning by teacher's guidance. Instructional scaffolding is part of educational concept known as "Zone of proximal development (ZPD), a set of knowledge and skills that students learn with the help or guidance of teachers or someone else. Here scaffolding is a teacher and students' knowledge and skill is ZPD. I, as scaffolding, like to help students learn knowledge and skills concerned with ZPD required for them. So, the lesson plan is appropriate and relevant in the context.

5.2 Lesson Plan 2

The second lesson plan designed for the students of Honors second year has been shown in figure 2 below.

Subject: English

Class: Second year (Honors) in English

Session: 2021 – 2022

Class duration: 45 minutes

A lesson plan designed to teach a poem of William Wordsworth entitled "**It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free**"

Form	Romantic Poem
Topic	It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free
Curriculum specifications	By the end of this lesson, students will be able to: (i) learn the theme and the interpretation of the poem; (ii) develop philosophical thoughts; (iii) recognize the literal meaning; and create feelings towards the past incidents.
Learning outcomes	During the lesson, students will be able to: ○ draw a picture in their minds through their own imagination; ○ write a sentence as the caption of their drawing; and write a thematic note which is not more than 200 words.
Moral values	Nature, reminiscences and address to little one
Theoretical ideas	Internal processing of information, reflection on mind/head, creation of own thoughts and ideas and guidance of peers
Teaching materials	White board, marker, Laptop, PowerPoint slide, the poet's background, photocopied poems, projector and white screen etc.

Background knowledge(s)	Students have read the poem and have a gist.
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Stages	Teacher's Activities	Students' Activities	Remarks
Set Introduction (15 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chooses students randomly and asks how the poet describes nature in the octave. 2. Explains in the sestet how the poet addresses his title daughter Caroline to worship at the Temple's inner shrine because God will stay with her when the poet and his sister will not stay with her. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell how the poet describes the picture of nature and how he addresses his child Caroline. 2. Listen to the teacher's explanation attentively. 	White board, marker, laptop, PowerPoint slide, the poet's background, photocopied poems, projector, and white screen etc.
Factual Analysis/Explicit Meaning (30 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distributes photocopied poems to each student. 2. Explains and discusses with the students about what the meaning lies behind the octave and the sestet of the sonnet. 3. Divides the students into 5 groups and asks them questions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get a copy of the poem. 2. Listen to the teacher's explanation attentively and participate in discussion actively. 3. Get into groups and write lots. 	Photocopied poems, paper, pen, suggested answers.

Table 2

The second lesson plan on William Wordsworth's romantic poem "**It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free**" is very significant. The study is designed on the basis of student-centered learning. In curriculum specifications students will be able to learn the theme and interpretation, to develop philosophical and psychological insights, to recognize the literal meaning and to create feelings towards the past. Students will be able to: (i) draw a picture of nature's love and blessing through their imagination; (ii) write a topic sentence as the caption of their drawing; and (iii) write a thematic note but not more than 200 words. Finally, they will write this note individually. The theoretical ideas e.g. internal processing of information, reflection on minds/heads, creation of thoughts and ideas, and guidance of peers are related to some ingredients of cognitivism, constructivism and scaffolding.

The introductory stage includes 15 minutes. In teacher's activities the teacher chooses students randomly and asks them questions relating to the description of nature and the poet's address and advice to his little daughter Caroline. In the students' activities students tell how the poet describes a picture of nature and he addresses Caroline, and they listen to the teacher's explanation attentively. In the factual analysis / explicit meaning section, it takes 30 minutes. The teacher distributes photocopied poems to each student, discusses with students about the meaning of different terms and divides students into 5 groups and asks questions to them. So, the lesson plan is appropriate and reasonable.

5.3 Lesson Plan 3

The third lesson plan designed for the students of Masters final year in English Literature has been shown in figure III below.

Subject: English

Class: MA (Final) in English Literature

Session: 2018 – 2019

Class duration: 45 minutes

A lesson plan designed on William Shakespeare's play **Hamlet**

Topic	Hamlet , a tragedy of William Shakespeare	
Learning objectives	i.	To develop students' knowledge of the plot of Hamlet ;
	ii.	Outline the significance of the line "To be or not to be";
	iii.	To develop students' ability to create information and to take notes;
	iv.	To continue practice of reading and sharing ideas with other students; and
	v.	To analyze the character of Hamlet.

Learning outcomes	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: a) know every fact of the plot of Hamlet; b) find out the significance of the line “To be or not to be”; c) create information and to take note; d) develop practice of reading and sharing ideas with other students; and e) analyze the character of Hamlet.
Theoretical ideas	Internal processing of information, thought process behind behavior, internal representations through learning, learner’s mirror of reflection, reorganization of experiences gained by new insights, active involvement of learners’ learning, new ideas or concepts based on prior knowledge or experience, active learning, discovery learning, knowledge building, maximization of students’ learning by teacher’s guidance, instructional or independent learning and collaboration of learning etc.
Teaching materials	Laptop with internet connection, handouts, photos, PowerPoint slide, white board, marker, pen, photocopies of Hamlet (the drama), projector and white screen
Background knowledge(s)	Students have already read the whole drama.

stages	Teacher’s Activities	Students’ Activities	Remarks
Set introduction (15 minutes)	i. asks students to read the text in order to be familiar with the plot and the characters in Hamlet . ii. shows the imaginary photos of the main characters in videoclip, and advises them to watch and listen to video and audio. iii. encourages students to work together when they have finished the text by reading and	i. Read the text and become familiar with the plot and the characters of the play. ii. watch the imaginary photos of the characters in videoclip, and watch and listen to video and audio. iii. work together and	Handouts, photo copies of the text, laptop, white board, marker, PowerPoint slide, projector, white screen etc.

	watching.	share ideas with the class.	
Factual Analysis / Explicit Meaning (30 minutes)	i. distributes the handouts and the photo copies of the text to each student. ii. Explains and discusses with the students about what meaning lies in each act. iii. divides the students into 4 groups and asks them to develop ideas. iv. Asks students to feed back to the class and advises to develop any interesting topics of conversation that spring from these discussions.	i. collect copies of each item. ii. listen to the teacher's explanation and participate in this discussion. iii. get into groups and develop ideas. iv. feed back to the class and develop new interesting topics that usually come from these discussions.	Handouts, photo copies of the text and suggested answers

Table 3

Primarily I adopt some learning objectives i.e. developing students' knowledge of the plot of Hamlet, significance of the line "To be or not be", creation of information and making notes, practice of reading and sharing ideas and analysis of Hamlet' character. Learning outcomes relate to the above learning objectives. I have developed the concepts of the theoretical ideas relating to the theories of cognitivism, constructivism and scaffolding. The concepts or ideas are internal processing of information, thought process behind behavior, internal representations through learning, learner's mirror of reflection, reorganization of experiences, active involvement of learning, maximization of students' learning by teacher's guidance.

Students have already read the text as part of previous preparation. The stages include the introductory stage covering 15 minutes and the factual analysis / explicit meaning stage covering 30 minutes. In the introductory stage the teacher (i) asks students to read the text and become familiar with the plot and the characters; (ii) shows the imaginary photos of the main characters in videoclip and advises them to watch video and listen

to audio; and (iii) motivates students to work together. In this stage students (i) read the text and become familiar with the characters; (ii) see the imaginary photos of the characters and watch video and listen to audio; and (iii) work together with teacher and other students. In the factual / explicit stage the teacher (i) distributes the handouts and photo copies of the text to each student; (ii) explains and discusses with the students about what meaning lies in each act of the play; (iii) divides students into 4 groups and asks them to develop the ideas; and (iv) asks students to feed back to the class and advises to develop any interesting topics. Here students (i) collect copies of each item; (ii) listen to the teacher's explanation and participate in discussions actively; (iii) get into groups and develop ideas; and (iv) feed back to the class and develop new interesting topics. So, the lesson plan is appropriate and relevant.

6. Critical Reflections and Recommendations

I think strongly that we need to bring about changes in teaching and learning by replacing the old or traditional techniques to the new ones i.e. participatory and interactive methods of teaching and learning. I recommend students' domination in classroom where teacher takes part in exchanging ideas and discussions. As a result, teacher – students' participation and interaction will be ensured in classroom. I would like to encourage students to work in groups and / or pairs, and humbly advise the principal to introduce peer support and observation in classroom routine. I would like to recommend to evaluate teachers' performance by the students, and students' performance by the teachers annually. These theories include some of the learning ingredients like internal processing of information, reflection on mind or head, creation of new thoughts and ideas, internal representations through learning, reorganization of experiences gained by new insights, active learning, maximization of students' learning by teacher's guidance etc. So, the above elements of the learning theories will help us to be participatory and interactive in classroom.

Evaluation

As teachers we need to motivate principals, colleagues, staff and students to implement the aims regarding teaching and learning methods in classroom. As a mentor I like to convince my students to be participatory and interactive, to work in groups and pairs, and sometimes individually. Teacher – students' participation in discussions and sharing ideas needs to be ensured in classroom. I would like to motivate my colleagues to be participatory in classroom and also like to humbly motivate my principal to continue peer support and observation in classroom. For the purpose, a committee of teachers will be made for peer support and classroom observation. So, assessment of teaching – learning activities will properly be introduced in our college. If the teaching and learning activities are based on

the effectiveness of the participation of the teacher and students in the classroom in accordance with the lesson plans, our students will highly be benefited in achieving their learning goals. So, participatory approaches are important to enhance teaching – learning activities in classroom.

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Causes of Inattention in the Civics Classroom: A Case Study at the Higher Secondary Level

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Abstract

The study investigated the causes of students' inattentiveness in the Civics Classes of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College, Bhola. The study followed the qualitative research methods to collect data from the participants. Three instruments such as Semi-structured Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Classroom Observation were applied to obtain the data. The respondents were the teachers teaching Civics study subjects at the higher secondary level. The respondents were chosen by purposive sampling. Two teachers were interviewed; two classrooms observation were conducted; and an FGD of 14 students was performed. And finally, using thematic approach data was analyzed, interpreted, and presented. The findings from the Interview, FGD, and Classroom observation demonstrated that large class size, absence of technological supports traditional methods of lectures, traditional physical layout, teacher attitudes, lack of motivation, absence of and brain storming activities insist the student to be inattentive in the civics class. . The limitation of the study is that it would be better, if it could be conducted in all the government colleges of Bangladesh using large sample size. Furthermore, this study was conducted during the worldwide Corona pandemic. However, these limitations would not impact the study result. The implication of the study is that this study helped me to explore the scenario of student inattentiveness in the civics classes of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women Colleges, Bhola.

Key Words: inattentiveness, Civics Class, attitude, beliefs, and behavior, lack of motivation, Modern technology

1. Introduction

In educational theory, students' attentiveness in the classroom is considered as one of the most important factors for effective teaching and learning (Rowe, 1994). But, students' inattentiveness in the classroom has become common problem in the educational institutes. Almost all the

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educational institutes in the world face the problem (Rowe & Rowe, 1999). Like other countries, students' inattentiveness in the classroom has become matter of great concern in the Bangladesh (Lutfujjaman et al., 2006). Around all the colleges in Bangladesh experience the identical problem (Hossain, 2013). Civics is one of the major subjects for the Humanities group student of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College (GSFWC), Bhola. In the civics classroom, it is seen students are not attentive while following the lectures by the teacher. During the teacher lecture, they gossip with each other, read book outside of the syllabus, poke others, make loud noise, draw pictures, side talk, show bad gesture, utter slang language and sometime sleep in the class time.

In the Civics class of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College (GSFWC), Bhola, Bangladesh, there is no multimedia facilities and teacher has to handle large volume of students over 300 in the classroom. Teachers follow teacher centered learning (TCL) method in lieu of Student Centered Learning (SCL). According to Reed (1989) both the teacher teaching style and classroom teaching learning environment are responsible for the students' inattentiveness in the classroom. Inattentive students don't interact with the teacher while lecturing and do not actively participate in the classroom activities (Rowe and Rowe, 1999). The student who want to be concentrated in the class, they could not be concentrated, because of inattentive students' loud noise and slang language. This impacts the student result and overall teaching learning environment (Boice, 2019). Students' performance in the civics class is not satisfactory at all. This study will explore the reasons behind students' inattentiveness in the Civics classroom and to show probable solution.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The student's inattentiveness in the classroom has become a matter of great concern in Bangladeshi educational institutes. As a Civics teacher of a Government College, the researcher faces the same problem regularly in the classroom. Considering the necessity of the topics, he gets interested to conduct a research on this topic and to explore the probable solution of the problems. The findings of this study may help to ensure a better teaching and learning environment in the Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College, Bhola and provide with the policy support to other educational institutes to resolve the students' inattentiveness phenomenon. This study illustrates the reasons behind students' inattentiveness in the Civics classes and the present scenario of it. This study also attempts to show how inattentive students badly affect the attentive students and good teaching-learning environment in the Civics classes of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College (GSFWC), Bhola. According to Bensted & Bachor (2002), inattentive students obstruct the other students to be attentive

in the class and create chaotic environment in the class while lecturing teacher lessons.

Moreover, this study may direct the ways of making Civics classes interesting and interactive for the inattentive Civics students at GSFWC. Beside these, findings of this study would help the teacher to bring changes in his teaching method and using technology in the classroom. Similarly, the findings may also help the students to get the technology based Student Centred Learning (SCL) by the civics teacher. However, this study will also explore the probable solutions for making the inattentive students to attentive in the Civics Class of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College (GSFWC), Bhola. The findings of this study may help policy makers as well as college administration to take necessary initiatives to resolve the problems.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This research is conducted to explore the reasons of the students' inattentiveness in the Civics class at the Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College (GSFWC), Bhola. Therefore, the study sets the following objectives to study:

1. To find out the root causes of students' inattentiveness in the classroom;
2. To explore the impact of students' inattentiveness in teaching and learning process;
3. To find out the solution of students' inattentiveness in the civics classroom.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was conducted to answer the following research questions. The research questions tried to determine how the entire research process proceeded. As a result, studies using these questions generally aimed to "discover," "explain," or "explore."

1. What are the reasons for students' inattentiveness in civics classes?
2. How do inattentive students affect the teaching learning environment in a civics class?
3. How can the inattentive students be motivated to be attentive in civics classroom?

2. Literature Review

Attentiveness in the classroom is integral parts of quality teaching and learning (Napoles, 2006). Witt(1986) writes, attentiveness is operationally defined as appropriate attending to or participating in classroom events . Student attentiveness in classes appears to be a function

of activity (Witt, 1986). Students are most attentive when performing and least attentive during nonperformance periods (Forsythe, 1977). Kostka (1989) writes student attentiveness is important for both the teachers and students. Students' attentiveness makes the class environment teaching friendly. Teacher can deliver his lecture perfectly and the students can reach at the lecture easily (Cohen, 1991). Beside these, students' participation in the classroom activities satisfactorily increased. Students raise questions to the teacher and teacher answer them well. As a result, class become lively and enjoyable and student cut a good figure in the final exam.

Students' inattentiveness in the class is a problematic behavior of a student that all teacher have to face in their classroom (Simplicio, 2001). Inattentiveness refers a state of the mind of the students where the student is physically in the classroom but mentally out of the class (Rowe and Rowe, 1992). According to Patton (1981) during the inattentiveness student don't pay concentration to the teacher lecture. Inattentiveness in the class denotes to lack of attention of the student during class time (Tannock, 2007). Similarly, Boice (2019) mentioned, inattentiveness takes away students' mind from classroom to other place. Inattentive students engage themselves in doing anti-classroom teaching activities such as side talking, laughing, making loud sound and poke to attentive students (Patton, 1981). They draw picture, chat with the friends through the smart phone and sometimes they sleep in the class. Inattentive students always be disorganized, confused and distracted in the classroom (Lauth et al. , 2006). Student could not remain attention long time in the class. According to Finn (1998) large volume of students in the classroom is responsible for the student inattentiveness. In a large class teacher could not reach at all the student equally. Whether the students understand the lecture or not and could not maintain eye contact with the students. Similarly, students could not ask the question to his teacher to clarify the lesson. As a result, students lose attention in the class. Because of large volume of students in a small room, too much noise is created so teacher voice does not reach at all the students. Chaotic environment also breaks the attention of other attentive students.

Setting arrangement of the classroom is also important to be attentive in the classroom to the students (Petersen & Gorman, 2014). Traditional classroom setting arrangement forces the student to be inattentive in the classroom. Traditional classroom physical arrangement does not allow teacher to reach at all the students, hampers in maintaining eye contact and active learning (Petersen & Gorman, 2014). Teaching-learning environment is severely affected due to students' inattentiveness in

the classroom (Rowe & Rowe, 1999). Inattentive students create loud noise, bad physical gesture and chaotic environment in the classroom that obstruct the teacher teaching process in the class and break other attentive students attention in the class (Rowe & Rowe, 1992). Attentive students could not concentrate in the class and could not raise questions to the teacher. When a student becomes inattentive, he tries to make inattentive others; the whole class goes out of control of the teacher. Teacher could not manage the class and lecture interrupted. So, teacher could not clear the topics and syllabus on time.

3. Research Methodology

The qualitative approach was adopted for the present study because it creates in-depth understanding on research issue, and an ideal for generating new research ideas. The research was conducted using three research instruments such as in-depth interview with two teachers, two Classroom Observation at the HSC level, and a focus group discussion (FGD) with 14 students. The students were chosen randomly from 300 students of humanities group take Civics. This institution was selected purposively because it's one of the largest women colleges in the southern part of Bangladesh. The participant teachers were coded as T1, T2... and the students were synonymous as S1, S2, S3, S4.....S14.

3.1 Process

Semi-structured interview and FGD questions were designed in such way as the respondents can express opinion without interference. Teachers' interview and FGD questions were open-ended. There were 9 key questions followed- by some follow up questions for FGD; and 9 in-depth questions for Teachers interview. Classroom observation protocol was used to verify and cross-check the collected data through the FGD and interview schedule of the teachers. Two Civics teachers and 14 students who study the civics were the respondents of this study. For the reason on Covid-19 pandemic situation, the students were selected through random sampling considering their availability.

The validity and reliability of the instruments were checked by the experts and senior researchers. As per the previous permission of two civics teachers' interview was held using semi structured interview schedule. The interview was last for fifteen minutes for each participant. Fourteen students of civics were taken part in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). They were informed prior and selected purposively. Semi structured interview questions were placed for FGD. Teaching sessions of two teachers were

observed without disturbing classroom teaching environment. Permission was taken from two civics teacher before classroom observation. Classroom activities were recorded and noted down using observation checklist during the classroom observation. Separate codes for every data were also used for data preservation.

Thematic approach was used for analyzing and interpreting the collected primary data. It gives opportunity to a researcher to compare and clarify the collected data. It helps to summarize large data set and present clear and organized final report. After collecting the data from the respondents, the researcher categorized the data as per the research questions. FGD and Interview data were translated into English as these are collected in Bengali language. During the time of data process, intra-qualitative data triangulation was done.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the instruments, the results and discussions of the study are presented in the following sections:

4.1 Findings from the Teachers' interview

The present study conducted in-depth interviews with two teachers regarding the reasons for students' inattentiveness for civics classes. Of the interviewed teachers, (T1) informed that large class sizes and teaching, methods, and style of the teachers are responsible for the students' inattentiveness in the classroom.

The second participants (T2) of the teacher highlighted that the absence of use of modern technology in the classroom such as multimedia projectors, digital contents, and sound systems are the major shortcomings in the civics class.

Regarding the impact of inattentiveness of the students in the civics class, T1 said :

when students lose attention in the class during the class he engage himself with other non academic activities such as creating loud noise, gossip with others, singing song, using slang language and breaking the other attentive students attention, these disturb the quality teaching and learning environment in the civics class.

Other teacher (T2) remarks:

When chaotic environment is created during in the class, I try to make the class silent. Lecture is interrupted and could not complete

the syllabus on time. He added that using active learning activities can catch the student attention more in the classroom.

Regarding motivation, T1 mentioned:

Moderate class size is needed for an effective teaching learning environment. Furthermore, the student Centered Learning approach and using modern technologies are prerequisites to eradicate monotony in the lecture presentation.

4.2 Findings from the FGD

The study conducted an FGD with 14 HSC students. They were asked why they become inattentive in the civics class. During the time of FGD, students gave different opinions from their own point of view, some are identical to one another and some have difference in views. Some of the respondents (S1, S4, S14) remarked that teachers' lecture methods and attitudes towards students were responsible for students' inattentiveness in the classroom. S2 and S9 added that when teacher could not follow study plan and it made the students inattentive in the class. S3 and S7 said long period gap from one class to another class forced them to be inattentive in the next class. During the FGD students were asked about how inattentive students affect the teaching and learning environment of Political Science class. Of the participants (S3, S2, S5, S11, S13) of the FGD most of the students commented that because of inattentiveness, the students could not understand the teacher lecture. Few students (S1,S4,S9,S10,S12) of the FGD, said the students who wanted to pay attention in the class could not give attention in their class due to inattentive students' making noise and loud sound and bad physical gesture.

During the FGD, the students were asked how inattentive students can be motivated to be attentive. During the FGD, some of the participants (S5,S9,S13) said multimedia classroom, digital contents and clear sound system might make them active learners. S9,S13 and S15 said active learning could make them more attentive than traditional lecture mode. They added that Group work, assignment, presentation lead them to be attentive in the classroom. Participants 3, 5 and 9 said teacher should follow activity based lesson plan. Participants S1, S2, S3, and S6 said using educational technology such as multimedia class, digital content in the classroom make them more attentive in the civics class. It may allow them to learn from audio-visual methods

4.3 Findings from the Classroom Observation

The present study conducted two classroom observation in the Civics Classes.- During the classroom observation, it was found that Civics Class seating arrangement is traditional and unplanned. It obstructed teacher

movement in the classroom; it did not allow the teacher to reach at all the students. The last benchers got chance to gossip each other, and wasted time by singing song and uttering slangs. During the classroom observation, it was also observed that, the civics teacher could not deliver the lecture perfectly; they did not use educational technology, never operated group work, hardly provided interesting presentation, and poorly focused brainstorming activities in the class. Therefore, the lectures became boring to the students and they became inattentive.

It was observed that there is no arrangement for multimedia facilities in civics classes. Teacher had to use white board for lecture purpose. Multimedia makes the class enjoyable, understandable, and also remain students' attentiveness in the class (Pearson, 1994). In the civics class, active learning activities such as presentation, think-pair-share, concept mapping and brainstorming are absent. Lack of active learning activities make the class one sided and insipid to the students. This is supported by Rowe & Rowe (1999). The teachers, who could not maintain the study plan, just followed the traditional lecture during the class time; consequently, the student become inattentive in his class. It was also seen when teachers voice did not reach to all the students the students become inattentive in the classroom. During the classroom observation, it was seen teachers' lectures were interrupted due to loud noise and students' talks. It was also found that the attentive students could not concentrate to their lessons due to inattentive students' loud noise and physical movements. Inattentive students' classroom participation is not satisfactory at all. Inattentive students are unable to complete the assignment on time. During the class observation it was seen that when students could not hear the teachers' voice clearly, the students got inattentive in the class. It was also noticed the Civics teachers who taught the students using modern technology could make the class interesting and student friendly.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study shows that the students' inattentiveness in the class has become major challenges to ensure quality teaching in the classroom. It is clear from the findings that students' inattentiveness hampers teaching learning atmosphere in the civics classes of Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women College. The findings from the Interview, FGD and Classroom observation have demonstrated that large class size, absence of multimedia facilities, traditional lecture methods, teacher attitudes, lack of motivation and learner-based activities generates inattentiveness in the civics class. The study suggests civics teachers should use multimedia projectors and other technological supports and facilities in the class such as smart board, digital contents, and sound.

Group discussions, group presentations, and brainstorming need to be used in the Civics class. Teacher should behave friendly with students and maintain a lesson plan. Class size and classroom management are also matters to play roles to reduce the chance to be inattentive of students in the civics classroom. Educational institutes those which use these in the classroom are being capable to catch the attentiveness of the student in the civics classes. Finally, it can be said from the discussion that the student centred learning and using multimedia in the civics class can make the students more attentive. To ensure the Student Centered Learning (SCL), teacher should divide students into different groups, and then allowing them for group presentation, assignment or problem-solving tasks. Civics teacher should be given proper training for the use of modern technology use and updated teaching methods.

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An Investigation on the Regular Speech and Language Therapy during COVID-19 for Children with ASD

Sharmin Jahan*

Abstract

Present study attempts to find out the significant difference of improvement between the group of children who follow regular online speech therapy and irregular online Speech therapy. Due to Corona virus (Covid-19 pandemic) situation the most of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) children could not physically attend at the therapy centers. In this situation, the only option was online Speech Therapy. This research applied the mixed method approach to accomplish this study. 50 children with ASD were selected as the sample of the study. The study carried out on 50 ASD children. Among them 25 children continued speech therapy through online and rest 25 could not continue. Besides, a questionnaire and an FGD were conducted to collect data from the parents. Data was collected by using Speech & Behavior Modification Check List. Questions relevant to this study gathered information regarding provision of online therapy following COVID-19 closures. The major findings of the study reveal that there is a significant difference between two groups, of children. Irregular group did not develop much from their present condition whereas regular speech therapy group developed significantly.

Key words: Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), speech therapy, behaviour modification.

1. Introduction

Although telepractice or online speech therapy services are acceptable alternative service delivery option for providing speech and language therapy services to school-aged individuals, speech-language therapists and parents must play a more proactive role in online speech therapy services to facilitate effective improvement. There is no common concept on how speech therapy can be delivered safely during lockdown. Possible barriers to healthcare might be more pronounced during the pandemic and parents experience a high psychosocial burden. Social distancing is the best prevention from the COVID-19 pandemic. In this

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situation ASD children and their parents are facing problem with their children treatment. Whole world has shifted their activities to online media. In line with this, responsible parents are continuing treatment of their children through online. They are taking various therapies through online. Speech therapy is one of them. In this process initially they may not be comfortable but after few sessions they became conversant. The study found, that the parents who all are responsible and continued the therapy through online, the rate of development of their ASD children is much higher than those who did not continue the therapy. In online speech therapy process, the therapist basically teaches the parents. They provide various guidelines to parents side by side/ they also practice various activities of the children through video communication. They also provide home activities. As the children are passing maximum time with their parents, so parents became the best guide for them. Finally the study found that, the development rate of continuous group is much higher than the non-continuous group. With this back drop this paper will describe ASD in general, effect of speech therapy on children and finally will analyze the study and survey report. A mixed method approach is used to find out the result of the study.

1.1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a disorder of brain development. Children and adults with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from that of typically developing people. They show some common features, especially they have a communication gap with other persons in society. Autism or ASD (Autism spectrum disorders) is a very common neurological disorder in our country. But many people don't have any clear concept of this disorder. Children suffering from ASD comprise heterogeneous groups with varying levels of communication, intellectual ability behavior and socialization ability. It's mainly a lifelong, neurological developmental disorder. It is also a restricted behavior problem. ASD children show mostly three types in their behavior, those are: they don't communicate and interact with others, they have poor socialization, and also have restricted behavior which is known as a complex developmental disability. Though the number of recovery of ASD is very limited but by applying various treatments the problems can be minimized. Some of them even can be returned to normal life with minor difficulties. There is several treatment processes involved in ASD treatment. These are neurological treatment, psychological treatment, OT (occupational therapy), ABA (applied behavior analysis) and speech therapy etc.

1.2 Speech Therapy

Autism or ASD can be improved through various treatments. Speech therapy is one of them. Speech therapy is nothing but few activities

of improving voice, tongue movement, communication, sound production, preverbal skill etc. It is a lengthy and continuous process but very effective for the development of ASD children. It also help in behavior modification. Most parents of children with ASD lack the knowledge about importance of continuous speech therapy and treatment. They believe that ASD cannot be recovered. Though some parents are following speech therapy according to the guideline of speech therapists, due to the lengthy process, most of them do not continue. As a result, ASD children cannot get improved and remain in the same stage. On the other hand, it is found that those who are continuing speech therapy become successful. Discontinuation of speech therapy by parents is a common tendency. In fact, due to the lengthiness of the process of speech therapy, most parents in Bangladesh become impatient and give up. The causes of such avoidance are the social condition of parents, economical status, lengthy as well as costly process, poor family support, lack of concept and knowledge, leave of passion, etc. This study tries to prove that continuous speech therapy is the key treatment of ASD in Bangladesh.

1.3 Behavior Modification

ASD children are generally having behavioral problem. Therapist is providing guideline to parents on behavior modification training. After learning the technique, parents need to apply those to their children. It is a continuous and long term process. Once the behavior modification is done, the other minor attitude problem of the children will reduce soon. In this regard ignoring, diverting and stopping the unexpected behavior with patience is one of the way of reducing this behavior. Behavior modification is the alteration of unusual behavior to normal behavior through some techniques like: positive or negative reinforcement and learning through games etc. Behavior modification is based on the idea that good behavior should lead to positive consequences and bad behavior should lead to negative consequences. It is essential to modify their behavior in this COVID-19 situation.

1.4 COVID-19 Situations for ASD Children

During pandemic situation children with ASD are unable to visit doctors or therapist regularly. They cannot go to special school and cannot attend the outside interventions. The treatment tools are not available in the market. Additionally, numbers of children with ASD are facing difficulty to adjust with the change. Although parents are taking support from some online sources or visiting doctors with high risk of covid-19, but the number is very limited. A survey was conducted on impact of online speech therapy on ASD children's behaviour.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

To understand the impact of regular speech therapy during lockdown on access to speech and language therapy and to inform its response, the study wanted to hear what people with communication and swallowing needs thought about their access to speech and language therapy in lockdown, any new ways their speech and language therapy was delivered, the impact of this on their lives and on the lives of their families and carers, and what they thought about the future. Finally, to find out the impact of regular and irregular online speech therapy on modified behavior of ASD children.

2. Literature Review

To develop the knowledge and finding the research gap several literatures on speech therapy and its relation with autism were consulted. B.Kollia (2021 April, 10) published “Influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic on telepractice in speech-language pathology. “This article reports on a brief about electronic survey that was completed by 145 speech-language pathologists (SLPs) during the early months (June 2020) of the pandemic. Results showed that the majority of SLPs will continue using a telepractice model into 2021 and beyond, as more than half of SLPs rated the quality as similar to services delivered in-person. The absence of earlier preparation, access to and hindrances with technology, and client factors were the main elements influencing telepractice success for SLPs.

Shrine R.Tambyraja (10, April 2021) published the article “Speech-Language Teletherapy Services for school aged children in the United states during the COVID-19 Pandemic “in this article he discuss about the purpose of this study was to examine how school-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs) maintained clinical services via teletherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic closures. A variety of virtual methods were used, but Zoom and Google hangouts were the most commonly used technologies. School-based SLPs were largely successful in maintaining speech-language therapy services to children on their caseloads. Information regarding the types of technologies used and common challenges can inform future teletherapy training for SLPs should future school closures occur. Backus (1947) found that, group therapy is very effective way of development of the ASD children. He also mentioned about the importance of speech therapy. He highlighted on regular speech therapy. It should be done step by step. He also highlighted the importance of involvement of parents in speech therapy. If parents can guide the children at home, that will be more effective. The farther shows that, therapeutic relationship acquiring speaking skill and also increasing benefit in the use of speech skill.

Hakim. A (2014) found that this is the first scientific stage in the Bangla version that is written in the Bengali language for autistic children who have the same language disorder in delivering their speech in words. Here specialist and doctor suggest different types of therapy and also mention who follow and symbol to make more attention than add one word and try to improve the expression language through speech in word. Though it is not possible to cure fully but by taking regular speech therapy can improve a lot. Wendell. J (1996) in 'Speech Handicapped School Children' mentioned about four major questions--(1) what kinds of speech disorders are found among school children, (2) what are the physical, psychological and social conditions, hearing impairments, and other factors that are importantly related to these speech problems, (3) what can the classroom teacher do about them, on her own or in cooperation with a speech corrections, (4) what are the basic examination methods and remedial approaches of the speech corrections in dealing with the problems. He found that, regular schooling, therapy and other treatment help to develop the children.

3. Methodology

Observation of about 50 ASD children will also be done and be continued. Questionnaires to parents and teachers will be provided to collect data. In this study instruments such as literary journals, reports, books, expert opinions, would be used. For data collection, the following instruments were used in the present study or measure the dependent and independent variables. This check list is divided into two area such as speech and behavior speech area/ schedule list consistent of 8/10 of items with 3/5 to response like strongly, agree to disagree or (yes or no) yes means=1 and no means=0. The maximum possible total score for a responded was 10 to 50. In this check list there is no reliability and validity. Higher scan indicates good speech and behavior condition and lower score indicate poor speech and behavior condition.

3.1 Procedures

The following area will be surveyed for the study: Random selection of patient from Ma o Shish hospital Chittagong. Random selection of patient from the online service from the study overcome center and bloom ctg. No invasive procedure was involved. Parents of ASD children were informed verbally and written consent were taken from them.

3.2 Data Collection

The primary data was collected through the interview of a particular person or parent, caregivers, teacher of specie schools, online sessions. The procedure and techniques used to analyze the data is done through SPSS software from the question provides to parents. The secondary data is basically collected through online study, various books and publications. To

analyze data x (chi-square) test were used. The paper compiled data throw a table and chart and with the same literature.

3.3 Data Analysis

Difference between regular and Irregular ASD children on the basis of speech and behavior modification check list where regular group count as a experimental group and irregular group count as a control group.

Group	N	Mean(x) —
Regular(experimental)	25	27.8
Irregular(control)	25	49.8

Table-1 : Difference between regular and Irregular ASD children on the basis of speech and behavior modification check list

4. Results and Discussions

The result Predicates that mean score of regular group (experimental) was 27.8 and mean score of Irregular (control) group was 49.8. It is clear that irregular group facing more problem than the regular group. The present study shows effect of regular online speech therapy for ASD children, A new way to modifier behavior during this covid-19 situation. The table shows the difference between regular and irregular speech modification sub skill checklist. It is observed that, the number (N) of regular speech therapy group is having higher chance of development.

Title	Group	N	Mean(x) —
Regular (experimental)	Speech skill	114	4.59
	Preverbal skill	142	5.68
	Communication skill	90	3.6
Irregular(control)	Speech skill	33	1.32
	Pre verbal	53	2.12
	Communication skill	27	1.08

Table-2- Difference between regular and irregular speech modification sub skill checklist

From the above data we can come to a solution that , those who all have done continuous therapy, they could develop their speech skill. The table indicate the result of mean score of regular sub skill and the scores are Cognitive skill 4.08, Play skill 5.8 , Present behavior skill 5.6, on the other hand irregular skill Cognitive skill 1.72, Play skill 1.88, Present behavior skill 3.36

Title	Group	M	Mean(x) —
Regular (experimental)	Cognitive skill	102	4.08
	Play skill	127	5.8
	Present behavior skill	149	5.6
Irregular(control)	Cognitive skill	43	1.72
	Play skill	22	1.88
	Present behavior skill	84	3.36

Table-3: Difference between regular and Irregular ASD children behavior modification sub skill checklist:

The chance of development of sub group skill is higher to the regular clients. From 25 mothers of regular therapy group 17 were house wife and 8 were serving. House wife mothers give more time to their children and they practice more at home. Whereas serving mother could manage time for their children. Thereby they were more dependent able to the therapy center.

Group	N	Mean	—
Housewife mother	17	0.76	
Service mother	8	0.32	

Table-4: Difference between housewife mother and serving mother

Table 4 indicates that, difference of housewife mother and service holder mothers mean score and it indicates that those children are doing more improvement whose mother are house wife. From 25 mothers of irregular therapy group 9 were house wife and 16 were serving. House wife mothers give more time to their children and they practice more at home. Whereas serving mother could manage time for their children. There by they were more dependent able to the therapy center.

Group	N	Mean	—
Mother of housewife	9	0.36	
Mother of service holder	16	0.64	

Table 5 indicates that difference of housewife mother and service holder mothers' mean score in irregular group.

5. Conclusion

During the COVID-19 crises, children with autism have difficulty to adjust with changes in their routine and environment although different parents are handling these situations in different ways. The transition from

in-person treatment to online treatment was associated with both advantages and disadvantages. Considering every situation the study found the significant difference in improvement of regular speech therapy group than irregular group. The regular group could overcome many difficulties through online therapy. Their behavior modification could change their life style. They could communicate in a better way and starts following instructions. Therefore, the proper treatment is required for ASD children to develop their deficits during COVID -19 pandemic. Regular online speech therapy is one of the treatments of our ASD children during present situation. That can help in behavior modification.

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Online Education at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh: A Study of Students' Perception

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Muhammad Istiaque Hasan†

Abstract

The present study concentrates on the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) students' perception of online classes. More than 300 students from government and non-government colleges participated in the questionnaire survey conducted through Google Forms. Male and female students of HSC classes from Science, Business Studies, and Humanities provided valuable input through the survey. Students expressed their ideas regarding the benefits, barriers, technical issues, and improvements in online teaching. The data shed light on designing blended teaching and teaching methods and the readiness of teachers to use online resources appropriately and to use them in the virtual classroom.

Keywords: Online Class, Students' Perception, Web 2.0 tools, Digital Platform, Virtual Classroom

1. Introduction

There is a significant change in the education sector due to the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide. Studies have been halted, and students, teachers, and parents have been greatly affected by the prevalence of this deadly disaster (Chowdhury and Nath, 2020; Ramij and Sultana, 2020). The whole world has witnessed the severe consequences of this unwanted catastrophe. We had to continue teaching and learning activities in this 'new normal' situation. Disruption of educational activities in more than 200 countries had a crucial impact on the studies of students (United Nations, 2020). The closure of educational institutions has jeopardized the education of students (United Nations, 2020). On the other hand, according to UNICEF (2020), students in many countries are deprived of remote teaching for a lack of available resources. The present study highlights the perception of students about online classes. Students were not habituated to attending online classes. Students and teachers faced some problems coping with

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using computers, and various softwares like Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. Online teaching has created many opportunities for students and teachers. Through virtual classes, students can join classes from their homes through the internet using their mobile or laptop devices (Muthuprasad et al., 2021). It is to be mentioned here that internet access is not the same everywhere. Students in rural areas have faced severe internet disruption.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

With the shutdown of educational institutions around the globe due to the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching and learning processes have to be continued through alternative ways. As a result Government of Bangladesh has taken various steps to provide teaching and learning resources to students so that their studies can go smoothly. In this respect, Sangsad TV, teachers' portal (shikkhokbatayon), Kishore Batayon, GhoreBosheGhoreSkikhi, Amar Ghore Amar School initiatives have been taken by Government of Bangladesh (Noor &Shaoun, 2021). Schools and colleges have taken measures to teach their students through online mode, for example, YouTube channels Facebook Live, and recorded class lectures through posting on YouTube and Facebook groups. Because of digital division, urban and rural institutions do not have the same benefits. In order to run online education successfully, some factors like available devices and internet connectivity are required. Shifting traditional classroom practices to online mode is a challenging task. The process was unknown to the teachers about the online mode of taking classes (Dhawan 2020). Teachers became afraid of the system. Teachers were not fully ready to conduct online classes. It is understood that it is difficult to measure the comprehension level of students about a particular topic by students (Mondira & Mahtab, 2021). Educational institutions are not able to reach everyone during the Pandemic situation. With the closure of the educational institutions, most of the educational institutes started their teaching activities through various online platforms (Noor &Shaoun, 2021).

1.2 Rationale of the Study

Online education is different from the traditional teaching method, and success depends on learners' accessibility and keeping pace with the system (Bignoux & Sund, 2018). Online education was not used before at a large scale before the pandemic. Things have significantly changed with the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic. The perception of HSC students will pave the way for making online education effective and beneficial for them. The responses from the questionnaire will indeed show areas for improvement in online education. Students have experienced the Pandemic situation and have also gone through a crucial time as they had to stay at home all the time without any physical movement. It has some mental impact on their everyday task. Course design and lecture delivery will be

improved through the feedback of students. Despite some challenges, the Covid-19 situation also positively impacted our education system. Teachers also need to welcome the new trend in teaching and learning. It is also true that even after the Covid-19 situation; the online mode can be practised along with the regular traditional classroom practices. Materials prepared during pandemic situations can be utilised in face-to-face classes using a projector with PowerPoint slides.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- (i) find out the perception of HSC students about online education
- (ii) suggest necessary steps in making online education effective and beneficial for students.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The data were collected mainly from the students of Dhaka city and were collected online. As a result, there were some limitations in accessing all the data timely. Time was another barrier in this respect. We could not go to different places to collect data. Another benefit of online data collection using Google Forms is that the graphical presentation is provided by Google using the collected data. The findings could be different if more colleges from rural and urban areas were included in the study.

2. Literature Review

Internet access and other facilities are not available in rural areas. As a result, the 'digital divide has significantly been seen (Noor &Shaoun, 2021). On the other hand, internet access is not easier in villages and remote areas (Khatun, 2020). Affordability is another issue in the online mode of education. It is also seen that in developed countries, there is a lack of internet connectivity and other resources. According to Goldberg (2018), in some places in the USA, the internet is not accessible. Learners can interact with each other in online classes. Like face-to-face classes, in virtual classes, students can exchange ideas and communicate with each other (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Teachers need to allow students to create a congenial online atmosphere. Students can attend online classes at any time and from any place. It has shortened the distance. A considerable time is saved from physical movement. Synchronous communication increases interaction with students and teachers in the live class. On the other hand, as Petrides (2002) argues, there is a lack of spontaneity in online education, whereas, in face-to-face classes, spontaneity and participation can largely be seen.

Parents can play an active role in their children's education. Poor course content, boring class, uninteresting topic, and disruption of two-way communications are some challenges of online education (Dhawan, 2020; Mondira& Mahtab, 2021). Everything is virtual here. Sitting in front of the machine for a long time also causes health problems (Mondira& Mahtab, 2021).Online education, particularly in some developing countries, often faces challenges (Shearer et al., 2020). Lack of ICT infrastructure, teachers' training, and the high internet and device costs profoundly impact online education (Jamal et al. 2020). The curriculum is to be aligned with the use of ICT and ensuring the availability of devices and connectivity will bring more opportunities for students and teachers.The factors that create hindrances in online education can be summarised as lack of internet and device, lack of teacher interaction, and less engaging teacher content. For these reasons, online education sometimes fails to achieve its desired goal. In addition, teachers' lack of training and using various softwares are also responsible for the smooth going of online classes.

3. Research Methodology

Data were collected on various issues like their mode of joining online classes, use of devices, mode of internet connection, interaction during online sessions, and readiness of teachers conducting online classes. A Google Form was devised to collect data from students. More than 300 students, both from urban and rural, private and government colleges, took part in the questionnaire. Thirty-two questions were asked of students. The Google form was turned off after 15 days. Within that time, we collected the desired number of responses from students. This is mixed method research in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Students were provided the form stating that their participation in the research is voluntary, their information will be kept confidential, and the information will be used only for research purposes. Ethical issues were strictly followed in conducting the study. Students did not face any trouble in responding to the questions.

4. Findings and Discussion of the Study

307 students from the HSC level attended the online survey from private and government colleges around the country. 191 male and 116 female students from the HSC level responded to the survey. Among them, 159 students from the Science group, 122 from Business Studies, and 26 from the Humanities group expressed their ideas through the survey. 281 Non-Government colleges and 7 Govt. colleges answered the questions through online mode. The responses came from urban colleges. It would be better if more responses came from rural institutions.

It is found that many of the students attended 4 classes in a day whereas it is seen from the table that 23 students attended only 1 class per day. In the questionnaire, there was a question on the frequency of attending classes. Many students (187) replied that they attended almost all the classes. 50 students answered that they had attended half of their held classes. Some students do not feel interested in attending online classes. It is known from experience that some students join online classes but do not listen to the teacher's lecture.

11. Do you use your own digital devices or others' devices to attend online classes?

307 responses

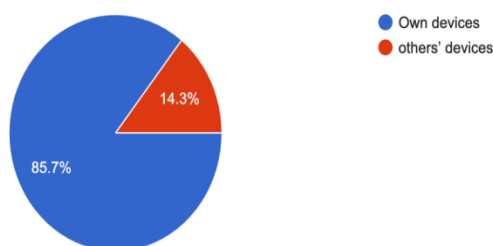


Figure: 1

From the above pie chart, it is found that students attend classes using their own devices. It shows that their economic condition is satisfactory. They can afford their own devices. A negligible amount is also seen here. It may be mentioned that the students are mainly from urban areas. Students connect through wi-fi connectivity. But there is an opposite picture where students from the village use mobile data to connect to their classes or watch the recorded classes.

13. Are you satisfied with the speed of your internet connection?

307 responses

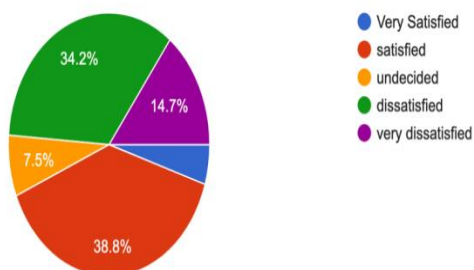


Figure: 2

Students are satisfied with their internet connectivity. 38.8% of students were satisfied, whereas 34.2% were very satisfied. On the other hand, 14.7% of students were very dissatisfied. It is found that students from

rural areas do not get enough bandwidth to continue their classes. In addition to that, they also face electricity cut.

14. To what extent are you expert to operate the devices to attend online classes?

307 responses

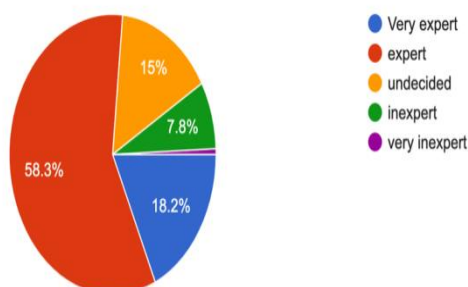


Figure: 3

It is found that 58.3% of students are experts in using devices (mobile phones, desktops/laptops). 21st-century students are tech-savvy. They like to use and explore new gadgets. It is also seen that 7.8% of students are not good at operating devices. They need to be trained to operate their devices.

19. How would you evaluate the use of computer technology by your faculty/teachers?

307 responses

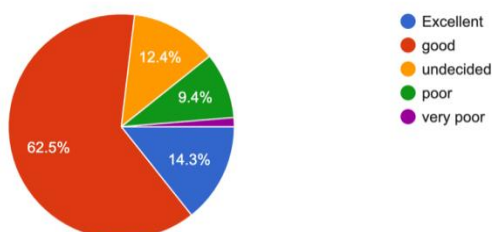


Figure: 4

There was another question about the use of the device by their teachers. Students opined that 9.4% of teachers are excellent at using the devices properly. 62.5% of teachers are good users of modern technology. Teachers' readiness to operate various softwares like Microsoft Office, online tools, and web 2.0 tools is required for successful online sessions. Teachers also need training to operate different types of software. It is to be mentioned here that along with technical knowledge, teachers also need pedagogical knowledge.

17. Do you agree that teachers can make online classes more engaging?

307 responses

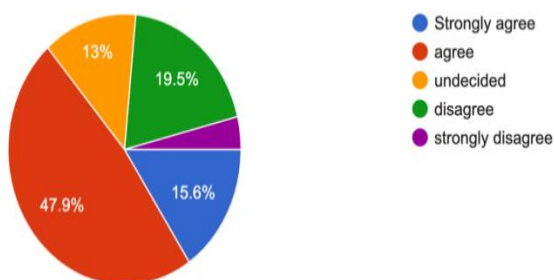


Figure: 5

The pie charts reflect the quality or engagement of students in online classes. In figure no. 6, 82.1% of students answered about developing teachers' teaching practices. Again, the highest engagement rate in the figure is almost 48%. From the above two charts, it is understood that in order to engage students in the online class, teachers need to take preparation to conduct the class. Teachers can prepare a lesson plan and use web 2.0 tools to take classes. Teachers can use Kahoot, Google Forms, pollev.com, and other web tools.

18. Do you think that the teachers should develop the quality of delivering online lectures?

307 responses

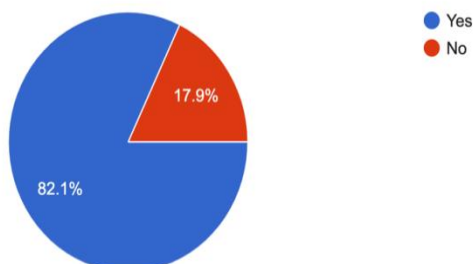


Figure: 6

In addition to that, teachers can make proper use of PowerPoint slides. The slides need to be attractive with information. Instead of lecturing all the time, teachers can engage students through pair and group work. For engaging them in activities, online tools can be effective in attracting the attention of the students. Apart from this, the student-teacher relationship is also essential. If the teacher fails to communicate well in the online class, the class may not be fruitful. Student-teacher relationships must be strengthened to reap the benefits of the online class. This good relationship is also true in an offline or face-to-face class.

25. How much do you find your online classes interesting?

307 responses

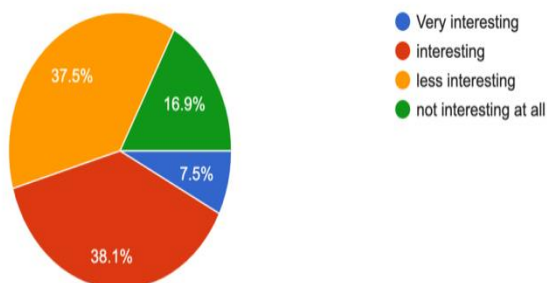


Figure: 7

Students say they do not find it more interesting, unlike regular face-to-face classes. 37.5% say that online classes are less effective, and 16.9% of students express that online classes are not interesting at all. It can be said that online classes can be interesting if the teacher uses some teaching techniques. Most of our classes are teacher-centred where students do not have any place to express their ideas. The shift is to be changed from teacher-centred to student-centred. Students need to be given some autonomy in their classes. They will feel comfortable in the class. The effectiveness of online classes is one of the crucial points. 40.1 percent student opine that online classes are effective whereas 25.1% students say that virtual classes are ineffective. It is understood that developing certain factors for example using web 2.0 tools, planning of classes, preparing of effective and informative PowerPoint slides, giving break during online class, will attract the students in online sessions..

26. How far, do you think, online classes are effective?

307 responses

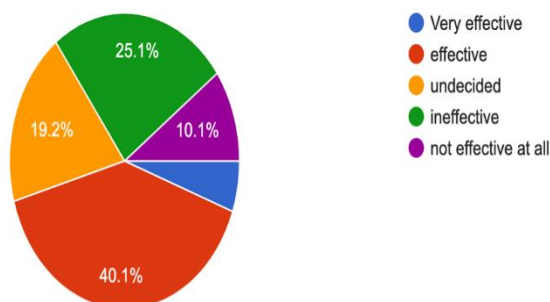


Figure: 8

In many institutions, they have made a routine for online classes, and they take classes using Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook Live, etc. It is also seen from the questionnaire that most of the teachers use Zoom in

conducting their classes. 97.1% of teachers use the Zoom platform for conducting their classes. Teachers find it comfortable on this platform. Some other platforms, such as Google Meet and Facebook live, are also used by the teachers. Teachers initially find it challenging to use this type of online meeting software. But they have been able to learn how to use the software through classes. Sometimes, fear of using software also hinders the mindset of the teachers.

22. How far do you agree that financial constraints/problems are barriers to reaping the benefits from online learning?

307 responses

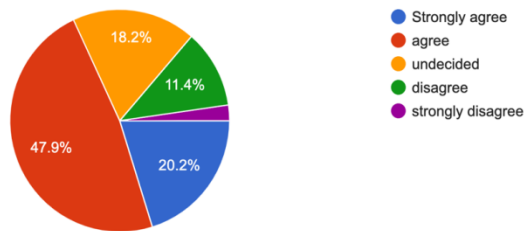


Figure: 8

While attending online classes, mobile or PC internet connections are required, and students must buy those devices. It so happens that all the guardians do not have the same ability. Online attendance can be hampered by a lack of available devices or internet facilities. Students have expressed their ideas that financial constraints negatively impact online education, which 47.9% of students' evidence. Assessment is a vital issue in teaching. If students are not assessed, their learning process will be hampered. Teachers are comfortable taking pen and paper exams. But they did not have the opportunity to take online exams using the software.

32. Do you think online classes can be an effective alternative to on campus classes?

307 responses

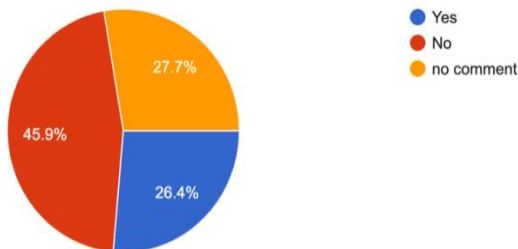


Figure: 9

If the teachers do not take the formative assessment at the end of the class lecture, the students' learning process will not be complete.

The last question of the questionnaire was a vital question where students are given the choice between online class and face-to-face class. About 46% students speak that online classes cannot be the alternative to offline classes. It is also true that blending of online and offline classes will bring a positive change in teaching and learning practices.

5. Recommendations

Students who will miss the live class will be able to watch recorded classes later and taking notes while watching the class will surely help the learners. Technical difficulties may occur at the time of taking classes. In this case, in WhatsApp groups or messenger groups, students can be informed of the next available slot for the class. Again, course content, delivery of lectures, and engaging students through attractive PPTs can be helpful. Teacher-student communication can be strengthened. Students can be conned by sending SMS about any class announcement because students do not always stay online. To keep connected, social media groups can be fruitful. Teachers need to design class content thinking of the students of mixed abilities. It takes a teacher much time to prepare class contents, but he can use the same materials in the following classes. This opportunity of using digital content in several classes saves the teachers' time. Sometimes, teachers do not find their content when they need them. They can use online storage, for example, Google Drive or Dropbox, to preserve their materials online. They can get those materials whenever they need them using the internet. Another benefit of online storage is that the files are synchronized in real time from the PC where the drive is set up.

Teachers can arrange online games for the formative assessment using Kahoot! Google Classroom is also an excellent place to share content and engage students. The teacher will provide worksheets and quizzes in the online class. However, the traditional way of teaching needs to be shifted. Lecture-based method to student-centred method is to be taken as they will provide some space for students to flourish in their learning. Taking feedback from students is also necessary, which can be done using Google Forms. In this way, the teacher can equip himself-herself for a successful online session. Again, teachers need to develop themselves professionally. With time, it becomes tough for teachers to deal with 21st-century learners. For this reason, teachers need to know new teaching strategies, and adopting them in the classroom will make a difference in their teaching where students will be benefited. Institutions can adapt their online system, which students will have access to. Institutions can adopt open source LMS (Learning Management Software) for teachers and students. Institutions can organise training sessions for students and teachers to reap the benefits of online instructions.

6. Conclusion

From the students' responses and literature review, online classes' benefits, challenges, and opportunities are visible. Online education is a new system in our country. For this reason, it will take time to cope with technological and pedagogical integration. Due to Corona pandemic, the starting of online education will not end as students, teachers and parents have understood the alternative way of continuing teaching and learning activities. Despite some challenges, online education will flourish future to save time, energy and money. Students have clearly expressed their thoughts on online education, their liking, and the areas where improvement is required.

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Teaching English Speaking Skills at the Higher Secondary Level in Rural Bangladesh

Md. Abu Abdullah*

Abstract

This qualitative study tried to explore what methods and approaches the teachers at HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) level employed to teach English; what training the teachers had to teach communicative English; the reasons why students could not communicate orally in English; what challenges teachers faced in teaching speaking English; and how the challenges could be minimized. Three colleges where HSC curriculum is implemented were selected for the study from Narayanganj district. One English teacher and 10 second-year HSC students from each college were selected for the study. The teachers were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule and three FGDs (Focus Group Discussion) were conducted with the students of each college using an FGD guide. Moreover, three teaching sessions of the three teacher respondents were observed using an observation protocol. Collected data were transcribed, coded and then categorized based on the themes of the research questions. The major findings of the study revealed that teachers used GTM (Grammar Translation Method) in teaching English; the teachers did not have any training to teach communicative English; teachers did not engage students in speaking practices; teachers conducted English classes in Bangla, and teacher training and inclusion of speaking in assessment might improve the situation.

Keywords: *intermediate level, CLT, teaching method, speaking skill, curriculum, rural Bangladesh.*

1. Introduction

Speaking is considered the most important skill of the English language as it demonstrates the language competence of a person. English has become the most important language all over the world (Rao, 2019). Bangladesh curriculum also puts emphasis on English language skills development and has made English compulsory from primary to HSC levels

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of education. English is given more importance for its worldwide demand as the medium of communication (Patel, 2015). English is truly a global language due to a number of factors such as participation in world economy, information exchange, travel and popular culture Harmer(2002). Among the four skills, only reading and writing skills are practiced in schools and colleges in Bangladesh, while there is not much scope for practicing speaking skill. In EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning situation in Bangladesh, speaking and listening skills do not get much attention at primary and secondary level (Shurovi, 2014). Imam (2005) reported in a study that the level of English of the university students was equivalent to the level set by the government for the students of class seven.

The immediate past curriculum (NCTB, 1995) also attached importance to four English language skills development of the students including the HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) level students. Communicative language teaching approach was introduced in our country in 1997(Ahmed, 2003). Although speaking is an important skill, it has not been yet included in our public examinations such as SSC (Secondary School Certificate) and HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) level. The study tried to investigate the existing problems for which a large number of students fail to speak English fluently in Bangladesh. The study also explored approaches English teachers used at the intermediate level in teaching English speaking skill in Bangladeshi classrooms. Although English is taught as a compulsory subject at primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels in Bangladesh, the performance of the school and the college (11 & 12 classes) leavers is not satisfactory (Imam, 2005).

1.1 Background of the Study

With the advancement of science and technology, the communication system developed and a big number of people have to communicate with people from different parts of the world for various purposes. Therefore, they need a common language to communicate with people speaking different languages. English plays the role of that lingua franca. The English language is taught as a compulsory subject in 11 and 12 classes like in other grades of primary and secondary levels but the performance of the students seemed poor. Therefore, it is urgent to investigate why the intermediate students fail to achieve speaking skills in English.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

The exploration of the actual scenario of English speaking skill teaching and learning at the intermediate level of education in Bangladeshi colleges would benefit the NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) in taking policy decisions

regarding the English speaking skill development of the students studying at the intermediate level. The researcher hoped that this study would help better implement the English curriculum at the intermediate level of education in Bangladesh.

1.3 Research Questions

The current study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- i) What methods or approaches do the teachers employ to teach English at the HSC level?
- ii) What training do the teachers have to teach communicative English?
- iii) Why cannot students communicate orally in English?
- iv) What are the challenges teachers faced in teaching English?
- v) How can the challenges be minimized?

1.4 Scope and Limitations

The teachers whom I chose for collecting data were familiar to me as we teach in the neighboring colleges. They sincerely helped me by giving answers of my questions and allowed me for observing their classes. As all the participants were previously known to me, they could easily be accessed. That was a scope for the study. The research, however, had some limitations. Only three colleges from Narayanganj district were selected for the study. The researcher could not include more colleges from other districts of the country. That small number of colleges including small number of English teachers and the small number of students were the limitations of the study. However, as the study was qualitative and it was conducted rigorously, the findings of the study can be considered trustworthy.

1.5 The Concept of Communicative English in Bangladesh

In the globalized world, communicative competence in English has been enjoying the higher status from the beginning of the 21st century. In this reality, there have been paradigm shift in the English language instructional strategies. Interactive strategies have been introduced instead of teacher-centred Grammar Translation Method (GTM). CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) started to get popularity from the beginning of the 80s (Littlewood, 1981) and Bangladesh adopted it in the curriculum of 1995 (NCTB, 1995). CLT is a student-centered method for language learning where students actively participate in language learning through continuous practices. Littlewood (1981) claims that ‘meaning’ is more important than ‘form’ in the CLT. That is, communication is more important than grammatical accuracy. Learners achieve accuracy through continuous practices and their language is naturally corrected. In CLT, students do almost all the activities in pairs and groups and thus they learn the target language.

2.0 Literature Review

National education policy (2010) emphasizes learning English as an international language for communicating locally and globally. Many international organizations have no other option but to use English in communications (Borzykowski, 2020). Communication through English is the prime demand of the employers at present time (Pandey, 2014). Sensing the demand of English in the global market, the government of Bangladesh made it compulsory for the students of primary and secondary levels. Although CLT was introduced to class six in 1996, it was introduced to HSC classes in 2001 (NCTB, 2001). CLT puts emphasis on the four skills development of the students through continuous practice. Meaning of the language is more important than form in CLT (Littlewood, 1981). Through continuous practice, students achieve the skills of the language. For example, if one wants to learn English speaking, they must practice it orally. Through practising speaking in pairs and groups for a longer period of time, one can be fluent and can gain accuracy in the long run. Many studies highlight the principal problems of learning communicative English in countries like Bangladesh, China, Japan and Korea where English is taught as a foreign language and where the grammar-translation method is prevalent. In Bangladesh, learning English language means learning grammar, not learning to communicate (Farooqui, 2007). As a result, developing communication skills is ignored in English teaching and assessment.

Since people are monolingual in Bangladesh, students do not need to use English outside the class (Paul, 2012). Paul (2012) claimed that students did not have anyone to practice English with outside the school and if someone tried to speak English, others used to laugh at them. Because of this social negativity, the practice of English language speaking among young Bangladeshi students was decreasing (Jabeen, 2013). However, Brown (1994) has alleged that communication is likely to occur in the classroom when a significant amount of pair work and group work is conducted; authentic language input in real life context is provided; students are encouraged to produce language for genuine, meaningful communication; and classroom tasks are conducted to prepare students for actual language use outside the classroom. What happens in eleven and twelve classes in Bangladesh? Do the teachers engage students in speaking? If not, what are the challenges?

3. Research Methodology

The study was conducted by using qualitative research methodology as it is possible to go deep into the research problem through qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher used semi-structured interview method, FGDs (Focus Group Discussion) and class observation method to collect data. Three teachers and 30 students from three rural

colleges of Narayanganj district were selected for the research. Firstly, the researcher invited the teachers by mobile phone to take part in the study and they gladly agreed. Students who participated in the study were selected according to their merit. Ten students from each college were selected who acquired highest marks in English in the year final year examinations. All the selected students belonged to HSC 2nd year Science Department. To collect data transparently and authentically, teachers' interviews were conducted face to face. Three teaching sessions of the three teacher participants from three different colleges were also observed. Three FGDs with 10 students in each slot were also conducted. Collected data were read several times and were developed. Then the data were transcribed and thoroughly examined. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, FGDs, and observation were coded, categorized as coding and categorizing enables a researcher to sift out what the data are saying (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). It is worth mentioning that the teachers were named as T1, T2, and T3 to avoid any possible threat to them. On the other hand, The three FGDs were named as FGD-1, FGD-2, and FGD-3.

4. Findings of the Study

The findings of the study came to the surface during data processing. The major findings of the study were: teachers used GTM in teaching English; teachers did not have any training; teachers did not engage students in speaking practice; teachers taught English in Bangla; and teacher training and inclusion of speaking in assessment might improve the situation. The findings have been presented in details in the following sections:

4.1 Teachers use GTM in Teaching English

During classroom observation, it was noticed that teachers were using GTM method in teaching English. They did not warm up their students to get ready for the lesson. They started their classes abruptly. All the three teachers were seen reading the text and clarifying in Bangla. Moreover, all the activities were solved by the teachers. The teachers were not seen to engage the students in any kinds of activities including speaking. Instead of engaging learners in speaking practice, teachers were observed to teach grammatical rules explicitly. In traditional method of teaching English, the main focus is only on providing knowledge to the students, not developing their language skills. That is, the target language skills achievement remains ignored. T1 asserted that GTM did not consume much time to complete the syllabus. Moreover, they did not have to take any prior preparation for the class. T1 further claimed that he taught using GTM as it helped students to pass their examinations. Similarly, T2 asserted that there was no instruction in the curriculum to engage students in speaking practice.

Therefore, the teachers did not pay much attention on students' speaking skill development. In the similar way, T3 alleged:

There is a gap between curriculum guidelines and the implementation. As the assessment system does not include the four skills of English language, we do not engage students in speaking. And I am not sure what the curriculum says regarding the speaking practice.

The students in FGD-1 claimed that their teacher did not have any pre-plan regarding the teaching of the textbook lessons. The students claimed that their teacher always taught them in Bangla and focused on grammar even in English first paper classes. The teacher did never put emphasis on speaking English. The students in FGD-2 claimed:

Our teacher never motivates us to speak English. The teacher always speaks Bangla in the classroom. He reads the text and tells the Bangla meaning for our understanding. He always gives us lessons such as dialogues, letters, applications, paragraphs, and stories for memorizing at home.

However, the participants in FGD-3 asserted that their teachers sometimes engage them in solving the textbook exercises but in most cases, the teacher helps them to find the right answers. It is clear from the data presented above that the teachers use GTM in teaching English. None of the teachers were found to be aware of the strategies employed in CLT. It might be that teachers are not properly trained on CLT. The following section deals with the training of the English teachers.

4.2. Teachers did not have any training

While interviewing, the researcher asked teachers if they had any training to teach communicative English. All the three teachers claimed that they did not have any training on CLT. Therefore, they were not aware of the techniques used in teaching communicative English. T1 asserted that he did not have any training. He further claimed that in his 10 years of teaching, he was never invited to take part in any training session. There was no in-house training at the college, too. On the other hand, T2 asserted:

I have no training and I do not know how to engage students in speaking activities. I teach in the way I was taught by my teacher in my college days. And I do not have skills for using technology in teaching English speaking skill.

T3 confessed that training was essential for teaching English effectively. As he did not have any training, he was not clear about using different techniques to develop English speaking skill. During class

observation, the researcher observed that teachers did not have much knowledge and skills of class management. Teachers did not organize pair work, group work, or any other activities that enhance the speaking skill of the learners. Teachers were teaching the texts and telling the meaning of the texts mostly in Bangla. Sometimes, they were seen to focus on the grammatical items. The above data show that teachers did not have training to teach English. It was also clear that teachers did not feel that they needed training as they could not even arrange in-house training for their professional development. The situation indicated that there should have been arrangement of in-service training for better implementation of the English curriculum.

4.3 Teachers did not engage students in speaking practice

Literature shows that students' unwillingness to speak English is a great barrier in the development of language skills in Bangladesh (Hoque, 2008). But in the current study, it was revealed that teachers did not engage students in speaking activities. During class observation, it was seen that students remained inactive because of the style of teaching; teachers taught using the GTM where there was little or no opportunity for learners to practise English. However, T1 blamed the students for not taking part in the speaking activities. Although T1 talked about the students' unwillingness at one stage of the interview, at another place he (T1) talked about the mismatch between the planned curriculum and its implementation. T1 alleged:

The present examination system is one of the major challenges in teaching English speaking. The present examination system focuses on memorization of answers. It does not test the linguistic competence of the learners; it tests students' grammatical competence. Speaking skill is not valued that much in the current system of assessment.

T2 also possesses the similar opinions as T1. T2 alleged that students rarely spoke English in the classrooms or in their everyday communications. "I do not teach them English through English. I have to use Bangla during teaching as students do not understand if I speak English all the times", alleged T2. It was also observed during teaching observation that teachers were speaking Bangla often in the classrooms. T3 alleged that most of the students felt shy and fear to speak English with teachers. He claimed:

If one speaks English, others laugh at them. Actually, we could not make any English-speaking environment inside and outside the classrooms. We never thought about the importance of developing students' speaking skills.

All the students in the FGDs, claimed that their teachers never tried to engage them in speaking practice. Their teachers taught English mixed with Bangla. It was revealed in FGD-1 that teachers spoke Bangla most of the class-time in English class. One of the participants alleged:

We do not speak English in the classrooms with teachers and friends; our teachers also speak Bangla with us. We do not speak English as we cannot speak it. We are afraid of speaking English as there many grammatical mistakes in our English.

All other participants in FGD-1 supported their friend who uttered the above quotation. Similar data were provided by the participants of FGD-2 and FGD-3. All of them confessed that they did not practise speaking with teachers and classmates; their teachers also did not ask them to speak English. It is evident from the presented data that neither the students nor the English teachers are aware of the importance of speaking skill development. It might be because they are not trained or because speaking skill is tested neither in the colleges nor in the final examinations.

4.4 Teacher Training and Inclusion of Speaking in Assessment

It was revealed from the interviews and the teaching observations of the three English teachers that they (teachers) badly needed training on teaching English. The way they were teaching English did not commensurate the NCTB-prescribed CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). The researcher could very well understand the lacking of the teachers as he received an intensive training 24-days' training organized by Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP). All the three teachers also felt and expressed the need for training to better teach English. T1 alleged:

I have been teaching in this college for long ten years but till now I was provided with any training on teaching English. I feel the need of training as I cannot cope with the textbook lessons. I am not sure about how to teach the lessons. I am teaching English in the way I believe appropriate.

T2 and T3 were also teaching in the traditional way. During observation of their teaching sessions, it was observed that they were reading out the text and explaining in Bangla. Moreover, they were found solving the exercises on the black/white boards. When asked during interviews, they maintained that they needed training to better implement the English curriculum. On the other hand, both teachers and students alleged that as there was no speaking test, they never practised speaking skill. All the three teachers, T1, T2, and T3 asserted that as students' speaking skill was not tested; they did not engage students in speaking practice. T1 asserted:

Marks should be allotted for speaking. If there are some marks, students will practise it compulsorily. Why will we spend time on speaking practice when we know it will not be assessed or tested? So, the NCTB should allot some marks for speaking and listening as speaking is developed through active listening.

T2 put emphasis on providing training to teachers and allotment of marks in speaking. They claimed there should be provision of viva voce in English which would create a kind of pressure on the students to practise speaking. According to T3, a lot of speaking activities could be done in the classroom but he did not do because there were no marks for speaking. A teacher's role in a language teaching class should be facilitating. He should make everything amusing, exciting and enjoyable. He should make his student practice orally without the support of a written script." However, FGD2 claimed "The use of multimedia materials in the present age can be fruitful for developing speaking skills. In the CLT classrooms, objects, pictures, actions, gestures etc. are used for language teaching. With the easy availability in recent years film strips, slides, films, tapes etc. can be used. The picture with voice is very much effective for developing speaking skills." FGD 3 asserted that class should be interactive and communicative.

5. Conclusion

From the above findings and discussions, it is evident that teachers are not trained and they do not follow the NCTB prescribed approach in teaching English. Therefore, students' English speaking skill is not that developed. Therefore, the concerned authority needs to arrange training for proper implementation of the English curriculum. Appropriate teacher training and inclusion of speaking in assessment might improve the English-speaking situation at the HSC level of education in Bangladesh.

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

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3. Introduction

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

4. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to describe past important research and it relates specifically to the research problem. It should be a synthesis of the previous literature and the new idea being researched. The review should examine the major theories related to the topic to date and their contributors.

The researchers are required to know the research that has already been done in their field. The Literature Reviews examine previous related research. It should include all relevant findings from credible sources, such as academic books, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

5. Research Design/ Methodology

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

6. Findings and Discussion / Results

In this section, the results are presented. This section should focus only on results that are directly related to the research or the problem.

Graphs and tables should only be used when there is too much data to efficiently include it within the text.

Findings and Discussion section should also discuss the results and the implications on the field, as well as other fields. In this section, the hypothesis is tested or the research questions are answered and validated by the interpretation of the results.

7. Recommendations (Optional)

In this section, the author/researcher may put forward some recommendations based on findings of the study.

8. Conclusion

This section should also discuss how the results relate to previous research mentioned in the literature review, any cautions about the findings, limitation of the study, and potential for future research.

9. References

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

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