

PROBLEMS, INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS:  
A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING (ELT) IN BANGLADESH

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING (ELT) IN BANGLADESH**

By

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## ABSTRACT

This is a case study which was directed to investigate some of the problems in English language study and teaching that are presently being experienced at various levels of the educational system in Bangladesh. This study deals with the changing of English Language Teaching (ELT) methods in the light of students' needs and interests. It explores why and how present ELT methods fail to satisfy students' needs in learning to speak English more accurately and fluently.

The study in this thesis is primarily qualitative and the methods of data collection consist of document study and questionnaire survey. The results of the study show that many English teaching activities which teachers commonly used fail to satisfy students' needs and interests. This lacking of interest has a negative impact on motivation to study English. Some negative feelings, such as frustration and boredom, have developed due to the uninteresting and unenjoyable teaching activities.

The study also shows that there is a striking difference between what students believe to be enjoyable, and effective for making language study fruitful and what teachers believe. Students perceive that communicative activities are helpful for making a class enjoyable as well as effective for enhancing their English language proficiency. On the other hand,

though teachers believe both communicative and non-communicative activities are important, noncommunicative ones are valued more highly than the communicative ones.

The mismatch between students' needs and expectations and the pedagogical philosophy and methods of teaching causes serious harm for learning a language. In recognition of this, the researcher recommended some solutions on the basis of the findings of the study. The discussion and recommendations generated from the research should be useful for changing English Language Teaching Methods in Bangladesh. It should also be useful to teachers in their quest for activities that are suited to their classroom environments, and administrators, as they grapple with curriculum development and programs for English language learning in Bangladesh.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABEP	Advisory Board of Education for Pakistan
BANBEIS	The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BEEB	The Bangladesh Educational Equipment Board
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BIDE	The Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education
BISE	Boards of Intermediate and Secondary School
BUET	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
DPE	Division of Primary Education
DPI	The Directorate of Public Instruction
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of other Languages
ESP	English for Special Purpose
FL	Foreign Language
H.S.C.	Higher Secondary Education
IER	Institute for Education Research
KELT	Key English Language Teaching

L <sub>2</sub>	Second Language
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
M.Ed.	Master of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAEM	National Academy for Educational Management
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NIEAER	National Institute for Educational Administration, Extension and Research
NIEMT	National Institute of Educational Media and Technology
PTI	Primary training Institute
PTI	Primary Training Institute
S.S.C.	Secondary School Certificate
TTC	Teachers Training College
UGC	University Grants Commission

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE PROBLEM

The proposed study is aimed at improving the standards of English study and teaching in Bangladesh, where English has the status of a second language. The knowledge of English is a necessity in the world. English is fast becoming the international *lingua franca* for the discussion of all aspects of Western-oriented knowledge and business. It is now the normal language for conferences and meetings which are specifically multi-lingual, such as UNESCO and EEC meetings. In fact, in today's competitive world a satisfactory knowledge of English is becoming expected rather than exceptional. It is seen as a means of access to scientific and technological development and an instrument of commercial, educational and general communication. As a third world country Bangladesh has realized that knowledge of English is essential for acquiring modern scientific and technological knowledge which is crucial for economic development. Hence, educators (those developing materials, syllabuses, curriculum) and teachers should have the educational responsibility to promote and facilitate the learning of English. Improving and facilitating English language learning and teaching at various levels of the education system in Bangladesh was the primary focus of this study.

This study had a two-fold purpose. Its central purpose was to identify some of the problems in English language study and teaching that are presently being experienced at various levels of the education system in Bangladesh. Secondly, it investigated English teachers' attitudes toward current English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh with which instructional techniques they regarded as beneficial to aid the students in learning the language with ease and appropriateness and facilitate students' competence in English. Students' attitudes toward current ELT methods and their preferred methods in the English classrooms were also investigated to compare with those of teachers. In this study, the need for improved teaching was emphasized, because effective teaching is obvious fundamental to enhancing second/foreign language proficiency and also because the recent study, "English Elective Materials for The B. Ed. Course Offered by TTCs in Bangladesh" shows that the main cause of the unsatisfactory standards of English language education in Bangladesh is lack of effective teaching methods and qualified teachers (Foster, 1994: p.1).

This research was based on the presupposition that if students' difficulties with English and their attitudes toward current ELT could be identified, analyzed and interpreted, their needs and the appropriateness of current ELT methods in Bangladesh may be better understood. The comparison between learners needs and expectations and teachers preferred teaching methods may be authentic to making a balance in choosing suitable methods for English teaching in the Bangladeshi context. The author's discussion of different approaches

to language teaching in the light of students attitudes would make the teachers aware of pedagogical innovations and may encourage them to change their teaching methods and explore strategies which could optimize students' English language learning. This discussion would have implications also for curriculum planners. It is valuable for curriculum specialists to know about different approaches to learning, and to be sensitive to their differential effectiveness, their fit in school contexts, and their implementation.

## 1.2 INSPIRATION

While I was engaged in teaching English in a Higher Secondary School in Bangladesh from 1992-1994, I developed an awareness that students were frustrated in learning the language and had negative attitudes toward the study of English. The method, *Grammar Translation Approach*, I used to teach English failed to attract and motivate them to learn the language. This made me realize that instead of the traditional language teaching methods, modern methods need to be adopted to make language study more motivational and interesting. After having taken graduate courses and conversed with professors and second language teachers in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I came to know about different *approaches* to second/foreign language teaching. This knowledge has inspired me to conduct research which would assist in changing ELT methods and thereby improve second language instruction in Bangladesh.

### **1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM**

English study and teaching in Bangladesh is full of paradoxes. Although officially, English is a second language, standards and practice call this status into question. A survey of English Language Teaching in Bangladesh by the British Council (1986) shows that standards of English were higher before the War of Liberation in 1971, when East Pakistan became Bangladesh. Prior to the liberation, the language policy for both East and West Pakistan was to have Urdu as the sole national language in both parts of Pakistan, with English as the official second language. The “Language Movement” in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) opposed this policy. The people of East Pakistan fought and in some cases died for the inclusion of Bengali, the language of that area. Such was the feeling behind the language issue which eventually led after the “War of Liberation” to the use of Bengali as the sole medium of instruction in all educational institutions in Bangladesh. The teaching and practice of English has also suffered. Consequently, English is neither sufficiently widespread nor appropriately taught as a second language of a genuine bilingual nation. Nevertheless, it is not a wholly foreign language. Although English is no longer in such widespread use as it was before, it remains the prestige language of the educational minority in Bangladesh, particularly in the urban areas. In the education system, English has been taught compulsorily in all junior high schools (grades VI-X), in all other institutions at this level (e.g. Vocational Training Institutes), and in all Intermediate colleges (XI-XII). In addition to this, primary schools teach English and it is compulsory from grade III.

However, Bangladesh can no longer be considered as a genuine ESL (English as a second language) situation. Neither does it qualify as a purely EFL (English as a Foreign Language) one. Bowers (1986), in his study of English teaching in Bangladesh, describes it as “ESL lapsing into EFL” (p. 29), and this is, in fact, the present status of English in Bangladesh.

Whatever the status of English in Bangladesh, English language teaching has tremendous drawbacks which need to be reformed. According to Bangladesh National Curriculum Guidelines (1988), the main objective of the study of English is to enable students “to use the four skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing, in real-life situations outside the school” (p.43). But a genuine foreign language classroom should administer the teaching method which helps students to increase their linguistic knowledge as well as communicative competence. One is useless without the other. However, the usual language teaching methods in Bangladesh “may increase linguistic knowledge, but not communicative competence” (Foster, 1994:7). In fact, English language teaching in Bangladesh is still characterized by a highly traditional approach, in particular the *Grammar Translation Method*, which I believe is one of the most important reasons for the mismatch between the objectives of ELT and actual language learning. Again there is a mismatch between teachers’ perceptions of effective teaching methods and that of students. Teachers’ assumed beneficial techniques may not fit students’ needs and learning styles. As a result, there are always claims of difficulties and lack of understanding. From my observation as a teacher,

I noticed a sense of frustration in my students with learning the language. There is a need for a change that could renew English language learning and the whole system of what is to be taught and learnt. The methods of instruction can be altered to increase students interest in understanding and learning English and to enhance students; communicative proficiency in English.

The whole language issue is such a sensitive one in Bangladesh that few public figures have openly regretted the falling standards of English, though many have privately deplored the loss of language. In the last few years, however, there has been a growing recognition in official circles that the decline in standards of English must be reversed. Various schemes and proposals have been put forward to improve the teaching of English at various levels in the education system. After examining ELT training in much greater detail, Cullen (1991) recommended that “The TTC B. Ed. Syllabus for the English elective should be revised so as to reflect more accurately both current developments in the field of English language teaching methodology and the practical needs of classroom teaching in Bangladesh” (p.16). However, English instruction still remains unchanged for three simple reasons that the teachers do not know i) why to change, ii) what to change and iii) how to change. Widdowson (1984:86) recommends: “There must be change..... if we do not accept the need for change, for renewal and reform we deny dynamism to our profession.” In this regard the investigation of problems in English language study and teaching, and



solutions to those problems seemed to be pertinent for discussion of reforms in ELT in Bangladesh. Changing ELT methods with recommendations for a culturally relevant curriculum and English teaching methods for Bangladesh was the primary focus of the study.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This research responded to a two-fold need. Firstly, from my experience as student and teacher of English, I noticed that students in Bangladesh have been suffering from a variety of problems in learning English. Very little research has been done to document the nature and extent of the problems. It is extremely uncommon in Bangladesh that students are asked about how effective and appropriate they find the teaching and what problems they encounter in studying English. Curriculum specialists and teachers take it for granted that the present content and teaching methods are appropriate and suitable for students. Consequently, there is a mismatch between learners' needs and expectations and teachers' teaching methods which hinders learners' achievement in language learning. Students are the motivating force of education. Research shows that language students have definite opinions and perceptions about language learning (Horwitz, 1988), and their perceptions need to be documented and reviewed to develop language study (Kleinsasser, 1989). It is therefore, the main purpose of the study was to identify some of the problems which the students are facing in learning the language. To document the nature of the problems, the main focus was given on students' attitudes toward current ELT, needs and difficulties in

learning English, preferred teaching methods and activities.

Secondly, it investigated students' and teachers' attitudes toward current ELT and its appropriateness in real-life situations. A set of questionnaires, which reflects various activities of both communicative and noncommunicative approaches to language teaching, was developed by the researcher based on a review of related literature and previous knowledge of English language teaching fields. The survey of current ELT and its appropriateness in the real-life situations was administered to make teachers aware of learners' needs so that they can reform their teaching methods in accordance with students' needs. In addition to its examination of students' attitudes, the study attempts to determine which instructional techniques teachers believe to be beneficial and important for students to enhance competence in English, and their applicability in Bangladeshi context. After investigating, analyzing, and interpreting the questionnaires, I hope to recommend for the establishment of a culturally relevant curriculum and also for suitable English teaching methods for Bangladesh. However, supplementary research needs to be conducted on the evaluation and implementation of those methods to language teaching at various levels of the education system. If English language teaching needs to be changed, I hope there will be further research on the development of teacher education and the improvement of curriculum for teacher training.

## 1.5 DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

Several terms in this thesis proposal which require definition are listed below:

### **EFL (English as a Foreign Language)**

In a foreign language setting, English is not the dominant language in the community where it is being taught. Students, outside the classroom setting, do not have the opportunity of being immersed in the target language.

### **ESL (English as a Second Language)**

As Richard-Amato (1988) explains, in the second language setting, "English is the dominant language in the area where it is being taught" (p.179). Outside the classroom, students have the opportunity to use the target language.

Marckwardt (1963) said that the British made a distinction between ESL and EFL: "by English as a Foreign language they mean English taught as a school subject or on an adult level solely for the purpose of giving the student a foreign language competence which he may use in one or several ways.....When the term English as a Second language is used, the reference is usually to a situation where English becomes a language of instruction in schools, as in the Philippines, or a *lingua franca* between speakers of widely diverse languages, as in India (Marckwardt, 1963: 13-14). This distinction was mentioned by several

scholars (Quirk *et. al.*, 1972; Christophersen, 1973). Later Smith suggests that “ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) may be used as cover term for both ESL and EFL” (1983:15).

### **Second Language Proficiency**

Second language proficiency is best defined as the learners’ overall knowledge of the target language. When the second language learners’ language proficiency is measured, it is usually assessed in relation to the native language speakers’ proficiency (Canale and Swain, 1980; Harley, Allen, Cummins and Swain, 1990; Swain, 1985). Cummins (1981) views language proficiency as the ability to use language both for academic purposes and basic communicative tasks. Second language proficient students develop the ability to understand the target language and speak in that language as well as the ability to write, and to read materials written in the target language with comprehension (Carrasquillo, 1990).

### **Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence has been characterized according to different linguistic categories. These categories include such components of language as knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, phonology, and uses of language with respect to aspects such as functions, situations, and oral or written texts. A fourfold concept of communicative competence has been advanced by Canale (1984). According to him communicative

competence can be characterized in terms of various knowledge and skills in four areas: 1) Grammatical competence (mastery of the language code); 2) Sociolinguistic competence (mastery of appropriate language use in different sociolinguistic contexts); 3) Discourse competence (mastery of how to combine and interpret forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text; and 4) Strategic competence (mastery of verbal and nonverbal strategies) (Canale, 1984:112). It is important to note that communicative competence is used to refer to both knowledge and skill in using language.

### **Likert-type scale**

Likert-type scale is an ordinal scale used in questionnaires. The respondent gives an answer which ranges from one extreme of the scale to its opposite. For example, one of the Likert-type scales used for the purposes of this study, the choices range from (1) not important, (2) somewhat important, (3) very important.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study lies in several specific areas:

- i) it will contribute to making solutions to some of the problems in English study and teaching in Bangladesh. To my knowledge, no independent study has been done focusing on changing and improving of English teaching methods. Hence, this research will work as an important document in the promotion of ELT in Bangladesh;

- ii) this study will generate many insights into some of the problems of English study that are being experienced by the students in all levels of the education system and suggest solutions from the analysis of different activities and approaches to ELT. These solutions will help administrators and teachers in reassessing current methods and, also, in exploring strategies and methods that could optimize students' English language learning;
- iii) the study may encourage curriculum planners to develop a new English curriculum which will be effective and will fit in the Bangladeshi school context;
- iv) this research will have implications also for the overall improvement of teacher education. Professional development for teachers, specially for English teachers, is a haphazard business in Bangladesh. There is very little emphasis on the promotion of trainees' English teaching skills in the colleges of education. This study will make the administrators aware of that and may encourage them to develop a curriculum to produce qualified English teachers;
- v) finally, this study may be of interest to educators in other non-English-speaking countries who have problems of a similar nature in English study and teaching. It may help them to undertake new programs and approaches to language teaching relevant to their needs and contexts.

## 1.7 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study were : i) to begin to identify students' problems in learning a second language like English; and ii) to investigate teachers' and students' attitudes toward current ELT and which method they believe to be beneficial for facilitating English education in Bangladesh. Two types of surveys were administered for collecting data. These are as follows:

1) A student survey. The main focus was be placed on students' attitudes and opinions regarding the real life applicability of the material and teaching techniques that are currently being used, the level of interest in what is taught, the degree of difficulty in studying English, and the preferred teaching methods and activities.

2) A survey on teachers attitudes toward current ELT and their preferred teaching methods which they think beneficial for enhancing students competence in English.

The proposed surveys were based on two sets of questionnaires which were developed by the researcher on the basis of the related literature review. Both closed and open-ended questionnaire items were used to give the subjects an opportunity to express their feelings freely and also to have more qualitative data. Students were administered the questionnaire in both Bengali and English as the researcher recognized that conducting the survey in both languages would eliminate language problems. The teachers' questionnaire



was administered only in the English version.

The study was administered in the capital city, Dhaka, Bangladesh. A potential group of 35 first year university students who have completed twelve years of schooling where they studied English compulsorily was selected for the students survey. The subjects were selected randomly from the different departments of Dhaka University. For the teachers survey, 20 English teachers at the primary and secondary levels were randomly selected from 15 different schools in the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Computer facilities (SPSS) were used to analyse the data collected from the closed questions and generate frequencies and percentages in order to obtain a descriptive analysis of the data. Analysis of the information received from the open-ended questions was qualitative based. The words, attitudes and opinions expressed in the responses of the subjects were the focus of this study's analytical base. Responses sometimes were divided into categories for the purpose of comparing and contrasting.

## **1.8 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made in the study:

- 1) Because the subjects investigated in the study were first-year university students, it was



assumed that by this time they have gained a knowledge of ELT needs, difficulties with current ELT methods and language competence.

2) Both subject groups understood the language of the questionnaire (As I have mentioned, the students' questionnaire was provided in both languages, English and Bengali).

3) Subjects were honest and sincere in responding to the survey questions.

4) It was assumed that the results of this research study would be applicable not only to Dhaka, but also to the rest of the country, since Bangladesh has a commonly used English curriculum which is established by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

### **Limitations**

The following are recognized as the limitations of the study.

1) The physical distance between the researcher and the field of the study, since the researcher was in Canada at the time of the research. If the researcher could have gone to the field of the study, the study could have been more elaborate.

2) The narrowness of the student sampling. The students involved in the study were the students of various faculties of Dhaka University, Bangladesh which constituted a limitation because the majority of the students of Dhaka University have entered through competitive examination and therefore, they are ranked as average and upper average students. There is a lack of below average students' responses. In addition to this, the needs and perceptions of rural learners might be different from that of the urbans. The study also lacks in rural

students' sampling.

## **1.9 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the thesis is given first followed by a brief discussion of the significance of the study. A brief picture of the educational system in Bangladesh is given in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is the history of English Education in Bangladesh from its beginning to the present status. The theoretical framework of the study is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a detailed account of the methodology adopted for the research. The findings of the study are given in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 is the general discussion of the findings. The final chapter (Chapter 8) is an integration and conclusion for the study. This chapter also presents some recommendations for a culturally relevant curriculum and offers suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **GENERAL BACKGROUND ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH**

A general overview on the educational system in Bangladesh is useful. It will help to give some background in making the discussion about English study and teaching in Bangladesh. The educational system of a country is the result of interactions of many factors, such as history, language, economy, and also political, social, and religious beliefs. All these elements play a decisive role in the formulation of a nation's educational policy. In describing the educational system in Bangladesh, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first, "The National Setting", describes briefly some of the general aspects of the country, such as landscape, history, government, religion and population. The second section, "Education in Bangladesh", focuses more precisely on the Educational System in the country.

### **2.1 SECTION I: THE NATIONAL SETTING (BANGLADESH)**

Bangladesh is an emerging and developing country of South Asia which is flanked by India on three sides - north, east and west; on the south, the only sea outlet for the country is provided by the Bay of Bengal. Though Bangladesh became an independent

nation in 1971, this geographical area has thousands of years of history behind it. Indeed, Bangladesh has from ancient times experienced waves of new people who first invaded and settled the land. The Muslims ruled India for about six hundreds years and this greatly influenced the social and cultural life of Bangladesh. The British rule of India (including Bangladesh), which lasted about two hundred years, has also left an enormous impact, especially on administrative and educational systems.

Formerly Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan (after partition in 1947) or East Bengal (before partition). In 1947 Pakistan emerged out of the partition of British India as an independent state consisting of East and West wings, but the rejoicing over independence soon wore off in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and issues of regional administration, economy and culture came to dominate local politics. When Bangladesh was East Pakistan, it had 56 percent of Pakistan's total population of 120 million and these people spoke Bengali (Omar, 1979). The language policy for both East and West Pakistan was to have Urdu as the sole national language in both parts of Pakistan, with English as the official second language. Later on, Urdu was adopted as the national language. Bengali speakers felt their claims for inclusion of Bengali as a national language had been denied and thus, the language question became an important issue for cultural survival (Khatun, 1992). The "Language Movement" in 1952 in East Pakistan opposed the language policy, fighting and, in some cases, even dying for the inclusion of Bengali.

Such was the feeling behind the language issue. The dissatisfaction against Pakistani rule in course of time gave birth to the nationalist movement which saw its culmination in the "Liberation War" of 1971, and in its final victory on December 16, 1971, the new country of Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign State.

Bangladesh lies roughly between  $20^{\circ}/30$  and  $26^{\circ}/54$  North Latitude and  $80^{\circ}/56$  longitude. It, with only 144,000 square kilometres, is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. To compare it with Canada, Bangladesh is about the size of New Brunswick while its population is four times that of Canada. About 85 percent of the population are Muslims; Hindus constitute an additional 13 percent of the total, and the remainder is made up of Christians and Buddhists. The high population rate has obvious unfavourable influences on the educational development, though the government has determined to increase the literacy level by establishing more schools and providing with the facilities in terms of classrooms, textbooks, and teachers.

Bangladesh is a unitary, independent and sovereign Republic known as the People's Republic of Bangladesh. It is also a Commonwealth country. Bangladesh has a Parliamentary Government, with a Prime Minister as Head of State and Chief executive. The Prime Minister holds office for a term of five years from the date on which he/she enters upon the office. The Bangladesh Government operates from Dhaka, which is the

capital city of the country. The unicameral Parliament located in Dhaka is elected on the basis of adult suffrage for a period not exceeding five years at a time. The Parliament consists of 300 seats and 30 reserved seats for the nominated woman Parliament members. There is a Council of Ministers consisting of the Prime Minister, one or more Deputy Prime Ministers and other Ministers to aid and advise the Head in the exercise of his/her functions. The ministers are responsible for effecting, controlling and supervising the various policies and functions of the government.

As regards the administrative division, the country is divided into five Divisions, each placed under a Divisional Commissioner. There are 64 districts under the five divisions. The district is administered by a senior officer known as Deputy Commissioner (DC). Each district is subdivided into a number of Upa-Zillas. Upa-zilla is the focal point of public administration in the country and it is the lowest rung of administration, but it is not the lowest unit. Each upa-zilla is itself composed of unions and the unions themselves are made up of villages (Source: Government of Bangladesh, 1993).

## **2.2 SECTION II: EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh inherited the long tradition of a British colonial system of education. Therefore, the historical development of education in Bangladesh is inseparably related to the total educational development of India and Pakistan. From days unknown, Dravidians

are said to have been living in India. The excavations at Mohinjo-dro, Harappa, and other places of the Harappain civilization have revealed the existence of a civilization about 2000-3000 years old having a well-developed system of public sanitation, pottery, a written language, with an art rich in beauty (Sassani, 1954). Such cultural remains give indication of a people who must have had an educational system. From central Asia, Aryans invaded India and introduced a society based on a class system. Their educational system was segregated against Dravidians. Their learning was primarily directed toward a class of Brahmins. This ancient culture in India introduced a legacy of caste system which became highly rigid. The Muslims of India rejected the caste system, and in this context, Pakistan and Bangladesh have none. Educational opportunities are available to all citizens alike (Hussain, 1993). However, the British rule in India has left a significant influence in the educational system of the country. In the following pages a sequential development of education is presented with a view to identifying the factors influencing the present-day conditions.

### **2.2.1 Education in the British Period (1758-1947)**

The British rulers inherited the Muslim centres of learning and designed them to educate a limited number of people to work as clerks and civil servants for the British Government. The British system was not concerned with the broad needs of the country. The British period was marked by an initial policy of non-involvement, which was later

changed to gradual assumption of responsibilities of education on a limited scale by locally educated nationals in order to facilitate the increasing complexities of the vast kingdom. The early nineteenth century was the beginning of active involvement of the government in the officers of education in India. There was a scheme to produce a generation of Indians, Indians in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect (Daswani, 1982). During that period the British introduced English language to the Indians and encouraged the study of English.

The most important landmark in the history of education in the continent is the Education Despatch of 1854 which was the first government paper officially recognizing the need and objectives of universal education. The Despatch had had a tremendous impact on the development of education in the Indian sub-continent. In the Despatch the emphasis was given on the need for administrative research, the role of an inspectorate, control of textbook and curriculum, the education for an elite, religious education, the medium of instruction. These areas are still in need of appropriate research (Government of Bangladesh, 1991). However, some of the achievements are described as follows:

- i) free compulsory primary education;
- ii) gradual transfer of educational responsibilities from the centre to the province;
- iii) efforts to introduce an additional tax for educational expenditure;
- iv) establishment of the universities as examining and affiliating bodies;



- v) development of schools, colleges, and universities by Muslims to meet changing educational needs for India; and
- vi) the study of English in schools, colleges and universities (Huq, 1954:21).

### **2.2.2 Education in the Pakistan Period (1947-1971)**

After the partition of 1947, the new Dominion of Pakistan was thrown into competition with the rest of the world. The country, therefore, needed a dynamic educational policy to meet this challenge. Accordingly, the Government of Pakistan and the provincial Government took some initiatives to formulate educational policies for the new generation. But evidence shows that the educational policies formulated during the long 25 years of the Pakistan period neither met the requirements of the aspiration of the common people nor equipped them to compete with the demands of the scientific age (Khatun, 1992).

Pakistan inherited an educational system which was intended to serve the narrow utilitarian objectives of a time long since passed (Zaki, 1968). It was in 1951 that the first attempt was made to formulate a six-year plan (1951-1957). As it was not closely related to an overall plan for social and economic development of the country, it had to be scrapped soon after its launching. However, some of the factors considered in the plan were: improvement of instruction, improvement of technical institutions, programs of scholarships, and plans to expand girls' educational facilities.

The concept of education as a vital national investment, described in the Second-Five- Year Plan, continues to be the guiding factor of the Third-Five-Year Plan and is directed towards achieving a well-balanced and integrated developments at all levels of education. The Third-Five-Year Plan is the first to be formulated within a Twenty-Year Perspective Plan (1965-1985). The Third-Five-Year Plan (1965-1970) was initiated in 1965 with the main objective of a speedy attainment of "Islamic Socialism". However, in spite of these development, the British legacy of automatic promotion of senior teachers to administrative positions has still remained in vogue along with the legacy of assigning educational leadership to civil servants, regardless of their educational qualifications and experience.

### **2.2.3 Education System in Bangladesh (1971-present)**

The basic educational structure has been inherited from the days of British India almost unchanged through the Pakistan era and now faces the struggle of the 1990's with no clear philosophy to guide it but with a clear political commitment to strengthen it. The education system comprises about 60,000 institutions, over a quarter of a million teachers and around 10 million students. The basic structure is well established. The Educational System of Bangladesh may broadly be divided into three stages, viz., Primary, Secondary, and Higher; Primary education is imparted in primary schools, secondary education in junior secondary/high schools, higher secondary education in the intermediate colleges and

intermediate sections of degree colleges, and higher education in degree colleges and universities. "Bengali" is the medium of instruction at the primary and secondary level, where English is widely used in the higher level of education, particularly in the universities.

### **Pre-Primary Education**

The first five years in a child's life are of special importance. The child psychologists define this period as the formulation of the structure of human life (Khatun, 1992). In Bangladesh government recognition for pre-primary education is absent even though many primary schools, especially private schools, offer such facilities. About 3,000 nursery, kindergarten, tutorial and pre-cadet schools are located in urban areas which have pre-primary classes, nursery, standard I, II, preceding formal primary classes (Government of Bangladesh, 1992). Some of these institutions also provide primary and secondary level courses and prepare students for examinations at 'O' level of the English system. These institutions are mostly run on a commercial basis and only parents with financial ability avail themselves of the privileges of these institutions. Mosque-based institutions also offer pre-primary education along with religious teachings.

## **Primary Education**

Formal schooling begins at the age of six in the first grade of the primary schools and it extends over five years (Grade I-V). Of the total number of about 46,000 primary schools in the country, 37,610 are managed by the government and the rest are privately managed (Government of Bangladesh, 1992). Teacher-student ratio in primary schools is 1:55. Most of the primary schools run in two shifts; the first shift is from 10 a.m. to 12.00 noon and the second one, from 1 p.m. to 5.15 p.m. During the first shift, classes I & II are held and in the second shift classes III, IV, & V are taken. Primary education offered at the primary schools is free. The Government has increasingly been extending greater emphasis on the universalization of primary education since 1973. Recently it has been made compulsory for all children of 6 to 10.

Primary school curriculum for classes I & II consists of Bengali (Native language), Mathematics, and Environmental Science (General Science and Social Studies). From class III onward the students have to take physical education, Arts & Crafts, and Religion as additional subjects. English is taught as the second language from class III. The academic year starts in January and ends in December. Promotion to the next higher grade at the primary level is given on the basis of satisfactory results in the annual examination held at the end of each calendar year. However classes I & II are treated as one unified/ungraded class. There is no system of public examination at the end of the primary level. The head

of the institution issues school leaving certificates to the successful students. There is, however, a system of conducting a Merit Scholarship examination at the end of class V for the best students selected by the Head of each institute. This examination is arranged by Divisional Primary Education (DPE) offices and scholarships are awarded mainly on the basis of merit and upazilla-wise.

## **Secondary Education**

The level of education after primary and immediately preceding higher education is known as Secondary Education. It consists of three phases, viz., i) Junior secondary, ii) Secondary and iii) Higher Secondary. The durations are 3 years for the junior secondary, 2 years each for secondary and higher secondary (i.e.,  $3+2+2=7$  years). Junior and secondary education is offered in junior high schools and high schools, and higher secondary education is offered in intermediate colleges and intermediate sections of degree colleges.

### **(i) Junior Secondary School**

Junior secondary schools offer teaching facilities comprising three grades (grades VI-VIII). There are many high schools and a few intermediate colleges which offer the courses of the junior secondary stage. The total number of junior high schools is 2,500, all of which are privately managed. The government, however, extends 70% salary support to the teachers and other employees of these schools. Recently the government has also declared; education free for all girls studying up to class VIII admitted into the institutions located

outside the municipal areas (Government of Bangladesh, 1992). Each institution has a School Managing Committee for the management and supervision of the school.

The curricular structure is uniform and consists of Bengali, Mathematics, English, General Science, Social and Religious Studies. No public examination is held at this level. Each institution conducts its own examination. The annual tests are held at the end of the calendar year and promotion to the next higher class is given only if a student secures the minimum prescribed marks which vary from school to school. A countrywide scholarship examination known as the “Junior Scholarship” examination is held every year. It is conducted by the Deputy Director of Secondary and Higher Education Directorate of the four administrative divisions. Merit scholarships are given to the successful candidates.

## **(ii) Secondary/High Schools**

Normally a high school comprises five grades from classes VI to X. Grades IX and X are considered secondary stage. There are many high schools which have classes from grade I-X. The number of high schools is 8,000. Of these only 295 are managed directly by the government. The teacher-student ratio in secondary schools is 1:33. Most of the privately run high schools provide co-education. There are, however, many single sex institutions. Each institution has a School Managing Committee consisted of 11 members: a representative from the government (1), the head of the institute (1), teachers (2), guardians

(4), person interested in education (1), founder (1), and donor (1).

Diversification of courses and curricula are introduced at class IX, where the students are separated into two streams of courses, viz., science and humanities. Bengali, English, Mathematics, and Geography are compulsory for both groups. The elective subjects for the science group students are Non-living Science (Physics and Chemistry) and Life Science (Botany and Zoology), and for the humanities group History, Economics, and Civics or any two of the following subjects: Religious Studies, Advanced English, Science, Home-economics, Food & Nutrition, Book-keeping & Accounting, Geometrical & Technical Drawings, and Wood Working.

The annual examination is held and promotion to the next class is given if a student gets the minimum prescribed marks. The academic program is intended to be terminal at the end of class X where the students appear at the first public examination called the S.S.C. (Secondary School Certificate) examination, but primarily, the program is directed at the preparation of the students for entrance into the higher secondary level. The examination is conducted every year by the four Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). The minimum marks for 1st (equivalent to A), 2nd (B), and 3rd (C) division in the S.S.C. examination are 60%, 45%, and 33%, respectively. The minimum pass mark for an individual paper is 33. To qualify for a certificate, a candidate must pass in all subjects

including English. Students securing a 75% mark in aggregate are awarded a 'star' and a 'letter' is awarded to a candidate securing a minimum of 80% marks in each subject.

### **(iii) Higher Secondary School**

At the higher secondary stage, the academic program for general education is of two years' duration (grades XI-XII) with a public examination called Higher Secondary Certificate (H.S.C.), at the end of class XII. Generally Intermediate colleges offer courses of higher secondary level, but there are many degree colleges which combine grades XI and XII as well. Out of a total of 850 colleges, 359 are intermediate colleges and the remaining are degree colleges. The teacher-student ratio in Intermediate colleges is 1:35. Academically, all the higher secondary institutions are under the control of BISE.

Courses are diversified into science, humanities, and commerce. Bengali and English are compulsory for all groups while the elective subjects for the science group are Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology, Psychology, Geography or Economics; for the humanities group any three of the following subjects: Economics, Civics, History, Sociology/Social Welfare, Logic, Psychology, Geography, Home-Economics, Islamic Studies, and Advanced English; and for the commerce group, any three of the following: Book-keeping & Accounting, Principles of Business, Economics & Commercial Geography, Statistics, Short-hand & Typing, and Computer Science. Every year all BISE's conduct



public examinations called the H.S.C. examination. The method of examination is mostly written. Practical examinations are taken in sciences and allied subjects. The marking system is the same as in the S.S.C. examination.

### **Technical and Vocational Education**

Technical and Vocational Education in the country is organized in two phases: certificate and diploma. The certificate course prepares skilled workers in different vocations spread over 1-2 years duration after 8 years of schooling (class VIII) and the diploma courses prepare the Diploma Engineers at the Polytechnic Institutes. The Diploma course is of 3-years duration and its admission prerequisite is a minimum of S.S.C. There are 18 polytechnic and 3 Monotechnic Institutes in the country. The Institute of Marine Technology and 11 Technical Training Centres run by the Ministry of Manpower and affiliated to the Technical education Board for academic purposes. Public examinations are held for various types of courses under the auspices of the Bangladesh Technical Education Board and diplomas are awarded by them.

### **Higher Education**

After passing the H.S.C. examination, students can pursue a Higher Education in accordance with their ability and aptitudes. Examinations for entrance into universities are

highly competitive. For entrance into the general universities, students have to participate in a 200 mark (50 in Bengali, 50 in English, and the remaining 100 in the major subject) admission test, and for technical universities students are required to participate in a multiple-choice test on different subjects related to science (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, etc.). The selection is based on the result of the admission test and also on the results of S.S.C. and H.S.C. examinations. Usually 1/5th of the students can get a chance to be admitted to the prestigious universities.

Higher education at post H.S.C. level comprises the following: i) Pass/Honours Bachelors' Degree courses (2 years for Pass and 3 years for Honours) in the degree colleges or in the universities; ii) The Master's degree courses (1 year for honour's holder and 2 years for Pass Degree holders); iii) 4 and 5 year specialized degrees in engineering and architecture at engineering colleges and universities; iv) a 5 year degree in medicine in the medical colleges; and v) 4 year degrees in agriculture in the agricultural colleges and universities. Besides from these, M.Phil. and Ph. D. courses in selected subjects are also offered in the universities. The duration of studies for M.Phil. degree is 2 years and that of Ph. D. a minimum of 3 years after Master's degree. The total duration of education from the primary to the highest level counts up, therefore, to  $5+7(3+2+2)+4(2/3+2/1)=16$  years, except the medicine degree, in the education system of Bangladesh.

The courses of higher education are offered by degree colleges, professional colleges, and universities. Out of nine universities, seven offer general courses in Humanities, Sciences, and Commerce, one offers courses in agriculture, and other courses in engineering, technology and architecture. As well, there are 2 agriculture colleges and five engineering colleges which are affiliated with the Agricultural University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) respectively. The eight Government Medical colleges, and seven private Medical colleges offer 5 years MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) courses upon completion of which, including one year of residency, a student becomes a general practitioner. There are 179 government run and 280 privately managed degree colleges offering courses, of which, 43 colleges provide courses at the Honours and 12 Post-Graduate level. Recently, a private university has been established in the capital city of Bangladesh. The medium of instruction in all universities the majority of the subjects is English emphasizing the importance of the knowledge of English. The universities are financed by the Government but they are functionally autonomous. There exists a University Grants Commission (UGC) which is also an autonomous organization for co-ordinating the developmental activities of the universities.

### **Teacher Education**

Teacher Education is offered in the 53 Primary Training Institutes (PTI) (48 government and 5 non-government) for preparing trained teachers for primary schools. This

training is a one-year course; the minimum pre-qualification for admission is S.S.C. or equivalent degree. The National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) is responsible for conducting examinations after one year of training in the PTIs and offering Certificates of Education (C-in-Ed).

There are 10 Teachers' Training Colleges (TTC) in Bangladesh where a 1 year B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) course is offered for secondary teachers. Pre-qualification for this course is the first university degree or equivalent. Mostly in-service teachers are being trained in this course. In some of the Teachers' Training Colleges M.Ed. (Master's in Education) course is also offered for B.Ed. degree or diploma holders. The apex institution for teacher education is the Institute of Education and Research (IER), Dhaka University where a one-year Diploma in Education course in various disciplines is offered to the university graduates followed by one-year M.Ed. course. A Minimum of 3-years Ph.D. in education is also offered by IER to M.Ed. degree holders. The National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) is entrusted with the responsibility to conduct in-service short-term training course on different subjects/disciplines for both secondary and college teachers and for educational administrators.

System of Education by which a student can pursue higher studies while in his own house using modern publications, educational technologies and mass-media is popularly

known as the Distance Education in many countries of the world. This system was introduced in Bangladesh for teacher-training in 1985. The Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE) offers B.Ed. (two-year course) with the affiliation of the National University. The government is now contemplating widening its scope by offering various other popular courses in keeping with the socio-economic development strategies of the time.

The Technical Teachers' Training College offers two-year technical teachers' training for polytechnic diploma holders. The Vocational Teachers' Training Institute offers training to teachers of vocational institutes. The Academy for Fundamental Education organizes in-service training courses for teacher trainers and selected primary school teachers and supervisors/administrators involved in primary education. The National Institute of Educational Media and Technology (NIEMT) is responsible for school broadcasting programs, and preparation of audio-visual aids.

### **Educational Administration and Management System**

Since the emergence of Bangladesh, more and more importance has been given to the education. Overall educational administration and management of Bangladesh is run by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in associations of attached departments and directories, as well as, in a number of autonomous bodies. The MOE provides broad policy decisions and the

Directories are responsible for implementing the decisions. The staff departments and the autonomous bodies are not directly linked with the routine administrative business. They include organizations which are professional in character as well as organizations responsible for curriculum development and textbook production.

The Ministry of Education is concerned with policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies on education. It is headed by a minister who is assisted by a state minister. The organization of the MOE includes the posts of Secretary (1), Additional Secretary (1), Joint Secretaries (3), Deputy Secretaries (7), Assistant Secretaries (19), Chief of Planning (1), Deputy Chiefs (2), Assistant Chiefs (3), and Research Officers (4). The total employees of the Ministry of Education is 135 out of which there are 39 class I education officers, 60 class III staffs, and 35 class IV workers (Educational Statistics, 1988).

Attached directorates, such as the Directorate of Primary Education, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, the Directorate of Technical Education, and the Directorate of Adult and Inspection, are responsible for the development and management of primary education, secondary and higher education, technical and vocational education and , non-government schools and colleges, respectively. Each Directorate is headed by a Director-General and has subordinate officers located at divisional and district levels. The

basic task of the directorate is to implement the approved policy decisions of the MOE. In addition, the following staff departments of the MOE perform specialized functions assigned to them:

i) The National Academy for Educational Management (MAEM) is responsible for in-service training for senior educational administration and teachers at the secondary and higher secondary levels. It also conducts the foundation training of the Bangladesh Civil Service (B.C.S.) Education Cadre officers;

ii) The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is responsible for curriculum development at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels and also for the printing and supply of all textbooks for these levels;

iii) The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) is the agency for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of educational statistics from primary to university levels;

iv) The Bangladesh Educational Equipment Board (BEEB) is responsible for production of educational equipment including scientific apparatus;

v) The National Institute of Educational Media and Technology (NIEMT) looks after the school broadcasting programs, preparation for audio-visual aids and training of teachers in the use of AV aids.

Furthermore, a number of autonomous bodies function with the education sector. These are:

- i) The University Grants Commission (UGC) created in 1973, coordinates the activities of the universities and distributes government grants to them;
- ii) Recently, the government has set up an Affiliating University, the National University, for academic control of all the affiliated degree colleges in Bangladesh and for conducting degree Pass examinations;
- iii) Four boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education for affiliated secondary and higher secondary schools are conducting the Secondary and Higher Secondary Examination;
- iv) The Technical Education Board is charged with the responsibility of conducting certificate and diploma examinations in technical education; and
- v) The Religious Education Board conducts public examinations in the field of religious education.

### **Trends in Educational Policy**

The constitutional provisions serve as a guide for educational planning and development. The main purpose of education is to provide knowledge for agricultural, economical, scientific and technological development. Aside from these, education also provides some specific knowledge in art, language and literature. The fundamental principle of state policy on education as laid down in article 17 of the constitution of Bangladesh is:

- establishing a uniform mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children of such stage as may be



determined by law,

-- relating education to the needs of the society and people, and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs,

-- removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law, and

-- producing the skilled people needed to increase productivity and equipping students with necessary tools in higher education.

(Government of Bangladesh, 1972:7)

These constitutional provisions reflect that Bangladesh took a democratic stand in deciding the need for an education which can reach to every child. Seven major documents were prepared by or on behalf of the government which attempted to deal with educational problems during the period 1971-1995. These are:

1. Bangladesh Education Commission Report (1974);
2. The Draft Report on Interim Education Policy (1979);
3. The Proposed New Education Policy (1983);
4. The First Five Year Plan (1973-1978);
5. The Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985);
6. The Third Five Year Plan (1986-1990); and
7. The Fourth Five Year Plan (1991-1995).

These documents identified some of the fundamental problems which confronted the country, and government stated its commitment to their improvement.

## 2.3 CONCLUSION

British rule in India had a significant influence on the educational system in Bangladesh. Over time some changes have been made in the educational policy to meet the needs of current society, such as universal and free compulsory primary education, scientific and technical education development. The study of English plays an important place in the education system in Bangladesh. It is not only a compulsory subject from grade III to grade XII, it is also the medium of instruction in the universities. Though English occupies an important place in the educational system from primary level to higher education, it gets negligible attention from the educational planners. However, recently there has been a growing recognition in official circles that the knowledge of English is necessary to access scientific and technological development and also for commercial and educational communication, and that the study and teaching of English needs to be developed to meet this need. Developing the standards of English language study and teaching in Bangladesh was the primary focus of the research.

Chapter three describes the history of English in Bangladesh, its role and status, and its teaching methods for providing a precise and clear knowledge of English Education in Bangladesh.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ENGLISH EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH**

The learning of an additional language has been quite common since the earliest times of civilization when people felt the need to communicate with other linguistic groups. For centuries people have been learning second language(s). The Akkadians in ancient Babylon studied the earlier Sumerian language in which the religion and culture they adopted were enshrined; the Romans in their heyday of imperial power took pains to study Greek; and in the modern century, non-English speaking countries are studying English to communicate with the West. Modern research shows that becoming bilingual adds uniquely to a person's personality and potential and that English, alongside other languages of learning is capable of making a sizeable contribution to a better equipped and more resilient socio-economic status (Cumming and Swain, 1986). In today's competitive world, satisfactory knowledge is becoming expected rather than exceptional.

Hence it is not surprising that in a country like Bangladesh, in which the first language is Bengali, there has always been the need for a second language such as English which is essential for international communication. As a third world country Bangladesh is struggling hard to gain access to modern knowledge. It has, by and large, realised the importance of English in education as a vehicle for acquiring modern scientific and

technological knowledge crucial for economic development. This chapter attempts to focus attention on the role and place of English in Bangladesh from its beginning to the present.

### **3.1 THE ROLE AND PLACE OF ENGLISH IN BANGLADESH**

#### **Early History of English**

The study of English is not new in Bangladesh; it has a history of about two hundred years. The English language first came to the Indian subcontinent with the merchants of the East India Company who were given a charter by Queen Elizabeth I on December 31, 1600 to trade with India. It was diffused in three phases: the missionary phase (1614 - 1765); the phase of local demand (1765 - 1835); and governmental policy following T. B. Macauley's Minute on Indian Education of 1835 (Kachru, 1969). During the third phase of British supremacy in India, Lord Macauley through his famous "Minute" established the right of English to be the official language of India. He wanted to produce a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Daswani, 1982: 298). English soon came to be used in the elitist administrative services, the armed forces, and the court of justice in the Indian subcontinent. It was also the medium of instruction as well as a school subject in secondary schools and higher education throughout the nineteenth century. Ultimately English became associated with prestige and status and acquired a privileged position in most walks of life. Individuals who were bilingual in English and another regional language were regarded as members of superior class.

By the time the British left India in 1947, English had become an indispensable tool for higher education and intellectual discourse and had been appropriated as a productive power in dealing with the colonies and in gaining access to Western knowledge and technology. Although it was no longer favoured as a medium of instruction in schools as it had been under the British Raj, the use of English continued for official as well as unofficial purposes after independence. Introducing English as a school subject also continued in different levels of educational system.

During the Pakistan period, language differences proved to be a deeply divisive factor in the new state of Pakistan which was established as a unified Muslim state made up of two large areas, East and West Pakistan. Of the five provinces that then formed Pakistan, none could boast of a monolithic linguistic structure. Linguistically, the most tightly-knit were East Pakistan and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), provinces where Bengali and 'Pushto' were the languages of the majority of the population. The other provinces had a variety of languages. Panjab had Panjabi, Shindh had Shindhi, Urdu among the large numbers of incoming refugees, Gujrati in influential minorities. All these languages, with the exception of Bengali and Gujrati, are Indo-Arabic in origin and others are primarily Sanskrit-based and use the Sanskrit script (Baumgardner, 1993).

One of the unifying symbols of the Pakistan Movement was the slogan of the

adoption of Urdu, the language of the Muslims of India and the lingua franca of the Indian masses, as the national language of Pakistan. The language policy that Urdu should be the sole national language throughout Pakistan with English as the second language, led to protests, rioting and bloodshed in East Pakistan for the inclusion of Bengali among the official languages (Khatun, 1992). Such was the strength of feeling behind the language issue that it led eventually to the War of Liberation and the emergence of Bangladesh as a separate state. And when the new state of Bangladesh was established, use of the mother tongue - historically called as Bengali and currently known as "Bangla" - was encouraged.

### **The Present Position of English**

Although the majority of educated people have realised the importance of English in this modern century, the standards and use of English language in Bangladesh are not quite satisfactory. A survey of English language in Bangladesh by the British Council (1986) shows that the standards of English in Bangladesh were higher before the War of Liberation when English was a unifying and effective language of communication government, business and education. With independence and the proclamation of Bengali as the sole national language, the role and use of English language diminished. Bengali became a focus of national identity and patriotism and quickly took over from English as the sole medium of instruction and government, though both Bengali and English were recommended to be taught as compulsory subjects (Government of Bangladesh, 1972). There were people who

wanted to remove it with the view that it was unnatural and inconsistent with the present position of the country to study English and that the growth of nationalism after independence would be at stake through the study of English. Consequently, the teaching and practice of English has suffered. English has neither been widespread nor sufficiently taught to be the second language of a genuine bilingual nation. Nevertheless, it is not a wholly foreign language.

Although English is no longer in such widespread use as it was before, it remains the prestige language of the educational minority in Bangladesh. Provision has been made by the Government (1977) for teaching English as a compulsory second language from class III because it is felt that there is a need for "good foundation in this language which is an international language today" (Government of Bangladesh, 1977:265). It is also the language of litigation, and the language in which internal ministry memos are written, and many ministry meetings are conducted. In the print and electronic medias English occupies an important place (about 40% newspapers are published in English) and it is significant that the Government of Bangladesh's Fourth Five Year Plan (1991-1995) exists only in an English edition. Information - technological, economic, sociological, and statistical - is available in English. What is more, in certain social circles a good command of English is considered a mark of education, sophistication and rated high on the prestige scale.



Recently there has been a growing recognition that the decline in standards of English must cease and be reversed. The language is seen as a means of access to scientific and technological development and as an instrument for international communication. The author believes that:

"the introduction of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the primary and secondary levels should not be misinterpreted as shutting out English from these levels. In fact for successful completion of the first degree course students should possess an adequate command of English to be able to express themselves with reasonable ease and felicity, to understand lectures in that language, and to avail literature in English (particularly scientific and technical). This knowledge of English helps to study abroad and also to use the language in real-life situations where necessary. With this aim in view adequate stress should be laid on the study of English as a language right from the school stage" (Translated from Rahman, 1994:6).

It is, therefore, necessary to present a detailed picture of English language study and teaching in the different levels of education system in Bangladesh to know how it is being studied and taught.

### **3.2 ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Teaching English in Bangladeshi schools, both primary and secondary, is a massive enterprise. As mentioned above it is introduced as a compulsory subject from class III to XII, and an elective major subject in undergraduate and post graduation levels. In addition to being a school subject, English is available as a medium of instruction in some private schools and English-medium schools, and also in the university faculties of general (some



humanities subjects are taught through mother tongue), engineering, technical and medicine all over the country. The aim of teaching English is "to increase producing the skilled people needed to increase productivity and equipping students with necessary tools in higher education ....." and also to help students to be able "to control the four skills and to use these skills in real-life situations outside the school when necessary" (Government of Bangladesh, 1977:87). Following is a detailed picture of English study and teaching at three levels of the educational system.

### **English at the Primary Level**

The study of English at the Primary level has been a controversial issue since the Pre-Partition Period (when India and Pakistan was undivided). During the Pre-Partition Period the Primary Curriculum Committee while formulating the curriculum considered that English should not be taught in the primary schools or in the primary section of the junior and high schools. The Government, however, didn't agree with the Committee to abolish teaching English at the primary level. Rather, it held that English should be taught as an optional subject in classes III-V in those schools where qualified teachers were available. When taken up, this was treated as an examination subject but marks obtained were not taken into account for awarding of the Merit Scholarship (Primary Curriculum Committee, 1937).

There were strong arguments against teaching English to the children of primary

schools of undivided Bengal. Bottomly, education officer of East Bengal, carried out a special investigation of the conditions of primary schools in Bengal in 1943 and on the basis of this he came to the conclusion that English should be dropped from the syllabus of such schools (cf. Khatun, 1992). Similarly, many other provincial educational officers were in favour of removing this course from the primary level. The Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) of East Bengal strongly opposed teaching a foreign language at this stage on psychological grounds. In his opinion teaching a foreign or second language to children of a tender age was one of the errors of foreign rule in this country. Much damage had been done to the real spread of people's education through our abortive attempts at learning English at a very early age. No educational psychology would admit the justification of teaching a foreign language before the age of ten years (Khatun, 1992).

The same controversy again started in the Post-Partition Period. The Pakistan Educational Conference and the Advisory Board of Education for Pakistan (ABEP) did not recommend any foreign language in the primary curriculum. This was also the feeling of the Education Department and other bodies of East Pakistan. The Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Secretary of East Bengal Secondary Education Board (EBSEB) also were in favour of discontinuing English from primary curriculum. At last in 1948, the course was dropped from the primary level (cf. Government Document, 1960).

Shortly afterwards, demand arose once more from different quarters for the reintroduction of English in the primary curriculum. Different educational and competent bodies had been claiming the importance of English. The Ad hoc Central Primary Education Committee, the Sub-Committee constituted by the EBSEB, Officers of the Directorate of Public Instruction, and the Principal of Teachers' Training College, Dhaka urged and proposed the Government to restore English in primary stage (cf. Government Document, 1960). In the light of popular demand and views of responsible authorities, the DPI felt it desirable to reintroduce teaching English in the primary level. Later in 1956, the Education Department approved the proposal and included the course as an optional subject from class III-V (cf. Government Document, 1960).

During the Post-Independence Period, the Bangladesh Education Commission did not recommend any language other than the mother tongue in the primary curriculum. They were of the opinion that a good grounding in the mother tongue would assist pupils to learn English or any other foreign languages, such as Arabic, Germany, French, Japanese (Government of Bangladesh, 1973). But considering the historical association of English with the education system of this country and the demand of English as an international *lingua franca*, the Commission recommended that English should be offered as a second language from class IV. Later, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) included the course as a compulsory subject from class III upward in the consideration that

the people of Bangladesh should have a good grounding in English - a widely used international language from their first level of education (Government of Bangladesh, 1977). However, in quite a number of schools, English has been taught from the beginners' class of the primary schools; perhaps, "the pressure of public opinion was behind the unofficial policy of teaching English from the first class of the primary stage of education in Bangladesh" (Khatun, 1992:93).

### **English at the Secondary Level**

During the Pre-Partition Period the teaching of English came to be regarded as the prime object at the secondary school stage. English was taught not only as a school subject, but also as the medium of instruction and examination. After the partition, it was no longer used as a medium of instruction, though it continues to be used as a school subject today. The Commission on National Education held a very favourable opinion about the place and teaching of English in this level.

"The foremost reason for such a position is its association with the history of this sub-continent for about two hundred years. It was through English that different parts of India could join the struggle for independence. In the Pakistan Period it had been used as a medium of communication between two wings of the country. It is a store house of the knowledge incorporating every year the results of the latest advances in thought in all subjects. Our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to its expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, the study of English is bound to play an important part". (Government of East Bengal, 1951:296).

In this consideration the Commission recommended to include English as a compulsory language from class VI to XII and at the graduate level. Since then English virtually became

a second compulsory language to be studied in the secondary and higher secondary levels.

During the Post-Independent Period, English continues to be studied as a compulsory subject and also as a second language from class III upward. The Secondary Education Commission held that "our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to its expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, the study of English is bound to play an important part" (Government of Bangladesh, 1974:1) Later, the report of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board recommended continuing the study English at this level considering its importance to produce skilled people needed to increase economical, scientific, and technological development since English language is seen as a vehicle for any Western-oriented knowledge and business (Government of Bangladesh, 1977).

### **English in Higher Education**

English occupies a prominent position in Higher Education in Bangladesh. After Liberation, English was a compulsory subject for the B.A. (Pass) degree at all degree colleges and universities. It is now optional, but an option which an increasing number of students in various faculties are seeing as a very necessary one. For example, the English Department of Dhaka University's Institute of Modern Languages which offers part-time courses to students from all faculties received over 3,000 applications during 1991-1992

session for 250 student places (ESP Curriculum Unit, Dhaka University, 1991). The same situation is founded in the other universities at Chittagong, Jahangirnagar, Rajshahi, and Sylhet; part-time courses offered to various students are heavily over subscribed. As well, the English Departments of these universities offer a three year Honours degree which is followed by a one year Master's degree in English Literature and also a one year Master's degree in English language. Most of the students who do these courses become teachers of English either in secondary schools or colleges or universities.

The "Specialist" universities for agriculture and engineering make a token provision for English, where any is made at all (Education Report, 1986). In the Engineering University this amounts to one hour a week, and is largely grammar and reading comprehension based. The reasoning behind this lack of provision is not that English is considered to be unnecessary. On the contrary, students at both universities are required to do a great deal of studying in English since most of the study materials are in English. Rather, it is taken for granted. Whether the reality of the situation matches this assumption or not, is debatable.

It is mentioned that English is the medium of instruction in higher education. However, at various times governments have declared that Bengali will supplant English in all subjects. For example, the Bangladesh National Education Commission (1988)

recommended that "national language should be used to teach different subjects to practice the language properly" (p.15). This seems unlikely because to replace English would involve a formidable rewriting of teaching materials. However, teachers sometimes lecture partly in Bengali as their students cannot always follow in English, though they are supposed to acquire adequate knowledge of English in secondary level so as to be able to carry on advanced studies.

Key English Language Teaching (KELT) projects set up in the late seventies to introduce English for Special Purposes (ESP) into the universities met with startlingly little success (The British Council, 1986). Given the current professional disrepute into which ESP seems to be falling, this lack of success might be seen as attributable to Bangladeshi commonsense. It might, however, be seen as due also to the gap between reality and official thinking referred to above.

## **Syllabuses**

National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is responsible for the syllabuses in English at the primary and secondary levels while the universities are responsible for their B.A. and M.A. courses. The books English for Today (one for each year from III to X), and English Selections for the Young (for grades XI & XII) are prepared by NCTB. They are largely grammar and reading-comprehension based. At the primary level there is no



distinction between literature and language in the syllabus. A typical English syllabus, especially for grades VIII to XII, consists of one textbook for detailed study (prescribed book by NCTB), supplementary book, and some help books on grammar and translation. A detailed study text usually includes a selection of short stories, essays, and poetry, some of them in the original while others simplified. Units of the book are sometimes followed by exercises on spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammatical rules and structures. The supplementary book includes drama and stories which are in simplified form. Finally the help books are based on grammatical rules and structures and translation skills. Since in the classroom no emphasis is placed on the communicative skills, the students' English language competence is totally inadequate to cope with the unsimplified literary pieces. However, it cannot be described as "literature" teaching in the normally accepted sense.

English is not only a compulsory subject at both the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C) and the Higher Secondary Certificate examinations (H.S.C), it is one of the subjects in which a pass is mandatory and in which failure results in the withholding of the group certificate. Since gaining these certificates is necessary to progression within the system, and since the grade obtained in the H.S.C is decisive in acceptance for study at the tertiary level, proficiency in English is an essential element in educational advancement. Paradoxically, the importance vested in a pass (the stated pass mark is 33%) in English as a barrier to certification probably results in a lowering of standards.



The syllabuses from grade VIII to XII are no more than the examination syllabuses. The examinations are forced to adhere very strictly to questions which have been individually worked through in class. From the detailed study text and the supplementary text, general content questions are asked in the examinations. General questions on content were essay type until recently, but now 50 percent is essay type and the remaining 50 percent is short answer and multiple choice questions. From the help books, students are tested mainly on their knowledge of grammar rules manifested in their ability to manipulate isolated sentences, rather than their ability to use the language in certain communicative situations. They are also expected to do some exercises in precis, essay writing and translation.

Within the English Departments of the general universities which offer English major courses, the main bias has always been literary one. The English Literature syllabuses at the universities are uncompromisingly traditional. The content of the graduate courses comprises fiction, drama, prose, and poetry. Nineteenth century fiction up to and including Thomas Hardy, the plays of Shakespeare, Romantic and Victorian Poetry are most favoured. The history of English Literature, an introduction to literary genres, and literary criticism are also included in the course. All the universities offer one year post-graduate courses in English Literature. These courses are oriented towards 19th and 20th century literature. Some universities structure their syllabuses along historical lines, others by genre. Optional

courses in Comparative Literature and American Literature are also included in the post-graduate syllabus in most of the universities. Although the main bias is a literary one, a healthy interest, however, has been taken in language since 1986. Two universities offer a one year M.A. in applied linguistics options.

### **Teaching Materials**

As has been stated, responsibility for preparing all textbooks effectively rests with the NCTB. The materials, produced at greatly subsidized rates, have been written over the last twenty years by a team of well-qualified and experienced people, usually including a native speaker. Textbooks for primary and secondary schools, English for Today (A series, introduced one for each year), are structurally-based, with a lot of reading comprehension work in the higher classes. Local teachers sometimes criticize them for a scarcity of interesting topics to exploit, and for their reliance on a theory of grammar the teachers are unacquainted with. But the books are sound, if unexciting, and with the right treatment in the classrooms can be considered qualitatively adequate for the situation in which they are used (Bowers, 1986). However, the use of authentic materials along with the textbooks can make the study of English more effective. The textbooks may have one advantage: they offer a linguistic progression in regards grammar, but they are not appropriate enough for enhancing students' communicative skills. This indicates that though the textbooks are sound enough for increasing one of the two main components of foreign language teaching,

the ELT techniques fail to teach another component; i.e., the practical knowledge of English.

There are a lot of criticisms against the textbook for the higher secondary level which is highly literary. As the preface to this book says, "It contains prose, short stories and poems from different periods of English Literature which will be of interest to our young boys and girls. A few simple pieces of modern writers have also been included so as to give them some idea of twentieth century English prose and poetry". But it is hardly of interest to the young students. Poems like Milton's sonnet on his 23rd Birthday, Wordsworth's Solitary Reaper, Frost's Tree At My Window, etc., drive the adolescent learners frustrate instead of helping them. They do not help them acquire the ability to use English in day-to-day situations which they expect from the study of English. It is impossible to tell on what basis the selections were made. There is no indication of grading and except for some literary pieces, no simplification. It may be deduced that the presuppositions on which this selection was originally based included the convictions that the students were linguistically competent enough in the language to manage unsimplified texts and that such a selection was necessary to provide a knowledge of English. But it has been estimated by the ELT Task Force (cf. The British Council, 1986) that the present standard of language competence at class XI and XII is four years behind that of the assumed levels within the textbooks. A quotation from one of the pieces included - an essay by L. A. G. Strong entitled Reading for Pleasure - provides suitable comment: "What was happened is that they have been shoved

up against a book before they were ready for it. It is like giving a child food only suitable for an adult; the result is disastrous". The same problems exist with the supplementary books, though recently the NCTB has introduced simplified form of literary pieces for supplementary readings.

Other books which are used to teach grammar and translation are produced by open competition among commercial publishers. Their standards are uniformly low which overemphasizes the grammatical rules and structures; no emphasis is given on phonology, syntax, and morphology. Apart from the books, no other materials are used in the support of English teaching in the education system. Teachers from the higher secondary level, however, show an interest in what materials are currently available on the ELT market, and the Teacher Council hopes to develop ELT resource centres in each of its three libraries for the benefit of such teachers. Some progress has been made at the Institute of Modern Languages in Dhaka University for developing ESP and ELT materials.

## **English Classroom**

The English classes meet for the same number of times as the regular classes which limits practice time and makes progress slow. In the primary level, it is taught for six 30 minute periods of the school week, in the five years of secondary level it is taught for seven - nine (varies from school to school) 40 minute periods a week, and it takes up six 45 minute

periods per week in the two years of higher secondary level. Perhaps the largest impediment to teaching the English language in Bangladesh is that this course has to fit into the same framework as the "regular" lecture courses. In a regular content course, such as Mathematics, the teacher can lecture and have the students go home to absorb the material at leisure. This is not as easily done in a second language course, at least not in those aimed at encouraging communicative competence. While it is possible to have students take their books home to study and practice language structures, it is very difficult for the students to practice the language outside the class mainly for two reasons: i) Bangladesh has only one national language, everybody in the society talks in the same language, and ii) students have little extra time to devote to practising English because of the heavy homework-load.

In the classroom many students feel self-conscious about speaking English; for this reason they do not take advantage of the chance to do so, and they are not encouraged to do so. Also, Bangladeshi students are especially shy about trying out any skill before mastering it, if it means they might stand out (for good and bad) in front of a whole class of their peers. This can be said of students almost anywhere, of course; but from her observation as a teacher, the researcher feels that it is particularly evident in Bangladesh. This reticence, combined with the traditional role teachers have long had in Asia, in which they impart information which the students are to passively and dutifully accept without questions, makes for very passive classes. Also, their sharing a common language often makes it



difficult to keep them speaking English in the classroom. However, based on communicative theories of language learning that the teacher should be responsible not only for linguistic analysis but also for encouraging students to speak in English in the classroom.

## **Teachers of English**

A lack of trained and qualified teachers is one of the major causes for the poor standards of English language education in Bangladesh. In theory, there is no shortage of teachers of English. In practice, however, there is an almost total lack of properly trained teachers of English at either the primary or secondary level since neither the B.Ed. nor M.A. courses provide adequate professional training in ELT (Foster, 1994). All teachers are non-native speaker of English who learned English as a second language through formal teaching and who are ignorant of special techniques of teaching English. Although secondary teachers are supposed to possess some kind of training qualifications, primary teachers are not required to obtain any degree. In-service provision at the local level is the only way of orientating primary teachers to the set textbooks for English.

Teachers of English at the secondary level are normally holders of an M.A. (English) or B.A. Honours, and have undergone a one year's training at one of ten Teachers' Training Colleges in Bangladesh. English is taught as a subject in the colleges of education. In addition, there is an elective English course within the B.Ed. program, on the teaching of

English. However, B.Ed. graduates need not take the elective English course to teach English, as it is still believed that English can be taught by any qualified teachers. A survey of the qualifications of the teachers of English in the Government schools (public schools) conducted by the Institute of Educational Research in Dhaka university in 1992 states that 72 percent of secondary subject teachers have received pre-service training (IER, 1992) and a substantial program of the in-service training is conducted at this level. A very few of them take the English elective course (only 377 out of 5519) since it is seen as a "difficult" subject. What is more, the syllabus for the English elective course in the TTCs "concentrates on factual knowledge of topics of questionable relevance to classroom teaching, while neglecting teachers' and students' practical classroom needs" (Foster, 1994:13). The examination questions are heavily biased to theoretical, academic knowledge of education, rather than the practical knowledge of teaching methodology.

Cullen (1991) by examining ELT training in much greater detail, recommended that "The TTC B.Ed. syllabus for the English elective should be revised so as to reflect more accurately both current developments in the field of English language teaching methodology and the practical needs of classroom teaching in Bangladesh" (p.16). The syllabus should be restructured, focusing on the practical classroom requirements in the methodology of teaching English. Otherwise, it will continue to be inadequate as a preparation for qualified English teachers. In addition to the inappropriate syllabus, there is a lack of qualified

trainers to train English teachers. Out of 10 TTCs, 9 have specialists on their staff (Foster, 1994). There is a desperate need for fully qualified TESL teachers who could staff TTCs to produce qualified and trained English teachers.

## **Teaching Methods**

What is chiefly lacking in the field of teaching of English in Bangladesh is a proper approach, i.e., communicative approach, to the teaching. A staff member of the British Council during his visit in the country in 1986 showed thorough disappointment with the standards of teaching (cf. The British Council, 1986). It is still characterized by a highly traditional approach and methodology which stress literary and formal content learning. It is a mainly book-oriented method which overemphasizes language as a mass of rules, placing little emphasis on communicative competence in a second language. As it follows the traditional Grammar-Translation method, classroom dynamics are usually limited to the familiar teacher-dominated/fact memorization arguments (more details on English Language Teaching in Bangladesh is given in Chapter IV). The researcher's intention here, however, is not to criticise the English teachers. They are conscientious and hardworking teachers, but they have not been taught English properly, nor have they been properly trained in how to teach it. It is not directly their fault. But the results of their teaching do not match with the objectives of teaching English which brings disaster for English language learners.



## Recent Development in ELT Planning

Recently there has been a growing interest in the teaching and learning of English, particularly in the urban areas of the country. Most people believe that it is necessary for the student to acquire competence in English for various reasons. Therefore, a lot of planning is needed to improve the teaching and learning of English to make it relevant to the needs of the society. The question is how the students can learn the language well and use it effectively for their own purposes. The answer to the problem must be in some new methods of teaching the language, and there is evidence of recommendations for an appropriate method. For example, Cullen's (1991) recommendation for changing the TTCs B.Ed. Syllabuses for the English elective course which should reflect current developments in the field of English language teaching methodology.

Moreover, for the preparation of qualified and trained teachers, there is an urgent need for fully TESL qualified staff in TTCs. Recent proposals have been made for a KELT project in teacher-training focus on this level and several candidates are currently being processed for UK training in ELT under the Technical Co-operation program so that they can take up posts in the TTCs (Government of Bangladesh, 1992). In addition, The British Council has taken a leading role in training teachers and giving suggestions on various aspects of language teaching methodology. Some universities have introduced a course in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Unfortunately, no one has yet set about a systematic study of English language. However, though the Ministry officials give assurance to the

importance of English study in Bangladesh, the development of English teaching is not the subject of long-term planning by the government. Educators should take the responsibility to "jog its memory".

### **3.3 ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Recently the privately established North-West University has insisted on total English-medium competence from its staff and students. It is clearly seen as an essential feature of a modern university of Western standard. There are also a number of English-medium schools and colleges (more than 500), some of which prepare students for GCE (GCSE) examinations. Few have staffs trained in the teaching of English as a second language. However, in general if their students emerge with a good command of English, this is due to the immersion effect of the English-medium, not to the effective methods used in the classes.

The YMCA offers part-time English classes. Some of these classes are directly aimed at preparation for the American Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination, but most are general 'spoken English'. Students include school-leavers of pre-university status, housewives, jobholders who need to improve their English. As well, there are numerous small-scale tutorial establishments, specializing in 'spoken English'. Schools of this nature rarely survive for long, and have practically no ELT-trained staff and little

professional reputation.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

To sum up, Bangladesh shows an extraordinary lack of exposure to ELT. Not only are teaching conditions unsatisfactory, but there is no effective pre-service teacher-education system for English teachers. The materials, examination system and teaching methodology are in need of drastic reform. In Bangladesh, the traditional approaches to language teaching are still being used vigorously in most of the schools. Bangladesh has not yet succeeded significantly in planning an effective method for ELT. The necessity for such a method calls for serious research in the field. It is obvious that no single method can be considered adequate for the Bangladeshi situation, but once certain basic principles have been tested and accepted, educators and teachers can adapt them to suit their own situations. It will take time for the discipline of ELT to become properly established, but one has to start somewhere. With this consideration, this research aims to conduct a study to contribute to the scant literature on English Language Teaching in Bangladesh.

Chapter Four will review the literature on the different methods and approaches to second language teaching which have been adopted by second language teachers from the beginning of the need of learning and teaching a second language. It will also present a detailed picture of the ELT situation in Bangladesh.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A major part of acquiring a second /foreign language for fluent output, either written or oral, depends on instructional methods and techniques. The literature describing ESL/EFL teaching is abundant in recommending instructional approaches to teaching English to second/foreign language students. ESL/EFL teachers need to know about these approaches and methods. This knowledge helps them in choosing the methods appropriate and suitable for their students. As the purpose of the study is to develop English Language Teaching in Bangladesh where it has the status of a second language, the following two areas of the literature need to be analyzed in the development of this research:

- i) Approaches and methods in language teaching;
- ii) A brief discussion of ELT in Bangladesh.

#### **4.1 APPROACHES AND METHODS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

"All aspects of human culture are the products of the past and the matrix of future. Every branch of human knowledge grows from its past and the stage reached in a previous generation provides the starting point for the next" (Nair, 1988:36). The history of second/foreign language teaching is not different from this common principle. It is the

collective experience of those who have been associated directly and indirectly with second language (L<sub>2</sub>) or foreign language (FL) teaching. This experience is the only light in which we can see the future. It is experience that aids our judgements and so enables us to make wiser choices and to take better decisions. As Stern (1992), who has an exhaustive survey of the past worldwide developments in second language teaching, points out that "through the study of history of language teaching we can gain perspective on present day thought and trends to find directions for future growth, knowing the historical content is helpful to an understanding of language teaching theories" (p.3).

The history of the evolution of the methodology of L<sub>2</sub> teaching has its beginning when people felt the need to communicate with other linguistic groups. Ever since that period there have been efforts to elaborate the theoretical and philosophical foundations of language teaching. Still, we cannot claim a proved methodology which overcomes certain basic difficulties of second language learning. For example, the various problems created by the interference of the mother tongue (especially in learning spoken language) have not been overcome. However, new orientations in the field of L<sub>2</sub> or FL teaching are being sought in order to make it more easy and effective. Apart from this, the developments in various branches of knowledge like psychology, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, etc. have a potential impact on the teaching of language. The following are some approaches to language teaching which have been adopted from the beginning of L<sub>2</sub> teaching.

## Grammar-Translation Method

The first approach to language teaching, namely the *Grammar-Translation Approach*, is founded on behavioral psychology. The theory of the behaviorists is that people's "responses to *stimuli* can be trained through practice and conditioning to become automatic habits" (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985:5). The Grammar-Translation Approach utilizes drills, repetition, and rote responses. It is also based on structural linguistics, and language is seen as a series of patterns with interchanging pieces.

In the Grammar-Translation Approach, focus was placed on grammar-facts and vocabulary. The objective of this method is to teach language for literary and translation purposes rather than for oral communication (i.e., speaking, listening). Graduates of this approach cannot often communicate in the target language. But knowledge of grammar usage rules were unrealistic for the students who needed to understand and speak in a target language. Often seen as an elitist approach to English language instruction, Messec (1987) states that "grammar study encourages clear thinking" and "holds.....a high position of academic respectability" (p.15). By examining English Language Teaching in Bangladesh, Foster (1994) states that it is based on the traditional Grammar-Translation Approach which "aims to increase linguistic knowledge rather than communicative competence" (p.7). Needless to say, this method is now considered to be outdated and not practised in most of the bilingual nations, because it does not promote effective language learning since its major



focus is on "committing word to memory, translating sentences, drilling irregular verbs, later memorizing, repeating and applying grammatical rules with their exceptions" (Bowen, Madsen, and Hilferty, 1985:19); and resulted in limited oral proficiency.

### **Audiolingual Method**

The *Audiolingual Method* was developed from the need for spoken communication. Although the Grammar-Translation Approach and the Audiolingual Method are similar to their shared foundation of structural linguistics, many difference do exist. The importance of speaking, as well as understanding spoken English, outweighed the rule-based Grammar-Translation Approach. Audiolinguists believe that since children learn to speak their first language by listening to other people speak, second language acquisition should be the same. Considered the most effective second language approach in the 1950's and 1960's, the Audiolingual Method de-emphasized reading and writing, and emphasized oral skills (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). It is a form-oriented method which emphasizes the methodological aspects of language teaching and the other components of the language classroom (for example, the learner and the thematic content of learning) are hardly taken into account. Memorized dialogue, choral repetition and drills of sentence patterns, and pattern practices are the framework of the method. One of the main disadvantages of this approach is that students become dependent on teachers (Laperla, 1986). Laperla (1986) states that "teacher assumed the role of the transmitter of knowledge, dealing the method and

content of instruction, and students' attainment of complete mastery of pattern" (p.7) is used to evaluate students' learning.

### **Silent Way**

In the 1960's and 1970's, the traditional Grammar-Translation and the Audiolingual Methods were challenged by Caleb Gattegno and Charles Curran. The *Silent Way*, created by Gattegno, encourages students' autonomy and independence, making students responsible for their own learning (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). It is based on the concept that the teacher should be silent most of the time, and learners should have every opportunity to talk. The teachers' function is only to direct the learning by pointing to symbols on a chart. Through teachers' silence, the students use previous knowledge of the items on the chart to communicate with the other students. Followers of this method believe that learning is facilitated if the learners discover or create rather than remember and repeat what is to be learned. Gattegno believed that students must be aware of the learning process, and ultimately learn to control it (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). The Silent Way stimulates students' self-awareness. However, there is little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the approach.

### **Counselling-Learning Approach**

The *Counselling-Learning Approach* was developed by Curran in 1972. This



approach is partly influenced by the cognitive-affective (humanistic and developmental) psychology. It is an approach which emphasizes the humanistic side of language learning because it involves the "whole person" in the learning process (Laperla, 1987:8). Curran (1972) utilized the psychology and techniques of counselling. In this technique the teacher is placed in the role of a facilitator. He claimed that the non-threatening counselling relationship provides the best environment for learning. This is accomplished in a "shared, task-oriented activity" (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985:21) and cooperation is achieved by the students helping and aiding each other.

In the class sessions which follow the Counselling-Learning Approach, following activities have been administered: i) learners sit in a circle and converse freely in their native language; ii) the teacher as a "counsellor" translates these topics into the target language; and finally, the counsellor repeats the statement correctly to the other group. Each one advances independently in speaking the target language according to his/her abilities and is assisted when necessary. As the students become more advanced, more exact corrections are made (Carrasquillo, 1994). The Counselling-Learning Approach, also known as the Community Language Learning Approach, is based on the theory that the students will learn about themselves and others by experiencing an open and accepting environment (Vervel, 1980).

## **Suggestopedia**

Another approach to L<sub>2</sub> teaching, introduced by Lozanov (1979), a Bulgarian psychiatrist, is *Suggestopedia*. Learning involves the unconscious functions of the learner as well as the conscious functions (Lozanov, 1979). The main objective of Suggestopedia is to improve self-esteem through suggestion, and to expose students to language while in a relaxed state. A teacher can facilitate memorization by using music, decoration, furniture and special classroom arrangement,. Lozanov's lessons concentrate on dialogue that deals with cultural and grammatical points. Creativity and imagery are expressed through role playing and written exercises.

This approach is based on the theory that students can learn faster than they usually do by removing psychic tension (Lozanov, 1979). It reasons that a learner retains more of what is learned and feels freer when the environment and learning conditions are relaxed and non-threatening. It is then that learners are able to go much further than previously thought (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). Its aim is communicative and internal processing is a major focus. Suggestopedia is not considered to be a method but a "methodological strategy to be used as part of the ESL instructional program and part of other approaches" (Carrasquillo, 1994:122).

## **Total Physical Response**

The *Total Physical Response* method was originally developed by James Asher (1965). His approach is based on the concept that second/foreign language acquisition can be accelerated through the use of the kinaesthetic sensory system (1977). Asher (1982) believes that listening comprehension is demonstrated before a language learner can produce speech. Since many ESL and EFL students may feel uncomfortable speaking English even though they understand it, Asher reasoned that the Total Physical Response method is an approach that utilizes only body movements in response to the teacher's directions. Oral directions are given by the teacher to a group of students, and the students carry out the actions without speech. The teacher acts out the commands along with the students. Asher (1982) states that speaking should never be forced; therefore, the students are not required to speak. The method emphasizes the development of comprehension skills through action before the learner is taught to speak or write. Though the Total Physical Response cannot be considered a complete method, it is useful for the learners in the early stages of language learning and is also good for interaction skills of the students. However, the academic language skills are not acquired in this approach (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985).

## **Communicative Approach**

Heavy criticisms were levied against the previously described methods, especially the first two methods. The spontaneity and uniqueness of language were being overlooked

by such methods. Only the linguistic codes were regarded as important in the learning process. No account was taken of the fact that language also has a communicative function. "The next change in language teaching theory was prompted by an important shift in the linguistic paradigm" (Wolft, 1990:7). Sociolinguists transformed Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1965) into the broader concept of communicative competence. Sociolinguists like Hymes (1974) argued that a competent speaker not only knows how to use linguistic forms correctly, but is also able to use language appropriately in real-life situations. Foreign/second language teaching theory took over these ideas gratefully and thus the communicative teaching paradigm was born.

Wilkins (1976) introduced the Notional/Functional Syllabuses in his book Notional Syllabuses. The Syllabuses maintain no single approach to second/foreign language teaching. Seeing the need to focus on the communicative and functional potential in language teaching rather than on the mastery of structures, he proposes a set of categories based on language concepts and meanings. The Notional/Functional Syllabuses are based on a "semantic and pragmatic theory of language" (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985:28), and are employed to teach communication. The student is required to generate "language which is not only grammatically acceptable but socially appropriate to a particular situation" (Laperla, 1986:12).

Arising out of the communicative emphasis is the *Communicative Approach*. The approach is based on the theory that people need to communicate in different ways (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985), and that language is a system of communication (Messec, 1987). Neither from a theoretical nor from a practical perspective does the Communicative Approach presents itself as one homogeneous approach to language teaching. Derived from the Audiolingual Method, it adds a variety of activities that rely on modelling, problem-solving, role plays, and verbal and nonverbal exchanges. Followers of this approach believe that the goal of language teaching is to develop the learners' ability to communicate in the target language and the "primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:71). In this method, therefore, the structure of the target language is not taught explicitly. "All learning is done in context, and the context must be appropriate for the learners" (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985:35). In fact, this method was founded on conditions needed to promote L<sub>2</sub> or FL learning, rather than on a theory of how learning occurs. It should be pointed out, however, that the Communicative Approach to language teaching was also criticized because of its avoidance of the grammar component of language teaching. "Teachers in general believe that learning a foreign/second language cannot take place without focusing on grammar" (Wolft, 1990:8).

## **Language Experience Approach**

The *Language Experience Approach* was originally developed as an initial reading program for English speaking children in which students produce reading materials based on their own interests and language background (Van Allen and Allen, 1976). Later this approach has been used successfully with ESL students at both the primary and secondary levels (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). The teacher who follows the method acts like a copy writer who copyies exactly what students dictate. The student's story based on a real experience helps to facilitate the memory and comprehension of the student during future readings. The experienced story is presented over and over until the student has learned all of the words, and can recognize them out of context of the story. In the classroom the learners' experiences and ideas are used as a means of developing communication skills in writing, spelling, listening, and reading, all four skills necessary for a second/foreign language acquisition (Alberta, 1988).

The Learning Experience Approach has many advantages for students. It highly motivates students as they see their own words transformed into writing and used as a basis for a lesson. It also strengthens their self-esteem and promotes a close working relationship between the teacher and the learners (Carrasquillo, 1994). It can be used both for individual instruction and group work which helps in building a strong relationship among the peers.



## Natural Approach

The *Natural Approach* is based on a humanistic theory along with an input hypothesis theory (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) about L<sub>2</sub> acquisition. Also known as the Monitor theory, comprehensible input (Alberta, 1988; Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985; Krashen, 1982; & Messec, 1987) is seen as the crucial factor in language acquisition. The theory suggests that lexical items can be retained in messages before the learner begins to practice learning. This approach "focuses on providing a context in the classroom for natural language acquisition to occur, and utilizes conscious rules learning and unconscious language acquisition" (Messec, 1987:7). Language is taught in a communicative fashion without the help of the native language and without reference to grammatical theory or analysis (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). In a classroom which follows the Natural Approach, the teacher speaks only in the target language and the students are not forced to respond, rather it is the student who decides when to speak.

The approach emphasizes exposure to the target language. Krashen (1982) considers that the formal learning of language forms is of little importance in the development of communicative ability for most language learners, whereas active interaction in the language is and should be the major activity in the classroom. He believes that acquisition of a language requires a meaningful, natural interaction in the target language and that it is by understanding the message rather than the forms that people naturally learn a language. This

approach, however, was also criticized for its "lack of system" and its "heavy demands on teachers to create their own teaching procedure" (Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985:19). Besides, it is also difficult for the EFL teachers to use English always in the classroom. The mother tongue needs to be used, especially when difficult grammatical questions are being dealt with and also for the beginners. As a teacher, the researcher also noticed that her students became more boring and frustrating when they did not understand what their teacher was trying to say in English.

### **Cognitive Approach**

The *Cognitive Approach* emerged as a reaction to the Audiolingual Method. The method promotes the use of "prior knowledge" and "emphasize(s) the information processing capability of the learners" (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985:55). In the Cognitive Approach, the learner is "encouraged to take a more active role" (Laperla, 1986:16), and thus become an "active participant in language learning" (Laperla, 1986:16). The teacher becomes the facilitator of learning by focusing not just the observable language behaviour, but also on the mental activity that involved in second language learning (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares, 1985). Through the Cognitive Approach, ESL instructors are challenged to become more adept in investigating the needs of limited English proficient students; thus, "language teaching can be replaced by language learning" (Laperla, 1986:8).



## **Methods Based on Classroom Practices**

Although ESL/EFL teaching approaches are derived from a more formal methodology, such as Grammar-Translation Approach and the Audiolingual Method, many are often developed within a local community and structured to meet that community's particular needs.

Thonis (1990) states that "teaching students to know what language means is the most obvious instructional objective in any classroom" (p.140). By creating a language-rich atmosphere, teachers can nurture those skills necessary for language development and growth: listening, speaking, reading and writing. She suggests teachers provide interesting experiences to talk about and listen to, to read work aloud, to ignore errors in pronunciations and grammar, and to read to students daily to help students become better speakers as well as better readers. Journal writing, and the opportunity to write creatively --- letters, stories, dialogues --- can help learners to become better letter writers. She believes that "if students are to achieve in life and in school, they need to learn how to listen carefully, to speak easily, to read efficiently, and to write effectively" (Thonis, 1990:14). Thonis also believes that the success of the students depends on the teacher because it is the teacher "who sets the pace, sequences the lessons, offers opportunities that are conducive to language learning, and avoids incomprehensible lessons in English" (p.14).

Dolly (1990) supports dialogue writing in journals to further enhance ESL skills in reading, writing, and speaking. She states that "learners develop functional expertise" because they are "negotiating meaning through the use of their dialogue writing" (Dolly, 1990:360). The interaction that takes place between the teacher and student is active and necessary to language growth. It is the students' responsibility to make the initial entry and the teacher's role is to "help expand and modify topic not to direct or correct" (Dolly, 1990:361). Thus, dialogue between teacher and students arises. Dialogue writing or dialogue journal reading assists the students in learning the importance of interaction with others.

Flores (cf. Ross, 1990) is also an advocate of dialogue journal writing for ESL students. She believes that the activities that require students to write on a given topic, read their entry to the teacher, and wait while the teacher responds on both oral and written language are the easiest and least threatening way to help students to learn the target language. The most important aspect of journal writing is the relationship that develops between the teacher and learners. Flores (cf. Ross, 1990) refers to this as "authentic discourse" (p.26). Reyes (cf. Ross, 1990), however, is more critical of journal writing. After analyzing 261 writing samples from L<sub>2</sub> students, she states that "through journal writing, students became fluent in their expression of ideas, but they failed to correct their form or improve their style, even when teachers respond by rephrasing the students' language

into standard English usage" (p.26).

Mei *et al.* (1987) suggest the use of "reading passages followed by vocabulary lists" for beginning level students. Verb study lists, especially those with irregular verbs "which EFL students might find particularly confusing", are also beneficial to the beginning level students (Mei *et al.*, 1987:21). They state that explaining unfamiliar vocabulary is the job of all teachers, "while explanations dealing with syntax usage and rules are usually the responsibilities of ESL/EFL teachers" (p.21).

Meyer (cf. Ross, 1990) stresses the importance of a whole language environment through the use of "thematic units, literature, shared book reading, language experience charts, a rich print environment, ..... and read aloud sessions" (p.26). Such activities assist second language students in developing the necessary components of language acquisition: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Meyer states that "making the message comprehensible is the bottom line" (cf. Ross, 1990:26). Rigg (1991) is also in favour of a whole language environment. She believes that second language classes should offer a language nurturing environment, paying attention to interaction to each other, and "second language, like first language, develops through interaction with peers rather than through imitation of a teacher's model or through formal study" (Rigg, 1991:4).

Harris (1993) argues in favour of "Memorization" skill for language learning. She states that "it is very difficult for a student to understand, write about or orally express an idea in a second language without previously knowing the structures and vocabulary presented in that idea, thought or experience" (p.2-3). According to her, L<sub>2</sub> students are not exposed to natural daily experiences in which they repeatedly hear and use language structures, and because of this L<sub>2</sub> students must rely heavily on memory in order to "build and recreate similar responses and reproduce structures and vocabulary" (p.3). Memorization then, is a language skill necessary to language study. In order to overcome some shortcomings of this skill, such as that it is mechanical, and tends to be tedious, boring, and lonely, she suggests to place the external act of memorization into a roleplay format which she calls "Interactive Memorization". In this lesson learners are helped to retain words, sentences, and grammatical structures through repeated encounter with the text from dialogues, and role play of these dialogues.

Lie (1994) encourages the paired story-telling techniques that can be used in ESL/EFL classrooms to help motivate students to maximize reading comprehension which gradually helps them to use English communicatively. The techniques involve the students in the following activities: i) pair off; ii) discuss the story theme; iii) read half of the story; iv) take notes on their half of the story; v) exchange the story notes with each other; vi) write about the part of the story they have not read on the basis of their partner's notes; vii) read

their own versions of the story to each other; viii) read the part of the story they have not read; ix) discuss the whole story; and finally take a test on the story. The story-telling strategy provides opportunities for interaction among the students and gives them the opportunities to use the target language. Through writing part of the story, it also helps to integrate the reading and writing skills. This technique is, however, suitable for secondary level as it requires some previous knowledge on the target language.

### **Summation**

Ideas regarding approaches that are the most beneficial to the ESL/EFL students vary from teacher to teacher, from school to school and also from situation to situation. For example, in the Bangladeshi situation, as I experienced as an ESL teacher, English language teachers have problems with the principle of using only the target language in the classroom. They are required to use the mother tongue, especially when difficult grammatical questions are being dealt with, to make students understand. ESL/EFL teachers, however, have a wide selection of approaches and methods available to meet the needs of their learners, and they need to know all the existing approaches, theories, and practices of second language teaching to select a suitable and effective one. In this research, 20 English teachers of Bangladesh were surveyed to rate some of the techniques and approaches to ESL teaching, which were selected on the basis of review of related literature and previous knowledge of English language teaching fields, which they believe to be beneficial for their students to facilitate

the learning of English, especially the four skills, reading, listening, speaking, and writing, necessary for a second/foreign language acquisition. Students were also surveyed to investigate their opinions to effective and enjoyable teaching and learning activities for developing their language competence. The opinions of both groups of the subjects were compared to identify the similarities and differences between their perceptions of effective teaching methods.

## **4.2 TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BANGLADESH**

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh has tremendous drawbacks. It is interesting to note that while a number of new approaches to English language teaching have been introduced since the 1940's, ELT in Bangladesh is still characterized by a highly traditional approach, namely the Grammar-Translation Approach, and that is probably one of the major reasons why students do not manage to reach the standards of language education that they are aiming at (i.e., to be able to use the language in real-life situations). Not very long ago a colleague of mine critically remarked that ELT in Bangladesh has not changed during the last twenty years and that it was unlikely to change in the future (Personal communication, 1992). Her comment made me think about ELT in Bangladesh and also to do something in changing and reforming it. However, the following are some of the aspects of current ELT situation in Bangladesh.

## **Aims and Objectives of Teaching English**

Teaching English in Bangladeshi educational institutions is a massive enterprise. It is included as a compulsory subject from class three (grade three) upward in the consideration that educated people of Bangladesh "should have good grounding in English, ... a widely used international language, from their first level of education" (Government of Bangladesh, 1978:265). Beyond this stated policy, quite a number of schools offer English from the beginners' class of the primary schools. Perhaps "the pressure of public opinion is behind the unofficial policy of teaching English from the beginning stage of education in Bangladesh" (Khatun, 1992:93). This public pressure shows that people have realized the importance of English for gaining scientific knowledge and also for international communication.

Although teaching English in Bangladesh is a massive enterprise, there has been a lack of clarity in defining its aims and objectives. According to the Bangladesh National Curriculum and Textbook Board (1977), the study of English "should be related to the roles assigned to education in the National Development Plan, to increase producing and equipping students with necessary tools in higher education" (p.87). Such a policy statement would naturally imply that English is needed as a library language in the field of higher education and that the main objective of teaching English should be to impart good reading ability and referencing skills in English language. But the document also states that English

teaching should provide students with the "ability to control the four skills" and to "use these skills in real-life situations outside the schools" (p.89). However, the specific objectives of teaching English laid down by the Committee are as follows:

**I. Listening:**

- a) to enable students to understand a talk or story within his/her experience;
- b) to follow a series of instructions in English;
- c) to take dictation.

**II. Spelling:**

- a) to enable students to give a wider range of instructions;
- b) to take part in natural conversation on a topic within his/her experience;
- c) to explain simply what they have read and written.

**III. Reading:**

- a) to enable students to read silently for information and to dictate it;
- b) to increase speed of reading;
- c) to understand the literary meaning of passages, make inferences and draw conclusion;
- d) to identify and distinguish fact and opinion;
- e) to identify the main facts in a text as a step towards summary.

**IV. Writing:**

- a) to enable students to write paragraph with the following characteristics - clear communication of ideas and facts, relevance to the subjects, grammatically accurate sentences, accurate punctuation and spelling;
- b) to take useful notes from a talk and to recognize and expand these notes and produce coherent paragraph;
- c) to express himself/herself in writing with relevance and accuracy on a subject of general interest within his/her experience.

**V. Reference:**

- to enable students to use dictionaries and general reference works related to other subjects of study.

**VI. Translation:**

- to enable students to translate from Bengali into natural and idiomatic English; the



main purpose of this will be to reinforce the vocabulary and structures of the syllabus and to deepen understanding of the mechanisms of the languages.

(Government of Bangladesh, 1977:87-88).

Such objectives imply that the main purposes of teaching English are to provide students with learning opportunities that will enable them to listen to and understand ideas and concepts expressed in English, to express orally their experiences and thoughts with clarity, to write with correctness, and to develop their referencing skills. But in reality, there is a mismatch between the official English teaching objectives and actual levels of students' proficiency. In 1989, by testing English language skills of 230 students studying grade students, Hoque (cf. Foster, 1994) found that 89% of them cannot participate in natural conversation on a topic within their experience; the same was true of written skill, though they can understand and read better. What is the reason for this mismatch? Cullen (1991) identifies four reasons for which there is more failure than success in the learning of English language; these are: i) untrained teachers, ii) methodological reliance on meaningless rote-learning and examination formats which encourage it, iii) inappropriate curriculum which overemphasizes basic grammatical rules, rather than communicative skills, and iv) a gap between assumed and actual levels of students proficiency.

### **English Teaching Methods**

Since there is no particular teaching method policy which should be followed,

teachers are free to adopt whatever methods they like and find beneficial for their students for enhancing the four skills of the language. This would seem an ideal condition for the teachers to adopt an effective method or combination of methods depending on their practicability in the particular situation. Actually what happens is contrary to this scenario. From my experience as a student and also as an English teacher what I noticed is that most teachers resort to an explanation of the text and lecturing. The teacher reads the text in the class and the students listen to it with their textbook open. Then the teacher paraphrases the text line by line using the teacher's variety of English; sometimes the meaning is explained in the mother tongue or a "code-mixed" variety of the mother tongue and English. After a piece of the text is thus explained the teacher does the language exercises given at the end of the text unit and proceeds to the next unit. Language class also tends to follow the same procedure. There is no emphasis on communication or communicative skills; basic grammatical rules are emphasized. Most vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words. No emphasis is placed on phonology, syntax, and semantics.

Classroom dynamics are usually limited to the familiar teacher-dominated/fact memorization arrangements (Foster, 1994). Students are treated as passive learners whose only function is to follow the teacher's lecture and memorize what the teachers want to be learnt. the teacher asks questions and students answer. There are claims of difficulties and non-understanding and, from my observations, a sense of frustration in my students with

learning the language. There is no scope for the learners to participate in what goes on in the classroom. They are not encouraged either to respond to any lecture or to participate in role playing to enhance communication skills or to participate in discussions (pairs, small groups, and whole class). Drilling is the main activity in the classroom. The methods deny one of the main components for learning a language, classroom interaction. Through interaction with teachers and peers, students would get opportunities to use the target language (Rivers, 1987), and be able to develop their communicative skills. Error correction from teachers and peers within the classroom can also help learners to discover what they need to do to be comprehended accurately (Swain, 1985).

Another important component of language teaching is the assessment of language proficiency. While the conventional in-school paper test is considered to be inappropriate for assessing second language proficiency (Cohen, 1990; Ramirez, 1984; and Snow, 1992), it is the only evaluation method used in Bangladesh. Modern linguists believe that a holistic, integrative assessment methodology should be used in assessing language proficiency since it is no longer considered a sum of its parts but a total entity whose subskills need to be assessed holistically (Carrasquillo, 1994). Conventional tests may assess students' linguistic skill areas, but not the communicative skill areas. Language proficiency tests should be focused on communication as well as on the vital structures of language that make that communication possible (Ellis, 1990). Cohen (1990) states that if teachers are to use

standardized, conventional tests, they should pay attention not just to the product of that test but to the process - why and for what reason the test is used - to make the test appropriate and authentic. However, in Bangladesh the focus of a test is only on the product - how much a learner can memorize and how grammatically accurate their writings are. A pass mark (33%) in the examination is required to proceed to the next level. This kind of bias in the area of language proficiency assessment hinders students' systematic development of the communicative skills.

### **Summation**

What emerges from this brief review of ELT in Bangladesh is that there is no consistency between the stated objectives of teaching English and the actual teaching methods. This is similar to and to a large extent a result of, the mis-match between the official policy which gives English the status of a second language and actual language use in public life. The explicit teaching of grammatical rules and items to students is not in accord with the objectives laid down by the NCTB for teaching English which imply that the main purpose of the teaching at English is to provide students with the opportunities to enhance their ability to use the language in real-life situations. It "aims to increase linguistic knowledge rather than communicative competence" (Foster, 1994:7).

Another drawback of ELT in Bangladesh is teacher-centre procedures. Teachers see their role as that of providers of facts and explanations about English to their learners, rather than as organizers of opportunities to practice language skills (Foster, 1994). This is damaging to the potential for developing students' communicative skills, without which a second/foreign language cannot be learned. Therefore, there is need for a change. The methods of instruction can be altered to increase the level of interest of the students to understand and learn English. The role of English as a language of wider communication implies a different approach to its teaching and requires a new orientation in the preparation and use of new teaching materials to make its teaching relevant and meaningful in the Bangladeshi situation (Foster, 1994). Changing English language teaching methods with recommendations for a culturally relevant curriculum and also for suitable teaching methods for Bangladesh was the primary focus of the study.

#### **4.3 STRIKING A NECESSARY BALANCE**

The charge against methods and approaches that focus on grammar and structures is that communicative aspect of the language suffers, but on the other hand, some researchers suggest that grammar is necessary to L<sub>2</sub> acquisition (Terrell, 1991). The converse is true of communicative methods and the relationship to grammar, but communication is necessary for the development and fluency of speech. In fact, a genuine foreign language teaching should incorporate both analytical teaching, linguistic analysis, and experiential teaching, practice of the target language. Again sometimes there is a mis-match between teachers'

perceptions and that of students. Teachers' assumed beneficial techniques may not fit students' needs and learning style. Now the question is - how does one combine the two? How can one know that a particular method is suitable for one's learners to enhance learning effectively? How can one match one's teaching styles with students' needs and learning style?

Students are the motivating force of education, yet they are given little opportunity to appraise their educational environment. Schubert (1986) points out that students are seldom involved in the development of curriculum, especially in second/foreign language. Kleinsasser (1989) while documenting teacher perceptions, strongly asserts that students also need to be considered a part of studying foreign language learning environments. "Students' perceptions, at all levels - elementary through college, including adult learners - need to be documented and reviewed as well. The learning environment description will continue to remain inadequate until they are talked to and studied" (p.172).

In The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fullan (1991) proposes that students on all grade levels need to be treated like "people", with a say in their education. He asks, "what would happen if we treated the students as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools?" (p.170). He suggests that if we do not seek students' input, then we are not treating them like human beings, and this will

contribute to most educational innovations being doomed to failure.

Savignon (1983) writes that the ultimate success in a student's learning a second/foreign language relies on the student's attitudes and interests. Yet, seldom does one bother to ask them what their interests are. What do students say about their language learning experience?; what are their perceptions of the methods through which the second language is being taught to them?; what difficulties do they encounter in language learning?; how do they expect to use the language in the future? -- these kinds of questions are crucial for the educators to reform the second/foreign language curriculum.

Research shows that language students clearly have definite opinions and preconceptions about language learning and their ideas about effective learning and teaching activities are sometimes different from those of their teachers (Horwitz, 1988; Nunan, 1986; & Yorio, 1986). Serious mis-matches may occur between students' needs and expectations and the pedagogical philosophy or methods of teaching (Oxford *et.al.* 1991), with unfortunate potential consequences. The students tend to be bored, inattentive in the class, and become disappointed with the course which leads to their ultimate failure. Studies show that matching teaching methods to student needs, expectations, and learning styles can significantly enhance achievement and student attitudes and motivation (Oxford *et.al.* 1991). What must be done to achieve effective language (second or foreign) learning is to balance

instructional methods, so that it meets student needs and expectations.

In Bangladesh, very little research has been done to document the nature and extent of students' needs, interests, and difficulties with learning the language. It is unknown for students to be asked about how effective and appropriate they find the teaching and what problems they encounter in studying English. Curriculum specialists and teachers take it for granted that the present curriculum and teaching methods are naturally the most suitable. Consequently, there is a mis-match between learners' needs and teachers' teaching methods which tends to hinder learners' achievement in language learning. To reform the ELT in Bangladesh, therefore, students were studied so as to involve them in the development of English language education in Bangladesh.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The search for methods, approaches and techniques to enhance L<sub>2</sub>/FL instructions will continue. Teachers are "in the best position to know which aspects of the various approaches will prove to be most useful within the classroom setting" (Carrasquillo, 1994:125). Before choosing a method or a combination of methods, teachers should know the purpose of teaching - what teaching tasks he/she intends to fulfil within a designed project; decide how these purposes can be achieved in accordance with affective factors, such as student age, level of proficiency, learning style, needs, expectations and motivation, and



where the language is taught; and finally design suitable strategy(ies) and choose the method(s) they believe to be beneficial for the development of their learners' proficiency level.

Chapter 5 will present a detailed picture of the methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study responded to a two-fold need regarding the development of English language study and teaching in Bangladesh. The main purpose of the study was to identify students' problems in learning a second language like English, their attitudes toward current ELT, needs and preferred teaching methods and learning activities. Secondly, it investigated English teachers' attitudes toward current ELT and which methods they believe to be beneficial for facilitating students competence in English. Two types of survey were administered for collecting data to meet the above mentioned purposes. These were as follows:

- 1) A student survey. The main focus was on students' attitudes and opinions regarding the real life applicability of the material and teaching techniques presently being used, the level of interest in what was taught, the degree of difficulty in studying English, and the preference for teaching methods and activities.
- 2) A teacher survey. The main focus was on English teachers' attitudes toward current ELT and the teaching methods they think to be beneficial for enhancing students' competence in English.

Presented in this chapter are the methods and procedures used in this study. Specifically, the following are discussed: a) finding the volunteers, b) subjects, c) questionnaire design, d)

procedures/data collection, and e) data analysis.

## **5.1 FINDING THE VOLUNTEERS**

With the permission to proceed with the research, efforts were made to find at least two volunteers to work in the research. The volunteers were needed in the study, because the distance between the researcher and the site where the study was administered made it difficult for the researcher to accomplish some tasks directly (i.e., subject selection, data collection, etc.). The researcher contacted three educators, two female and one male, who have research backgrounds on English language study and teaching. They were explained the purpose of the study and their functions in conducting the study. A copy of the thesis proposal was also sent to each of them for detailed information. The researcher subsequently received replies from two educators who were very interested in developing English language teaching in Bangladesh and proud to be part of this kind of research. One volunteer was then given the responsibility for the students' survey and another for the teachers' survey.

## **5.2 SUBJECTS**

The target subjects for the two types of survey were English teachers in the primary and secondary levels and first-year university students who have recently completed twelve years of schooling where they studied English as a compulsory subject.

## **Student Subjects**

With the help of the volunteers, a potential group of 35 students was selected for student survey. The subjects were selected randomly from the different departments of Dhaka University, so that they would represent different school backgrounds and there would be fairly even male and female representation. The purpose of choosing first year university students was that by this stage these students have gained a knowledge of ELT needs, language competence and their difficulties with learning English. Before making final selection, a notice mentioning that some students are needed for a survey of English language teaching in Bangladesh was displayed in the 'notice board' at the different faculties of Dhaka University. Interested students were requested to contact to one of the volunteers at the Department of English, Dhaka University. More than 50 students showed an interest in participating in the study. The volunteer who was in charge of the students' survey made an arrangement in one of the classrooms in the university to meet the interested students. After the general purpose of the research was explained by the volunteer, 35 of the students agreed in participating in the study. Before starting the actual survey, the students were requested to give a brief introduction of themselves, especially their age, sex, socio-economic status, dominant language, and type of school they attended. The introduction shows that all students, 19 males and 16 females, were from lower-middle class to upper-middle class socio-economic backgrounds. The age of the students ranged between 18-20, and their dominant language was Bengali. They have attended different types of schools, public and

private including English-medium schools.

### **Teacher subjects**

For the teachers' survey, 20 English teachers at the primary and secondary levels were randomly selected from 15 different schools, both private and public, in city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. They represent both male and female; trained and non-trained teachers. For the selection of the teacher subjects, the researcher requested the volunteer who was in charge of the teachers' survey to contact some of the English teachers in person. He went to 15 different schools in Dhaka and met the English teachers of those schools. After explaining the purpose and importance of the study, initially 25 teachers were agreed in participating in the study. Before making the final selection, the teachers were given the final copy of the thesis proposal for detailed information of the study. Out of the 25 teachers, finally 20 were interested in participating in the study.

### **5.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

The two sets of questionnaires, presented in Appendices A and B, were developed by the researcher based on a review of relevant literature and previous knowledge of the English language teaching field. The surveys consisted of two major components: general information and ELT-related information. Both closed and open-ended questionnaire items were used to give the subjects an opportunity to express their feelings freely and also to have more qualitative data. Space was available for suggestions regarding curriculum development and teaching methods.

## **Questionnaire for students**

Seven questions regarding general information gave the researcher insight into the students' background information, their reason to study English and their expectations for using the language. Nineteen questions regarding English language teaching generated information concerning the students' attitude towards current ELT, opinions regarding the real-life applicability of the material and teaching techniques, their interest in what was taught, difficulties in studying English and their preference for teaching methods, materials and activities. Question seven was crucial for the study. In this question, students were given twenty activities that might happen in an ESL/EFL class, and asked to rate them on two independent three-point scales in response to the following questions:

- A. In the English classes that you have experienced, how often has this been done?
- B. In your opinion, would this help to make the class more enjoyable?

With question "A", possible responses are: 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Very often; and with question "B", possible responses are : 1 = Not at all, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Very much. The questionnaire also included spaces for optional comments on all of the activities. Further questions 8-10 were the elaboration of question 7 where an open-ended form was used to have more qualitative data regarding students opinion on their preferred teaching



methods and activities (see Appendix A for the students' questionnaire).

### **Questionnaire for teachers**

Seven questions regarding general information gave the researcher insight into the teachers' experience and training as English teachers. Ten questions regarding English language teaching generated information on teachers' attitudes towards current ELT and their views on the importance of using particular methods and approaches. Question 10 was important for the study where some activities (the same ones that were used in question 7 of the student questionnaire) of ESL/EFL classrooms were used to assess the teachers' views on English teaching methods which they believe to be important for developing students' proficiency in English. Subjects were asked to rate on three-point scales in response to the following questions:

A. In your English classes, how often have you used these activities?

B. In your opinion, which activities are important and beneficial to enhance students competence in English?

For question "A", possible responses were 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Very often, and for question "B", possible responses were 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Very Important. The questionnaire also included spaces for optional comments and suggestions on all activities (see Appendix B for the teachers' questionnaire).

### **Question wording**

Nunan (1994) recommends that “ when constructing a questionnaire, one needs to pay careful attention to the wording of the questions” .....“questions should not be complex and confusing” (p.143). The researcher placed emphasis on keeping the language of the questions as simple as possible. In addition, the questionnaire for students was written in two language versions, English and Bengali, as the researcher recognized that conducting the survey in both languages would help to eliminate language problems. For further help, the volunteers were made available as resource people for the subjects.

### **5.4 PROCEDURES/DATA COLLECTION**

The volunteers were extremely supportive. Coming from research backgrounds themselves, they were tremendously helpful in pursuing the study. Very fortunately, the researcher found a friend who went for a short visit to Bangladesh on the 15th October, 1995. The whole package of the survey was given to him to pass along to the volunteers who worked for the research. The volunteers before giving the questionnaire to the subjects explained the objectives and purpose of the study. Furthermore, it was indicated to the subjects that the survey was being conducted on a voluntary basis and their participation and answers would be kept confidential and would be used only to analyze the data.



On October 20, 1995, the questionnaire was distributed to the subjects. The deadline date of October 31, 1995 was stated. The volunteers were made available for any kind of questions regarding the survey questionnaire. The subjects were also requested to seal the response package for keeping confidentiality. After collecting the subject responses, the volunteers were requested to send them directly to the researcher. On November 10, 1995, the researcher received the survey data.

## **5.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The students' questionnaire was answered by 35 students, 19 males and 16 females. Since 7 questionnaires were not usable because the students responses were incomplete and did not show any opinion, only 28 questionnaires were analyzed for the purpose of the study. From the group of 28 questionnaires, 15 were male and other 13 were female. The teacher questionnaire was answered by 20 teachers, 12 females and 8 males. All the responses were complete and analyzed for the study.

The computer facilities (SPSS) were used to calculate the data collected from closed questions and generate frequencies and order percentages in order to obtain a descriptive analysis of the data. Analysis of the information received from the open ended questions was qualitative based. The words, attitudes and opinions expressed in the responses of the subjects were the focus of this study's analytical base. Responses sometimes were divided

into categories for the purpose of comparing and contrasting. Students' opinions and needs in items of effective teaching activities were compared with teachers' beliefs.

The findings related to this study are presented in Chapter six.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Results**

Two surveys were conducted for the study. Presented in this chapter are the findings of the surveys. The chapter is divided into two parts: Part I presents the results of the students survey and Part II presents the results of the teachers survey.

#### **6.1 PART I: RESULTS OF THE STUDENTS SURVEY**

As part of the survey, students were first asked to respond to seven questions on general information. Specifically, this information included students' English language background, opinion about studying English and use of English. Out of the seven questions, six were closed-ended and the remaining one was open-ended. The responses of the open-ended question were categorized on the basis of the respondents' statements. For example, the responses to question six, " why do you want to study English if it is not a compulsory subject?", were divided into the following categories: " continue higher study", "study abroad", "knowing an additional language", "developing good career", "use it whenever needed", and "communicating with the people of other languages". The summary of general information regarding the sample population of students is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of the General Information on Students' Language Background**

<b>Background</b>	<b>Frequency (n=28)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1. Dominant language</b>		
English	1	4%
Mother tongue (Bengali)	25	96%
Other	0	0%
<b>2. Lived in English speaking country</b>		
Yes	3	11%
No	24	89%
<b>3. Parents speak English at home</b>		
Yes	4	16%
No	21	84%
<b>4. Length of English class</b>		
Less than 20 mins	0	0%
20-30 mins	2	7%
30-45 mins	19	68%
More than 45 mins	7	25%

**Table 1 continued in the next page.**

**Table 1: Summary of the General Information on students' Language Background**

<b>Background</b>	<b>Frequency (n=28)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>5. Continue English if it were not compulsory</b>		
Yes	25	89%
No	3	11%
<b>6. Reason for studying English</b>		
Continue higher study	5	18%
Study abroad	4	15%
Knowing an additional language	1	4%
Developing good careers	1	4%
Using it whenever needs	16	59%
<b>7. Confident about using English</b>		
Yes	3	11%
No	24	89%

The results suggest that the use of English in Bangladesh is limited to schools. Students do not have the opportunity to use the language outside the school, since Bangladesh has one common language for all. The data also indicate that students are very much interested in knowing and learning English. In response to question five, "If English were not a compulsory subject, would you still study it?", 25 (89%) of the students answered yes, and 3 (11%) answered no.

In response to question 6, the vast majority (59%) of those sampled commented that they want to study English so that they can use it whenever they need to use it in the real life situations. But the data show that 24 (89%) students are not confident enough to be able to use the language. The reason for this inconsistency can be found in the responses to the second section of the students questionnaire.

In the second section of the survey, students responded to nineteen questions regarding ELT related information. The main focus was placed on students' attitudes and opinions towards the ELT techniques and methods currently used, their difficulties with learning the language, interest in what and how they were taught, and their preferred methods and activities in the English classroom. Table 2 displays the results of questions 1-4, which were formulated on a Likert-scale. The information was tabulated in percentages.

**Table 2: Student responses to the current ELT methods (Questions 1-4)**

	<b>Not very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very</b>
1. Real-life situations	66%	29%	5%
2. Appropriate	78%	19%	3%
3. Interesting	58%	29%	13%
4. Difficult	9%	17%	74%

As Table 2 indicates, when students were asked how useful what they learn was for real life situations, the majority of the responses was between not very (66%) and somewhat (29%) useful. Only 5% felt that the knowledge they learned in English had substantial real life applicability. Responses to the questions concerning the appropriateness of the current ELT methods also show the same tendencies as responses to question 1. Responses to the question concerning the level of interest in learning English showed the following: 58% and 29% of those indicated low interest or somewhat interested in what they learned; the remaining 13% showed high interest. This lack of interest may have come from the students whose needs were not addressed by the curriculum, or it may be the lack of varied teaching techniques. It should be mentioned here that responses to question 5 of section I show that the majority of students were interested in learning the language. Similar conclusion could be drawn from the answers to question 4; 91% of the students indicated the English classes

were somewhat or very difficult.

For the most part, the sentiments among these learners about learning the English language was positive. However, one complaint was made with consistency: the instruction of English. In response to question 5 of section II, the majority of the respondents stated that the most difficult aspect of learning English was the uninteresting teaching activities. Teaching activities were described as “dull”, “boring”, “repetitive”, and “frustrating”. The following comments may be cited as examples<sup>1</sup>:

----“I know it’s important, but the way teachers tried to teach it made me feel bored. The line-by-line translation methods did not satisfy my need, that is to be competent in English.”

----“ From the beginning of my schooling I was very much interested in learning a new language like English. But in the classroom repetition of the same activity made it dull and frustrating. It was just ..... doing the same thing everyday, doing our homework, checking it over, learn a new lesson, doing our homework, checking it over.... same routine everyday.”



1. These comments were translated by the researcher from students comments which they originally made in their mother tongue.

----“I least like studying the grammatical aspect, even though I know that is essential in order to be able to use it. I would enjoy if my teacher used an alternative way to teach grammar. To memorize something over and over; and write the same thing over and over was really repetitive which made the grammar study boring.”

----“It was hard, it was really hard for me. Sometimes I didn't understand the exercises in the book and it seemed like it was more memorizing than understanding the stuff and that made it hard. I used to look at the examples given in the book and when I was answering it I was just following the examples even without understanding.”

----“My intention was to speak English fluently. I have already passed my twelve years of schooling, still I can't speak English fluently. In my English classes we were not encouraged to participate in any discussion or to speak on any topic. This made me shy to speak English. I know a lot about grammatical rules but I don't know how to use it as in my English classes teachers did not teach how to put these rules in structure and how to use it in spoken English. This was the most difficult aspect of learning English.”

----“The most difficult aspect learning English is memorization, but since it is not in my native language it was hard to remember for long periods of time. Usually, I forgot after

examination what I memorized. It is really hard to learn a language by memorization.”

The comments of the students show that they were not satisfied with the English language teaching activities. Besides describing boring repetitious lessons, they mentioned about being confused and not understanding the meaning of what they were saying, reading or hearing in English. With frustration, they conveyed how difficult it was to stay motivated, how tedious it was to learn English, and how disappointing and discouraging it was to try to become fluent. It was more memorizing than understanding which made the language learning temporary.

On the other hand, when students were asked what they considered the least difficult aspect of learning English (question 6, section II), nearly half of those sampled cited vocabulary. Only one answered reading comprehension and some responded grammar was not too difficult, though use of grammatical rules were difficult. Also, in marked contradiction to others, one believed verbs were easy to remember, mentioning that most were regular.

In question 7, section II, twenty activities were designed as a representative mix of communicative and real language practices on one hand and non-communicative form based techniques on the other hand. Items involving communication and the real use of language

included activities which are characterized by student-to-student interaction with little or no monitoring of students' output by the teacher (items 6, 7, 12 and 13); oral situations characterized by student-teacher interaction with the teacher monitoring and sometimes responding to students' output (items 10, 11 and 19); content- based teacher responses to students' journals (item 15); and the use of songs and reading work aloud (items 3 and 4). Singing and listening to songs and reading work aloud were included in the communicative group because in the classroom such activities focus on the meaning rather than the grammatical form of what is being sung or listened to and also because it helps to develop listening skills.

Non-communicative items included activities characterized by workbook type drill and practices with formal correction (items 1, 17 and 20); audiolingual style drills (items 16 and 18); dictionary work on a list of words before reading (item 5); explicit grammar instructions conducted either in English or students' native language (items 2, 8 and 9); and teacher correction of errors, specially grammatical errors, in students' journal writing (item 14). Tables 3.A and 3.B display the results of students' responses to both communicative and non-communicative items which were formulated in a Likert-scale. The information was tabulated in percentages.

The survey results suggest that the students had experienced very little variety of teaching methods and activities and that non-communicative methods had been experienced somewhat more frequently than communicative ones. The communicative activity the students in this study reported having used most frequently is reading work aloud (item 4, 25%) and the non-communicative activity is explicit grammar instructions (items 2 and 9).

**Table 3.A: Student Responses to Communicative Activities**

Items	Frequent			Enjoyable		
	Never	Sometimes	Very often	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much
<b>Student-student interaction</b>						
6	89%	11%	0%	7%	41%	52%
7	89%	11%	0%	11%	33%	56%
12	78%	15%	7%	11%	57%	32%
13	65%	23%	12%	4%	48%	48%
<b>Student-teacher interaction</b>						
10	73%	19%	8%	15%	39%	46%
11	59%	30%	11%	7%	54%	39%
19	69%	23%	8%	11%	54%	35%
<b>Teacher responses to students journal</b>						
*15	----	----	----	----	----	----
<b>Songs and reading work aloud</b>						
3	48%	33%	19%	26%	59%	15%
4	21%	54%	25%	47%	39%	14%
<b>Overall percentages</b>						
	66%	24%	10%	15%	47%	38%

\* As only 9 out of the 28 respondents responded to this activity, the item was not used to calculate the data.

**Table 3.B: Student Responses to Non-communicative Activities**

Items	Frequent			Enjoyable		
	Never	Sometimes	Very often	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much
<b>Workbook type drill and practices</b>						
1	11%	67%	22%	50%	42%	8%
17	0%	18%	82%	93%	7%	0%
20	31%	42%	27%	33%	63%	4%
<b>Audiolingual drill</b>						
16	4%	26%	70%	19%	69%	12%
18	7%	48%	45%	26%	59%	15%
<b>Dictionary exercise</b>						
5	35%	42%	23%	64%	29%	7%
<b>Explicit grammar instruction</b>						
2	0%	19%	82%	85%	14%	1%
8	19%	70%	11%	54%	28%	18%
9	4%	21%	75%	25%	64%	11%
<b>Error correction in journal</b>						
*14	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Overall percentages</b>						
	13%	39%	48%	50%	42%	8%

\* As only 9 respondents responded to this activity, it was not used to calculate the data.

A striking feature of the enjoyableness ratings was that the communicative activities were rated as more enjoyable than the form based non-communicative ones, though students seem to want a balance of both kinds of activities. The single exception was journal writing and its correction (items 14 and 15). The majority of the students (19 out of the 28) who participated in the survey skipped these two items. Presumably, since journal writing is not familiar to them, they may not be sure about whether this activity is enjoyable or not. However, the comparison of student responses to both kinds of activities in terms of enjoyableness indicates that communicative activities were rated more enjoyable than the non-communicative ones (see overall percentages in Tables 3.A and 3.B). Responses to the question concerning the enjoyable activities in learning English showed the following: 38% and 47% of those indicated very or somewhat enjoyable; the remaining 15% believed these activities are not enjoyable. On the other hand, responses to non-communicative activities showed the following: 8% and 42% of the student subjects indicated very or somewhat enjoyable; the remaining 50% believed these activities are not enjoyable. These figures do not necessarily mean the students found the communicative activities pleasant and the non-communicative ones unpleasant; the difference between the two groups of activities is comparable, not absolute.

In response to the questions 8 and 9 regarding the most and least enjoyable activities they experienced within their previous English classrooms, the majority of the students

indicated item 13 (filling the gaps of teachers selected sentences through student to student interaction) and item 18 (changing the form of sentences without changing the meaning) as the most enjoyable activities. This may suggest an apparent inconsistency of the student responses to communicative activities. However, the data also indicate that 66% of the respondents "never" experienced any communicative activities in their previous classrooms (see overall percentages in Table 3.A). So the indication of items 13 and 18 as the most enjoyable activity may come from the students who never experienced communicative activities previously.

Item 17 (teacher dominated method) was indicated by the 93% student subjects as the least enjoyable activity. Some students commented that they felt bored and frustrated when they sat in front of the teacher doing nothing except listening to what he/she said. They believe that without active participation it is hard to learn anything, especially a second language. Ironically, teacher-dominated or fact memorization method is the most widely used teaching method in Bangladesh (The British Council, 1986; Foster, 1994).

Students reported the following typical activities they had experienced in response to question 10: 1) Doing worksheets, 2) Memorizing selected vocabulary and then making sentence using the new words they have learnt, 3) Use of pictures to introduce new words, 4) writing on teachers assigned topic, and 5) Translation from native language to English.



In response to question 11, "Which activities you believe to be beneficial and which are not?", many students (11) who participated in the study were willing to accept both kinds of activities as beneficial to learn English. However, overall responses indicate that students believed communicative items were more effective and beneficial than the non-communicative form-based ones for enhancing their language competence. 13(48%) of the respondents voted in favour of communicative activities, 3(11%) for non-communicative activities, and 11(41%) for both kinds of activities. One student commented on group discussion (item 6), "I think that this helps much because through group discussion students can practice oral and listening skills which are essential for learning a language." One student commented on fill in the blank verb form exercises (item 1), "that exercise helps students to learn how to use the correct form of sentences." The majority of the students indicated the items which are related to practical practices (items 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 19) as beneficial for developing their communicative skills. According to them as school is the only place for them where they can practice English, these activities are really helpful for them to practice English. Lack of practice is believed to be as one of the important causes for their poor speaking skills. One student commented that "when someone speaks to me in English I feel shy and nervous, though I know I can answer his/her questions." Another student commented: "when I liked to say something in English, it takes much time as at first I have to translate it in my head, then express it. If I had the opportunity to practice in the classrooms or outside the classrooms, I would overcome this difficulty."

There were, it is true, some negative comments about certain non-communicative items, such as the following on fill-in-the blank verb form exercises: "This exercise helps in the forms of verbs, but this is boring", "The repetition of this kind of activity from grade III to XII is really boring"; on the teacher-dominated activity: "We have nothing to do except staring at the teacher which makes the class as drama theater"; on the explicit grammar instruction (items 2, 8 and 9): "In the language class I felt like I was in Mathematics class, like mathematical formula we had to memorize grammatical rules of English language.....I know grammar rules are important for language learning, but the way we had been taught in the language class was really boring and frustrating." One student commented, "I like all the activities because they help us to understand and I believe all the activities are important and useful if teachers know for what purposes they are using it."

Table 4 presents the summary of the responses to questions from 12-16. The data suggest that there is a marked inconsistency what students wanted and what they actually had experienced. Most of the students (61%) wanted to master all four skills of the language, but in reality they did not (cf. Foster, 1994). While students' most preferred learning activities are to be involved group study (35%), they used to be encouraged to learn English individually. In the classroom group discussion activity is hardly used (see Table 3.A). The data also indicate that the most of the students' least preferred learning style is listening to the teacher and taking notes. Ironically, it is the most widely used learning and teaching

style in the English classroom in Bangladesh (The British Council, 1986; Foster, 1994).

Students' responses also show that they were eager to involve themselves in active

**Table 4: Student Responses to Preferred Learning Styles (Questions 12-16)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency (n=28)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>12. Skills in which students want to master</b>		
A.Oral skill	9	32%
B. Understanding skill	----	----
C. Writing skill	2	7%
D. Reading skill	----	----
E. All of them	17	61%
<b>13. Preferred learning activities</b>		
A. Individually	2	7%
B. In Pairs	5	19%
C. In small group	19	33%
D. In one large group	----	----
E. In all of them	11	41%
<b>14. Active Participation in the class</b>		
A. Yes	22	88%
B. No	3	12%

**Table 4: Student Responses to Preferred Learning Styles (Questions 12-16)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency (n=28)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>15. Preferred learning style</b>		
A. Memorization	2	8%
B. Problem solving	5	19%
C. Listening and taking notes	----	----
D. Involved actively in the classrooms	19	73%
<b>16. Expected level of English competence</b>		
A. Excellent, almost as good as a native speaker	3	11%
B. Enough to communicate in English	19	70%
C. Enough to continue higher study	4	15%
D. Enough to work in English	1	4%

participation in the class discussion. 22(88%) of the subjects was interested to participate in classroom discussion. In responding to question 16 regarding their expected level of English competence, the majority of the students' (70%) expected level of competence was to be able to communicate in English.

In response to question 17 regarding the preferred language to be used in English class, the majority of the participating students preferred either English (49%) or both English and the native language (51%). None of the respondents was in favour of using only native language in English class. A student participated in the study said: "In my English classes we were not encouraged to involve in discussion or to speak on a topic in English. This made me shy to speak English. I realize that without practicing English in the classrooms I cannot promote my speaking skill." One student commented: "The teacher's responsibility should be first to make the whole lesson comprehensible to their students. And once they have done so, that is the time to encourage students to give examples in English." These respondents also argued that the use of both languages is more essential in the primary level than in the advanced level.

The responses to question 19 regarding preferred evaluation procedure show the inconsistency between what students want and what they had actually experienced. The least

preferred method of evaluation (only 6%) is normed or standardized tests. The study of the British Council on English language teaching in Bangladesh (1986) shows that it is the most widely used evaluation method in Bangladesh. Respondents overwhelmingly preferred test in the form of interviews or vivas (36%) or continuous assessments of the development (46%) as the best ways of evaluating their progress in English. Other felt that it is important for them to be involved in informal evaluating processes (12%).

## **6.2 PART II: RESULTS OF TEACHERS SURVEY**

As a part of the survey, teachers were first asked to respond seven questions on general information. Specifically this information included the following areas: level of teaching field, number of years teaching experience, degree held, ESL certification. Presented in Table 5 is a summary of general information regarding the sample population of teachers.

The results reveal that most of the respondents taught at the senior high level (80%). The data also show a variance in the years of teaching experience: 1-5 years, 28%; 6-10 years, 22%; 11-15 years, 17%; 16-20 years, 22%. Those having taught 20 years and more made up the smallest percentage (11%). The data disclose that while 53% held a Bachelor's degree, 16% held a Master's degree, and 26% held a Bachelor with B.Ed. degree, only one respondent held a Bachelor with B.Ed. and M.Ed. degree. The data also suggest that only

17% of the respondents were certified ESL teacher. Three of the respondents took special English courses during graduate and postgraduate programs. Only two (11%) respondents had visited English speaking country and 6 (35%) participated in ELT related conference.

**Table 5: Summary of Teachers Professional Background**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency (n=20)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1. Level of field taught</b>		
Primary	1	5%
Secondary	16	80%
Higher secondary	3	15%
<b>2. Teaching experience</b>		
1-5 years	5	28%
6-10 years	3	17%
11-15 years	4	22%
16-20 years	4	22%
21+ years	2	11%
<b>3. Degree held</b>		
Bachelor	10	53%
Master	3	16%
Bachelor with B. Ed.	5	26%
Bachelor with B.Ed. & M.Ed.	1	5%
<b>4. ESL certified</b>		
Yes	3	17%
No	15	83%



**Table 5: Summary of the Teachers Professional Background**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Frequency (n=20)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>4. Taken special English course</b>		
Yes	3	16%
No	16	84%
<b>5. Visited English speaking country</b>		
Yes	2	11%
No	17	89%
<b>6. Participated conference regarding ELT development</b>		
Yes	6	35%
No	11	65%

In the second part of the survey, ten questions were asked to generate information on English teachers' attitudes towards ELT methods, especially their views on the appropriateness and real life applicability of the current methods and the importance of using particular methods and approaches.

When teachers were asked how appropriate the current English curriculum and syllabus are (Section II, questions 1 and 4), the majority of the responses was between not very (49%; 56%) and moderately (47%; 37%) appropriate. In responding to questions 2 and 3 concerning modification of the present curriculum and changing of the current ELT methods, while more of the respondents (79%) were in favour of modification of the curriculum than in opposition to modification, only 27% believed that current ELT methods should be changed. However, the teachers studied in this survey recommended modification in several aspects of the current English curriculum. These are as follows:

I. Five of the respondents recommended that as the curriculum lacks in language component, more emphasis should be placed on the language component. Solid language courses, i.e. training in reading comprehension, listening comprehension, spoken and written skills should be included. One higher secondary teacher said: "The English syllabus is highly literary. How could it be possible to teach spoken and written English in the literature class? Language course emphasizing spoken and written skills should be included in the syllabus."

II. Eight of the respondents deplored that the curriculum does not have real life relevance; it is more theoretical than practical. The curriculum has to take into account the

requirements of the learners and society. The language curriculum must specify the aims and objectives of teaching the English language at different levels. It must provide guidelines for the preparation of instructional materials and specify the language teaching methods in different language situation. A teacher commented: "Though the language curriculum states the aims and objectives of teaching English, it does not provide any guidelines for teachers to be followed. Without any guidelines it is really difficult for me to choose suitable activities for my class". Another teacher commented: "What we used to teach in our classes is just to provide the theoretical knowledge from the texts, because we are expected to do so. The curriculum does not demand to teach practical knowledge of English, i. e., how to use the language."

III. Most of the teachers expressed concerns about the difficulty of the materials. They stated that the text books lack continuity. The NCTB should be careful in choosing materials which have real life relevance and continuation. Besides text books, audio-visual aids including recorded materials, radio broadcasts, video tapes and films on different subjects and situation of actual language should be included in the curriculum.

IV. Two of the subjects claimed that the time frame of English language class should be doubled, i.e. instead of 45 minutes, it should be 90 minutes period. A comment was, "Language classes should not be treated as general class. In a language class, students need

more time to practice what they have learnt, because without practice, a language cannot be learnt. The time frame available for the English class is not enough for practicing the language; it needs to be increased."

The data concerning the teachers preferred language use in English language class (question 5) show that over half (63%) of the respondents believe that in the Bangladeshi context, both English and the mother tongue should be used to teach English. Many of them (13) claimed that the mother tongue must be used, especially in the beginning level. But it should be mentioned that the teachers also recognize the importance of English, specially when students are involved in any discussion or conversation. Like the students subjects, they also believe that the classroom should be utilized as an environment for practicing oral skills. The following two comments can be cited as examples:

---"In the beginning of my career as an English teacher I was convinced that in English classes, only English should be taught. But when I noticed that my teaching was not comprehensible to my students, I changed my attitudes. I have realized that in a foreign language classroom, the mother tongue should be used if the texts and exercises are difficult enough for students "understanding."

---"Though I believe that using only English is sometimes difficult for students to

understand and follow the teachers, I also believe that without using English students' listening, understanding and speaking skills cannot be improved. Therefore, I prefer not to encourage my students to use the mother tongue in the English classes. I know in the beginning, they may find it difficult, but once they have become fluent, it would be authentic for developing their communicative skills."

It is interesting to note that though teachers can feel the value of students' active involvement in classroom discussion, many of them are very doubtful about the efficiency of group work. When answering question 7, they mentioned individual learning procedure as the most preferred classroom procedure. They believed that the teacher should always be in full control of what happens in the classroom, that he/she should be the only one to decide what should be done next. This attitudes has, of course, something to do with teachers' feelings about their own value but it can also be related to the fact that most teachers have not been prepared to handle group discussion.

Teachers' preferred evaluation procedures are consistent with those of students, though inconsistent with what they are actually using. They believed that standardized theoretical tests (i.e. requiring memorization of facts from the materials) can not be used to assess students language proficiency. Both theoretical and practical evaluation procedures emphasizing grammatical and communicative skills should be used for proper evaluation.

One comment was: "A language assessment tests should be comprehensive; it should assess not only students' grammatical knowledge , but also the communicative skills. For this purpose both practical and theoretical evaluation procedures should be administered."

Students difficulties in learning the language were supported by the teachers responses to question 9. They also reported that students are frequently unprepared for class, and homework was done erratically. Classroom participation is less spontaneous and students grow less enthusiastic. The teachers also indicated that students felt bored and frustrated in the language class. One teacher commented that "I feel that my students are not motivated enough to learn English. But as teachers it is our responsibility to find out what they need and how we can promote their motivation and interest." But student responses suggest that they are eager to learn English, though they did not find the English classes interesting. The discrepancy may be due to the misunderstanding of the teachers. The teachers fail to realize that students are motivated to learn English, it is the uninteresting teaching methods that tend to decline their motivation and interest.

In question 10, teachers were given the same activities as used in question 7 of students questionnaire and asked them to rate on three point scales in response to the following questions: "how often have you used these activities?" (Question 10.A) and "how important and beneficial do you believe these activities are for enhancing students

competence?” (10.B). Space was provided for any additional comments and suggestions on any of the activities. As mentioned earlier these items were divided into two groups: communicative and real language practices, and noncommunicative form based activities. Tables 6.A and 6.B present the results of the teachers’ responses to both group of activities.

**Table 6.A: Teacher Responses to Communicative Activities**

Items	Frequent			Effective		
	Never	Sometimes	Very often	Not at all	Somewhat	very import
<b>Student-student interaction</b>						
6	78%	19%	3%	18%	63%	19%
7	81%	13%	6%	56%	37%	7%
12	79%	13%	8%	33%	39%	28%
13	61%	22%	17%	17%	43%	40%
<b>Student-teacher interaction</b>						
10	77%	15%	8%	28%	37%	35%
11	56%	27%	17%	18%	51%	31%
19	65%	26%	9%	31%	49%	20%
<b>Teacher responses to students journal</b>						
15	----	----	----	51%	24%	25%
<b>Songs and reading work aloud</b>						
3	53%	38%	9%	34%	53%	13%
4	17%	46%	37%	18%	33%	49%
<b>Overall percentages</b>						
	63%	24%	13%	31%	43%	26%



**Table 6.B: Teacher Responses to Non-communicative Activities**

Items	Frequent			Effective		
	Never	Sometimes	Very often	Not at all	Somewhat	Very Import
<b>Workbook type drill and practices</b>						
1	8%	61%	31%	6%	31%	63%
17	0%	12%	88%	87%	11%	2%
20	28%	53%	19%	29%	56%	15%
<b>Audiolingual drill</b>						
16	7%	29%	64%	14%	53%	33%
18	3%	51%	46%	9%	67%	24%
<b>Dictionary exercise</b>						
5	41%	395	20%	18%	53%	29%
<b>Explicit grammar instruction</b>						
2	0%	13%	87%	3%	31%	66%
8	23%	59%	18%	31%	49%	20%
9	1%	27%	72%	7%	32%	61%
<b>Error correction in Journal</b>						
14	----	----	----	9%	37%	54%
<b>Overall percentages</b>						
	12%	38%	50%	21%	42%	37%

The survey results of question 10 also supported students responses regarding use of various teaching activities. Teachers responses suggest that they do not use a variety of teaching methods and activities and that non-communicative methods (88%) have been used

more frequently than the communicative ones (37%). The most commonly used activities rated by the teacher are items 17; teacher-dominated instruction (88%) and 2; explicit grammar instruction (87%). This is also similar to student responses as the majority of them (82%) rated these as the most commonly used activities. However, as the questionnaire included spaces for optional comments and suggestions regarding the activities used in the survey, several comments and suggestions came from the teacher subjects. Most of the respondents complained that the time frame of English class is as same as that of other subjects. But language class needs more time than others. One teacher commented, “ I would like to use a variety of activities to make my class interesting, enjoyable and fruitful. But 45 minutes is not enough for me.... the lack of time available leads me not to do anything exceptional but to follow the traditional activities.” Another teacher commented, “we were not actually trained how to teach a foreign language; I am not even familiar with some of the activities you have provided, so how could I use it?”

In response to the question 10 (B) in Section II, “which items do you believe to be important to facilitate students' language proficiency?”, teachers accepted both kinds of items as beneficial to learn English, though overall percentages show that teachers believed noncommunicative activities are more important than the communicative ones for teaching English language. 26% of the respondents believe that communicative activities are very important, while 37% of the respondents find non-communicative ones as very important.

One point was made clearly by almost all of the respondents: the importance of the instruction of grammar and grammatical rules. In the blank space provided with the questionnaire, a teacher commented, “Grammar is the root to any language learning; we should teach our students grammatical rules carefully and accurately. And the grammatical rules can be taught either explicitly or implicitly, but explicit grammar instruction is more accurate than the implicit instruction.” Another teacher said, “If students do not know the basic rules of grammar how they could speak or write.” These kinds of comments reflect the traditional structural approach to language teaching, rather than the communicative approach.

Workbook type drill and practices with formal correction (items 1, 17 and 20); explicit grammar instruction conducted either in English or students native language (items 2, 8 and 9); and teachers correction of errors in students journal (item 14) were believed to be beneficial and important for learning English. The majority of the teachers responses to these activities was between very important and somewhat important. These indicate that teachers believed form based instruction is more beneficial than real language practices (in contrast to the students responses). Items characterized by audiolingual style drills (items 16 and 18) were also noted as important or somewhat important by the teachers as they believed these help to learn grammar.

However, teachers also accepted communicative items as effective. For example,

they regarded reading work aloud (item 4) and use of songs in the classroom (item 3) as very important methods for enhancing listening skills. 49% and 33% of the respondents indicated reading work aloud as very important and somewhat important respectively, the remaining 18% believed it is not important. 51% of the teachers agreed that encouraging students to provide interesting experiences to talk about (item 11) and reporting interesting newspaper articles (item 10, 37%) in English are somewhat important instructional approaches.

Although teachers' responses to items 6, 7, 12 and 13 (which are characterized by students-students interaction with little or no monitoring of students output by the teacher) show that the teachers also believed these activities are somewhat important and beneficial for enhancing students communicative competence (see Table 6.A), the majority of the subjects (14 out of 19) believed that it would not be prudent to make the classroom free for discussion. Teacher should have control of everything. One teacher commented on group discussion: "I think that this helps students for developing oral skills, but due to lack of time available for English class, it would not be possible to use that method." Over half of the respondents (51%) rated ignoring errors specially grammatical errors during discussion (item 7) as not very important for language study. One teacher wrote, "I would try not to ignore any errors, specially spelling, pronunciation and grammatical errors, because to my opinion with grammatical errors no one can learn English correctly and accurately." Another teacher, however, suggested that "practicing conversation is crucial for developing oral skill and as

teacher I should not interrupt our students natural conversation, whether it is grammatically correct or not; we should not point out every detail because self confidence is more important at the beginning.”

Although students ignored the item journal writing (item 14), 54% of the respondents rated journal writing as very important or somewhat important as an instructional methods. Several comments were made on this item. One teacher wrote, “As this kind of activity is not familiar to our country, before introducing the journal writing we should first encourage our student free writing.” Another suggestion was “Before writing group discussion is important.” Another teacher suggested, “Keeping a daily notebook and entering new vocabulary along with natural events from their daily life and then reporting those in the classroom would be an important approach both for developing reading, listening and writing skills.” It must be mentioned that though many teachers (54%) believed journal writing to be an important instructional method, contradictory enough 51% of the subjects felt that paying attention to the ideas and feelings (item 15) is not important.

Responses to item 17 which is characterized as a teacher dominated approach show the striking inconsistency between what teachers believed and what they really used. The least important activity according to the majority of the respondents is item 17 (87%). Ironically enough, it is the activity which is used most frequently by the teachers. 88% of

the teacher subjects also rated that they frequently used the procedure. It must be noted that though they do not like the teacher dominated procedure, they believe teachers should have the full control in the classroom.

General discussion based on the findings of the study will be presented in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The study focused on the English language teaching methods and activities that are presently being used in Bangladesh. For generating a detailed picture of the current ELT methods and activities and also of the importance of using certain activities, the study was conducted from both teachers' and students' perspectives. The researcher believes that students' thoughts, plans, perceptions and intentions can make an important contribution to educational innovations. At the same time, a mismatch between students' needs and expectations and the style of teaching may cause serious harm for learning a language. Therefore, students were involved and documented in this study. The teachers were involved and documented in the study as well. Research suggests that language students have definite opinions and perceptions about language learning and that their ideas about effective learning and teaching activities are sometimes different from those of their teachers (Horwitz, 1988; Nunan, 1986; and Yorio, 1986). Therefore, the teachers' attitudes towards current ELT methods and their views on the importance of certain activities were investigated in the study for identifying a comparison between the perceptions of the students and those of teachers. In this chapter, discussion of the findings is presented.

The study begins with a survey of general information on students' dominant

1-7) suggest that for the most part students were very positive about learning and knowing the language. They mentioned that they did not study English only because it was a compulsory foreign language, but also because they want to know English, realizing the importance of the language for technological, educational, commercial and general communication. The data also show that although students were eager to know and learn English, the majority of the respondents (89%) were not confident enough to be able to use it in real-life situation. This indicates that English classes in Bangladesh are failing to satisfy students' needs--to make them confident and able to use the language. Further, in responding to questions 1-4 (Section II) concerning students' opinions towards the ELT techniques they had experienced -- its real life applicability, appropriateness and difficulty -- , students showed negative attitudes towards the present ELT methods. This again suggests that students are not satisfied enough what they had learnt and how they were taught.

The findings of the study also reveal that students were anxious about the method of language instruction and less concerned about the language per se. Their responses show a striking difference between what they had experienced in their English class and what were their actual needs. In response to question 5 (Section II), students commented about the difficulties they had in learning English. The vast majority of students said the most difficult aspects of learning English were form-based grammar study and memorization. These two were cited almost equally as often. For example, "I least like studying the grammatical



aspect, even though I know that it is essential. I would enjoy if my teacher used an alternative way to teach grammar." Another comment was, "It is really hard to learn a language by memorization." (For more comments on difficult aspects of language learning see chapter 6). However, ironically, vocabulary, which involves memorization, was the response given most often as the least difficult aspect of learning English. One student, however perceptively analyzed the phenomenon: "words are easy to remember in the short-term, but without regular practice, they can be lost in the long-term".

There was little variance in students' perceptions regarding the manner English was being taught to them. The complaint against the instruction of English was made with consistency. The teaching activities were described as dull, boring, repetitive and frustrating. Primarily, students reported that the study of English was so boring and so repetitious that they lost their concentration on what was taught. Simply, they criticized the teacher-dominated classroom and their passivity as students. Their responses show that the daily instruction is a monotonous routine of doing homework followed by repeating the same work in the class on the next day. A student commented: "All the repetitions in the classroom just to make me want not to listen anymore."

Besides, expressing repetitious lessons, students said about being confused and not understanding the meaning of what they were saying, reading, or hearing in English. With

frustration, they conveyed how difficult it was to understand; how tedious it was to learn English; and how disappointing it was to be able to be fluent (see chapter 6 for students' comments). Many of the respondents complained that the lessons were sometimes too difficult to understand and the worst thing was they had to memorize those lessons without understanding. The results were disastrous--their learning was lost in the long-term.

Another frustration for the students was their incompetence in spoken English. Their responses indicate that instead of giving emphasis on oral skill, the classroom procedure mainly focuses on translating sentences drilling irregular verbs, later memorizing repeating and applying grammatical rules. Though the participants acknowledged honestly the need to practice grammar elements, the way they were taught grammar made the learning boring. Many students wished for more emphasis on spoken English and believed that classroom assignments should emphasize students creativity. Students responses to the current ELT method suggest that it is mainly grammar -translation based and also that the method fails to enhance their communicative skills. This result is consistent with Bowen *et al*, (1985) who show that the grammar-translation method results in limited proficiency.

Again students find English learning difficult and uninteresting. This lack of interest may be, because their needs are not addressed by the curriculum and also because of the lack

of varied teaching techniques. This low level of interest and lack of motivation is one of the causes of students' failure in learning English. These results confirm Savignon's assertion (1983) that students needs and interests must be addressed if foreign language study is to be meaningful in today's education. He writes that the ultimate success in students' learning a second language relies on the students attitudes and interests (Savignon, 1983: 112).

The survey results suggest that the students in Bangladesh have been experiencing a little variety of teaching and learning activities. The responses to question 7 in which studnts were given 20 activities that may happpen in a second/foreign classroom reveal that students frequently experienced more noncommunicative activities (very often, 48%; sometimes, 39%) than communicative activities (very often, 10%; sometimes 29%; see Tables 3.A and 3.B). The students' responses are supported by the techers who also rated that they used a little variety of activities in the English class (see Tables 6.A and 6.B). The communicative activity the students reported having used most frequently is reading work aloud (item 4) and the noncommunicative activities are explicit grammar instructions (items 2, 8 and 9).

Table 3.A also indicates that the majority of the students never experienced the activities (items 6,89%; 7,89%; 10, 73%; 11. 59%; 12, 78%; 13, 65%, and 19.69%) which

involve students with other students or the teachers. This suggest that the current ELT methods deny one of the main components for learning a language, classroom interaction. Through classroom interaction with teachers and peers, students would get the opportunity to use the target language (Rivers, 1987), and be able to develop their communicative skills. Error corrections from teachers and peers during the classroom discussion can also help learners to discover what they need to do to be comprehended accurately (Swain, 1985).

Table 3.A again indicates that students in Bangladesh never experienced journal writing. This activity is so unpopular to the student subjects that only 9 out of the 28 respondents responded to this activity. Researchers found journal writing as the easiest way to help students to learn the target language (Flores, cf. Ross, 1990). Thonis (1990) states that journal writing can stimulate learners to become a better writer (p.14). According to Flores (cf. Ross, 1990), the most important aspect of journal writing is the relationship that develops between teachers and students. The teachers (54%) investigated in the survey also valued the importance of journal writing and the formal corrections of students' journal for developing reading, listening, and writing skills, though they (51%) did not feel paying attention to the ideas and feelings in students' journal is not important. However, in Bangladesh, if students are given the chance to write something, it is on a subject which the teacher chooses or a good deal of translation going on from the mother tongue to English (students reported these difficult activities they had experienced in response to question 10). So, there is no real point in these activities and absolutely no question of communicating

with anybody.

To the students it seems that the main purpose of every lesson during language class, is to get something correct. What a student says and what he/she writes may be dull and uninteresting to himself/herself and to anybody else, but if it seems correct, then teacher will approve it. Teachers participated in the study also strengthen this point when they comment that work book type drill and practices with formal correction are very important instructional method for developing students language competence. Generally speaking, the data reveals that teachers valued the formal error correction more highly than did the students.

Though students experienced a very little variety of activities, they prefer a great deal of activities which they believed make the language learning more enjoyable and interesting (see Tables 3.A and 3.B). A striking feature of the enjoyableness ratings is that the communicative and real-life practices were rated (somewhat, 47%; very much, 38%) as more enjoyable than the form based non-communicative ones (somewhat, 42%; very much, 8%). Same results have been found when they were asked which activities they believed to be important and beneficial for enhancing their language proficiency. 48% of the respondents voted in favour of communicative activities, while only 11% preferred the noncommunicative ones. However, 41% of the student subjects believed both kinds of activities as beneficial

for developing their language proficiency. They also placed some emphasis on form-based activities. For example, more than half of the respondents rated items 9 (64%), 16 (69%), 18 (59%), and 20 (63%) as somewhat enjoyable. This may be, because this kind of activities encourages students in active involvement in the classrooms (items 16, 18, and 20) and also makes the grammar study (item 9) comprehensible to the students instead of boring.

The result also suggests that there is a mismatch between students' ideas about effective learning and teaching activities and their teachers' preferred teaching style, although the teachers were also aware of the problems of English study and teaching. Whether students are not inclined to see activities emphasizing explicit grammar instruction and formal correctness as more beneficial than those emphasizing the real use of language, teachers believe explicit grammar instructions and formal corrections are important as well as essential for teaching a foreign language. Students' comments on the difficult aspects of language learning (see chapter 6) suggest that though they felt that grammar is important, the way they had been taught grammar made them feel bored. Majority of the students' comments (9 out of 11) on the grammar instructions reflect the same concern. This means that they are not satisfied enough with the explicit grammar instructions, except item 9 (64% rated this item as somewhat enjoyable), they experienced in their classrooms. On the other hand, the teachers are convinced that learning a foreign language cannot take place without explicitly focussing on grammar. They claimed that second/foreign acquisition in school

cannot be compared to the acquisition of a second language in natural contexts or the acquisition of one's mother tongue. One teacher commented: "Explicit grammar instruction is more accurate than the implicit grammar instruction." This again reflects the traditional structural approach to language teaching rather than the communicative approach.

The results show that the majority of the students indicated the items which are related to practical practices (items 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 19) as beneficial for developing their communicative skills. According to them as school is the only place for them where they can practice English, these activities are really helpful for them to develop their speaking skills. However, contradictory enough Table 6 indicates that teachers also believe items 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 19 as somewhat important and beneficial for enhancing students' communicative competence. Nevertheless, the majority of the subjects (11 out of 17) anticipated that these activities, especially group and pair discussion, are not likely to be used Bangladesh situations. One teacher said, "Due to lack of time available for English class, it would not be possible to use group discussion." But it also may be due to their lack of training in handling group works.

The students respondents believe that English class can be made more enjoyable and meaningful by increasing the use of variety of activities emphasizing on communicative skills. Every single student indicated an appreciation for oral activities or expressed value

in communicating orally. Students wanted more emphasis on oral activities and less on grammar study and workbook type drills. Students valued practice conversations between students and students or students and teachers. Teachers also valued practice conversation through which their students could develop oral skills, but they believed that first and foremost students should be taught the foundation of a language which according to them is grammar. Teachers in this study overlook an important aspect of language learning, “enjoyableness” by overemphasizing the importance of explicit grammar instruction which students find less attractive. However, language teaching, especially a foreign language teaching should provide the students with the knowledge of *linguistic structure* as well as how to use the language in real-life situations.

However, both students and teachers believed that either English or both English and the mother tongue should be used in English classrooms. The respondents who were in favour of using only English reasoned that since students have little opportunity to use English outside the classes, English classrooms should be used both as learning and practicing environment. Encouraging students only to use English in the classroom helps them to practice the language. This procedure increases their level of proficiency and removes their shyness while talking in English. On the other hand, respondents who voted in favour of both languages, reasoned that students sometimes may not understand difficult exercises if were taught totally in English. These respondents also argued that the use of



both languages is more essential in the primary level than in the advanced level.

A striking consistency, however, have been found between the preferred evaluation procedures of students and those of teachers. Both of the respondents least preferred method of evaluation, normed or standardized tests (students 6%; teachers 13%), is the most widely used evaluation procedure in Bangladesh (The British Council, 1986; Foster, 1994). This kind of test is highly competitive in Bangladesh and students have been competing against each other for promoting in the next stage of education. But helping students to improve their skills of understanding and speech, it is never necessary to compare one student's work with another. Students rather should be encouraged to work together, in pairs, in groups, commenting on each other's speech work, proof reading each-other's writing and sharing their language experience and trying to help each other to improve.

The responses to question 8 also indicate that teachers realized the conventional in-school paper test is inappropriate for assessing second language proficiency, especially the oral skills. Five of the respondents believed that conventional tests may assess students' linguistic skill areas, but not the communicative skill areas. This kind of test is heavily based towards theoretical, academic knowledge of education, rather than practical knowledge. Eight of the teacher subjects participated in the study recommended an assessment procedure which is to use for the step-by-step development of students all four language skills, reading,

listening, speaking and writing, crucial for learning a language.

The responses of both groups made it clear that language students have definite opinions and perceptions about language learning, and their ideas about effective learning and teaching activities are sometimes different from those of their teachers. This result is also similar to the research of; Nunan, 1986; Yorio, 1986; Horowitz, 1988. The result is also in accordance with the modern research of Oxford *et al.*, 1990; Koch and Terrell, 1991 which indicates that the mismatch between students needs and expectations and style of the teacher may result in learning problems for students.

A point needs to be clear is the connection between enjoyableness and effectiveness of the activities. Though students indicated communicative activities are somewhat more enjoyable and effective than non-communicative activities, they did not indicate whether or to what extent they believed that enjoyableness contributes to effectiveness or to what extent students believed effectiveness helped make activities enjoyable. The researcher believes that both are probably true, that enjoyableness enhances effectiveness, and that if something is important and beneficial tends to make it enjoyable. Again enjoyableness is related to interest and motivation; if students find something enjoyable, their interest and motivation will be increased. Motivation is extremely important for a second language learning (Oxford and Shearin, 1994). More motivated students are expected to learn more than those who do

not have high levels of motivation. Krashen (1991) found that students attitudes and motivation were more important in their learning of a second language than "considerations of intelligence, aptitude, and time spent on learning" (p.110). Therefore, teachers should keep in mind that it is their responsibility to make an enjoyable classroom environment to keep their students motivated and to make their learning fruitful.

The results of the survey also show some other problems in learning and teaching English in Bangladesh. The general information on professional background of the teachers suggests that the majority of the teachers are inadequately trained as a second foreign language teachers. They may have knowledge of English, but they were not trained how to teach a second language. Their negative feelings to some of the activities may be due to their lack of training. They are reluctant about using group work in the classroom may because that most teachers have not been prepared, during their own training to handle group work. One teacher even directly commented: "I am not even familiar with some of the activities you have provided, how could I use it?"

The teachers, of course , blamed inappropriate curriculum and lack of materials as one of the major causes of students' failure in learning the language. In response to questions 2 and 3 (Section II), the teachers commented that the curriculum lacks continuity and do not have much real-life relevance. The materials are too difficult to understand for

the students. They anticipated that lack of real-life relevance of the curriculum and difficulties of the materials might have negative effects on students interest level and motivation. The teacher participants offered some suggestions for the modification of the curriculum and teaching materials (see chapter 6 for teachers' comments on the modification of curriculum). For example, to give more emphasis on language component rather than on literature; to develop a need-based language curriculum, to modify the materials, and besides textbooks, authentic materials should be introduced as study materials. The use of authentic study materials is an important instructional methods. According to Lasen-Freeman (1986), authentic materials, perhaps a newspaper, a tape of an actual radio broadcast or even just a menu from a restaurant may be used in ways which encourage students to communicate with each other.

The basic concern underlying the present study is to find out some of the problems in English language study and teaching in Bangladesh. The study suggests that the English course as a whole is of doubtful value as a practical language development programme, since it concentrates on theoretical knowledge of language rather than on practical knowledge, while neglecting learners' practical needs. The study suggests that English language teaching in Bangladesh fails to satisfy students needs and interest. Consequently, one is left with the impression that practical knowledge is unacceptable for learning a foreign/second language. It proves that ELT in Bangladesh is imperfect. Rapid and wide-ranging changes

language. It proves that ELT in Bangladesh is imperfect. Rapid and wide-ranging changes are urgently needed throughout the entire field of ELT development if the ever-increasing rate of decline in standards is to be reversed.

Chapter 8 is a summary of the study, the conclusion based on survey results, recommendations for changing ELT situation based on the survey and required further study.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **8.1 SUMMARY**

The purpose of the study was to document some of the problems that have been experienced in English learning and teaching at the various levels of the education system in Bangladesh. To document the nature of the problems the main focus was on current English language teaching methods. Two types of survey were developed by the researcher to investigate both teachers and students attitudes towards current ELT methods and also their views on the importance of using particular methods and approaches to teach English. Both surveys consisted of two sections: general information and ELT related information. Questionnaire items for ELT related information were designed on the basis of related literature review. In the student survey, 35 students from the different Faculties of Dhaka University participated and in the teachers survey 20 teachers from 15 different schools participated.

However, within the limitations of the sample population the following important findings were found:

it in the real life situations, they are not confident enough to be able to use it.

2. Students are anxious about the method of language instructions. They, in responding question 5, complained that language instruction was dull, boring repetitive and frustrating. To them the instruction is mostly grammar oriented and fact-memorization which makes the study uninteresting and less motivative.

3. The most important finding of the study is the dichotomy between what students want to learn and experience in English classes, and what they are actually taught there. They do not like classes in which they sit passively, reading or translating. They do not like the environment where the teacher controls everything and want to be involved actively in the classroom activities. In fact, the students studied in the survey simply do not like to act as a passive receiver of information or knowledge.

4. There is also a mismatch between students needs and expectations and the pedagogical philosophy or the teachers views on the importance of some activities. Though students acknowledge the need for grammar, they want more oral practice and application of the spoken language. They valued the activities (items 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 19) which involve students with other students or the teachers more highly than the explicit grammar instructions for enhancing their language competence. Furthermore, they criticized the

grammar instruction they experienced previously, describing it as boring and unenjoyable. Comments like, "I would enjoy if my teacher used an alternative way to teach grammar", were cited by the most of the students. They criticized the explicit grammar instructions with one exception (item 9). This item was rated as somewhat enjoyable by the 64% of the respondents. It is may be, because they anticipate this activity can make the grammar instruction somewhat comprehensible to them. However, though teachers valued the importance of oral skill, they give priority to the grammar study. Table 6.B suggests 66% of the teacher subjects believe that explicit grammar instructions are very important activities for developing their students' English language proficiency. Both student and teacher respondents acknowledge the important of the knowledge of linguistic structure, though students are not satisfied enough with the method how the linguistic forms are taught.

5. 52% of the student respondents believe that active involvement in the group discussion increases their communicative skills. Whereas though 19% of the teacher subjects believe classroom should be used for practicing English, they are not optimistic enough to be able to be able to use this activity. They blamed short time frame available for the English class for this inability. They claimed that the time frame of English language class should be increased. Two of them commented that if the language class would be doubled, they could be able to use more activities, emphasizing oral skills.



6. 93% of the students do not like very much teacher dominated environment (item 17), but many teachers believe that they should always have full control of what happens in the classrooms, though contradictory enough they also rated the teacher-dominated activity as not important

7. Though students believe formal correction in conversation is not as important, teachers are against this belief. They believed without formal corrections language learning cannot be accurate.

8. Teachers do agree ELT in Bangladesh lacks in using variety of teaching activities. They also blamed the English curriculum lacking in real life relevance and continuation, lack of teaching materials and short time frame for English language course.

## **8.2 CONCLUSION**

From the study, it is clear that ELT in Bangladesh are failing to satisfy the learners needs and interests in any way. The emphasis given to communicative skills and to student-centered interactive learning means that some fundamental rethinking of English language curriculum is required. As teachers are not well-trained for teaching ESL, the systematic retraining of English teachers in learner-centered classroom procedures are steps that must be taken, if teachers and administrators are seriously interested in addressing their students

needs. They should keep in mind what Fullan (1991) says: “If we do not seek students needs then we are not treating them like human beings, and this will contribute to most educational innovations being doomed to failure” (p. 170).

Teachers, curriculum planners, and others who want to be sensitive to the needs of the students they serve should not always rely on their own intuitions. This study can be a helpful tool for the educators who want to know whether their students may see certain kinds of activities as more enjoyable and effective than others; whether their students are likely to like the techniques they have previously experienced; or whether they might like new techniques not previously experienced. Giving this type of survey to both students and teachers, and comparing the results, the researcher desired to identify potential troublesome differences between teachers expected beneficial methods and students expectations and needs. Information from this kind of survey may also be useful to teachers trainers whose trainees are curious about whether their future students will accept any new methods and activities with enthusiasm.

### **8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations appear to be justified:

1. It is important to develop a need based language curriculum. In a second language teaching situation, it is regarded necessary to impart instructions in the four basic four language skills. The language curriculum must specify the aims and objective of different skills at different levels, provide guidelines for the preparation of instructional materials, and specify the language teaching methods in different situation.

2. We learn a foreign language both by using it and learning about it. As Bangladesh has only one common language for all, students have little opportunity to use English in the community. Teachers, therefore, must create learning situations in which their students use English. They should develop a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere in which students can develop attitudes of enjoyment and enthusiasm towards their study and use of English.

3. Both teachers and students found grammar study is beneficial for learning a foreign language. As students claimed that explicit grammar instructions are boring and frustrating, grammar should not be taught explicitly. The teachers should teach grammar in a way which can make the grammar study enjoyable and also effective. Teacher should remember that explicit grammar instructions may increase students' linguistic skills, not communicative skills (Foster, 1994) which students in general wish to improve. The development of aural-oral skill should form an integral part of the language course. Students should be provided with adequate opportunity to function in natural situation.

4. Interaction between students and teachers, and students and students is a very important aspect of a language study. The methods are currently being used in Bangladesh deny one of the main components for learning a language, i. e., classroom interaction. Teachers should keep in mind that through interaction with the teacher and peers within the classroom, students can get opportunity to use the target language. It is, therefore, instead of a passive teacher dominated environment, teachers should create an active learner-centered classroom environment. They should not regard the learners as passive receivers of knowledge, rather they should encourage them to be involved actively in the learning process.

5. In responding to question 2(b) the teacher subjects recommended for the modification of the textbooks which they believed to be difficult for students. The text books should be modified and selected carefully which are not too difficult for the students. Besides textbooks, audio-visual aids including recorded materials, radio broadcasts, video tapes and films on different subjects and situations of actual language should be included in the curriculum.

6. Both teachers and students do agree that language classrooms should be used learning as well as practicing environment. Since in Bangladesh students do not have the opportunity to use the language outside the schools, English classrooms should be fully

**missing from the  
original book**

## 8.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. The study dealt with subjects selected from only one part of the country. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which the attitudes of students and teachers of other parts would be similar or different. Students' attitudes towards ELT methods may be varied in terms of age, gender, educational level or English proficiency level. A supplementary study is, therefore, needed to compare the attitudes of different types of students.

2. To find out whether and how communicative activities help more than noncommunicative activities to improve language proficiency, an empirical longitudinal classroom based study would be preferred for future research.

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## **APPENDIX-A**

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

**Name:**.....

**Sex:**.....

**Type of School Attended:**.....

#### **SECTION I: GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**1. What language do you use?**

- A. At home -----
- B. With friends -----
- C. In the community -----
- D. In the school -----

**2. Have you ever lived in an English-speaking environment for more than two months?**

- A. Yes
- B. No.

**3. Do either of your parents speak in English at home?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

**4. How long was your English class?**

- A. Less than 20 mins.
- B. 20-30 mins.
- C. 30-45 mins.
- D. More than above.

**5. If English were not a compulsory subject, would you still study it?**

A. Yes.            B. No.

**6. Why do you want to study English?**

.....

.....

.....

**7. Are you confident to be able to use English?**

A. Yes            B. No

## **SECTION II: ELT RELATED INFORMATION**

**1. Think about what you learned in the past in your language class. How useful it for real-life situations?**

A. Not very            B. Somewhat            C. Very

**2. Are the current ELT methods appropriate for enhancing your English language proficiency?**

A. Not very            B. Somewhat            C. Very

**3. Do you find English study interesting?**

A. Not very            B. Somewhat            C. Very

**4. How difficult was your English class?**

A. Not very            B. Somewhat            C. Very

**5. What was the most difficult aspect of learning English?**

.....

.....

.....

**6. What was the least difficult aspect of learning English?**

.....

.....

.....

**7. Following are some classroom activities for language teaching. Using the scale below, please indicate which items A) you have experienced in your language classes and B) you think to be helpful for making the class enjoyable.**

- |                 |             |              |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| A. 1=Never      | 2=Sometimes | 3=Very often |
| B. 1=Not at all | 2=Somewhat  | 3=Very much  |

- i. The teacher assigns a written exercise in which students fill in the correct forms of verbs in sentences.
- ii. The teacher uses explicit grammar instruction, i.e., teaching grammar through formal instruction.
- iii. In class, students are given the words to a song in English. They then listen to the recording.
- iv. The teacher encourages reading work aloud from the text books.



- v. Students are given a list of words that occur in a story or article that they will read later. They look up the words in an English-English dictionary, and copy the definition.
- vi. The class is divided into small groups, students talk about things they like and things they dislike.
- vii. During discussion, teachers ignore errors in pronunciation and grammar.
- viii. The teacher explains a grammatical rule that is printed in the textbook, and gives examples. The entire lesson is taught in English.
- ix. The teacher speaks in Bengali when explaining a grammatical rule that is printed in the textbook, and then gives example in English.
- x. Each students finds and reports an interesting newspaper article in English.
- xi. Each student is encouraged to provide interesting experience from everyday life.
- xii. Students in the class are divided into pairs. They play a game in English, in which they have to ask their partners questions, and answer the questions their partners ask them.
- xiii. Students receive a sheet of paper with a number of sentences which are not complete. Then they move around the classroom, ask each other questions in English and try to fill the blanks with as many different types as possible.
- xiv. The teacher encourage the students to write a journal and corrects all mistakes in students journals.
- xv. The teacher pays attention to the ideas and feelings in students journals, and writes short notes in response to what the students say.

xvi. The teachers speaks a series of sentences. The entire class responds orally to each sentence by changing it in some way, for example making it negative.

xvii. The teacher lectures and students take notes. They do not participate in any discussion.

xviii. The teacher says a series of sentences. Each student in turn is asked to change the form of sentence without changing the meaning.

xix. The teacher leads a class discussion of a topic. The emphasis is on expressing and sharing ideas.

xx. The teacher assigns an exercise from the textbook or handout. In this exercise, students read a number of sentences, find mistakes in grammar, and correct the mistakes.

**Other comments and suggestions:**

.....

.....

.....

\* Please add any comments you wish to make. If place is insufficient use additional paper.

**8. What activities within your language class did you enjoy most?**

.....

.....

.....

**9. What activities within your language class did you enjoy least?**

.....

.....

.....

**10. Do you remember other typical activities. Please specify.**

.....

.....

.....

**11. Which items or activities you believe to be beneficial and which are not? Give reason.**

.....

.....

.....

**12. In what language skills do you want to master?**

- A. Oral skill
- B. Understanding skill
- C. Writing skill
- D. Reading skill
- E. All of them

**13. What level of competence would you like to have eventually?**

- A. Excellent, almost as good as a native speaker.
- B. Enough to communicate in English.
- C. Enough to continue my study
- D. Enough to work in English.

**14. In your class you like learning**

- A. Individually
- B. In pairs
- C. In small group
- D. In one large group
- E. In all of them, appropriate to the content of the topic.

**15. Do you like learning by**

- A. Memory
- B. Problem solving
- C. Listening and taking notes
- D. Involving actively in the classroom
- E. All of them

**16. Do you want to participate actively in classroom discussion?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

**17. In English class what language do you prefer ?**

- A. English
- B. Bengali
- C. Both English and Bengali

**18. Why do you prefer English/ Bengali/ Both in your English class?**

.....

.....

.....

**19. What methods of evaluating do you prefer?**

- A. Normal or standardized test emphasizing on grammar/ translation.
- B. Formal/ Informal Interviews emphasizing on communicative competence.
- C. Informal instruments, such as checklists, rating scales, language samples, curriculum-based assessment exercises, classroom observation etc.
- D. Any methods for assessing the continuous development in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Thank you for your participation.

## **APPENDIX-B**

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

**Name:-----**

**Sex:-----**

**Type of School:-----**

#### **Section I: General Information**

**1. Please write the name and level of your Primary teaching field.**

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**2. How many years have you been teaching?**

---

**3. Please circle the highest degree that you hold.**

a) B.A./B.S. b) Masters c) B.A. with B.Ed. d) B.A. with B.Ed. and M.Ed.

**4. Are you a certified English teachers?**

A. Yes      B. No

**5. Did you take any English course during B.A./M.A./B.Ed./M.Ed. Program?**

A. Yes      B. No

**6. Have you ever been in an English speaking Country?**

A. Yes      B. No

**7. Have you participated any conference/meeting regarding ELT development?**

A. Yes            B. No

## **Section II: ELT Related Information**

**1. How do you feel about the English Curriculum as presently used, specially address the appropriateness in real life situation?**

A. Not Appropriate    B. Moderately Appropriate    C. Very Appropriate

**2.(a) Should present curriculum be modified?**

A. Yes            B. No            C. Do not know

**2.(b) If yes what change you recommend?**

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**3. (a) Should language teaching methods be changed?**

A. Yes            B. No            C. Do not know

**3.(b) If yes what change you recommend?**

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**4. Do you think English syllabus presently being used is appropriate for enhancing students communicative competence?**

A. Not appropriate      B. Moderately appropriate      C. Appropriate

**5. (a) What language do you prefer to use in English Language class?**

A. English      B. Native      C. Both

**5. (b) Why do you prefer English / Native / Both in English Language class?**

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**6. Do you encourage students to actively involve in classroom discussion?**

A. Not at all      B. Sometimes      C. Always

**7. What classroom procedures do you prefer to use in your class?**

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**8. What methods of evaluation do you prefer to use?**

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**9. Circle the following characteristics of your students that fit to them:**

- a. always prepare for class
- b. homework have been done regularly
- c. classroom participation is spontaneous
- d. motivated to learning English
- e. interested in studying English
- f. frustrated with studying English
- g. find English difficult comparing to other subjects.
- h. shy in participating in classroom discussion
- I. feel boring in the classroom
- j. other comments

**10. Following are some classroom activities for language teaching. Using the scale**

**below, please indicate which items A) you have used in your language classes and B) do you believe to be beneficial to facilitate your students' English language proficiency.**

A. 1=Never                      2=Sometimes                      3=Very often

B. 1=Not at all                      2=Somewhat                      3=Very important

- i. The teacher assigns a written exercise in which students fill in the correct forms of verbs in sentences.
- ii. The teacher uses explicit grammar instruction, i.e., teaching grammar through formal instruction.
- iii. In class, students are given the words to a song in English. They then listen to the recording.
- iv. The teacher encourages reading work aloud from the text books.
- v. Students are given a list of words that occur in a story or article that they will read later. They look up the words in an English-English dictionary, and copy the definition.
- vi. The class is divided into small groups, students talk about things they like and things they dislike.
- vii. During discussion, teachers ignore errors in pronunciation and grammar.
- viii. The teacher explains a grammatical rule that is printed in the textbook, and gives examples. The entire lesson is taught in English.

**below, please indicate which items A) you have used in your language classes and B) do you believe to be beneficial to facilitate your students' English language proficiency.**

A. 1=Never                      2=Sometimes                      3=Very often

B. 1=Not at all                      2=Somewhat                      3=Very important

- i. The teacher assigns a written exercise in which students fill in the correct forms of verbs in sentences.
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- iv. The teacher encourages reading work aloud from the text books.
- v. Students are given a list of words that occur in a story or article that they will read later. They look up the words in an English-English dictionary, and copy the definition.
- vi. The class is divided into small groups, students talk about things they like and things they dislike.
- vii. During discussion, teachers ignore errors in pronunciation and grammar.
- viii. The teacher explains a grammatical rule that is printed in the textbook, and gives examples. The entire lesson is taught in English.

- ix. The teacher speaks in Bengali when explaining a grammatical rule that is printed in the textbook, and then gives example in English.
- x. Each students finds and reports an interesting newspaper article in English.
- xi. Each student is encouraged to provide interesting experience from everyday life.
- xii. Students in the class are divided into pairs. They play a game in English, in which they have to ask their partners questions, and answer the questions their partners ask them.
- xiii. Students receive a sheet of paper with a number of sentences which are not complete. Then they move around the classroom, ask each other questions in English and try to fill the blanks with as many different types as possible.
- xiv. The teacher encourage the students to write a journal and corrects all mistakes in students journals.
- xv. The teacher pays attention to the ideas and feelings in students journals, and writes short notes in response to what the students say.
- xvi. The teachers speaks a series of sentences. The entire class responds orally to each sentence by changing it in some way, for example, making it negative.
- xvii. The teacher lectures and students take notes. They do not participate in any discussion.
- xviii. The teacher says a series of sentences. Each student in turn is asked to change the form of sentence without changing the meaning.
- xix. The teacher leads a class discussion of a topic. The emphasis is on expressing and

sharing ideas.

xx. The teacher assigns an exercise from the textbook or handout. In this exercise, students read a number of sentences, find mistakes in grammar, and correct the mistakes.

**Other comments and suggestions:**

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\* Please add any comments you wish to make. If place is insufficient use additional paper.

Thank you for your participation.





