

Teaching English in Rural schools: A Case Study of Three Primary Schools in Bangladesh

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Declaration

I declare that the Dissertation titled “Teaching English in Rural schools: A Case Study of Three Primary Schools in Bangladesh” is submitted while completing Master of Arts in ELT and Applied Linguistics under the Department of English and Humanities at BRAC UNIVERSITY. This paper does not contain any material previously published without citation of accurate references. This paper presents the results of my original investigation and is not submitted for any other degree at any institution.

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

My study titled “Teaching English in Rural Schools: A Case Study of Three Primary Schools in Bangladesh” is my original work and all the data used in this research are collected by myself. Maximum caution was taken to ensure the authenticity of this research and participants’ statements were checked several times before using them in this thesis. Published materials are used with proper citation. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants and once they gave their consent to participate voluntarily, only then their interviews were recorded.

Abstract

This study explored opportunities and difficulties of teaching English in rural primary schools in Bangladesh. Rural schools are lagged behind in many ways than the city schools. Most of the cases there is hardly any modern facilities available in those schools. Moreover, these schools have hardly any trained and qualified English teachers. As a result the condition of English teaching in those schools are very poor. Qualitative research design is used for this study as I wanted to understand the phenomena in depth and it allows me to present a rich picture of English teaching in rural schools. Interviews, classroom observation and focus group discussion are the three instruments of data collection. The significance of this study lies in presenting a rich and detail description of the teaching English in rural schools. Although it may not be appropriate to generalize English teaching in rural areas based on data from three schools, this study provides valuable data of teaching English in rural areas. It also suggested some ways to overcome these barriers. Finally some recommendations were made for different stakeholders so that it helps to improve the teaching and learning situations in the rural primary schools.

Keywords: Difficulties, rural areas of Bangladesh, qualitative approach, primary level, classroom, teaching strategies, naturalistic inquiry, language competency level

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List of Acronyms:

| | |
|---------|---|
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| ELTIP | English Language Teaching Improvement project |
| DEID | Department of International Development |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| EFL | English as Foreign Language |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| BANBEIS | Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics |
| PTI | Primary Teacher Training Institute |
| GPS | Government Primary School |
| RNGPS | Registered Non-Government Primary School |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| GTM | Grammar Translation Method |
| NCTB | National Curriculum and Textbook Board |
| HSC | Higher Secondary Certificate |
| SSC | Secondary School Certificate |
| BA | Bachelor of Arts |
| MA | Master of Arts |
| EFT | ENGLISH FOR TODAY |

Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's modern world has transported English language to different parts of the world. Instead of being owned, understood and used by only the speech communities who claim English language as their mother tongue, it is used throughout all over the globe. Considering this increasing usage and importance of English in international modernization, the makers of Bangladesh Education Policy mandated teaching English in classroom from primary level of education system. The government along with the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and other educational organizations in Bangladesh have been putting efforts to cope up with the global modernization by ensuring the better quality of English teaching in the country since 1990s (Farooqui, 2012; 2008). But the learners' competency level is not up to mark due to different teaching issues especially in rural parts. English language learners of Bangladesh need to be taught, cared and motivated in a proper manner from very beginning of their education life. That is why issues of teaching English at primary level should be sorted out at first.

Considering the importance of learning English properly at primary level, I attempted to find out some major barriers which are responsible for creating difficulties in the language teaching process. At first I have discussed the context of English language teaching at primary schools of Bangladesh in this introductory chapter. Then I have explained the reason of choosing to work on primary level. After that, the reason of choosing the rural areas is discussed. Finally I have presented the organization of the whole dissertation paper at the last portion of this chapter.

1.1 Context

Bangladesh is a mono lingual country. People of this country use Bangla for almost every purposes here. People living in urban areas use English for official or administrative purpose. But people who live in rural areas mostly are engaged in agricultural works. They need not to use English for any purpose. At home or work they use only Bangla. As a result, students of primary schools are always surrounded by Bangla language. Though the students encounter some words and sentences in English at their classroom that does not have any impact on their practical life. Students do not get any environment to practice English outside the class. According to National Curriculum and Textbooks Board (2012), the foremost objectives of teaching English language at primary classrooms in Bangladesh are to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions and requests in English and also carry them out. But the actual scenario of rural primary level classrooms does not match with these teaching objectives. Lack of practice make the learners incompetent in language performance.

In Bangladesh the requirement for primary teachers is only SSC qualification. Teachers also lack proper training on specific subject. These two reasons cause to teach English through Grammar Translation Method in rural classrooms. Here, teachers read a topic in English and translate that to Bangla. Students are ask to memorize the grammatical structures to pass the exam. Thus, English language learning appears before the young learners as a tougher subject. Learners feel pressurized to learn it as they have a stress to get passed. This pressure often lead the learners to unlike the language and its learning processes.

In Bangladeshi context, it is a well-known and appreciated practice to make listen what teachers speak in the classroom. Both teachers and learners find it comfort to practice this type of teaching-

learning process. When this process is applied, an English language classroom becomes teacher centric. In that way, learners feel uneasy to communicate with teacher as everyone in the class remain silent. They only listen to what teachers say. This causes a gap between learners and teachers which has a big impact on language learning act. Teachers find it difficult to understand whether the students have understood a topic or not. Learners' understanding level, liking or disliking, any query about a topic remain unknown to teachers. This lack of enough knowledge about each student in a classroom cause to make a language class ineffective one.

Although government of Bangladesh has progressed in primary education in terms of enrollment of students but still there is a large amount of learners failing to be primary graduate. One of the major reasons behind that is a feeling of unease and discomfort about English learning. Children of rural areas of Bangladesh, like to study Bangla, Social Science, Religion or even Mathematics but they avoid to study English. Vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling pattern seem strange and difficult and new to them. Even they feel shy to discuss their lacking areas with teachers because of this uneasiness. This is a common scenario in Bangladeshi rural primary school classrooms.

However, considering the present status of language teaching strategies mentioned above and the global usage of English, NCTB has taken some steps to level up learners' language competency. The steps are basically based on the organization of new textbooks for developing the Communicative approach in language classrooms.

- Some basic expressions needed for social interaction have been included in ENGLISH FOR TODAY (EFT) book.
- Emphasis has been put on speaking and listening skills by adding some communication based lessons.
- Filling up forms of different practical purpose has been included from grade-V.

- Themes of lessons related to practical life have been introduced. For example, making a dish with the use of recipe, meeting with a doctor for prescription etc.
- With a view to developing the pronunciation, listening and speaking skills suggestions have been given for including video/audio materials.
- Different types of communicative activities have been selected for textbook topics such as, teacher-learner interaction.

For teachers there are also some suggestion by NCTB,

- Training for primary teachers should work for improving teachers' own language skills.
- Training should train teachers how to involve learners in classroom activities.
- Special training should be introduced for the improvement of teachers' pronunciation.
- A suggestion have given for including a sample English language class in Teachers' Guide.

In this present context, my study will look for the limitations of English language teaching in primary schools of rural areas in Bangladesh.

1.2 Why Rural Areas?

Most of the inhabitants of Bangladesh (about 68%) live in rural parts of the country. Rural people are not privileged as the way people of urban areas are. In village areas a wide range of people are struggling to survive in their day-to-day life because they are deprived of most of the modern associates of this modern era. But urban people continue a more facilitated to some extent luxurious life with the use of those modern things. That is why, they are getting comparatively more advantages as well as opportunities to get educated themselves while rural people are lacking

those. However, with a view to reaching the expected level of literacy rate in a country it is essential to ensure education for every strata of people. In case of educating English language in a monolingual country like Bangladesh, more efforts need to put as number of population is more. In Bangladesh most of the people dwell in rural areas and learners from these arena encounter English learning only inside classroom but outside they deal and are dealt with Bangla only. This situation is more applicable for the rural areas as urban students are surrounded with the gifts of science and technology. For example, satellite channels, English newspapers, advertisements or posters presented in English language, more access on internet and so on. Thus urban learners get closer to English language frequently. Moreover, parents of urban learners are educated enough to help their children in any language learning issues. In that way the process of language teaching takes place faster and easily in city areas. But, learners living in rural parts are not surrounded with these types of language learning supports. Besides, primary teachers of English language of remote areas of Bangladesh are facing difficulties to provide learners with better quality of teaching because they deal with a lot of limitations in language teaching activity. The intention of my paper is to focus on those limitations and find some prospects as well.

1.3 Why Primary School?

I selected primary school to conduct my work because it is primary level which builds the foundation of future workforce of a nation. Primary school forms the base of a learner' education life. It is most important to ensure the quality of primary school teaching. Primary teaching helps to shape up learners' social behavior and it works for their intellectual development. It is the stage where only teachers are responsible for both teaching and learning process. That is why teachers

of primary schools must be selected in a more sensible way. There are many students who nip in the bud before finishing primary level of education in Bangladesh. Mostly students from rural background are failing to perform in learning according to their age and level. But it is not only the teachers for whom students' competency is hampered. There lie a variety of issues behind learners' low acquisition of English language in primary level also. These issues are responsible for creating limitations in the act of language teaching in primary schools. Teachers are failing to provide the learners with a quality language teaching because of those limitations. Finding out the limitations is the foremost priority of my present study.

1.4 Organization of Dissertation

The study is consisted of five chapters in total. First chapter starts with an introductory paragraph. That paragraph introduces readers with the focus of my paper. It includes present context of English language teaching in rural primary schools of Bangladesh. After explaining the context I preferred to make readers clear why I chose rural areas for my study. Then I explained the reason of choosing primary schools of Bangladesh for my work. The second chapter is the review of literature which I started with an overview of the experimental studies. Those studies reflect many ideas intensely related to my dissertation topic. After that I mentioned historical background of English language and this chapter turns into an end by discussing the present status of English language teaching in Bangladesh. Third chapter is the methodology chapter which describes when, how and from where I collected data for my study. This chapter also discusses how I analyzed the collected data. Fourth chapter reflects the theme based findings from collected data with a critical analysis of the themes. At the last part of that chapter, the ideas shared from participants to

overcome the limitations of teaching English in village schools are mentioned. Finally the last chapter concluded the proposed study with some recommendations from my side.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The elevated status of English in the whole world has urged to teach English as a subject from the very beginning of the Bangladeshi education system. According to the revised declaration of Bangladesh education policy-2010, more emphasis has been put on learning English as an international language. This international language is helpful to communicate locally as well as globally (Milon, 2016). Lockheed & Verspoor (1991), emphasized over language teaching by saying that, virtually in almost all primary education systems, language teaching seeks for a significant space, and more than 50 percent of the schedule and exertion are spent to teach basic literacy and numeracy as well. Teaching a language requires a proficient teacher at first. Orafi & Borg (2009) preferred for the high qualification of primary teachers because it significantly impacts teaching process. Nunan (2003) explains that the current trend of teaching English which is the communicative approach cannot be applied properly due to a lack of educators with higher proficiency level in English. Nunan precisely expressed that this situation is prominent in village areas particularly. He thinks, it is only because of unavailability of proficient teachers in village areas. Korean investigator, Kang (2008) shows that primary teachers use both English and the native language for many pedagogical reasons in classroom because they lack proficiency. This indicates that the use of English language in a language classroom is basically determined by teachers' level of mastery over English. If a teacher is enough proficient in English language skills he or she will prefer to speak in English in classroom. In the field of teaching a language, teachers are called upon to perform a variety of roles. According to Harmer (2007),

In the language learning classroom, a teacher needs to replicate the situation as closely as possible and then provide sufficient support to learners, to be a controller, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, feedback provider so as to identify the students' problems and should be able to switch between these roles.

It is the decision of a teacher that determines when and why it is appropriate to play those roles mentioned by Harmer. But rural primary teachers are unable to take the right decision at right time as they lack of enough qualification and proper training over language teaching.

In the words of Joyce and Weil (2004), teachers are the professionals who are directly engaged in facilitating learners' learning process. They are the helping hands who support students to construct ideas, solve issues using their metaphorical thoughts and encourage them to be positive and make them skillful in all branches of knowledge. But in order to support the learners, teachers need to be well trained at first. In accordance with an investigation of BANBEIS (2007), Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs) are the only agencies that offer in-service teacher development program or training for the teachers of primary schools in Bangladesh. These sole agencies have the capacity of enrolling only 13,025 trainees every year which is much less than the actual demand. This training is confined within the in-service teacher community but there is not any arrangement for pre-service teachers training in Bangladesh. Pre-service teachers training is helpful for a better outcome from a language teacher at early stage of teaching life. In the study of Mullick & Sheesh (2008), it is mentioned that the qualification or requirement of Bangladeshi government for primary school teachers (Government Primary School, GPS and Registered Non-Government Primary School, RNGPS) is Bachelor degree for male and SSC for female (recently it is revised, both require Bachelor degree). No professional training is mandatory for them. Once the teachers get the appointment they start teaching and then are sent to PTI to receive professional

training. However, there are two different studies by Ahmed, et al (2005) & Haq (2006), which investigated that a mentionable percentage of teachers of primary level (26-27%) are not trained at all. The study of BANBEIS, (2007), refers that primary teachers are used to teach multiple subjects in classes. But only a few teachers, approximately 27-30% of GPS and 30-33% of RNGPS receive training on specific subject. Moreover, teachers have a wide range of shortcomings in their knowledge of teaching content and basic grammatical techniques. That means the content pedagogy of teachers is insufficient. This is more applicable for the primary teachers of rural areas. Their lack of enough training on teaching keeps them unaware of the processes through which teaching becomes smooth and turns out with a fruitful outcome. Sultana (2018), reveals that GPS teachers of rural areas of Bangladesh are observed in classroom giving mere feedback underlining the mistakes and errors with red mark in the exam copies of learners. But teachers rarely provide any constructive or inspirational comments for correct writing. Village GPS teachers are preoccupied mostly with a prevailing sense of grammatical accuracy rather than the development of innovative ideas. Learners feel hesitate to share their opinions, view or any idea about related lesson lest they make any grammatical error. Teachers' this type of attitude to young learners hinders the spontaneous process of language learning. Thus lack of proficiency and proper training on English create barrier to support learners with necessary inputs and efforts.

In nineteenth century, when language specialists and linguists thought about the improved or better quality of teaching a language, they used to refer to general principles and theories concerning the nature of language learning. The early theorists and specialists such as, Otto Jespersen (1860-1943), Harold Palmer (1877-1949) developed principles and theoretically accountable approaches to the design of language teaching programs, courses and materials although many of the particular practical details were left for others to work on. These early linguists were in search of easy ways

to learn new vocabulary and simple grammar of English language, but none of them witnessed the ideal embodiment of their ideas in any existing method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Banu (2009) states in her article that language learning cannot be successful if it is considered as a subject to read or memorize to write. It is not possible to know all the grammar of a language by following only rules or methods rather she tells that language can be acquired by using it in real life. Learning a language becomes successful when it is used for practical purpose because it is the medium of making communication. She thinks that the main purpose of teaching a language should be enabling students to communicate with the target language. Students must be able to express their needs, necessities, feelings, thoughts and ideas to others using that. However, it has long been a challenge for researchers to develop an effective method or guideline to acquire adequate literacy skills in target language (Torgesen et al., 2001). In case of Bangladesh where colonial legacy has been maintained since decade, inhabitants of Bangladesh are encouraged to use English for practical purpose. For example, administrative, professional or educational purposes (Rahman, & Karim, 2015). These practical needs in the country demanded to introduce a guideline for learners which adjusts with its culture (Banu, 2009). That is why the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) structured an improved syllabus and published the guidelines to design textbooks and teaching materials accordingly. Furthermore, it has revised the evaluation policy and developed several assessment tools and examination formats to help measure students' ability to use English in communication (Mohanlal, & Sharada, 2004). But this new curriculum needs teachers with a good level of proficiency, adequate teaching materials, allocation of enough resources, well equipped classroom, smart management of school education system, well organized pedagogic plan etc. Lack of any of these needs can be responsible for low outcomes from learners. On the other hand, Sultana & Ahsan, (2013) state,

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced to develop students' four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a communicative context in Bangladesh. CLT focuses mainly classroom activities, which based on communicative methods like group work, task-work, and filling the information gap.

But according to studies by national and international researchers, in village areas primary graduates are failing to follow the new curriculum successfully and learn language skills to use effectively (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; Ahmed & Nath, 2005).

There are a large number of contributors working behind primary students' low acquisition of English language. This topic will be broadly discussed in the fourth chapter of my paper.

2.2 Historical Background of English in Bangladesh

According to Sultana (2018), language plays a vital role in the management of power and balancing or maintaining the relationship at the interpersonal, social or local and the global level at the same time. English becomes a lingua franca by the end of twentieth century and was widely used for international communication among the people who do not speak this language and have English as a second or third language. According to the report of Curriculum Committee-1962, in 1947 when the two nation states India and Pakistan created their own separate existence in the map of the world, the question of language raised with a strong voice. When India opted for Hindi then being a Muslim prioritized country Pakistan preferred Urdu as mother tongue. On 21st February in 1952, a strong protest was made from the East Pakistan to establish Bangla as the state language. On that day, after the tragic shooting death, both Bengali and Urdu took place as the state languages of Pakistan. Then neither Bangla nor Urdu but English became the only common way to

communicate between East and West Pakistan. Thus circumstances opened the way for English to establish its status in Pakistan period as the second language. After that at secondary schools in Pakistan it was introduced as a functional language. The educated or even fairly educated people were instructed to use English for administrative purpose, professional issues, educational and other purposes. However, when Bangladesh became independent after the war of liberation in 1971, the official status of the English language replaced by Bangla and Bangladesh became a monolingual country. Bangla owned the position of using in every sphere of social and public affair. But in recent days English has regained an important unofficial status in Bangladesh (Salahuddin, 2013). Nowadays along with the use of Bangla in many government, semi-government and private organizations English is being used for almost every purposes (Ainy, 2001). Considering the importance of English, government of Bangladesh combined the existed English teaching processes with the 'Communicative Approach' since 1970s. Government wanted to ensure English learning for all strata of people in the country. But, after long four decades of launching the Communicative approach, the linguists, teachers, students and educational researchers are in big confusion about the actual outcome of the approach particularly from rural learners (Kabir, 2014).

In 1998, the new English language curriculum was established as a part of the project named (ELTIP) English Language Teaching Improvement Project. The project in collaboration with the Department of International Development (DEID) aimed at to bring changes in textbook, examination format and in-service teacher training program. It also had a focus to relocate teaching-learning process of English language from a traditional structure-based approach to a function-based or communicative approach. Though textbooks have been published according to

the new approach but the question about following those books and new curricula remains unexplained.

2.3 Recent Status of Teaching English at Primary Level

In rural primary schools of Bangladesh teaching English has had a lot of ups to downs. Learners particularly from rural background are always surrounded by Bangla language. They are used to hear, think and speak in Bangla. Though some English sentences are listened during class hours by learners but they do not get any source of learning English apart from class hours. Banu (2009) states that teachers view English as a set of content rather than an array of language skills. They keep students busy in covering those contents rather than to look for language competence. They are kept under pressure by education management system to complete a huge syllabus within a very short time. For that reason competency takes second position while the aim of finishing syllabus or textbooks is in the first position. She again emphasizes on learners' understanding level and communicative skill rather than correctness or accuracy. Teachers of primary level basically from village areas, interrupt the young learners' flow of English learning by injecting a sense of being correct and grammatically accurate. This creates a sense of being alert always about making mistakes which hinders the total language acquisition process in a healthy way. Another area where teachers of primary schools lack focus is that teachers give no attention on learners' comprehension skill. No importance is given on learners' reflection on any specific lesson, what they have learned from that lesson and their creative ideas related to that lesson. It is a very common practice of teachers or rural primary schools. According to Shukla (2008),

Comprehension strategies need to be more explicitly taught and individual interpretation of texts need to be valued inside the classroom. Children need to be taught different

reading strategies, for example, scanning, skimming, locating information throughout the text etc. to solve different reading problems. All learning experiences do not necessarily lead to learning, unless subsequent opportunities for reflection, application, correlation and consolidation are created.

These sectors are not being paid adequate concentration at primary stage of language learning which eventually results in learners' low acquisition of language. Kabir (2015) reports in 1991, government of Bangladesh declared free primary education for government primary school and in late 90's first CLT based curriculum was implemented but our English teachers did not receive this new approach of teaching warmly. Biswas (2018) stated that Selim and Tasneem (2011) have criticized these ELT teachers by saying "When CLT came to Bangladesh the traditional English teachers vehemently opposed it because they were not ready for something new." The teachers of primary level hardly felt the significance of enhancing students' spoken and listening skills. They were quite successful in neglecting two other important skills by following Grammar Translation Method. Although new curriculum has been introduced to uphold the quality of English language education. Literature shows that classroom teaching does not always change according to curricular modifications and alterations particularly in rural areas.

Report of NCTB (2006) explains, among the focal objectives of teaching English in primary level education in Bangladesh enabling the young students read and comprehend the textbooks are some of the majors. In accordance with the curriculum instruction they should also write words, simple sentences, passages, paragraphs, informal letters and numbers correctly. To ensure this competency NCTB revised the existing curriculum and arranged training for teachers to implement the curriculum. Studies incorporating interviews and classroom observation reveal the difficulties teachers face in implementing the new language policy. They are obliged to plan English classes

with the constraints of a large class of students and with mixed level of proficiency, short duration of teaching hours and limited resources (Farooqui, 2014). Farooqui (2008) indicates that there is 1 teacher for 60 students in a rural primary classroom. Teachers have to maintain this large number of students to teach effectively. In that situation teachers prefer to talk in Bangla rather English though it is instructed to speak in English in a language class. Teachers from rural areas are also observed reading from books in English and translate that in Bangla. Moreover they ask students in Bangla to respond over those topics. Teachers have a tendency to start class with English sometimes but switch to Bangla abruptly in most of the cases. Both teachers and learners find comfort in this teaching process according to the reports of Hamid & Honan (2012) on present status of English in today's Bangladeshi primary schools. Their research precisely pointed out the scenario that teachers' explanation in Bangla was observed throughout the whole observation period, explanation in English disappeared from the classes after 15 minutes of starting the observation period.

This is the common picture of every primary schools of Bangladeshi rural areas although some difference can be found in urban areas. But most of the people of Bangladesh dwell in rural parts and thus the present status of English teaching in Bangladesh should be considered depending more on the literacy level of rural people.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This methodology chapter begins with the research questions. Then there is the description of research design. After that it presents the setting, participants and instruments of the research followed by the description of data collection procedures. Finally it discusses data analysis process. At the end of the chapter there is the mention of ethical consideration which acts as safeguard to ensure that the rights of participants are abided by every way the paper is presented.

Research Questions:

The following two research questions are the main questions that guide this study

1. What are the main barriers of teaching English at the rural primary schools in Bangladesh?
2. What are the teachers' views to overcome some of these obstacles?

3.2 Research Design

In words of Creswell (2008), "Research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis". A research design is organized with chronological actions such as, sequencing every section of the study, displaying those sections in a representable manner and integrating all the points and information logically. Specific method or design of a research involves the forms of data collection, procedures, analysis of collected data, and own interpretation of the researcher. In one

sentence it can be summarized that the methodology section of a paper is the total guideline of a research.

Since the aim of my paper is to identify the limitations, teachers of rural primary schools are dealing with to teach English in Bangladesh, I chose to work by following various procedures of qualitative method. With a view to conducting my study, I prepared two sets of open-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 and 10 questions. After that I went for searching the schools for my study away from the urban areas. I selected the primary schools of the villages situated in Barishal division as my hometown is there. Then I talked to the Head teachers of 6 primary schools seeking permission to conduct my work. I prepared an information sheet (Appendix C) and a consent form (Appendix D) considering the ethical issues and presented them. Though I faced some difficulties to get the permission, I was able to overcome. I could conduct my study in three primary schools. In my study, I used both primary and secondary sources of data.

3.3 Setting

Seeking permission to enter a school for classroom observation and taking interviews from teachers was not much easy task to accomplish. Among 6 primary schools, 3 schools allowed me to continue my study in their schools. In order to take interviews I asked the teachers to come in a classroom after their classes are finished. For classroom observation I chose days before exam dates because all students tend to come to school before exam time. I managed to observe the classes from the very back bench of the classrooms.

3.4 Participants

The schools I was allowed to work with have only 1 or hardly 2 specific teachers of English. That is why I had to take interviews from teachers of other subjects who also used to teach English occasionally. I interviewed 19 teachers in total among them 12 were female and 7 were male. The average age of my participants is 38-40. For classroom observation I selected II, IV and V grade classes. Each classroom has 45-60 students who participated in my observation. In order to make the task enjoyable and comfortable I at first introduced myself to the learners. I selected grade II because it was my intention to observe the classes of beginners to understand their level of knowledge and understanding. Though learners felt shy and uneasy finding someone strange among them, they assisted me to complete my work properly. Here I made a list of my participants along with their age, qualification and training status.

| Participant | Pseudo name | Gender | Age | Qualification | Number of Received Training |
|-------------|-------------|--------|-----|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Alam | Male | 41 | BA | 0 |
| 2 | Khalid | Male | 38 | BA | 0 |
| 3 | Monowara | Female | 35 | SSC | 0 |
| 4 | Halima | Female | 40 | SSC | 0 |
| 5 | Sahela | Female | 32 | SSC | 0 |
| 6 | Asma | Female | 30 | SSC | 0 |
| 7 | Barkat | Male | 39 | B.Com | 0 |
| 8 | Zahid | Male | 33 | B.Com | 1 |
| 9 | Zamila | Female | 42 | SSC | 0 |
| 10 | Humayun | Male | 43 | BA | 0 |
| 11 | Rahima | Female | 42 | SSC | 0 |
| 12 | Khadiza | Female | 41 | SSC | 1 |
| 13 | Nazma | Female | 32 | SSC | 0 |
| 14 | Karim | Male | 29 | B.Com | 0 |
| 15 | Sheuly | Female | 28 | HSC | 1 |
| 16 | Azhar | Male | 36 | B.Com | 0 |
| 17 | Aliya | Female | 44 | SSC | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|--------|----|-----|---|
| 18 | Sultana | Female | 39 | SSC | 0 |
| 19 | Rakiba | Female | 29 | HSC | 0 |

Table: Participant List

3.5 Instruments

With a view to collecting data from participants I followed the procedures of qualitative method. Basically Interviews and classroom observation were the focal instruments for my work. I also conducted focus group discussion for getting an overall idea of teaching in rural primary schools and to collect their views about how the lacking areas of teaching English can be filled up. I prepared two sets of open-ended questionnaire, first one was composed of 15 open-ended questions for face-to face interviews (Appendix A) with teachers and the second one was composed of 10 open-ended questions (Appendix B) for all the teachers who participated in focus group discussion. My cell phone worked as an important tool for collecting data as I audio recorded teachers' interviews in that.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected in three phases over a month following various qualitative methods. First one is classroom observation, second one is interviews and the third one is focus group discussion. I conducted classroom observation and interview recording simultaneously for three weeks. Classroom observation helped me to observe a typical English language class of primary schools. I could note learners' activities along with teachers' contribution in a classroom, collect information about teaching processes, textbooks and materials used to teach. Face to face interviews were conducted with 19 participants separately which assisted me to idealize the genuine perceptions of village primary school teachers about teaching English. Replies from

English language teachers helped to collect data about present situation of English language teaching strategies in rural areas. Through focus group discussion I pointed down explanation, suggestion and perception about language teaching from teachers of English and other areas who shared their valuable opinions for eradicating issues related to language teaching in the light of their experiences.

Classroom Observation: My classroom observation for present study took place from Sunday to Wednesday for 3 weeks. I observed 9 classes of 3 government primary schools. Each class was over packed with students. During classroom observation I noted down attendance of students, classroom infrastructure, teachers' deliverance, teacher- learner comfort zone, learners' response and participation, seat arrangement and time management. I sat at the back bench of the room and observed the teacher's as well as learners' activities. I understood that students were finding something strange and uneasy getting me among them but I tried to cope up with the situation. Each class continued for 40-45 minutes.

Interviews: As the objective of my study is to identify the limitations that teachers of primary schools are dealing to teach English in rural parts of Bangladesh, I decided to take face-to-face interviews from 19 participants. They are directly or indirectly related to English language teaching. Interviews are helpful to collect spoken data in a more naturalistic as well as spontaneous way. In interviews a natural flow of the conversation is not interrupted because supplementary questions related to main topic can be asked base on replies (Wilson and Sapsford, 2006).

It took about 3 weeks to interview 19 participants from three rural government primary schools. I interviewed each teacher according to their convenient time, place and environment. Most of them

were comfortable inside school area. I recorded their interviews through the recorder of my cell phone and noted down the key points in my note book. The questions of my interviews were much focused on the teaching process and used materials which are usually applied for teaching English in their classrooms. I used Bangla for teachers' interviews. Each interview took an average of 15-20 minutes.

Focus Group Discussion: Accomplishing a qualitative research in a smooth way needs to conduct focus group discussion to collect qualitative data through open-ended question-answer session. I took about 8 days to complete the whole discussion process. For my present study 13 teachers of 3 schools took part in the discussion separately in their own school premises. Each discussion consisted of 4-5 participants who answered 10 open-ended questions with no option. Answering open-ended questions gave them opportunity to express their own opinions easily. It took approximately 25-30 minutes to complete each discussion. For making the discussion spontaneous and easily understandable I used Bangla as a medium of interaction.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2008),

Qualitative procedures demonstrate a different approach to scholarly inquiry. It employs different philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than rely on a single data source. They build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive

process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the database until the researchers have established a comprehensive set of themes.

Since I conducted my study by following Creswell's methods of qualitative research, the data collection process and analysis is attempted to complete according to Creswell's suggestion. Following his guideline, my data collection was based on multiple instruments. I prepared questionnaire, audio recorded interviews from teachers, conducted focus group discussion in a natural environment. After that I analyzed the replies according to my own understanding and interpreted that in my own style. I observed the classes and examined the learners and teachers practically in English language classrooms. I noticed teachers and learners continue their language class with a variety of limitations. Analysis of collected data was done inductively. I built my own pattern of working, conducted my activities accordingly and organized my findings based on different themes which I described in the following chapter.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Consent from the selected participants was attained before presenting their information in the study due to ethical considerations. In that case, an information sheet (Appendix C) along with a consent form (Appendix D) explicated in simple language. The aim and procedures of the study were sent to the headmasters of the selected schools at first and then were presented to all participants. Teachers took part in the study only when they were interested. It was ensured that their identity and given information will remain anonymous. All participants had the authority to decline or quit anytime from taking part in the project. These two forms guaranteed that my study was conducted by considering all the ethical issues.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

I conducted my work in rural parts of Bangladesh in primary schools following different methods of qualitative approach. My findings are organized in several themes from collected data. Here, I used pseudo name of the participants for ethical issues. Participants' statements are presented in two ways, with quotation mark and in indented text without quotation mark. Some opinions of the participants are also presented in my own words. In the first portion of this chapter I mention the themes and in the last portion there is the analysis of the themes.

4.3 Limitations of Teachers

Teachers' qualification: Primary school is the first educational institute where children start their study life. That is why the instructors of primary level play significant roles in children's early education life. They build the foundation of learning which needs to be built with strong pillars. To construct a well-built structure the building workers need to be efficient as well as patient enough. Like that teachers of primary level need to be well educated, patient and efficient so that they can build strong foundation of their learners' education life. Conducting my study in three primary schools of three villages, I came to know that most of the teachers are not educated enough to teach a language like English. According to my study, almost all female teachers have passed only SSC and started their job life as primary school teachers. It is found that, among 19 participants, there are 12 female teachers who have only SSC qualification except two teachers who passed HSC and 7 male teachers who are graduate. With a view to teaching a specific subject,

at first a teacher must need to be well educated and proficient enough at that subject. But in Bangladesh, the scenario is quite different.

Lack of proper training: A teacher is the most crucial in student achievement. At primary level only teachers are responsible for the education of learners. That is why student's success relies on well-trained teachers. But my study at primary schools displays a different view. Teachers of primary schools situated in rural parts of Bangladesh have rarely received any training over teaching according to my interviews. One of my participants, Khalid says,

I received only one training in 18 years of teaching life. That was a training on improving teaching skills. But I cannot remember what was trained there. I did not apply anything what I taught there.

My participant named Sahela shares, she did not receive any training in her 8 years of teaching experience. Including Sahela more five female participants express that they did not receive any professional training since their joining. Opportunities of teachers' training are not enough in village areas of Bangladesh, utters Rakiba. Some female teachers are also sometimes unable to attain training after taking care of their family and household chores. In some cases their family members are also not supportive enough. Asma expresses,

I am an English teacher of primary school of this village but I did not receive any professional training on teaching English. Though I was offered once but my family members did not support me to stay away from home and receive training.

After an interview session with Barkat, I came to know that he received one training on students' mind and brain development but that was not effective because he could not apply it in his classroom for the lack of enough facilities. Among 19 participants only 3 teachers have received

one or hardly two training over teaching. However, those trainings are not related to any specific subject. Khalid utters that he was offered to receive one professional training but he refused to join it because in his absence there were not any English teachers in the school to take his classes.

Lack of teaching philosophy: Teaching philosophy is a reflection of a teacher's personal belief, thought and values about teaching. It is basically a self-reflective statement which states teacher's belief over teaching. It helps to fix a definite goal of teachers' teaching act. It assists a teacher to find the way of reaching that goal. A fixed goal is always helpful for a runner to win the race. In that way when a teacher has a definite philosophy of his or her own he or she can take necessary steps to reach there without much difficulties. A teacher of English language having a good teaching philosophy is more likely to teach better than those who lack this. Teaching philosophy of an English language teacher basically includes his or her own art of teaching, own process of making students feel comfortable in learning, own style of making the classroom interactive and spontaneous as well. But my interviews with primary school teachers gave me an idea that almost all the teachers do not foster any specific teaching philosophy. In lining with the data from primary teachers, among 19 participants only one teacher has a teaching philosophy of his own. Asking about philosophy of teaching one participant Barkat exclaims, "The idea of maintaining a philosophy of teaching is not clear to me." From his statement the overall condition of village primary teachers can be assumed. About 14-15 teachers have not any clear idea about philosophy of teaching. Though 2-3 teachers have some ideas of maintaining a teaching philosophy but they do not maintain it.

No preparation for class: Taking proper preparation to teach a lesson is one of the main steps of making a class effective. When it is the case of English class then the preparation becomes mandatory for a teacher. Because rural primary learners are afraid of attending English

class. They find it difficult to understand the language and act accordingly. For an effective language class, preparation before class includes thinking about the level of learners, needs and demands of learners, fixing the lessons accordingly, preparing of what supportive antidote can be shared to make lesson easier, selecting what teaching aid is helpful for class etc. About 85% participants mention that generally they take classes without any preparation. Karim says that he does not feel necessity to take preparation before a class. He prefers to teach students randomly. Another participant, Monowara expresses that she does not get enough time for taking preparation for her classes. But she agrees that preparation is necessary for teaching properly. Humayun explains,

Preparation makes a class easy and successful but in a single day I take about six classes at a stretch and after school I teach English at my home then I feel too tired to take preparation for next class.

In most of the cases, English teachers are not in sufficient number in the primary schools. That is why class load remains always heavier for each teacher. When a teacher is overloaded with more classes to take, they cannot manage to occupy their time for taking preparation for next class, shares Rahima.

Absence of teaching speaking in class: According to CLT, teachers and students are supposed to interact with each other with the use of target language. But according to collected data from interviews and classroom observation, about 90% teachers in rural primary schools are not agree to speak in English in classrooms. One of the participants, named Zahid says that rural students need not to be taught speaking in English in class as they always prefer to talk in Bangla.

In a monolingual environment of Bangladesh, especially rural areas children are habituated to speak in Bangla always. Their parents, elders, relatives always speak in Bangla for what students are also comfortable to communicate in Bangla. They cannot think of to speak in English even in their English classrooms. Fatima, another participant comments that speaking is not that much necessary as writing and reading is. Students need to read and write at first. Reading and writing is most important to get passed in exam. But teaching speaking is not that much important.

Teachers' inability to speak in English: Almost all the participants admit the fact that they cannot speak in English during their class period thoroughly. Alam states in his interview that he cannot speak in English as he is not used to speak it regularly. Another participant, Sultana expressed,

I cannot speak in English as I am not used to. I understand that speaking English is helpful for fruitful language teaching but speaking in English thoroughly is not possible for teachers like us.

She adds that, teachers and students both are not much comfortable in speaking English in the class. Fatima admitted the issue by telling, “It is not possible to take a whole class with the only use of English, we are not enough trained to do so.”

Absence of teaching listening in class: Based on the answers of teachers in interviews, the fact comes to light that almost 98% teachers are ignoring teaching listening skills to the primary pupils. They are also unaware of the processes through which learners can be proficient in listening skill. Generally their classes are focused on passing exams and promoting to next class. Following Grammar Translation Method (GTM), teachers teach the students

structured based grammatical rules. Learners read and memorize the rules at home. At the time of exam they write those and get passed. Khadiza, one participant expressed,

I maintain a lot of students in my class. During class time it is easy for me to ask them something to read and write on paper. Listening activities need paying concentration on each and every learners' performance which I prefer to avoid.

4.4 Issues in Class Management

Short span of class period: Participants' replies on duration of class time reveal that learners are getting only 35-40 minutes class duration for their English language class. To carry on an effective language class minimum 1 hour duration is a must need says one of the participants Karim. Only 40 minutes class time does not suffice for doing classwork, checking them out, listening students' problems, finding out solution etc. Thus his class often remains unfinished and students get demotivated. In rural areas often learners are shy and reluctant to speak up their learning issues to their instructor says Sahela. She further added,

A short duration of class is not supportive to be friendly with students. We, the instructors need to maintain a good communication with pupils so that they feel free to discuss their issues with us. Discussion helps to understand the learning status of students, their learning progress and their lacking as well. But for discussion we lack time in class period.

Other participant Zahid speaks up in his interview that if a teacher wants to carry on a Communicative activity in class period, a 35-40 minutes class duration creates barrier there.

Over populous classroom: An over populous classroom refers to a classroom with more students than its accommodation capability. All participants are strongly agree on the point that they have over populated classroom. One of the participants, Monowara states,

I have a classroom of 60 students. It becomes very difficult for me to take care of each student in the class. Besides, classroom size is not so big to accommodate all 60 students which creates gathering inside class. When I ask students to do any class work, in a single class I cannot even check copies of all students and give them observation accordingly.

Rahima, tells her view that, she has to take language classes of grade 1-5. In each class she teaches not less than 50 students. She explains, the classroom size is very small and in each bench five students have to sit. Students start to talk among themselves. As a result, classroom becomes unmanageable for a teacher. Teachers' voice does not reach every corner of the classroom because of this noisy environment. Thus an over populous classroom causes disturbance to make a language class effective.

4.5 Limitations of School Infrastructure

Insufficiency of basic teaching aids: Rural primary schools lack teaching aids they should have for effective English language class most of the time, shared by Khalid. School authority is most of the time unable to support students with essential teaching aids. A teacher of English language needs some basic teaching aids such as, enough number of bench, sufficient number of chalk, individual copies for each subject etc. Moreover, rural schools lack the basic needs of a classroom. For example, enough electric lights, fans, sufficient number of clean wash rooms for teachers and students etc. Sheuly states,

When I take class students sit on the floor for the lack of enough benches. They suffer from excessive heat during summer because there is not enough number of fans in the room.

Halima says that in order to making a language class enjoyable and successful, colorful pictures, flashcards, colorful supplementary teaching aids related to specific lessons are useful. Besides, audio player for listening activities, microphones for large class are helpful for fruitful language teaching. But authority of primary schools situated in remote areas of Bangladesh is unable to supply the students and teachers with these basic necessities.

Lack of library: Rakiba shares in her face to face interview session,

A school library is the center of knowledge. Library supports the teachers with new ideas, modern thoughts and more knowledge. Students can also sit at library and read the books they want to. From a library, we can also take help when we need. But there is not any arrangement of a school library in the school premises.

One of the participants, Khadiza explains that they have asked their school authority to set a library up in school area but for budget crisis, lack of government initiatives for building library in primary schools, negligence of school concerns are responsible for absence of libraries in the rural primary schools.

4.6 Limitations in Implementing Curriculum

New English curriculum: Primary English Language Teaching curriculum in Bangladesh is now based on Communicative approach. Communicative Language Teaching is

focused on building an ability to use English for the purpose of communication. NCTB (National Curriculum Textbook Board) has set some curriculum statement for the primary level students as per the requirement of CLT. The statement includes,

1. Learners should understand simple commands, instructions, and requests and carry them out.
2. They should use English to fulfil their regular communicative functions. They must be able to read, write and understand simple sentences in English according to their age and level.
3. Primary learners should be able to describe about a person, objects, places and events in English. They should also be able to express their needs and feelings in English.

NCTB is responsible to develop appropriate English textbooks for implementing these steps of new curriculum. To teach those books it is required to train the teachers and facilitate the primary schools as well. However, in rural areas number of trained primary teachers are almost in negative margin. The basic facilities need for teaching through communicative approach, such as, big classroom, small number of students, long class duration, and appropriate school management system are almost absent in the schools. As a result, teachers are getting demotivated in teaching English and they are standing on the opposite position of implementing new English curriculum. About 17 teachers express that new English Curriculum is not always supportive for the students of rural areas. Asma shares her view, “students feel comfortable and are used to memorizing and writing in exam, they are reluctant to think using their intellect.”

Besides, CLT advocates a classroom to be student centered rather than teacher centered. But the scenario of village primary schools is totally opposite.

Absence of Communicative Language Teaching: Communicative Language Teaching was first applied in 1970's after dissatisfying implementation of Audio Lingual Method. Audio Lingual Method advocates for repeated drills which is only receptive. Communicative Language Teaching encourages to communicate through target language which integrates listening, writing and speaking simultaneously. CLT is not only a method but also a guideline to communicate with people practically. It is an approach that needs to be taught the pupils with rich and authentic input. That is why CLT demands to be taught by well-trained teachers. However, in the primary schools there is lack of proper trained English language teacher who have clear idea of Communicative approach. Again it is also a matter of Bangladeshi culture. Bangladeshi culture discourages students to interact with teachers frequently. Aliya opines that she cannot catch the way of teaching in Communicative approach properly. That is why, she cannot practice it in classroom. Zahid prefers to talk in class and make his students listen. He thinks, if students are given chance to speak, they become indiscipline and classroom becomes chaotic. Humayun another participant states that CLT needs some activities to be practiced but a small classroom does not support to practice those activities in class in the way it should be done. He adds that the necessary educational equipment which are essential for CLT based class are not available in school. That is why Communicative Language Teaching is absent in rural primary schools.

4.7 Limitations of Parents and Students of Rural areas

Ignorance of parents: Primary level students of rural areas are generally from rural background. Because of poverty and unawareness most of the village people are not educated. As a result, they are not acquainted with the usefulness of getting educated. They keep their children busy in doing household chores. From teachers' interviews it was revealed that parents remain

indifferent to the study of their children in most of the time. Nazma says, “My students pay no more attention in class when they are asked to work with their father in field.” Halima states that parents are even unknown about whether their children are coming to school or going to any other place. She adds that in village areas, it is silly to expect from them to know the importance of learning English in this advanced and modern world. Teachers said, students do not get any support from their parents if they face any difficulty while studying English at home. One participant, Zamila tells if her students are unable to complete any home task they escape from school and sometimes even they tend to be absent in English exams. But parents are rarely bothered about their children’s attendance in classes or exams.

Students’ hesitation and shyness: According to interviews from instructors of primary schools, about 98% students feel shy to express their problems and progress in learning. These young learners have fear of making mistakes in the class. They have also a fear of sounding odd in classroom sometimes. This kind of fear about English creates a feeling of shyness, says Alam. As per Monowara’s description, students even avoid to ask any question in their class about English lessons. They also used to avoid to share that they have understood a lesson successfully. Monowara also states that students’ hesitation and shyness create a distance between teacher and student.

4.8 Analysis of Findings

Analysis of qualitative questionnaire: Among 19 respondents, 10 female teachers are teaching students with only SSC qualification. This qualification of a primary teacher is not certainly at satisfactory level. A teacher with SSC qualification has not that much maturity and

understanding capability with what she can manage a class of mix proficiency and understand the demand of her each student. Besides, it is important for a teacher to analyze each student's attitude toward learning, need, level of understanding for making a class effective. Though the male teachers are graduate, they are not efficient enough to teach English effectively. Because their degree is not completed with a major in English. A teacher of a specific subject like English need to be qualified and skillful enough so that he can manage to create eagerness in students' mind for learning a new language. It is his or her duty to make the learning process easy and faster and also successful by adopting effective teaching processes. But lack of enough proficiency in English hinder to provide learners with the facilities mentioned above. Thus, students of primary level are not getting efficient teachers to be taught. The primary level students are the future directors of a nation and they are in badly need of proper care and motivation from early stage. But inadequacy of teachers' qualification is responsible for making learners reluctant to learn English.

According to the data collected from 19 respondents, only 2-3 teachers have received training over teaching. But those training were not related to specific subjects. Moreover, training opportunities are also much less in rural parts of Bangladesh. On the basis of the responds to my question about receiving training, it comes out that training opportunities are offered to the teachers but they cannot join it sometimes. They shared the reasons why they cannot join the training offered to them. Training programs often take place away from the school areas. Teachers need to stay away from home to receive that which is not always supported by teachers' family members. Thus, teachers lack the qualities of a well-trained teacher for different reasons. However, it is very important to ensure proper training for every primary teachers on specific subject.

Almost all the participants shared their opinions on teaching philosophy that they have not any specific philosophy of teaching. For this reason, they teach students in a scattered way. When it is

about teaching a new language, students often become confused and feel uncomfortable to use that for communication purpose. This confusion is responsible for feeling uneasy, hesitation in English learning process. Teaching philosophy is like a moral to a teacher. The more organized and practical philosophy a teacher maintains the more easy teaching processes keep opening doors. But teachers of rural primary schools are not that much qualified or well-trained to fix a good philosophy of teaching. Good qualification, training and matured age are supportive for understanding learners' type which is helpful for developing a well-built philosophy. But it is almost absent in those schools.

In most of the primary schools of rural areas, English teachers are not in sufficient number. For that reason, class load is heavier for each teacher. About 95% respondents are in this condition and they shared their opinion that when a teacher is overloaded with more classes to take they cannot manage to occupy their time for preparing themselves for next class. Primary teachers are also unaware of the advantages of taking preparation before any class.

As primary school teachers are not that much qualified and trained, they themselves admit that they cannot take a language class using English thoroughly. Eventually, learners of rural primary schools are continuing to learn their English lessons with the use of Bangla.

Learners of rural areas are not used to listen English from their surrounding areas. If teachers speak and interact with them in English they will eventually learn by interacting. Attempt of interacting will teach them to interact using English. But, lack of practice leads them to be less competent in English. Teachers are observed to focus on only reading and writing. No speaking and listening activities are encouraged at all in these schools.

A language class duration must be enough for conducting all general routine tasks of a class. Teachers have urged for 1 hour class duration instead of 40 minutes. They demanded it to complete all class tasks properly. A long duration of class period is also friendly for making a good communication between teacher and learner. It is helpful to know the students' lacking areas and progressive areas as well.

Conduction of a successful class needs to ensure learners' comfort at first. An over populous class creates problems for teachers to convey all information correctly to the learners. Young primary students hide their learning issues mostly as they are afraid of talking to teacher directly among a lot of classmates. In case of a language class, learners need to be communicated with instructors frequently. However, it becomes impossible for a teacher to ask and make good communication with each and every student in a classroom of 55 to 60 students. In that way rural level primary learners often remain untouched and unaccountable to their teachers. Because of excess number of learners, students at the back suffer from confusion, they cannot concentrate on study also.

In accordance with collected data, village primary schools are unable to provide learners with basic teaching needs. There necessity of supportive aids gets very less priority. Lack of proper support is a big limitation for which language class becomes ineffective.

The students of primary level usually have many curiosity about everything. It is a library which can help them to explore where they want to explore and what they want to know. Library plays a significant role in learners' language learning and achievement. It has different encyclopedia, story books written in easy English, dictionary. English appears as a completely strange language before the young primary students. They have to learn that language as a subject at school. In that case, they lack the basic knowledge what they already know about Bangla. That is why they need extra care and support to acquire it properly. Library is such a support from where both teachers and

students can be provided with immense facilities. Primary schools of Bangladesh often lack this facility in the school premises. But the teachers have highly recommended to set up library in school campus.

According to the Curriculum developed by NCTB, students are encouraged to understand the lesson, work with it using intellect and write with creative thought. But rural students are unable to think in English and write in English using their creative thought, said the instructors.

Analysis of classroom observation: Classroom observation helped me to understand the actual scenario of a rural primary level classroom. I observed, teachers lack the proper grammatical knowledge of English. They only focus on structure but students find it hard to follow their instructor. Students are asked by their teacher to memorize the grammatical rules. Lack of enough qualification is also responsible for teachers' wrong pronunciation of English words. Classroom observation also reveals the absence of subject based trained teachers. For this lacking, teachers are noticed to be unable to implement any easy strategy in language teaching activity. Teachers' behavior towards learners was also not positive as per my observation. I noticed that only teachers speak in classroom and students listen. Here talking less in classroom is considered to obey the teachers and in that way a language class becomes a teacher centric classroom. As a result, students' status of understanding, their schemata level, their command over any lesson, their demand over any chapter remain untold to teachers which is certainly unhealthy for a good language class.

As CLT is about communication both the speaker and listener change their role frequently. But in primary schools of village parts teachers themselves are unable to communicate their students

through English. In that situation expecting from the students to speak in English is absurd to some extent.

Classroom observation also helped to visualize the classroom infrastructure of a rural primary school. Schools lack enough number of tables, benches, chalk, electric lights and fans also. Students suffer from various difficulties in sitting arrangement. The blackboard is very old and there is not availability of dusters and chalk in some classes. These lacking areas contribute to learners' low acquisition of English language as per my perception.

My study in the rural primary schools not only reveals the limitations for what the teaching-learning process of English language is being hindered but also pulls some ways out to solve some of the issues. For that I arranged for focus group discussions in the schools separately. Analysis of the discussions is mentioned below.

Analysis of focus group discussion with teachers: I conducted three focus group discussions separately in three primary schools. Each discussion consisted of 4-5 members. There not only English teachers took part but also teachers from other areas shared their comments and views about some ways of overcoming the limitations of village primary school management system. I prepared an open-ended questionnaire composed of 10 questions for the discussions. As teachers themselves face the difficulties and the limitations of teaching English, I thought they have certainly some ideas to overcome those limitations. These discussions helped to express their wants and expectations from concern authority to make language educating process successful. Now I am describing the overall ideas of each discussion in a compact manner in this section.

Based on the latest United Nations estimation the current population of Bangladesh is 167,562,152 with a total land area of 130, 170 km². Bangladesh is a densely populated country where about 62% people live in rural areas. To educate Bangladesh it needs to ensure the education of rural people with more priority. About educational qualification of a primary level English teacher, Zahid shares his thought that the educational qualification of a primary level English teacher should be minimum Bachelor of Arts with a major in English. A graduate teacher is enough matured as per age or education to understand students' pulse. He further adds that a teacher with BA qualification has the knowledge or command over a subject he or she is supposed to teach. The definition of a qualified teacher not only includes an educated teacher but also proper trained, added Fatima. She says, a primary school teacher must need to be trained well on the subject he or she is supposed to teach. Almost all participants have same opinion that English is a foreign language for Bangladeshi students. Bangladeshi curriculum has mandated to study English from the very beginning of learners' education life. That is why instructors of this subject at this level should be selected with more sincerity. Aliya mentions, teachers of primary level in Bangladesh particularly who teach in rural areas require special training on teaching English. Rural area's primary school teachers need to be more patient, energetic, and motivated to teach the students. Khadiza and Alam shared their view that proper training can clearly explain and make teachers understand the new English curriculum. It can guide them to implement Communicative Language Teaching in classroom. As training is about budget and arrangement, a group of trainers can go to the schools and arrange their training session in the classrooms after the school time suggested by one of the participants, Zamila. She again said that in this way teachers can also join every training from their home. This initiative can also reduce the budget of training arrangement. Concern authority may take essential steps to commence on this initiative.

As teachers of primary level of rural parts are unaware of the advantage of fostering any philosophy of teaching they need to be well-understood the benefits of maintaining it. In that case, trainers can arrange a session in training period to explain the importance of maintaining a teaching philosophy, utters Rakiba. Along with a teaching philosophy, a language teacher should also have a preplan for teaching students before a class according to Rahima. Collected data is an evidence to prove that a preplan before teaching is almost in negative dimension in rural primary schools of Bangladesh. But Rahima understands that a preplan can make a language class comfortable and enjoyable. With a view to making a language lesson effective, easy and enjoyable school authority should take attempt for arranging necessary teaching aids, stated Monowara. For example, enough number of benches, tables, electric fans, lights, chalk and blackboard etc. Lack of any of these supports make a class unsuccessful and disturbing also. Khadiza realizes the fact that a successful language class does not only need basic necessary facilities but also supplementary appliance. Such as, flashcards, attractive lesson related pictures, colorful textbooks so that young students of primary stage enjoy their learning act. Karim explains, when students are under pressure to read, memorize and pass the exam they will learn and forget after exam. But they will never forget it if they learn it by heart through enjoy.

For a densely populated country like Bangladesh, class size is a big issue to conduct a language class successfully. All respondents harmonized in this regard saying that they all have a small classroom with a large number of students. But this problem can be solved in a way shares another participant Sultana. She tells that if class size is small to accommodate all students, the teachers can use the front field. School authority can build a shade under which learners can sit in rows. Teachers can take care of every students there. Teachers' voice can also reach to every learner as they can make a walk to the last student. She shares her opinion in removing learners' shyness and

hesitation in English language class. She says that if teachers are conscious about putting less red mark on students' working copies and less interrupt their learning flow by not counting their grammatical mistakes then learning can take place faster. For that practice, teachers need to be more liberal and patient to wait for the better outcome. Parents can also play a vital role to ensure their children's better English language learning. They can stay alert about their children's activities and encourage them to study English with more concentration. Azhar and Sahela opined, primary school teachers can go to each students' house and make parents aware about the importance of English language in this modern era to execute this idea.

About library facility Fatima, Khalid and Alam shared their opinions to make each primary school rich and learning friendly by setting up a small library. School authority can arrange a library fund where both teachers and students can contribute according to their ability. In that way a small library can be set up to help teachers and learners in different purposes

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I think the main focal points of education is far more than only reading or writing rather it is a rich investment for the residents of a country through which intellectual capability can be lifted up. This capability is helpful to eradicate poverty and inequality from the society. If this education is obtained from everyday situations, communications and experiences then its impact will last certainly longer than getting educated by gaining bookish knowledge. This thought along with the global needs of learning English inspired government of Bangladesh to implement Communicative approach in classrooms since 1977. But still its implementation is far away particularly in rural parts. In Bangladeshi education system expectation remained always high ignoring the implementation crises which consequences low competency of the learners. To emancipate the learners from this consequence preparation must be taken from the very beginning level of education system. That is why, ensuring primary learners' language acquisition should get more priority from government.

In this study, I attempted to project the present status of teaching English in primary schools of rural parts of Bangladesh. Classroom observation and interviews provided me with useful data to represent the present status of English language teaching process in rural primary level classrooms. My investigation helped me to find some suggestion that are useful to improve the present status of teaching English at rural primary level. I am recommending those at the last portion of the concluding chapter.

Recommendations

- Government requirement for recruiting primary teachers should be minimum BA with a major in the specific subject and number of teachers in rural primary schools should be increased.
- Primary teachers should enjoy basic facilities from government. For example, living in houses provided by government with a free of cost, ration facility for a small amount of money. These two initiatives will attract highly qualified candidates to apply for primary schools. Teachers who are already teaching they will be motivated to discontinue the coaching system also.
- Distribution of essential books among primary teachers can be ensured. Those books will be distributed related to specific subject with a free of cost. This practice can be continued in every 15 or 30 days. Reading books will broaden teachers' domain of knowledge.
- Arrangement of massive training program for primary teachers on specific subjects of all parts of Bangladesh should be introduced. Government should provide the schools and teachers with every facilities they require to implement in classroom what they have learnt in the training.
- Sessions of training programs and initiatives of teaching curriculum should consider the practical demands of Bangladeshi context.
- In case of large number of students, one class can be divided into two with not more than 30-35 students. Double shifting classes can be introduced in rural areas what is also helpful

for more teacher employment. In case of increasing the duration of class period, number of classes can be reduced in each day.

Hopefully these recommendations will work for eradicating the existing problems of English language teaching act in rural primary schools and help to keep erecting primary level language learners' competency level.

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Appendix- A

Interview Questions for the Teachers

1. What qualification do you have?
2. Did you receive any professional training related to your subject?
3. How long have you been teaching English?
4. What is your teaching philosophy?
5. Do you take any preparation for teaching in class?
6. Is the duration of your class sufficient for you?
7. What is your view about a class with a large number of students?
8. Do you feel the necessity of a school library?
9. What do you know about CLT? What is your opinion about it?
10. Do you practice any Communicative activities in classroom?
11. How do find new English Curriculum? Is it effective for fruitful teaching?
12. Do you speak in English at classroom?
13. What is your view about listening and speaking skills?
14. What is your opinion about learners' hesitation and shyness in English classroom?
15. What do you think about parents' contribution in learners' language learning process?

Appendix- B

Questions for Focus Group Discussion

1. What do you think about the government requirement for recruiting primary school teachers?
2. Is it important to train teachers based on specific subject?
3. What can be done for a large number of students in a small class?
4. What are the steps can you take to set up a school library in school area?
5. How will the long duration of a language class help in fruitful teaching?
6. What initiatives can be taken to teach English through Communicative approach?
7. What are the facilities do you need to practice speaking and listening skills?
8. Do you think to include listening and speaking test in final exams?
9. What can you do to increase the awareness of rural students' parents about the importance of English?
10. What is your suggestion to eradicate the hesitation and shyness of learners in a language classroom?

Appendix- C

Information Sheet for Participating Schools

Who is conducting the research?

I am Morsheda Sharmin, cordially inviting your school to participate in my thesis procedures titled, “Teaching English in Rural Areas: A Case Study of Three Primary Schools in Bangladesh.” At present I am a student of MA in ELT and Applied Linguistics at BRAC UNIVERSITY.

The aim of my study is to focus on the areas primary school teachers have limitations to teach English in rural areas of Bangladesh. I hope, to reach the goal of my study your school will cooperate me by participating with no hesitation. This information sheet will answer every question you have regarding this project.

Why am I being invited to take part?

Your contribution will significantly assist to achieve the aim of my study. Your important feedback to my inquiry is essential to display the present status of English teaching at primary schools of village areas. Your participation will provide me with precious data to find out the obstacles of English teaching and sort out the solutions as well.

What will happen if I take part?

Two phases of question – answer sessions will be arranged. First phase is for face-to-face interviews in which each participant will be asked open-ended questions where they can give the actual opinion what they know and feel about that issue. Second phase of question- answer

session will be held as focus group discussion where teachers' opinions will be asked about finding out some ways of overcoming the difficulties of English language teaching in Bangladeshi primary schools.

Will anyone know about my involvement?

Identification of each participant will be kept strictly confidential.

Is there any problem if I take part?

My works involve no potential risk but in case of feeling any kind of insecurity, participant can quit at any time from taking part in the project.

Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you to take part in the procedures. No obligation is there for you but I believe you will help me through participating spontaneously.

Thank you for making time to read this information sheet.

Appendix- D

Consent to take part in thesis

1. I voluntarily agree to take part in this project.
2. I have come to know that if I am agree now I can withdraw my decision at any time without any type of consequence.
3. I have had the nature and purpose of the study and ask any question about it.
4. I understand that there is not any benefit for me if I take part.
5. I agree my interview to be audio-recorded.
6. I know that my provided data will be confidential.
7. I understand that in any results of the study my identity will be kept anonymous. It will be presented under any pseudo name. My information can be quoted under that disguised name.
8. I understand that if I want to withdraw any of my provided information, I can do it anytime.
9. I understand that my interview recordings and classroom observation video can be retained for certain period of time.
10. I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am enabled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is preserved as mentioned above.