

An Exploratory Study of Teaching and Learning English in Rural Primary Schools in Bangladesh

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

This is my own work and while conducting this research I read various academic journals and books and various types of materials but the results presented in this thesis are based on my own study. During this research, I tried to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. I did not use the real name and identity of any participants or schools. I did not force the participants to participate in this research and all the participants agreed to participate voluntarily.

Abstract

This study explores the English teaching-learning scenario at the primary schools of a remote area of Bangladesh. It emphasizes on English learning of primary level because primary education is the foundation of an individual's life and English, an academic subject of Bangladeshi curriculum, is one of the most dominant languages in today's world. Primary education in Bangladesh is one of the neglected areas of education. Moreover, the primary education scenario in remote and rural areas in Bangladesh is very bleak. This study, Qualitative in nature, explores a rich picture of teaching and learning in rural primary schools in Bangladesh. The final results suggested that the schools of this area follow the traditional way of teaching with particular focus on grammar and memorization. It also found that there is hardly any modern facilities of teaching in those schools. Most of the teachers did not get any chance to attend any training and private tuitions were preferred than the schooling. It also found that memorization is valued over creativity and teachers hardly encourage students to think creatively.

Keywords: Primary schools; English teaching-learning; rural area; traditional way of teaching; examination.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to the Almighty, the most gracious and merciful, to my parents, the most supportive personas for whom my every wish, dreams can come to see the light of hope.

Acknowledgement

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful

At first, I would like to thank the Almighty Allah whose blessings have brought me here. Then, I would like to thank my father and my mother whose constant support, love, care, affection and motivation help me in every situation of my life. They are my strength and my reasons to live. In particular, I am very much grateful to my supervisor Md. Al Amin, the most understanding and the most helpful person who has taught me that there is always a room for improvement and guided me in every single step of my thesis as well as my learning. Whenever I got depressed and tensed, he motivated me and showed me the right path. I would also like to thank Professor Firdous Azim, Afsan Chowdhuri, Anika Saba, Roohi Huda, Seema Nusrat and Rukhsana Rahim. In particular, I would like to give a special thanks and gratitude to Lubaba Sanjana who is the reason of choosing my major in linguistics. Finally, I would like to give thanks and I am thankful to Sheikh Nahiyani for his constant support and guidance.

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List of Acronyms

NCTB National Curriculum Textbooks and Board

GTM Grammar Translation Method

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

Chapter 1

Introduction

The national educational policy of Bangladesh was formally introduced in 1972 after the country gained independence. From then, numerous changes were brought to the policy which includes the changes to the medium of instruction of language teaching. The latest change was brought in 2010 with the revised National Education Policy which divided the system into three parts: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level. Among these, the Secondary education level has been further segmented into three stages: Junior Secondary (Class VI-VIII), Secondary (IX-X) and Higher Secondary (XI-XII). In Bangladesh, formal education starts with the Primary level and continues for five years and English was introduced in the National Curriculum in the late 1990s. From then until now, English is considered as one of the common subjects of primary level. It is because on the one hand primary education is important for the whole education system, and, on the other hand, English is needed in the entire life.

1.1 Primary Education in Bangladesh

It is clearly declared in Article 17 of our constitution that the state should ensure ‘uniform, mass-oriented and universal’ system of our education but going deeper it is found the inconsistency in our primary level education. Though Bangladesh, being a developing country has gained tremendous progress in primary education through the enrolment of the students and free distribution of books throughout the country, still it is lagging behind in ensuring the quality of basic education. One of the reasons is the lack of uniformity in the existing various types of systems: Bangla Medium, English Version, English Medium, Kindergarten and Madrassa. In fact, there is no or hardly found any similarities in the curriculum and the process of teaching among these systems. Additionally, the students have

the excessive burden of books where it is stated in the NCTB that the school authority is not allowed to force the students to buy any extra books apart from those approved by the NCTB. Besides, the students are encouraged to learn only to pass and make a brilliant result in the examination. Furthermore, the lack of trained teachers and corruption in education through the illegal coaching business and other stakeholders are diminishing the quality of education in Bangladesh. Moreover, the non- government schools are imposing high tuition fees on students which have been a burning issue in today's Bangladesh (Neazy, 2016). However, the Government is taking steps gradually to ensure quality education through several training programs for teachers.

1.1.1 Scenario of Primary Education in Rural Bangladesh

Generally, the learners start their education at the age of 4 (pre-school or playgroup) and the age for primary education is considered 6-11. Additionally, the students are generally taught Bangla, English, Mathematics, Social Science, General Science and Religion with a particular focus on making a brilliant result in the examination. Also, drawing is included in the curriculum of some schools. Apart from these, the students are required to rote learning and they are dependent more on their private teachers and coaching centers than their school teachers. On the other hand, English medium schools are not or hardly found in rural areas and the class size is generally very large but most of the students are found interested in coming to the school. Again, students of class 1-3 generally have 4 periods and of class 4-5 have either 4 or 6 periods including tiffin period when the students are seen playing in the playground or in their own classrooms.

The teachers of the rural areas are not trained and qualified enough. Generally, the teachers need to pass 'Primary Assistant Teacher Recruitment' for being teaching in the government schools but for teaching in the non-govt. schools; the school authority sets the criterion. However, most of the primary teachers do not even have clear ideas about the

creative education method. Moreover, most of the teachers are dependent on the guidebooks to prepare their lessons and ask students to read from the commercial guide books. Due to this, students are not able to comprehend what they are taught in their schools (Neazy, 2016).

1.2 English Teaching-Learning in Primary Level of Bangladesh

Although English learning was made compulsory from primary to secondary level in Bangladesh, (Ministry of Education, 2010) yet students' performance in English is found to be low and the average English language skill level of a university student is equivalent to a student of Class seven (Chowdhury and Kamal, 2014). Due to this issue, NCTB adapted CLT to develop the communicative competence of a learner. It is stated in the curriculum (2012) that CLT is related to the overall human development agenda of Bangladesh and the English textbooks are designed by NCTB. Additionally, in the preface of the textbooks of primary schools, it is stated that the focus of the book is on learning English as an international language to communicate with it locally and globally while achieving the four language skills through meaningful and enjoyable activities (Kabir, 2015). The curriculum of 2012 recognizes English as a skill-based subject and due to this; the syllabus is designed in such a way where the learners can use English in real-life situations. Additionally, the curriculum states that the students will achieve language skills gradually and the teachers are expected to make the lessons as pleasurable and attractive as possible to fulfill the objectives. Moreover, the teachers are advised to encourage class participation, make students involved in group work, debate etc. to create an efficient English learning environment (2012). Additionally, it asks teachers to design the syllabus in such a way that it will decrease the dependency on mere memorization.

1.2.1 English Teaching-Learning in rural Bangladesh

The global popularity of CLT seeped into the country as the National Curriculum Textbooks and Board (NCTB) prescribed to follow this newer method for language teaching in schools.

As stated earlier that the main purpose of introducing English at the primary level is to enable the students to understand and carry out simple commands, requests, and instructions to achieve the four skills (writing, reading, speaking and listening) of the English language (NCTB, 2012). This difference is more noticeable if we consider the English language teaching scenario of the remote or rural areas of Bangladesh. It is because compared to the urban areas, institutions in the rural areas get less qualified teachers. In rural areas, teachers' pay is very less compared to those in the city and so well-qualified teachers often are not interested to take up a teaching job in villages. Also, rural classrooms have a larger sized classroom and there is an absence of using technology for language education. Correspondingly, teachers use a traditional way to teach the English language where students memorize items and only perform writing and reading activities in the classroom. Moreover, there is an absence of class participation as the classrooms are more teacher-centered. On the other hand, the awareness of the parents of the primary-school going children from urban areas helps young learners to communicate in English properly and this is hardly seen in rural areas. As a result, the learners of rural areas become competent in writing and reading but are lacking to achieve the skill in speaking and listening. In particular, research reports that students' listening skill is very low as only 42% of students can comprehend while listening to English news (Mamun, 2015) and the teachers of rural areas are comparatively unskilled and less proficient in English (Haque, 2014). Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that there is less or no consistency between the curriculum and the teaching of English.

1.3: Context of the Study:

This study is based on a remote district of Bangladesh, Swapnopur. In fact, the researcher took Swapnopur, also called the "Mophassahal area", as a representative of all rural areas. To

begin with, Swapnopur a district of 23, 79, 255 people where the literacy rate is 42.8% (male: 46.3% and female: 39.5%) and the economy is agriculture-based. Furthermore, it is noted that the literacy rate is increasing steady as it was 19.9% in 1981, 35.7 % in 2001 and now it is 42.8% (Census of economy and agriculture: 2001, 2003 and 2008). The total number of Government Primary school is 737 and non-government school is 44. The main crops here are paddy and jute.

Apart from these, it is a remote area where the economic condition of the people is average to below the poverty line but I found out that there is a thirst for education in all classes of people. There are several NGO- authorized schools that give female students a monthly scholarship and it motivates the parents to send their children to school. Moreover, there is no English medium school here because neither the economic condition is favorable nor there are skilled teachers. However, this study has focused on three primary schools of Swapnopur which have a large-sized classroom, learning occurs through rote-learning in a teacher-oriented classroom. Thus, there is an absence of class participation and technology to aid language learning. Hence, the traditional way of English language teaching is highly exam-based and real learning is achieved by following the trend of going to private tuition and coaching centers. Furthermore, the students are only assessed on writing and to some extent reading (as for writing the answers, reading is needed) but there is no assessment on listening and speaking. As a result, the learners become skilled in writing but not in speaking and listening.

Particularly, in remote rural areas, teachers lack the necessary skills to teach English as per the requirements of CLT and there is no consistency found between teaching style and the curriculum (Kabir, 2015). Besides, Mamun (2015) comments on a report about the majority of the students (73.3%) who believe learning grammar rules are Equivalent to learn English. Harsh yet true that these correspond with the thoughts of the teachers and learners of

Swapnopur. Additionally, in the case of learning English, private tuition gets more priority than the school to the students, guardians, and teachers of these schools but there is a lack of qualified English teachers in rural areas. Due to this, the students here get less opportunity to choose teachers as there are very few qualified teachers. Again, Hasan (2005) comments on a report that 78% of people think that English is needed to be taught and learned only for higher education and I found this similar to the participants.

However, the researcher understood that poor classroom practices, less proficient and qualified teachers, inconsistency between teaching style and curriculum hampers the students' being skilled in English and these processes of English teaching-learning are continuing for years.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following chapter contains the literature I found relevant to my study.

2.1 The necessity of primary education

Primary education takes place at a certain age and eventually it passes one stage after another. Reddy and Rao (2003) state that where education is the social indicator, their primary education is related to the socio-economic development of every individual and society. They add that primary education is necessary for a society and its individuals to achieve actual and genuine literacy. Kumar, Koppa and Balasubramanian (2003) identify that primary education helps a child to acquire the basic knowledge of education, to acquire the ability to read and write and it keeps a person away from 'fear to failure' which work till the end of a person's life. Apart from these, Eisemon and Schwille (1991) uphold the issue that primary education makes the students prepared for self-empowerment and the later stages of educational life become smooth when a student receives proper primary education.

2.2 Attitude towards Learning English in Primary Level of Bangladesh

Today, English is considered as an international language and we cannot think of the modern world without the use of it. McKay (2002) states that a language becomes international when it is no more linked to a single culture or nation rather it becomes the language of wider communication where it satisfies the needs of both local and global communication and English has achieved that prestige. She also states that English has spread very widely and quickly. Jenkin (2003) notes that the expansion of English occurred very rapidly for colonization and as Bangladesh was also colonized by Britain, so the English language has always played an important role here as well. According to the National Curriculum of Bangladesh, English is taught as a compulsory subject from class 1 to 12.

Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) note that English teaching and learning have been made compulsory at the primary level though the performance of the students is not very satisfactory. They also added that the education policy regarding English gradually changes and English was made compulsory from Class 3 in 1976 and from 1992 English teaching and learning became compulsory from Class 1. Referring to the declaration of the National Education Commission, Chowdhuri and Kabir stated that the objective of primary education is to make the learners introduced with the English language and its skills. Ahmed (2005) indicates that to achieve the overall objective of primary education in Bangladesh, English teaching and learning should be done effectively. He also states that a strong beginning of teaching English in primary school is needed for children's cognitive and language development. Erling, Hamid, and Sergeant (2013) show the relationship of socio-economic and international relation development of Bangladesh with English teaching-learning. Here, the authors state that as Bangladesh is a developing country and it needs international aid and socio-economic development, so strong English basic and teaching-learning is necessary from the primary level education. Thus, the researches, taken place regarding this issue give a clear idea that Bangladesh has a very positive attitude towards learning and teaching English at the primary level of education.

2.3 An Overview of Existing Research on how the teaching-learning process of English goes on in Bangladesh

Rao (2017) mentions that today English has become the language of job place and global market and it is almost impossible to think of doing a corporate job without having a good fluency in English. Bangladesh, a developing country has also the same scenario in the job field but still, the learners are not skilled in English even though they learn it from the very beginning of their educational life. Many researchers are working on this issue that why Bangladeshi learners are lagging behind to be skilled in English. Pooja (2013) comes up with

the idea that ELT (English Language Teaching) teachers, especially from primary level due to lack of proper training and fluency are facing problems to teach. As a result, the teachers, as well as the students, are suffering in the long run. Thus, the question arises on how teaching-learning of English actually occurs in Bangladesh. Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) mention that due to the incompetence in English, Bangladesh Government implemented CLT to teach English from classes 6 to 12 and also different national and international NGOs have funded for training the teachers. Also, Ahmed (2013) discusses the English teaching process of Bangladesh where he finds out that the students are weak in grammar as they feel less interested and although Bangladesh talks about the implementation of CLT, in many cases English is taught in the traditional way, following GTM (Grammar Translation Method). He also adds that the English classroom is teacher-oriented where the learners are silent listeners; they hardly get chances to ask questions rather they are encouraged to memorizing rules and other elements, they depend on the textbooks and guides, and there is no variation in teaching. Rahman (2014) finds out that the teachers of Bangla medium schools in Bangladesh only follow the exam syllabus, follow question patterns of previous years for upcoming public exams and try to cover them in the English class. As a result, only the reading and writing skills of the students become developed as these two are tested in the exam but the learners become low proficient in listening and speaking. Again, Hamid, Sussex, and Khan (2009) state that private tutoring plays a very important role in Bangladesh as it is closely related to the school system, parents' expectations, students' learning outcome and motivation of learning English. Thus, English teaching and learning here takes place through private tuition, coaching center and so on. However, some researchers try to find out how teaching and learning methods can be improved in Bangladesh and in this regard Ara (2009) states that as the young learners are not interested learning in the traditional way, so some natural ways like through songs, rhymes, etc. they will learn better English. Habib and

Adhikhari (2018) stated that maths and English are the two most difficult subjects in the primary and secondary levels.

2.4 Contribution of this research to the current ELT research domain in Bangladesh

This research emphasizes on how the teaching-learning process of English of primary school occurs in one of most remote areas of Bangladesh, Swapnopur. The above researches, discussed by the researcher are based on issues like the definition of teaching-learning, the significance of primary education, the attitude and way of teaching English in Bangladesh and other countries. In fact, the researchers most of the time focused on these issues when it comes to the concern of English teaching and learning. Apart from these, they talked about how English is taught in urban areas, compared between English and Bangla medium schools, etc. but they hardly looked at how the learners of remote areas learn English. Despite having many drawbacks, it is true that nowadays people are interested in taking education in both urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. Hence, it needs to be investigated how English, the most important language of today's world, is taught and learned and also, whether the learners are really improving in the four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening or not. To address some of these issues, the researcher decides to investigate how the teaching-learning process goes in Swapnopur's primary schools as there is no research on it and it will really add value to the ELT research domain in Bangladesh as Swapnopur is representing the remote areas of Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design including research questions and the methodology that the researcher applied to conduct this research. The chapter begins with a brief description of the purpose of this study in the primary level and gradually moves on by discussing why qualitative approach was chosen, who were the participants, context where the research was conducted, how data was collected and analyzed, which factors created obstacles to conduct the research. It ends with a brief discussion on how the issue of ethicality of the study was maintained.

3.1. Purpose of This Study

The aim of this research was to find out the teaching-learning process of English in the primary schools of Swapnopur. As the scenario of English teaching-learning technique is similar in the remote areas of Bangladesh, so Swapnopur as a remote area is representing all the remote areas. However, the primary focus of this study was to document how primary level learners are learning English language, what are the expectation of the students and their parents from English language learning, what are the methods or ways, teachers follow to teach English and at the end whether the students are being proficient in English or not. The focus is on the primary level because the researcher believes that whatever a learner learns at an early age, it has the highest impact on his/her entire life. Therefore, by documenting the opinion, experience, expectations, obstacles, and views regarding the whole process of English teaching-learning from the participants, the researcher moved ahead with the research to analyze the present scenario of English teaching-learning in a remote area like Swapnopur.

3.2. Research Design

A research is a systematic study and investigation of establishing a fact where the methods of doing so are different because different methods are needed to achieve different research objectives, suggested by Polski (2019). However, Atmowardoyo (2018) defines the research method as a systematic process, used by a researcher to solve the specified research questions through research design, data collection, and data analysis. In any research, the research design is important as it is considered as an outline, a preliminary sketch or the plan of the researcher to create, construct and relate the ideas to reach a conclusion (Nelson, 2013). So, in order to conduct this research, the researcher has also made research design and this study has been continued following the research questions. The research questions are:

1. What is the teaching-learning scenario of the English language at the primary level of a rural area in Bangladesh?
2. Is the English language teaching process in the rural areas actually helping learners to become proficient in the English language?

I followed a qualitative approach as data was collected in a natural setting through interviews and observation. Next, as it created a chance for self-exploration which is very important according to Thomas (2013). Along with it, I used the Ethnographic approach which is also a form of qualitative method. This study followed a short-term Ethnography as the researcher interacted and observed the participants in their classrooms and coaching center for almost one month. After taking permission from the Primary School Principals and English teachers of three schools and also English teachers from the coaching center, I observed the English classes by staying with the participants.

Additionally, for collecting data though the main focus was on the Primary Source which includes collecting information physically from the participants. Tavakoli (2013) said that the primary source works well for getting original data to find out the research

objectives. I also used the primary source as I went to the participants, collected information from observation, made a connection among all of the information and then came to a conclusion.

Apart from these, I adapted thematic analysis as it is a well-known method of data analysis in qualitative research method, as stated by Terry et al. (2017). Based on this, I came up with a number of themes based on the interviews and observation of the participants and themes has been made based on the words or sentences, uttered more times by the participants.

3.3. Context of Collecting Information

This study was conducted in a remote area of Bangladesh, Swapnopur which is also called a “Maphasshal” area- a rural district far from the capital Dhaka. To conduct this research, the researcher went to her hometown Swapnopur. It is noted that as the scenario of English teaching-learning is similar to other Maphasshal areas of Bangladesh, so Swapnopur is representing the remote or rural or Maphasshal areas. However, the researcher chose three primary schools where two were government schools and one was a privately-run school. All three are Bangla medium as there is no such English medium school here. Again, I collected information from the students of Class- 3, 4 and 5 from these three schools. Additionally, the researcher selected parents, home tutors and tutors of coaching centers from these students. Besides, data was collected from two types of students- academically successful and less successful (according to the institutional result). However, the main focus was on how English is taught here.

3.4. Participants of This Study

The participants have been carefully chosen for this study with whom English teaching and learning process is directly connected. The participants, interviewed and

observed were total 82 in number where 45 were students from classes 3, 4 and 5 of three schools. Here, from each class 5 students were selected where 3 students self-reported as successful and the other 2 said they were less successful (based on their academic result). Then, from these three schools 10 English teachers who teach English in the selected classes were interviewed and 9 tutors, teaching English at home and in coaching center were interviewed and finally 18 parents, chosen from the parents of 45 students were interviewed.

3.4.1. Information regarding the participants

Though the number of interviewees was 82, all of their answers were not satisfactory and relevant to this study. Due to this fact, the researcher discarded some of the participants' view and continued with the information, seemed relevant to her (R). It is mentioned that all the names, used here are pseudonyms. An overview of the participants is given below:

No.	Name	Age	Class
1.	Supti	8	3
2.	Arshi	9	3
3.	Pulok	11	5
4.	Tanvir	10	4
5.	Shipto	11	4
6.	Priya	11	5
7.	Proma	10	4
8.	Ritu	11	5
9.	Rizvi	8	3
10.	Porosh	9	4
11.	Sadman	10	5

12.	Zarin	10	5
13.	Mumu	9	4
14.	Maria	9	4
15.	Zarif	10	5
16.	Joy	11	5
17.	Mimi	9	3
18.	Prova	9	4
19.	Farzin	10	5
20.	Mashuk	9	4
21.	Sinthiya	9	3
22.	Abrar	10	5
23.	Hasib	9	4
24.	Nibedita	9	4
25.	Purba	10	5
26.	Akash	9	4
27.	Afsana	10	5
28.	Timur	8	3
29.	Priti	9	4
30.	Pranto	10	5

Table 1: Details of Participants (Students from Class 3, 4 and 5 from three schools

No.	Name	Age	Class (teaching)
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1.	Deka	45	4
2.	Poresh	40	3
3.	Bani	38	4
4.	Daisi	45	5
5.	Moynul	35	5
6.	Nabid	40	4
7.	Asma	50	5
8.	Shahin	42	4
9.	Anis	43	3
10.	Shelina	36	3
11.	Gora	55	5
12.	Mannan	65	Principal
13.	Prodip	59	Vice Principal

Table 2: Details of Participants (Teacher, including Schools, coaching centers and home tutors)

No.	Name	Age	Their child studying in Class
1.	Mrinmoy	45	4
2.	Alvi	50	5
3.	Minu	40	3
4.	Reba	47	5
5.	Mondol	41	4
6.	Reza	52	5
7.	Rekha	42	3
8.	Sultan	53	5

9.	Rotna	46	4
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Table 3: Details of Participants (Parents of the students)

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

In qualitative research, data needs to be collected very carefully as the result of the research depends on the data and its interpretation of the researcher (Creswell, 2014). To begin with, I collected data for this study through several ways that includes: interviews, class observation, asking questions to the participants and by taking field-notes. The researcher started with 3-4 straight forward questions and then moved to the open-ended and opinion-based questions where I asked for a suggestion as well of how English teaching-learning could be improved. There were three sets of questions- one set was for the students and the other two were for the teachers and the parents but I asked more questions to teachers than others. Teachers were interviewed individually whereas data from students were collected through focus group discussion.

Before any data collection, the researcher at first took permission from the Principals of the three schools to take interviews with the teachers and the students. With the help of the school authority, I collected the daily routines of classes 3, 4 and 5 to find out the free time of the English teachers to be interviewed. Also, I took students' interviews in their tiffin period (break time) and took interviews of parents in the coaching center and at the time of school ending. Besides, I needed to contact some teachers and parents over mobilephones by taking the contact number from the students and the teachers themselves. I also used a mobile phone for the purpose of recording as I needed to transcribe the conversation. Again, classwork and homework of the students, the books and materials, they follow for learning English were also observed carefully by the researcher.

3.5.1. Interview

It took almost 4 months to take the interview as participants were large in number and it took almost 10-15 minutes to interview each participating teachers and students were interviewed in group during the tiffin break or after the school. Before taking the interview, I checked the attendance sheet as I took an interview with good and less successful students and the students of these three schools are given roll based on their academic results. After selecting five students from each class, I asked them questions, recorded the answers and sometimes wrote the key points as well. Along with that, I took interviews with the teachers from schools and also went to the nearby coaching centers to interview the English teachers and talked over the phone to some of the students' English home tutors. Similarly, I talked to parents both face to face and over the phone and also by taking permission to record it. It really took time as the interview was taken one by one and again tiffin period was chosen for students so that they could become fearless to answer the questions. However, the interview was flexible and not strictly structured.

3.5.2. Observation with Document Analysis

With the permission of the English teachers and the principles, the researcher observed the classes 3, 4 and 5 of the three schools and also the coaching classes for almost one month. At this time, I noticed the class copy and home works of the students and also got the chance of seeing the question paper and the process of exam script checking. In the case of document analysis, the syllabus and materials, used in the class were checked. However, for data analysis, I took notes, took some pictures and did some videos provided I would delete those after the end of the research.

3.5.3. Instruction and Instruments, Used for This Study

Though the study is about the English teaching-learning process, the interviews were taken in Bengali as neither the teachers nor the students and their parents were fluent and

comfortable with speaking in English. While questioning, I asked several times not to answer the questions where they felt uncomfortable. In the case of the open-ended and opinion-based questions, the interviewees were asked for examples of their personal experience and to provide relevant examples. However, I carried a pen, pencil, notebook and smartphone, having a recording system with me so that I could note down and transcribe data at the time of analyzing.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher followed six steps for analyzing and interpreting the data as mentioned by Creswell (2012). I started with organizing the data, collected and then gradually explored and coded them. Then, I gathered the codes to find out the broader themes as themes provide the practical results in a qualitative study (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). In fact, data analysis continued after data was transcribed and processed and while analyzing, the researcher checked the notes and key points she took.

3.7. Limitation to This Study

The research was conducted within a very short period of time, so there was always a rush for collecting the information and also costing had an influence on it as I even needed to go one place several times, tried to contact the same person for many times and so on. Moreover, the students out of fear did not want to talk and they had a fear that whether the researcher would reveal their names. Similarly, some teachers and parents were not interested to talk and they were not taking it seriously and were giving answers indifferently. As a result, there was a fear of not getting enough and relevant information. Also, it was difficult to get permission for observing the class as some teachers were not agreeing. However, finally, it was conducted through many difficulties.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

I put maximum effort to maintain the ethical issues. Firstly, I did not force anyone to interview. Also, I ensured that the language, being used did not have any bias. Moreover, the name of the institutions and any of the participants are not mentioned rather the researcher has used pseudonyms. Also, interviews and class observation took place after taking permission and the participants' convenient time. Furthermore, the researcher did not make any interruption during their regular activities.

Chapter 4

Students' Perspectives and Opinions about English Language

Learning

This chapter discusses the responses that the researcher received while interviewing the students. It also documents my observation during the data collection period. The participants shared their valuable opinions regarding English learning and their responses have been grouped thematically in this chapter. However, this section includes students' responses containing the findings of the discussion done with the students of Classes 3, 4 and 5 from three schools.

4.1. Absence of English as a Medium of Instruction and Lack of English Language Practice

Everyone gave the same answer that the whole class is conducted in Bangla. Pranto, as a respondent told me that the teachers translate everything from English to Bangla. It is because, as Joy added that “no one actually understands English well and it is the English teaching system here”. The students shared the common opinion that they all communicate in Bengali outside the classroom. Here, Supti added, “we only use some general words or phrases in English like thank you, bye, sorry, how are you etc.”

Again, in case of class participation, all of them (S) are not familiar with group work, presentation, etc. as they did not even hear these terms. However, Mashuk, Priti, Hasib, Priya, Abrar, Rizvi and many more uphold the same point that they just answer the questions, asked by the teachers. Prova pointed out that teachers generally ask questions who sit in the first or last bench or whom the teachers think comparatively weak student and also who are seen to make noise in the class. She added that “the teachers often ask questions who they know as

the brilliant students. Thus, this is how actually the students take part in the class which the researcher is considering a teacher-oriented classroom. Also, Zarin and Zarif emphasized the fact that the teachers often ask the students whether they understood what s/he (t) taught but most of them (s) if not understand properly do not speak up out of fear because the teachers sometimes get angry and irritated. Here, Mumu commented that “all of us have private tuition where we get the lessons better, thus, we do not ask for repeating.”

Additionally, the students including Sinthiya, Arshi, Tanvir, Priya and 24 more shared a common reply that neither have they had knowledge about group work, presentation or project nor they did any of them rather they either get scolded or get punishment if they discuss anything with their friends or classmates in the class, Here, Farzin as a respondent replied, “the teachers often tell us to be competitive” and as a result, Maria said that they (s) try not to share their notes and materials with others.

4.2. Rote-Memorization as the Strategy of English Language Learning

All students except Nibedita, Purba and Afsana said that they just memorize the lessons suggested by the teachers to complete the syllabus and take part in the examination. Ritu mentioned that after learning the alphabets, they were instructed to start with the memorization of word-meaning and sentences with those alphabets without knowing the actual purpose of using those words. She also added, “We are encouraged to memorize the grammar rules and in class, we are asked to explain the rules as taught by the teacher”. Porosh, Supti, Proma, and others stated that there is no chance of writing anything on their own way rather they are bound to memorize and write paragraph, composition, letter, etc. following the notes or guide books, given by the teacher. Supti said that “I memorize everything without understanding most of the things. For this reason, I cannot write the parts or things which I forget.” The students added that sometimes they do not even know the

meaning of the word and mentioned that if they follow any book or note, different from the suggested one, there remains a chance of getting fewer marks.

Nibedita along with two other students added that initially, their parents and home tutor make them understand the lesson and then they memorize it. As a result, if they forget any line or any phrase, they can write it in other ways. However, I understand that for learning the basic rules and word-formation of English, including learning how to write a paragraph, rote-learning plays the most significant role, and not creativity or understanding.

4.3. Language Teaching Materials and Learners' Interests

Students stated that they just read whatever they have in their lesson plan and the teachers ask them to study different guide books and grammar books, containing paragraphs, composition, application, letter etc. Shipto, Rizvi and many more said, "We never go through any English story except those which are in our textbooks". So, the researcher finds out that the students only read materials, required for completing their syllabus and no authentic materials are given or suggested for the students.

Hence, majority of the students do not find interest in studying English as it seems difficult to them. Students including Arshi, Mimi, Porosh, Mumu, Maria, Zarin, Sadman and 12 other students said that even though most of the time they do not find an interest and understand it clearly, still they study it as it is their academic subject. Timur stated that "English is one of our academic subjects in school, so I have to read it". Along with them, Zarif, Joy, Prova and Mashuk mentioned that they need a good grade in English for an overall brilliant result, so despite being uninterested they study it very carefully. In this case, Prova strongly said, "if I get bad marks in English, I will not be able to obtain GPA 5 and hence my parents will scold me. Thus, I need to study English very seriously"

On the other hand, some students including Hasib, Akash, Tanvir, Farzin, Pranto among 9 other students gave a different view saying that English is their favorite subject. Here, Tanvir stated, “I like to study English because I need to memorize the meaning of the words and then it becomes easier to understand the language of English cartoons.” They also mentioned that it is easy to get marks in English as there is less chance of cutting half/one/more marks if it is accurate and word-formation of English seems easier than Bangla.

4.4. Discrepancy in Language Skill Competencies

The participants shared a common thing that they only read and write in the English class (school and private tuition) but never speak in English and also, they do not have any listening activity. Prova, Abrar, Pulok, Porosh, Sinthiya and 15 more emphasized on the fact that they know and are taught how to read and write because they need those in the examination (including public exams). Farzin mentioned that they cannot speak in English because neither they are taught how to speak in English nor they are given any grade or mark on speaking activity in the exam.

Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that English teaching-learning is entirely dependent on the syllabus of the examination and as speaking and listening are not included in the syllabus and national curriculum, so no emphasis is given on these two skills.

4.5. Private Tuition as the Savior for English Teaching-Learning

The participants said that they all go to either any coaching center, private tuition or they have their home tutor. Abrar and Afsana told that though their school teachers are not allowed to give tuition to the students of their own school, still they (t) secretly do so and their teachers teach better and more carefully in the tuition. They added that they (T) never get angry or irritated explaining things as they (T) felt in the school. Rizvi, Priti, Supti,

Mashuk and many more said that they learn better in private tuition or coaching center than school because here the teachers teach us very carefully, line by line, ask questions individually, check everyone's script very carefully, give extra time to the learners who face difficulties in understanding and overall make our home works and syllabus complete". Tanvir said, "In the coaching, we memorize and complete our syllabus with the help of the teacher. As a result, we do not need to study those at home and can give more time to study other subjects". Sadman concluded that they need to take tuition from their school teacher at his/her home as s/he gives suggestions and make them practice things that will come in the examination. Due to this, those who take tuition from him/her usually get more marks.

However, I realized that private tuition indeed is important for the learners here and also plays a very important role in teaching English.

Chapter 5

Teachers' Experience and Opinion about English Language Teaching

This section focuses on the teachers' responses to the questions, they were asked and the findings of the interview. It also includes the suggestions; teachers gave for improving the teaching and learning process of English.

5.1. Reality of Teachers' Knowledge, Role and Practice of English Language Teaching

This section begins with the views of two different group of teachers: one, who is aware of the methods they are following and other, who do not have any knowledge about the methods they are using for teaching English.

While discussing the "Methods", they (T) use for teaching English, Deka, Poresh, Daisi, Moynul, Asma, Gora, and Anis started explaining the style, technique, and ways, they actually follow in class and private tuition but they could not name of any methods like GTM, CLT or any other method that they follow while teach. However, Gora said, "There is no such method to be followed". Along with Gora, 3 more stated that they translate everything from English to Bangla, ask to memorize the meaning of the word, grammatical rules, paragraphs and other materials, ask to make sentences with the words, teach translating Bangla to English following the grammar rules, sometimes give notes and follow guide books for exercise, complete the syllabus before examination and so on.

On the contrary, Bani, Shelina, and Shahin mentioned that they follow GTM (Grammar Translation Method) to teach English as GTM goes with the context of our country, especially with the small or rural area where the class size is big and most of the learners are from economically disadvantaged area. Here, Shelina added that "the schools are

also lacking the facilities, needed to teach following CLT so we need to follow the traditional way”.

Furthermore, while talking about the ways of conducting the class, the participants gave the common reply that no group work, presentation, projects, etc. are taken place in English class. In this regard Poresh explained that neither these are included in the syllabus nor they (S) need these in the examination. Shahin pointed out several reasons by saying that “as the people (including T, P school authority, S) are not familiar with these, so they are not going to value it, the classroom size is not appropriate for practicing those and also it is the tradition or mentality here that teachers will prepare everything for the students and the students (S) will learn as much as their teachers will teach them”.

Many of the participants admitted that most of the classes are teacher-centered. Deka, Bani, Daisi and many more stated that they (T) are kind of master controller: in charge of everything in the class, they determine when the students should speak and they (S) speak only when they (S) are asked and allowed to talk. Besides, Gora mentioned that “teachers can often predict the responses of the students as everything is mapped out and there is no exchanging of ideas between teachers and students rather the students do what they are asked to do and listen accordingly”. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that the classrooms are entirely teacher-oriented where students are just the elements of this teaching-learning process.

5.2: Syllabus and Language Teaching Materials Regulating English Language Teaching

This section intends to show the type of materials teachers use to teach the learners English- whether they (T) use authentic materials along with the course materials or just the prescribed materials. It also includes whether the teachers teach just to complete the syllabus

or they give them knowledge about the different aspects of the English language, make them introduced with the real use of English, try to make them proficient and communicative or not.

Many of the participants agreed that they use materials which are designed for language learning purposes like different grammar books and English for Today textbooks. She stated that “Once I used English magazine and newspaper in class but got complained as these were not included in the syllabus. Not only that, many teachers and guardians stated that I was just wasting the class time, not concerned about the students’ future and in this way my students will cut a bad figure in the exam. From then, I just teach them what is in their syllabus.”

Asma, Anis, Poresh and six more emphasized the same fact that they only teach which is required for the course. Nabid in this regard mentioned that “The parents and school authority become satisfied only when they find the syllabus completed”. He and four more added that they (P and authority) actually want a brilliant result from the students and in our country, for the primary level, it is possible only by making them mastered in the required books. Again, Moynul said that “Everyone wants a better outcome from the examinations and so completing the syllabus effectively is the main target of us (T)”.

Thus, the researcher understood that teachers use materials that are required to complete the syllabus and are fixed by the Government.

5.3: The Reality of Teacher Feedback

This section is about how the teachers give feedback to the students on their performance: whether they give oral feedback or written or both.

The participants including Moynul, Shelina, Bani and Daisi said that they prefer and give written feedback more than oral as it is long-lasting and the parents, noticing it can take

steps to guide their child accordingly. Nabid and other five teachers told that they provide the students with the correct form of all mistakes they (S) do in the scripts and they (T) do it by crossing and underlining the wrong word, phrase, and sentences and write down the correct form over or beside the mistake.

While talking about the oral feedbacks, Bani, Anis along with others said that they hardly give oral feedbacks as the students always perform writing activity. Here, Moynul replied, “at the time of giving scripts and when they (S) answer the questions, asked by them (T), they give feedbacks like ‘you are right’, ‘Thank You’, ‘You need to study more’, ‘you did well’, ‘I will tell your parents that you are not studying at all’.

However, all of them emphasized the fact that written feedbacks work well as the parents and home tutors can notice those and make them practiced repeatedly. In this way, there is less chance of making the same mistakes again. On the other hand, Bani said, “there is evident that the students never tell the negative opinions to their parents or others, they get from their teachers”.

5.4. Teachers’ Suggestions about Teaching Strategy to make Learners more proficient

This part focuses on the thoughts of the teachers they think need to be introduced in the English teaching process for improving the learners’ skills.

First of all, most of them agreed to the same fact that the way they teach English is not enough for the learners to become proficient. The reasons behind this, according to Gora and Asma, that the teachers are teaching them (S) about the language like the meaning of the word, the sentence structure and the grammar rules, but are not teaching them how to use those words in the real life. Another participant Moynul told that “as English is our second language, so it is true that we need to learn it but at the same time we need to use it in real life communication. Prodip said that as Bangladesh is being digitalized, so introducing

technology in teaching is important so that the students can learn in several ways and become self-dependent. He added that “the teachers need training on the use of technology in English teaching in the remote areas as most of them (T) are not willing to use technology out of fear and lacking as well”.

Nabid, Shelina, and two more teachers came up with the same point that the teaching method or style needs to be changed. They went on saying that it is needed to know the rules, memorize some elements as it is not our first language but at one point there needs a shift from accuracy to fluency. Teachers should give chances to the students to participate in the class, try to make them interact with each other in English and at least English class should be entirely conducted in English. Bani suggested that “rather than memorizing paragraphs or compositions, the teachers can show them something and ask them to write about it in their own words”. She also gave an example which the researcher found really interesting and it was like if the teachers want the students to write about “cow”, then they (T) can show them a cow (S) first and then ask for writing what they saw on their own words. She insisted, “It will improve their creativity and writing skills because they will use their own words, not the stilted one”.

Thus, I found lacking the appropriateness of the English teaching-learning process of this area.

Chapter 6

Parents' Expectations and Perspectives about English Language learning

This section aims to discuss the thoughts and expectations of the parents regarding English teaching-learning. It will include why they (P) think their children need to be good at English, why they (P) emphasize English tuition and what are their expectations from their children.

6.1. Attitude towards English

This section will show the reasons why parents want their children to be proficient in English.

Parents including Alvi, Mondol, Rekah, Sultan and five more shared a similar opinion that as today nothing is possible without English and it is ruling the whole world, so learning English effectively is very essential. Besides, Reza emphasized a fact by saying “a better proficiency in English is required for higher studies and job sectors. My son will never get a good job if he does not have good command in English.” Rotna and Reba told to the researcher that people in all classes value those who have a better competency in English. They again added that as English is needed throughout life, so they want their children to be proficient learners in English.

6.2. Parents' Comments on the Necessity of Private Tuition

In the next section I will discuss the perceived need for private tuition by the parents.

All participants came up with the same point that their children learn better in tuition as the private tutors or coaching centers notice their (S) activities carefully, solve the mistakes they (S) make in the class and exam and make them prepared for the exam. Mrinmoy regarding this said that private teachers teach them (S) word by word and line by line. Additionally, Alvi, Minu, and two more parents said that working parents get less time to teach their child, so private tutors can fill-up that gap. Minu regarding this stated that “I am a working mother and I have another little child, so it is not possible for me to give my full effort and concentration on my child’s study”. Moreover, Rekha and Reba mentioned that English is not an easy subject to understand and often the children do not understand the topics in the class and they even cannot say it in front of everyone out of fear, hesitation. Reba added that the school teachers are seemed less careful to handle the difficulties of their child. Due to these factors, they (S) can express themselves quite well in front of the private teachers and vice versa the teachers themselves can look after their (S) problems and can solve it”. In particular, Sultan at one point said, “Private tutors are making extra money through tuition, so they become more careful while teaching at home and coaching centre.”

Hence, the researcher again understood that in the case of English teaching-learning the role of private tuition cannot be overlooked.

6.3. Parents’ Expectations and Suggestions

This part will present the expectations of the parents from their children in terms of learning English and also discuss some suggestions they (P) give to improve the teaching system.

Most of the parents shared a common thing that they want their children to get good marks in English. However, Sultan with two others came up with a slightly different view

mentioning that only passing examination is not enough for the children rather they should be able to communicate in English effectively.

Mondol, Alvi, Rotna and few other participants said that the teachers should speak in English with them (S) so that they can learn how to interact in English. Here, Minu added- “our children do what and how their teachers ask to do anything. So, if the teachers encourage them to speak in English they will definitely do so”. Reba then mentioned- “teachers can focus more on free handwriting than memorization and can ask them to read English newspapers, magazines and to listen to English news. In this way they (S) can be skilled in writing, reading and listening.”

Thus, the evidences provided above give a clear idea about how English teaching-learning occurs in rural or remote areas like Swapnopur and the obstacles they have in effective learning and teaching.

Chapter 7

Discussion

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the responses, the researcher received while interviewing and observing the participants. It also highlights several theories and ideas that have a connection with the responses. The discussion is divided and presented thematically.

7.1. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as a Dominant Method

From the responses, the first theme that the researcher has found is that the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is a predominant method of teaching English in Swapnopur. Responses from teachers and students to the way of teaching and learning English correspond to this and it wholly matches GTM and how it works. GTM is also called the ‘classical method’ which focuses on teaching grammar, translation, and structure of a language. This method emphasizes on how to translate elements from English to native language and learn vocabulary (Benati, 2018). Through this method, students learn isolated words and are encouraged only to memorize the meaning of the words without knowing the use of that word in practical life. This method uses a “deductive” way of learning where at first the learners are taught the grammar rules and then they are introduced with examples, so they just can use the language traditionally and systematically. Furthermore, the teacher’s role here is as a controller and the focus of the class is given on reading and writing.

Therefore, the findings match with the process of GTM as the participants (both students and teachers) agree on the point that from the start of learning the English language as well as teaching (in case of the teachers), the learners of rural areas are encouraged to follow rote learning. A reason why this is encouraged is that the classrooms have a traditional seating arrangement and teachers are comfortable with this method. Moreover, the medium of

instruction is Bangla (students' and teachers' L1) with little or no use of target language. The vocabulary taught is a list of isolated words with a more elaborated and lengthy explanation of grammatical rules. All in all, the emphasis on grammar is prime. Besides, another most important point is that GTM follows the 'bottom-up approach' which Brown (2000) considers a strategy of learning language piece by piece and to some extent chronologically. For example, language learning starts with the memorization of the alphabets, then meaning of the words and sentences and finally the meaning of any particular text. Thus, it can be concluded that the teaching-learning process of Swapnopur supports the idea of GTM.

7.2. The Real Role of Teacher in Swapnopur

Responses from teachers and students provide evidence that teachers play the traditional role or specifically the role of a 'controller'. It is because as some of the participants stated that they are not only in charge of every moment of the class but also determine the students' activity such as when they should do various activities and what they should do. Besides, teachers can even guess the responses of the students because everything is "mapped out ahead- of time" (Brown, 1994). Many parents interviewed said that the students are brought up in such a way where they believe their teachers to be always right and they have to do everything accordingly. Apart from these, in Swapnopur or specifically in rural areas, teachers along with preparing the lesson plans, control everything and never address individual authority and encourage class participation or communication.

Apart from these, in our country, in case of learning, we find a close connection between 'Teacher' and 'Feedback' as most of the time not only we expect feedbacks from our teachers but also it is them whose words we take most seriously. Therefore, this section intends to briefly talk about the importance and expectation regarding feedback and the feedbacks students generally get in the rural areas.

First and foremost, feedbacks are provided to justify our activity: whether we are doing right or we need improvements. In the previous section it is evident that in Swapnopur, the teachers play the role of a controller, so it is their responsibility to give proper feedback. However, the question arises how this feedback is provided and to what extent these are effective. Drew (2002) found that students can find out their strengths and weakness through feedback from their teachers and it is important for their better performance in exams. Again, Clynes and Rafter (2008) mentioned that feedback enhances students' confidence, motivation, self-esteem, and interpersonal skills. Hence, the view of Shelina, Nabid, and some other teachers show that teachers give negative feedback more than positive feedback and generally provide direct corrective feedback where the students are provided with the correct form of their all mistakes by crossing out or underlining the wrong word and sentence. Moreover, the data and class observation are evident that teachers also give unfocused corrective feedback and there is no use of indirect, metalinguistic, focused or electronic feedback. As a result, it might not contribute to long term learning as they (S) get everything prepared and they do not engage themselves in deeper processing of learning. Thus, it is evident that written feedbacks are given dominantly in Swapnopur.

7.3. Private Tuition: The Most Influential Sector

In recent years, private tuition has played the most significant role in the English teaching-learning context of Bangladesh. Participants (Students) such as Supti, Afsana, Abrar and many more said that private tuition of English is effective for them as they can understand these lectures better than those in their schools. Also, they get a chance for regular practice and regular assessment and feedback. Parents such as Minu, Alvi and many more think that their children become more regular and have more focus on studying English while taking private tuition. This gives parents the opportunity to keep track of their children's

progress by interacting with the teachers regularly. Moreover, in private tuition, teachers are more focused on providing specific lectures and the lessons are catered to provide a better quality of education as there is a smaller number of students in each batch. The batches are created depending on the proficiency level of the students. In particular, they focus on the point that the classroom size is very big and students do not have the same intelligence and ability to understand. In order to this, it is quite impossible for them to give individual feedbacks and take extra care in school, and, therefore, private tuition helps them out from this particular problem. Therefore, the researcher realized that private tuition has indeed a significant role in the English teaching-learning context of Swapnopur.

7.4. Examination Shapes Teaching- Learning

The overall responses of the participants to the teaching-learning process highly support that here teaching and learning are entirely dependent on the exam syllabus. Participants such as Mondol, Reba, Tanvir, Deka and many more from three groups clearly stated that materials, used and taught are those which are included in exam syllabus, students go to private tuition for making themselves prepared for exam and even they (S) become skilled in writing and reading as these two are tested in exam. Besides, the example of using commercial guide books, model composition, teachers' acknowledgments regarding not teaching proportions of textbooks that seem less important for the exam, being pressurized by principals and parents to cover the exam syllabus justify the researcher's understanding that teaching-learning of English is entirely dependent on the exam.

7.5. Absence of the Use of Technology

Today, the use of technology in education has become an increasingly important area of research and it is being used as a medium of encouraging inquiry, enhancing communication, preparing teaching materials and assisting students' self-expression (Beak et al., 2008). Yet, it is the harsh truth that rural areas do not get the touch of technology as

expected and Swapnopur as a remote area is falling behind in this aspect. From the class observation and interviews, the researcher found out that teachers of these schools still used only blackboard, chalk, and duster and there is no use of modern technology like projector, video presentation in the classrooms. However, there is a computer lab in the privately-run school with a smaller number of computers. Teachers in these schools are not willing to use technology as they do not have proper training and are not aware of using technology in the classrooms. Moreover, using technology has not been made compulsory yet, so the school authority is not taking it into account. As a result, the students cannot keep pace with modern learning strategies and are learning through traditional ways.

7.6. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Expectation and Extent of Language Skills development

The teachers interviewed commented that along with accuracy, the students need to have fluency and ability to communicate in English effectively. This gives rise to the idea of the desire for effective implementation of CLT. It is because CLT focuses on ‘communicative competence’ which strengthen four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening through meaningful communication and active participation in class (Richard et al., 2001).

Class observation and interviews reveal that teaching-learning of English goes on in the traditional way even though the curriculum of Bangladesh emphasizes communicative activities. As a result, the learners know about the language, but they do not know how to use real-life situations. As the focus is on the improvement of writing and reading, so they are skilled in these two sectors but remain unskilled in speaking and listening. On one hand, the schools do not have a listening lab or speaking activity; on the other hand, these two are not included in the structure of the national exam. In particular, the result of the interview

illustrated that here learning is exam-oriented and so no emphasis is given on these two skills.

As a result, the students lag behind to be proficient in these two skills.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study attempts to show the entire scenario of English teaching-learning in the primary level education of one of the rural areas in Bangladesh. This research took Swapnopur as a sample rural area. In the country, students' formal education begins with primary education and it is the most important period of their educational life. It is because whatever a learner learns at this early age is a foundation for later years and will help them in later levels of education. Due to this, proper attention should be given in this period and if it is about learning the second language, extra care and attention are required.

However, in Bangladesh, English as a second language is learned and taught from the beginning of students' educational life. The national English curriculum (2012) of Bangladesh is planned to achieve comprehensive communicative competencies by setting the objectives of helping the students develop their four language skills (writing, reading, speaking and listening) and use these competencies in real-life situations. Still, the students cannot communicate in it effectively even after growing up and always lacking in several language skills, especially speaking and listening skills. In particular, if it is about the learners of rural areas, the case seems worst as being the master controller of the class, the teachers follow the traditional way of teaching where there is no use of multimedia or technology. Students remain silent in the classroom and teachers hardly encourage them to participate in the discussion. Exam even in the primary level plays a big role to determine teaching and learning. Moreover, poor socio-economic conditions, large number of students in each classroom, poorly trained teachers, unsupportive and indifferent attitude of teachers and other stakeholders (such as students' parents) are also affecting these students progress and for these reasons they remain behind comparing with the students from the city areas.

Students' English learning is mainly syllabus-oriented which always encourages rote learning. As a result, they might have good command in English grammar but fall behind in communication. The national English Curriculum of 2012 proposes that the students will be able to describe people, place, follow instructions, participate in communication, discussion, recognize sound, stress, intonation and so on but most of the students fail to achieve this. In particular, the whole teaching-learning process is dependent on the exam syllabus and gaining a brilliant result with good grades. Due to this, with the absence of speaking and listening activity, the learners perform a huge amount of writing and to some extent reading activity as these two are tested on the examination.

Nevertheless, the researcher as a resident of this rural area intended to suggest some Recommendations to introduce quality education in English in Swapnopur at the primary level. They are:

1. Considering English as a Language:

English should be considered as a language, not as an academic subject. It is because when it will be considered as a language, then everyone will try to use it and communicate with it, not try to memorize the form, structure and rules. The focus of English teaching-learning badly needs a gradual shift from 'exam syllabus oriented' to achieve 'communicative competence'.

2. Shifting focus of English language Curriculum and Assessment:

In our country education is exam syllabus oriented and achieving academic success-oriented and it is not possible to lessen the effect and impact of the exam syllabus and result overnight. Due to this, speaking and listening activities needs to be included in the national curriculum and students should be tested on these two so that the learners learn and are taught these two for at least making a good result in examination. Moreover, exam topics should be chosen in such a way where the students need to write it in their own way, not through memorization.

3. Going beyond Method: An Eclectic Approach:

Rather than following any teaching method alone teachers should decide which one will work better for their students and which method is suitable. It is because English is our second language and we need to know the grammar and structure first and then gradually need to shift our focus from accuracy to fluency. To do so, borrowing books from the library and then writing and presenting the summary on that particular book in English might be made compulsory for the students by the school authority. It will also help to improve listening skill as well because everyone in the class has to listen carefully. Again, in this aspect, school authority can announce a prize to motivate students.

4. Selection and Development of English Teachers:

Teachers should be selected based on a certain number of criterions rather than any kind of lobbying and before taking a class they should be given proper training on language learning methods. An English teacher should have the quality of conducting the whole class in English and it should be monitored whether the teachers are providing effective feedback or not. Seminar, workshop, training, etc. can be arranged for training the teachers regarding how to take class effectively.

5. Use of Technology:

Technologies should be introduced even though the economic condition might not be favorable. Firstly, to introduce technology for a better educational environment, the govt. and school authority need to make its use compulsory and the govt. should provide sufficient training to the teachers. Furthermore, the teachers might be uninterested in using technologies but this unwillingness and indifference might be improved by making several policies like if the teacher does not use technology in his/her class, salary will be deducted and the promotion will be stopped. Finally, the school authority should inform their needs to the Govt. and non-govt. organizations.

To conclude, the researcher comments that the teaching-learning process of rural areas is not up to the mark where a large number of students are from these rural areas. Thus, the government with the help of other non-governmental organizations should monitor it properly as education is the backbone of a nation and the significance of English is growing day by day.

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