

Research Article

## The Struggles of Attending Introductory English Courses in Bangladeshi Universities

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### ABSTRACT

Considering the recent economic milestone achieved by Bangladesh, a downright reformation has emerged as obligatory which is a sustainable and all-round delivery of English throughout the academic journey of all the learners. Still, students are found struggling with the elementary language skills while attending introductory English courses at the universities. This study, conducted in mixed-mode, recounts the findings based on the data collected from twenty-one universities. Through this investigative work, the researchers have tried to diagnose the reasons behind the struggles faced by the learners and attempt to explain such outcomes from the perspectives of the gaps between policy and practice, attitude towards English, and the state of ELT in Bangladesh. Findings suggest that the issue of maintaining the synergy between separate levels of education is ignored by the stakeholders as well as the policy makers since the policy itself fails to uphold the significance of English as an international language. In addition, faulty application of CLT in the learners' secondary levels create a fearful image of English in their minds hindering them from conceptualising English as an international language as well as a tool for their future academic success.

### 1. Introduction

Though the spread of English has been appraised and critiqued by the experts from various perspectives, it can never be ignored that English has been able to pose itself to be of great significance. English has been in the veins of Bangladesh, as an independent nation after 1971 and as a part of the Indian subcontinent before that. Kachru (1986) quotes Thomas Babington Macaulay, a former British secretary, in terms of the indispensable need for the proliferation of English as a tool of domination in the colonised India that it was necessary to produce "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --- a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (p.4). Later, authors like Robert Phillipson and Alastair Pennycook have worked scrupulously on the hidden spirits that accompany English as a language. However, this paper does not address the issues associated with the imperialist motives. It focuses on reclaiming English as a part of translanguaging, pluralism, and inclusiveness (Holliday, 2005; Canagarajah, 2013; Schulzke, 2014). English is taught in Bangladesh as a mandatory part of coursework from the very beginning of the academic career of all the learners. Currently, there are four major streams or curricula being administered by four authoritative bodies which are-

a) National Curriculum and Textbook Board [NCTB represents an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education that offers Bangla and English version of the same curriculum which is followed by all the public schools and numerous private schools. At the primary and secondary levels (class 1 through 10), NCTB is responsible for providing free books every year to the learners matriculated through nine separate and autonomous Intermediate and Secondary Education Boards. For the higher-secondary levels (class 11 through 12), books developed by independent authors following NCTB curriculum are available in the market and colleges enjoy the freedom to choose their preferred books (Intermediate and Secondary Education Boards, Bangladesh, n.d.).]

b) Bangladesh Technical Education Board [BTEB stands for a state regulatory body formed in 1960 to supervise technical and vocational education in the secondary and higher-secondary levels which functions through 45 public and 20 private institutes (Bangladesh Technical Education Board, n.d.).]

- c) Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board [BMEB monitors secondary and higher-secondary education provided in the madrasahs, an institution dedicated solely to the nourishment of Islamic values, which was transformed into an independent body in 1979 by the government (Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, n.d.).]
- d) International regulatory bodies [A great number of schools are run by private entities subscribing to the international curricula, mostly Cambridge Assessment International Education and the Pearson Edexcel (English-medium schools in Bangladesh, n.d.)]

From these practices, it is obvious that English enjoys a significant place in the education system of Bangladesh. This study takes English as a global language and critically examines the state of English teaching, principally classroom instruction, content, and delivery, based on some empirical evidences realised in the tertiary-level language teaching classrooms. There have always been several pressing questions regarding language-specific instructional design. Some of them relate to the assessment criteria, medium of instruction, content, materials, cultural adaptation and appreciation, individual learner differences, error correction, human resources, and logistics (Briggs, 1991; Robinson, 2001; Young, 2009; Mickan, 2012; Macalister & Nation, 2013; Reiser & Dempsey, 2017). Since any student entering the tertiary level in Bangladesh must complete a twelve-year full-time classroom instruction on English, it can be, at least, assumed that they all retain the essential understanding of all the four macro skills of English. The problem arises when the learners are found to be struggling with the approaches and modules formulated for university teaching. In most cases, the students fail to perceive the classroom instruction delivered in English and have a threatening situation in terms of writing correctly, even at a very basic level. As the universities are not supposed to work with the mechanics of English and are to prepare the learners for their future academic journey through the introductory language courses, the teachers also find it difficult when it comes to working with the applied aspects of language, e.g. organisation in academic writing, reading intensively for critical interpretation, using language in real-life communication, and applying language skills in encoding and decoding information. Steeping over these complications, the following research questions were formed prior to conducting the study.

- a. What are the possible reasons that impede the language use?
- b. Can these reasons be unified under a single string from the viewpoints of the gaps between language policy and adopted practices?
- c. How far can these issues be minimised in the context of Bangladesh?

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. English as an International Language and Bangladesh**

Talking about the global inevitability of English, Crystal (2012) reports that English is used as the accepted language in 85% of the international organisations and Ethnologue (2019) claims that currently English has a total of 1.27 billion speakers consisting 369.7 million native and 898.4 million non-native speakers making English the most widely used second language. English is now creating new boundaries and opportunities for the bilinguals and in the international platform, English has already entered a new ecological system (Mansour, 1993; House & Rehbein, 2004; DeWispelare, 2017). Jenkins (2003) profoundly claims that wherever this language has set foot, it has been widely accepted and in the non-native settings, English has successfully made a permanent impression in the names like ESL, EFL, EIL, and ELF giving birth to a newer stream of pedagogy, e.g. TESL, TEFL, and TESOL, through a certain level entitled “new Englishes”. English has successfully been able to transform itself from “the ruler’s language” to a world language where it belongs to the hands of the non-native performers and after going through several processes of assimilation, no variety can be entirely attributed to any distinct country where English is used as a native language (Mufwene, 2001). Lim (2009) denies such categorisation of English concerning Singapore English (SingE) by pointing such measures to possess “an inductive fallacy of proof” (p.181) and she decisively establishes that SingE, or any other local variety of English, can never be classified or typified through distinguishing some basic patterns or structural properties. Likewise, in terms of the third world countries, English has been evaluated in a constructive manner since it’s a crucial component in international relations, NGO operations, and higher education (Block & Cameron, 2002; Crewe & Axelby, 2012; Leitner, Hashim, & Wolf, 2016).

As categorised by The World Bank, Bangladesh has secured the place of a lower middle-income country in 2018 and now is in the process of graduation to be accomplished in 2024 if everything goes as planned (Bangladesh, 2019). Keeping that in mind, English becomes a crucial catalyst since this number one lingua franca (Aarts & Nelson, 1999; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Mackenzie, 2014) has a second-to-none position in every sphere of the society e.g. education, trade, commerce, media, politics, and technology which, as a whole, complement the bigger prospects of globalisation, neoliberalism, and multiculturalism (Crystal, 2006; Murray, 2006; Modiano, 2009; Mufwene, 2010; Pennycook, 2010; Smit, 2010; Jyothi, 2012; Neeley, 2012; Walt, 2013; Barnawi, 2018; Rahman & Pandian, 2019).

## 2.2. Attitude Towards English in Bangladesh

The primary conjecture arises from the gaps between the stakeholders' failure to appreciate the prominence of English as a global or international language and taking actual steps in tackling those. Studies have it that the language policy, attitude, and planning of Bangladesh have been greatly affected by a sense of faulty, biased, and blind nationalism. Numerous works have suggested that the historicity of Bangla and the colonial past have contributed to a great extent in reshaping the approaches adapted towards developing resilient language policies. Chowdhury & Kabir (2014), referring to the case of China adopting English, hold that Bangladesh has faced "almost irreconcilable fractures in formulating unproblematic language policies" (p.1) bearing the legacy of colonisation and the nationalistic outlook that subdues English over Bangla. Due to the dirty political practices and derogatory policies adapted by the then British government during the colonial period (Banglapedia, 2003), English has always received a form of "tissue rejection" (Holliday, 1992). This faulty notion of nationalism has always been into the dispositions of Bangladesh and even after several attempts, the Pakistani government failed to implement an appropriate language policy in Bangladesh before liberation and there was no visible attempt from the administration to resolve this issue in the independent nation (Talib, 1978).

Hussain (2019) questions this status of nationalism on the grounds of higher education and international trade and seeks for a harmonising presence of Bangla and English. Karim (1992) posits that Bangladesh, as a newly independent nation, failed to reevaluate and readjust itself with the growing needs of international relations since it simply carried the Pakistani nationalism, flawed in its root, even after independence. Drawing on E. J. Hobsbawn's model of "proto-nationalism", Samaddara (2002) argues that Bangladesh, through its imprudent and impulsive measures, is paving the way for a nationwide disorder since the successors cannot decide on various national issues, e.g. education, literature, and fundamentalism. Jahangir (2002) goes on maintaining the same stating that such sort of hysterical nationalism can work behind the rise of fundamentalism which might encapsulate all the spheres of the state if not reticulated on an urgent basis. Tagging Bangla as "a potent symbol of identity and national aspirations" (p.29), Hamid & Erling (2015) claim that the status of English in Bangladesh had severely degraded after independence bringing it down to a foreign language from second language resulting from the "Bangla-centric sentimentalities" (p.30). They also stretch that though the government had realised the substantial significance of English later, a lot of erratic and impetuous measures led to the creation of a problematic secondary education system.

Connecting the role of language with economy and human capital, Gazzola, Templin, & Wickström (2018) elaborate on the communicative parameters of language in a global setting and opt that it is one of the desirable skills that employers seek for. English also gets precedence in other walks of life and for long, it has been quite a debatable issue whether a nation should remain stagnant on the values ushered from nationalistic idealisation or choose to identify the pluralist views bearing in mind the unquestionable legitimacy of English, especially relating to international correspondence, negotiation, higher education, and multiculturalism (Reynolds & Valentine, 2005; Mowbray, 2012; Zaman & Muzaffar, 2016).

## 2.3. English Education in Bangladesh

Consisting of 265.2 million speakers (Ethnologue, 2019), Bangla stands at number five and thirteen respectively as a first and a second language. Kachru, Kachru, & Sridhar (2008) endorse Bangladesh as a multilingual country as "there is only one major language in Bangladesh... Bengali... spoken by approximately 98% of the population" (p.148) where the rest 2% is comprised of 37 minority language. They further claim that no notable state efforts have been undertaken to preserve any minor language and Bangla is the officially preferred medium of instruction in the secondary levels. In this monolingual setting, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in 1999 to satisfy the needs of global and intercultural competence and to create globalised citizens (Billah, 2013)). Also, to match with the ongoing demands, a lot of adjustments have already been stuffed into the National Education Policy where ensuring all the classroom instructions to be delivered in English (implemented through the enactment of Private University Act 1992) and launching mandatory English language courses in all the universities are two of the most significant ones (Rahman A., 2015). Still, Bangladesh remains in a problematic and indecisive state even in addressing the sociology of Bangla and placing English in proper contexts.

In the case of the education system of Bangladesh, it is evident that the concept of language teaching has never been suitably addressed by the government or the policy makers. Mohsin (2003) points out the education policy of Bangladesh to be intensely prejudiced that favours nation building through the conscious exploitation of language centered strategies. These strategies are reflected in constitution, legal documents, and sectarian records, which, undoubtedly, neglect the "global" over "interpersonal" (Holliday, 2005, p.174). Rasheed (2012) questions the real practices of CLT on the ground that it lacks the balance between nationalism and internationalism leading to a permanent pitfall in the learners' critical awareness and

literacy. Even after ten years of implementation, the National Education Policy (NLP 2010) is yet to see productive outcomes whereas the secondary education had a budget of BDT 29,624 crore (296.24 billion USD) for the fiscal year of 2018-19 (The Daily Independent, 2019). As in Bangladesh, the education system is fundamentally “the same over two decades” (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008, p.17) and in the case of CLT failing to spread its wings in Bangladesh, Rahman, Johan, Selim, Singh, & Shahed (2019) have held some issues liable which are inappropriate approach towards the social setting, less incentive in T-S interaction, and poor training facilities of the teachers. Some further impediments are the medium of instruction in the lower levels, socio-economic constraints, ineffective administration, class size, excessive attention towards accuracy, lack of materials, low level of communicative skills, excessive concentration towards grammar skills, and assessment (Barman, Sultana and Basu, 2006; Islam and Bari, 2012). Another study conducted by Haider & Chowdhury (2012) on the secondary school teachers of Bangladesh presents that most of them do not follow the core practices of CLT.

Where many authors refer to individual countries and endorse that education has a direct connection with development, e.g. Soon (1988) and Kolhatkar (1997) in the cases of Singapore and India respectively, Faegerlind & Saha (2016) establish that literacy rate and development have never been in proportionate to each other. Rather, they move on stretching that the policies must be systematically scrutinised before putting into action since “the relationship between education and development is highly complex” (p.58) and the policy makers should have a clear understanding of the desired development, e.g. economic, social, and political (p.58). Bangladesh faces turmoil in this regard where the focus is put more on increasing the literacy rate and merely covering the contents in the syllabus instead of emphasising on literary nourishment and soft skill development. Comim (2012) believes that universities have a lot to offer in this regard as “education is related to human capital and human capital promotes growth” (p.90). Bangladesh is no exception to the above strands bearing that “it is now essential for even a factory worker, who earns less than the minimum wage, to know some English” (Imam, 2005, p.480). NLP 2010, published in 2010 with support from UNESCO, upholds the same legacy which can be comprehended from several clauses (no 6, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, and 20 in particular) outlined under the “Education: Aims and Objectives” section. These clauses refer to education and its purpose through various drives which are paraphrased below.

- Clause 6. focus on creativity, practicability, and productivity leading to the nourishment of scientific mindset and leadership abilities of the learners
- Clause 10. assuring marginal competencies discouraging rote learning
- Clause 11. cultivation of skills essential for competing in a global context
- Clause 12. practice of employing extensive importance on ICT, maths, science, and English
- Clause 17. delivery of education at each level in a correlated manner
- Clause 19. emphasis on imparting a research-friendly environment
- Clause 20. establishment of appropriate context that supplements cultivation of learning

In fine, these aims can be broadly explained through critical learning theory, threshold concepts in learning, progressive and eclectic learning, Krashen’s monitor model (The input hypothesis to be precise), constructivism, and essentialism. It can be observed that the language policy supports and predominantly values English as a core component of teaching whereas the real scenario is quite the opposite. English has a diversified set of prospects that cannot be ignored right now and instead of arguing over the derogatory attributes, a point of departure could be designed where English and Bangla can achieve a complementary coexistence.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Design**

The study has been conducted using a mixed method where both the qualitative and quantitative method of data collection have been applied simultaneously to reach the conclusion. Greene, Caracelli, & Graham (1989) define mixed method research as types of research “that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm” (p.256). It is also used when the existing set of data might not be enough, and a further clarification is needed to answer the research questions (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Where Hesse-Biber (2010) highlights mixed method as it can “assist the researcher’s total understanding of the research problem” (p.04), Bergman (2008) warns the researchers about following some steps while designing the strategies of the mixed method as this method demands more attention and delicacy. Though mixed methods are more expensive than qualitative or quantitative methods, they have been suggested to be able to provide a better interpretation of the research problem (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). It is often called as “the third paradigm” of research where there lies a compromise between the qualitative and quantitative mode of data collection, and it provides a deeper appraisal of the problem (Bryman, 2006; Newman & Ridenour, 2008). Morse & Niehaus (2016) further suggest that

mixed method can be used “when the phenomena being studied is considered complex and beyond the reach of a single method” (p.15). Creswell & Clark (2011) have provided a thorough list of the mixed methods where they have identified four major types; namely, The Triangulation Design, The Embedded Design, The Explanatory Design, and the Exploratory Design (p.59). The multilevel model of the triangulation design has been applied in this study.

The triangulation model is defined as a form of research where data is collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Watson, McKenna, Cowman, & Keady, 2008). Morse (2008) asserts that this mode can be useful in gathering “different but complementary data on the same topic, rather than to replicate results” (p. 157). By using triangulation model, “it is possible to use qualitative data to illustrate a quantitative effect, or to determine whether the qualitative and the quantitative component yield convergent results” (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017, p.116).

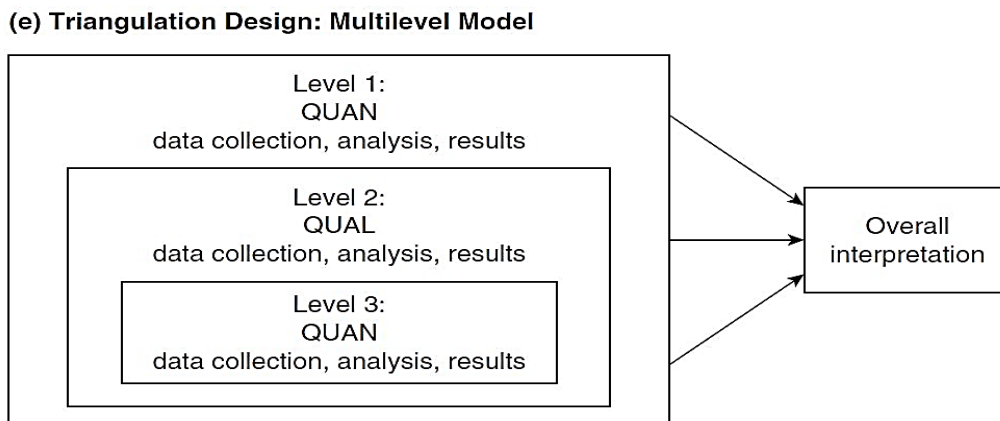


Figure 1: Data collection and interpretation through triangulation design (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p.64)

### 3.2. Data Collection, Setting, Participants, and Analysis

Datasets have been prepared based on 287 responses derived from 241 quantitative and 46 qualitative ones with respondents from 21 universities across the country. For accumulating quantitative data, 100 sets of printed questionnaires were distributed in the locally approachable universities among which 73 were returned and the rest (168) has been interpreted from online responses disbursed using Google Forms. The qualitative data have been amassed based on 26 focus group discussions (FGD) and 20 one-to-one interviews. Microsoft Excel 2019 has been used for tabulation and preparation the charts and tables.

95.5% of the participants comes from three streams of educational background. All of them were attending their introductory English courses that go by different names at different institutions bearing analogous aims and objectives. Some of the common course titles are “Introduction to English Language”, “English Fundamentals”, “Foundational English”, and “Introductory English”. Since these courses are offered to all the students at their foremost semesters/trimesters and have been mandated to be compulsory at every tertiary-level institute in Bangladesh, all of them tend to focus on improving the four macro skills of English. These courses exhibit several communal goals, e.g. improving basic language aptitudes, formulating language awareness necessary for advanced level studies, and introducing the learners with the norms of academic writing.

Table 1.1. Demographic data of the respondents

Region	Number (in percentile)
Chittagong	38.6
Dhaka	14.5
Rajshahi	21.2
Rangpur	2.1

Khulna	8.7
Mymensingh	6.2
Barishal	1.2
Sylhet	7.5

Table 1.2. Educational background of the respondents

Stream	Value (in percentile)
English medium	14.3
Bangla medium	74.1
English version	7.1
Madrasah	1.2
Technical education	2.5
Other	0.8

### 3.3. Ethical Considerations

All the responses had been recorded maintaining the “Confidentiality” and “Anonymity” (Loue, 2007; Kulakowski & Chronister, 2008; Wiles, 2012) of the respondents. No identifier had been implemented or preserved and no unethical persuasion had been exercised during the data collection process. Also, the principles of “Informed Consent” (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009; Panter & Sterba, 2011; Bailey, 2019; Seidman, 2019) were strictly followed throughout the whole process.

### 4. Findings

The findings are presented herewith in percentile as per the sequence followed in the questionnaire.

Table 1.3: Findings

	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
Q.1. The hardest language skill for me to master is-	15.4	23.1	53.8	7.7
Q.2. The easiest language skill for me to master is-	61.5	14.2	8.2	16.1
Q.3. At my school/college, my teachers mostly focused on teaching-	22.1	55.6	12.7	9.6
Q.4. At my university, my teachers mostly focus on teaching-	17.6	30.3	38.6	13.5

	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Q.5. Did your teachers use English while conducting classes?	7.7	12.4	14.7	36.4	28.8
Q.6. Did the teachers combine lectures with in-class activities, e.g. pair and group work, presentation, and project work?	2.9	9	22.4	42.1	23.6
Q.7. Could you interact with the teacher spontaneously and actively participate in the class?	12.2	15.3	26.2	41.9	4.4
Q.8. Other than doing by yourself, did you have to do any additional activity related to reading?	0.7	1.1	4.6	16.5	77.1
Q.9. Other than doing by yourself, did you have to do any additional activity related to writing?	11.2	4.8	19.3	53.9	10.8
Q.10. Other than doing by yourself, did you have to do any additional activity related to speaking?	0.2	2.9	14.9	29.8	52.2
Q.11. Other than doing by yourself, did you have to do any additional activity related to listening?	0	1.7	8.2	49.5	40.6
	1	2	3	4	5
Q.12. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5	30.1	33.4	19.1	10.2	7.2

the highest), rate your overall readiness for tertiary-level studies concerning the use of English that you have achieved from your secondary level education.					
Q.13. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest), rate your reading proficiency level required for starting tertiary-level studies.	22.9	18.3	21.3	29.3	8.2
Q.14. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest), rate your writing proficiency level required for starting tertiary-level studies.	31.6	36.8	9	15.7	6.9
Q.15. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest), rate your speaking proficiency level required for starting tertiary-level studies.	46.5	32.4	11.2	5.1	4.8
Q.16. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest), rate your listening proficiency level required for starting tertiary-level studies.	41.2	29	20.6	6.1	3.1
Q.17. Now, think for a while and elaborate on your experience of learning English as a language after starting your undergraduate studies. You can focus on a) the parts that you enjoy, b) the parts that you fail or struggle to understand, c) how tertiary-level studies are different compared to your secondary level. (Kindly note that answering to this part is completely optional, however, we would greatly appreciate if you could write a few words.)	(Discussed in findings)				

## 5. Discussion

It is evident that the policy fails to materialise its ambition even after ten years of enactment and the disputes tend to speak for themselves. The responses manifestly point that the learners are in a challenging situation since the synergy between the aims stated in the policy and the actual classroom practices has never been objectified. With 46.5% learners who think that they have the lowest level of speaking proficiency, even for the introductory level, and 63.4% who hold that they are barely ready to go for undergraduate studies, the pendulum moves towards the linear relation between education and national growth where educational planning plays one of the key roles. All of them carry a superficial understanding of English as well as the macro skills and are not equipped with even the very basic understanding. Since the problem is rooted in the classroom practices that do not reciprocate the policy and the policy itself is highly affected, the learners are forced to simply move with the flow without even being able to conceptualise the language itself. It poses another dilemma on their parts provided that most of them fail to grasp the threshold concepts which gets a worse shape after they enter undergraduate level. The responses to Q12-16 manifestly portray that their classrooms do not allow them to learn in a logical manner whereas clause 17 of NLP 2010 has direct instructions to keep the contents correlated. This mismatch between their expectation and reality fail to cultivate the necessary skills for a global context and instil a fear of English in their minds. Right after beginning their tertiary levels, most of them start fighting with their own shortcomings carried forward from the previous education, e.g. public speaking, vocabulary, basic sentence structure, and reading and listening skills. It, to a great extent, becomes troublesome to cope with the new approaches implemented in their universities where, so far, they have been accustomed with rote learning and lecture-based classes. Since the learners are not taught employing a pedagogical approach balancing all the macro skills (Q1-4), this mismatch disturbs their motivation and poses itself to be an affective one.

One more disappointing element could be the use of techniques in their previous classes. As most of the universities follow modern approaches to language teaching, e.g. blended learning, peer activities, and self-paced learning, it becomes essential for the learners to possess the essential skills to move further. For instance, the students feel retracted when group projects are assigned as their mindsets do not allow them to socialise with new people easily and stop them from opening up. As a whole, these tenacious rudiments work in segregating them from English as a language and turns the English classes into burdens that must be passed in any way. This flawed and shallow understanding of English negatively influences their linguistic competence. Gramsci (cited in Hoare and Smith, 1989) has warned against such perception of knowledge as this "objective form of knowledge" will not be able to contribute towards national and intellectual growth and will only spawn "traditional intellectuals".

Furthermore, hardly any student reports on going through an interactive and engaging session in their secondary levels. Whatever the policy warrants, e.g. discouraging rote learning and nurturing creativity, the learners never get to experience authentic techniques and they are, more or less, all by themselves when it comes to learning the language. Embracing this model of disguised GTM (Abedin, 2013), the teachers from the secondary and higher secondary levels are probing an undesirable impact on the language proficiency of the learners which results from, as recognised by Farooqui (2014), several challenging circumstances like employing teachers with low grip over English to teach English classes and setting no specific degree requirement to be a teacher of English. Consequently, the learners are forced to go for rote learning ignoring the possibilities that learning and exploring a new language can offer and depend on their teachers for instruction and materials for memorisation (Q5-11). These faulty applications of the method have a long-term effect in the minds of the learners as well as in the national development. Since there is no practical language planning in Bangladesh, these defective and forceful obligations have transformed English into a language that is only necessary during studies, not in real life. Other than a small percentage of additional activities on writing, the responses to the reading, speaking, and listening activities are alarming. The learners are in no position to blame for they have never been able to encounter the appropriate pedagogical applications. Even though the most practised skill in their secondary levels has been writing, their written responses could not sustain their own stands. Examining their written responses (Q.17), only 34 were found with no errors out of 212 received copies. If the other 47 with marginal errors are overlooked, there remain 131 writeups that contain serious errors. Most of the scripts were found containing errors in elementary areas, e.g. subject verb agreement, person, number, sentence conjugation, tense, and determiners. It puts the university teachers in a complicated state for most of the universities in Bangladesh are run following semester or trimester instruction system (trimester for most of the private universities and semester for the public ones) with limited hours allocated for each course and the tertiary-level language courses are not designed for addressing such errors. Though a handful of the private universities place the low performing freshmen in remedial courses, e.g. pre-university courses and access academy programs, the outcome is often unsatisfactory because these errors are hard to rectify through a three or four-month course. The facilitators also remain in a fix regarding the credibility of the course objectives and needs analysis. Rehman (n.d.) discusses the unrewarding state of ELT in Bangladesh in an interview affirming that in the context of Bangladesh, “the ELT programmes which all of our Departments of English took up as early as the mid-nineteen seventies and which are still continuing – the degrees, projects, conference and training junkets, for example – have not, it seems to me, made much of a difference so far”. Criticising the pedagogical practices of ELT, he denotes that “just plain English language teaching” is failing to produce expected results. The responses and findings duly suggest that the learners are entangled into a vicious circle of bureaucratic complicity, deficient policy, and fallacious schooling.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study summarises the survey conducted on the students attending their introductory English courses. From the viewpoints of skill development and correlated instruction, the findings suggest that there lies a serious mismatch between the previous and current mode of instruction. This discrepancy has been briefly supported by literature and recommendations have been conversed. As some closing notes, it can be mentioned that the current pedagogical practices that are more inclined towards one-way lecturing should be rectified in a way that does not create a morbid image of English in the minds of the learners. In this era of multilingualism, an unreliable standard in the language-specific instruction during the first twelve years of education has all the possibilities to bring devastating outcomes. However, this work has focused on the problems related to macro skills which are immediately observable and pertinent to policy and practice. Further discovery can be undertaken exploring the micro skills and the relevant affective issues. Investigations on classroom settings, teachers’ training and level of proficiency, learner needs, and materials can also be enlightening and supplementary to this study.

## **7. Recommendations**

The foremost step to remedy the situation should be the reformation or adjustment in the attitude towards English with a solid reflection through policy. As discussed above, the state of English as a global or international language has both beneficial and detrimental properties. In view of the current circumstances, the reformation should acknowledge the advantageous facets of English and appreciate English not as an imperialist tool, rather as the gateway to the universal prominence. Providing support in favour of “World Englishes” as a completely new variety that does not belong to any race or nation and incorporate all the speech communities under one roof, experts believe that there lies a wide range of choices in the hands of the stakeholders. At one point, Galloway & Rose (2015) visualise the expansion of English as a crucial and prolific phenomenon since they take English as a point of unison where it serves the interest of all without acting as an instrument of domination. On the other hand, putting emphasis on the events of global reach, necessity, and being a modern skill, Park (2009) urges for a critical but sympathetic department towards English. Bangladesh, being a country with almost a



null state related to appropriate language policy, needs a critical and context-specific language policy. Nationalism should not be a hindering factor in designing policies, rather a juncture could be figured out where the nation can gratify both the ends. As proposed by Bale (2015), some of the key terms like right, freedom, nationalism, and global political economy need to be deconstructed and reconfigured for a sustainable development. He rightfully refers to the term “blind spot” employed by Block, Gray, and Holborow (2012) that attempts to inspect the unanswered inquiries bridging “class inequality and the inevitability of capitalism” (p.73). In line with that, McKenzie (2010) argues on the inevitable connection between psychological elements and sociopsychological aspects of a language and seeks for a balance between the two.

In terms of education, studies concerning the value, power, and the learners’ attitude towards English clearly depict that English is required when it comes to the credibility of higher education bearing that it has to offer the largest volume of literature, has richer prospects in job sectors, possesses the ability to connect and operate globally, and acts as an important element of global multiculturalism (Gagliardi & Maley, 2010; Pinner, 2016; Rahman T., 2016). For the greater good, curriculum reformation balancing the policy, administrative and logistic limitations, and learners’ needs should be dealt with the utmost importance right now. Canagarajah (1999) comes up with a list of strategies that can be taken into action while designing policy for higher education balancing between cultural orientation and pedagogical approaches. He duly proposes that other than finding the contentions, policies should be designed to minimise the imperialist control in the fields of curriculum, classroom interaction, and materials. Through a flowchart (p.81) projecting how ELT reaches the classroom from the centre to periphery, he recommends that the participants of the process, e.g. teachers, policy makers, community interest groups, state agencies, and educational institutions, should play an active role in filtering the curriculum and fit it in a way that is free from any defective elements. Holliday (2005) preserves that keeping English out of sight and maintaining a locked down state should be undone and some notions related to the practices of TESOL or ESOL, the educators, cultural aspects, learner and social autonomy, and overall methodology are yet to be resolved. By presenting a diagram connecting TESOL with social context (p.139), he holds that five crucial parameters must be reassessed which are vision, agency, task, learning, and outcome (p.142). In other frameworks, it has also been quantified that the seeds of domination and power practice can be avoided and rejecting English bluntly is never going to solve the problem. Rather, these issues need to be addressed critically and conclusions should be reached after thorough deliberation and refinement (Protherough & Atkinson, 1994; Corbett, 2003; Coolahan, 2012). In our context, the synergy between secondary and tertiary English curriculum has to be institutionalised through a bottom up or an eclectic approach, not only through a top down method. Either the schooling system has to be standardised to match with the tertiary levels or the curriculum has to make room to accommodate some major adjustments. If the learners enter the undergraduate level without achieving proper skills, they will suffer in the long run contributing to a nationwide impact affecting national growth and human resources. On the other hand, it is not possible to radically improve the secondary schooling overnight. The authoritative bodies must think ahead and plan for bridging these gaps with a view to providing the learners with a proper education system.

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