

EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN SECONDARY LEVEL ONLINE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES DURING PANDEMIC

By

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the requirements for the degree of
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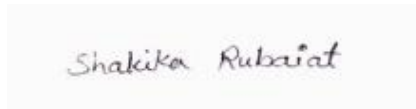
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my 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 have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

Ethical issues were sincerely taken care of while conducting this research. In the beginning of this research, the researcher had submitted a comprehensive ethics form which was approved by the Thesis Committee.

Before data collection, the participants were explained about the purpose and significance of this research over phone and after their initial permission they were sent a formal consent letter to sign for taking part in this research. Moreover, a consent form was sent to the parents of the research participants who were under 18. All the participants were assured that the information they will share will be kept anonymous throughout the research and they can even back out anytime they feel uncomfortable. The researcher also informed the participants that they can skip any question which is sensitive to them. Thus, during data collection, whenever the participants hesitated to answer any question, it was not preceded further. Besides, the researcher sought permission before recording the conversation and communicated with the participants that all of the data will be kept secured and deleted after this research. The researcher also tried to maintain neutrality throughout the research by using the recorded and transcribed data while interpreting them to avoid personal biases.

Abstract

Foreign language anxiety among learners is a vital issue around the globe in the field of foreign language education. As the educational institutions of Bangladesh had to take an unexpected shift towards online learning in order to continue education during this covid-19 pandemic, it is essential to improve the quality of English language classes in the online platform. Therefore, this research focuses on foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms. The present research has adopted a qualitative method with some supporting quantitative data and collected data from five secondary level schools in Dhaka to explore both the teachers' and students' perception regarding foreign language anxiety in online English classes as well as sought to find out the reasons behind it. The findings provided in this research paper highlight that foreign language anxiety is less in online English language classrooms despite some challenges. It also identified that students' personality, self-motivation, learning environment and teacher student relationship have substantial impact in causing foreign language anxiety in online English classes.

Key words: Foreign language anxiety, Online language learning.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is an emotion prevalent among language learners all over the world established in the field of education particularly in language learning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladesh had to pull off a major shift in the field of education by introducing online education especially in schools and colleges. As schools are now operating online, I think this field of online education is an important area to conduct researches for further development in the field of foreign language education. Hence, this study tries to unravel the perception of secondary level students and teachers on foreign language anxiety in the online English language classes through Qualitative approach. The study proposes to collect qualitative data supported by some quantitative data through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Interview and close ended survey from secondary level students and teachers in four urban Bengali medium schools of Dhaka city.

1.2 Research Topic

Foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Spielberger (1983), anxiety is defined as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (as cited in Zhang, 2014, p. 30). However, it is of utmost significance to differentiate between different types of anxiety arising due to different factors. Here, Foreign language anxiety refers to a unique and complex type of anxiety related to learners’ self-perceptions,

beliefs, feelings and behaviors limited to foreign language learning classrooms because of having a distinctive learning process (Horwitz et al.,1986).Foreign language anxiety is an internationally recognized phenomenon and a number of studies have been conducted regarding this issue which indicates that ‘anxiety’ is one of the most prominent affective factors in foreign language learning (Horwitz et al, 1986; Liu & Huang, 2011). A study in Pakistan revealed that learners feel anxious in English language classes and brought into light some prevalent causes behind language learning anxiety from intermediate level learners’ perspectives. Moreover, this study suggested that language anxiety is a multi-faceted and complicated phenomenon which needs further exploration (Bhatti, 2016). Not to mention here in Bangladesh, many students struggle in English language learning because of having this anxiety. English being a global language it is essential to have a good command over this language for students to survive in this competitive world. Hence, through this study, the researcher wants to explore secondary level English language learners’ and teachers perception on foreign language anxiety in the context of Bangladesh. Although quite a few researches have been conducted regarding foreign language anxiety in Bangladesh, this study will focus on online English classes during this unprecedented pandemic, as Bangladeshi schools had to start taking online classes for the first time in this time which will unravel ways to improve the field of language learning education.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the students perceive foreign language anxiety in online English Language classes?
2. Why foreign language anxiety happens among students in online English language classes?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the role of foreign language anxiety in Online English language classrooms from Bangladeshi perspective. To be precise, this study intends to find out the perceptions of Bengali medium secondary level students and English language teachers regarding how this online English language classroom is working for them and the ways it can be improved in terms of English language learning. Moreover, this study will not only try to understand what students' and teachers' think about foreign language anxiety but also will dig deep into finding the causes of foreign language anxiety in online English language classes to unravel the root causes behind it. Besides, it will also seek for solutions to decrease the level of anxiety among students in online English classes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will shed light on the present situation of online language classes to understand one of the notable challenges of English language learning among students; that is foreign language anxiety. The findings of the research will provide information to revise our present teaching-learning process to ensure quality in online language education. Moreover, as most of the research on foreign language anxiety is conducted with college or university level language learners, the researcher could find very few researches on this issue with the secondary level learners. Hence, this research hopes to bridge the gap of exploring foreign language anxiety in online languages classes in the above mentioned context of Bangladesh. Moreover, this study seeks attention of the language educators by creating further scopes for research in areas which includes foreign language anxiety and online language learning.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety:

Anxiety can be observed in not only foreign language classes but also in other classes, yet research shows some distinctive characteristics of formal foreign language anxiety which might provoke anxiety in learners who are learning foreign language rather than other learning situations. To illustrate, Foreign Language Anxiety can be defined as a unique and complex type of anxiety related to learners' self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors limited to foreign language learning classrooms because of having a distinctive learning process (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). For instance, a classic example that supports the existence of anxiety among students is, when learners "freeze up" in the middle of the test despite having the required knowledge which results in poor performance (MacIntyre, 1995). This is a different type of anxiety from other academic anxieties because it has a unique metacognitive element which makes the learners aware and feels like they are "deprived" from their comfortable and normal means of communication, which is their mother tongue. Hence, learners feel the pressure that they have to communicate through a language in which they are not enough competent. And this creates the feelings of inadequacy in them both in terms of academic achievement and self-representation (Schlenker & Leary, 1985). Moreover, this feeling of linguistics limitation might make the learners feel disparity between their "true" self and a more limited self when they present in a second language other than their mother tongue (Horwitz et al., 1986). In other words, this inability to present ideas and opinions by one in the target language which might threaten one's self-esteem as well as their self-image (Horwitz et al., 1986). In fact, this incompetency to use the language without any errors (mispronunciation, grammatical mistakes

etc.) lead to negative evaluation by others and the failure of comprehending the target language (spoken and written inputs including instructions) results in embarrassment among students as well as confusion about the proper response or action (Horwitz, 2001). It happens because “language and self/identity are so closely bound, if indeed they are not one and the same thing, that a perceived attack on one is an attack on the other” (Cohen & Norst, 1989, p. 76).

Other researchers also connected the role of foreign language learning with second language learning and English being both second and foreign language in this country, these two are closely related. According to Krashen (1982), affective factors have strong connection with the acquisition of second language which reinforces the role of foreign language anxiety. As the level of affective filter varies among individuals, “Affective Filter Hypothesis” suggests creating a second language learning environment with lower affective filter. And anxiety being one of the prominent affective variables, it increases the affective filter in individual learners which impedes language learning by blocking their ability to process and understand the message from available comprehensible input in the target language. In other words, here foreign language anxiety works as an affective filter which leads the students to being unreceptive to language inputs which deters their language learning (Krashen, 1980). Language learning environment plays an important role to keep the affective filters low and thus reducing anxiety in language learning. Extrinsic motivators such as socio-cultural context, especially language learning environment where second language or foreign language learning takes place, has a substantial impact on students’ language anxiety (Schwartz, 1972, as cited in Scovel, 1978).

2.2 Types of Foreign Language Anxiety:

Research shows that this foreign language anxiety affects in the whole language learning process having impact on all the four main skills of a language- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. And researchers are already working to investigate these specific types of anxiety related to foreign language learning and its skill areas: foreign language writing anxiety (Cheng et al., 1999; Daly & Miller, 1975), foreign language reading anxiety (Saito et al., 1999), Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (Luo, 2011; Horwitz et al., 1986) and foreign language listening comprehension anxiety (Kim, 2000; Vogely, 1998). According to a study conducted among intermediate level Spanish students revealed that nature of speech influencing communication apprehension is one of the major factors behind foreign language listening anxiety (Vogely, 1998). Moreover, Kim (2000) through his research found that self-confidence while listening is another key factor impacting listening anxiety. Subsequently, Speaking in foreign language is another area where learners struggle and feel anxious the most. Young (1999) has stated negative thoughts and fear of failure of students as the main factors behind speaking anxiety (as cited in Yassin & Razak, 2018). This foreign language anxiety affects in reading skills as well. Having reading anxiety might result in poor understanding of a text in the target language. Saito et al. (1999) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and its results which revealed that most of the learners, who have foreign language anxiety, also have foreign language reading anxiety which ultimately impacts in having lower grades in the examination. In addition to that, a research conducted by Cheng (2004) conforms the existence of Foreign language writing anxiety and offered Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) which disclosed three dimensional conceptualization of anxiety such as- cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior, which has negative co-relation with the language

learning ability of the learners. Last but not the least, studies have also showed that foreign language anxiety has a negative effect on academic performance in foreign language learning (Chen & Chang, 2004).

2.3 Understanding Foreign Language Anxiety among Students:

Studies have shown that in foreign language classrooms students frequently enter with anxiety (Yoshida, 2010). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) observed some prominent characteristics of an anxious student. Anxious students refuse to participate voluntarily in activities of the classroom, feels discomfort in experience of second language learning. Moreover, they are always scared of making mistakes and avoid trying new linguistic forms (as cited in Burden, 2004). In addition, students having high level of foreign language anxiety often shows avoidance behavior such as being absent in class or being irregular in homeworks as well. Anxious students also tend to forget vocabularies and grammar they have previously learned in test situations (Horwitz et al., 1986).

2.3.1 Physical and Emotional Reactions: Andrade and Williams in their study found out some common physical reactions among students going through anxiety. The most common physical reaction of them all is faster heartbeat and emotional reaction is that students feel that their mind goes blank and they cannot concentrate further. Apart from these, some other physical reactions are such as feeling hot or burning cheeks, sweating and feeling a lump in the throat (2009, p. 11). Nonetheless, Williams and Andrade reported that it is quite visible that these emotional reactions could be related to many of the anxiety-provoking situations among students, for instance, students' remaining silent in classes and not responding promptly (2008).

2.3.2 Expressive and Verbal Reactions: Foreign language anxiety among students is also associated with verbal and expressive reactions. It means that students feel anxious while planning and producing something in the target language more than having input in the target language. It is again combined with fear of negative evaluation among students leading to their loss of self-esteem. Not to mention, this fear and lack of confidence is accountable for most of the anxiety provoking situations (Andrade and Williams, 2008).

2.4 Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety: The main factors of foreign language anxiety are mostly caused by processing and output related tasks. Fear of having a bad impression or receiving criticism from others is the most cited cause behind foreign language anxiety which leads learners to feel less competent than their peers. Similar results are visible from a study on Japanese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners (Burden, 2004). Overall, the result of this study holds processing and output accountable for majority of the anxiety provoking situations that has been reported. Here, the learners mostly experience anxiety for not being able to achieve a goal and the specially the desire to express themselves efficiently (ibid.). Also, in half of the cases, students feel that teachers are responsible for anxiety provoking situations in the foreign language classroom and to some extent they find themselves accountable as well (Williams and Andrade, 2008, p.187). In addition, research shows that when teachers correct student's error in a discouraging way, it provokes anxiety among them. Here, though students are aware about the importance of error correction for the development of their language learning, incorrect responses and making errors in front of their peers still induces anxiety among them (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Moreover, Williams and Andrade presented some more anxiety provoking situations in foreign language classrooms in their study. Firstly, students become anxious when the teacher asks them

questions by randomly selecting and at that time others become anxious thinking about the possibility of their turn. Also, while delivering a speech in front of the peers, students usually feel anxiety especially if peers stare at them while at the time of speaking in front of them. On top of that, the long pauses while thinking of what to say next makes them more uncomfortable (2008, p. 186). Apart from speaking activities and negative evaluation of the peers, lower level proficiency of the learners is another vital factor working behind foreign language anxiety. The low proficiency or inability of the learners to use the target language and express through it makes them anxious as they always tend to overthink about making errors (Kondo & Yang, 2003). However, the relationship between foreign language anxiety and low proficiency of the learners is still debatable on the basis of “chicken egg discussion”. The debate is about whether low proficiency of learners is a ‘cause’ or ‘result’ of foreign language anxiety (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991).

Nonetheless, two variables such as situational variables and learner variables also have significant influence on language anxiety among students. Here, the existence of "situational variables, for example, course level, course organization, course activities, instructor behavior and attitudes, and social interaction among learners" are explored in previous researches. Furthermore, they demonstrated learner variables that "include, ability, age, attitudes, beliefs, culture, gender, learning styles, and personality variables among others" (as cited in Williams & Andrade, 2008).

2.5 English Language Learning Context of Bangladesh:

Before this covid-19 pandemic, English has always been taught in physical classrooms in schools. English language provides more opportunities to socio-economic and technological

development of a country. Also, being skilled in English creates better job opportunities leading to better living standard for individuals and that is why learning English has become quite mandatory in Bangladesh (Chaudhury, 2011). Though English language is a compulsory subject in our country from primary to tertiary level in madrasahs, schools and colleges' yet people struggle to speak or write properly in English even after completing their higher education most of the time (Shahriar, 2012). One of the prominent reasons behind Bangladeshi learners' failure in attaining a significant level of proficiency in English may be that they go through anxious feelings in English language classrooms (Das, 2020). Due to this high anxiety, or precisely foreign language anxiety, the learners perceive that their English language ability gets restricted. These learners might feel insecure of their limited linguistic competency in English being exposed to others resulting in less participation in classroom activities (Das, 2020).

2.6 Online Language Learning:

Online learning is an educational alternative which is growing in this technological era for adults. It has maintained a crescent demand since the very beginning because adults, who cannot attend physical classes regularly due to time and space constraints are benefitted through this online learning (Estevez et al., 2015). Means et al. (2009) refer online learning as the "learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet". Hockly (2015) defines the term 'online language learning' to refer to language learning that takes place fully online, via the internet, without any face-to-face interaction in both formal language and informal learning environment. Due to Covis-19 pandemic, several prominent Bangladeshi secondary level schools have shifted in to taking online classes (Abbas, 2020).

Alberth (2011) mentioned that students' personal characteristics have influence in their perceptions towards online courses, ultimately impacting on their performance and outcomes. He added that physical absence of the teachers can damage some students' motivation. In his study some students stated that they prefer conventional classrooms over online courses for effective learning, even though they had enjoyed interacting in online courses. In contrast, other students said that they prefer online courses for future classes and had enjoyed working and interacting online. According to Pichette, some students having high level of foreign language anxiety tend to enroll in an online course to secure their anonymity, which make them believe that they will not have to speak and interact with their peers (2009).

Albert also claims that, students' individual characteristics might partially influence the perception of online learning. Independent students and students who have previous exposure of technology are more likely to take advantage of online classes than the students who have no experience with technology, or have to depend on the presence of a teacher for confidence (2011). Moreover, Kirovska-Simjanoska (2016) mentioned that digital learning depends on initiative and motivation of the students. However, while studying at home, students might become prone to distractions which can affect their learning.

One of the most common arguments regarding online language learning is about oral proficiency. Blake et al. (2008) presented that many educators and institutions still have doubts on developing foreign language oral skills in online courses. Furthermore, a study in Chile during the Covid-19 pandemic shows that lack of interaction with students and poor internet connection are two of the major challenges of online classes (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Moreover, the obscurity in online language classrooms as a result of interacting in a foreign language without verbal or visual indications might lead the students to a sense of

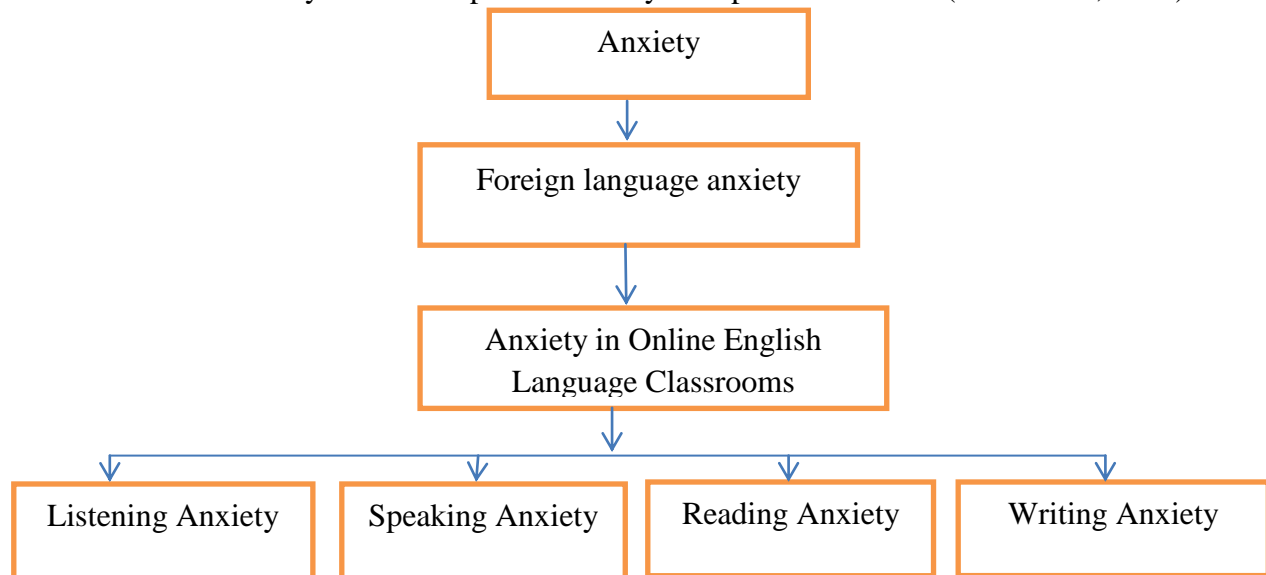
isolation from others which again increase their level of anxiety (as cited in Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to research more on this area as these challenges in online language classes might hinder the linguistic achievement of the students.

Not to mention, there are plenty of researches in online language learning yet in Bangladeshi online English language classroom context it is rare due to the sudden shift in education system of this country. Hence, this research will focus on online English language classrooms and explore secondary level students' perspectives regarding foreign language anxiety in this platform.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework that is followed in this research is adapted from the framework developed by Yassin and Razak (2018). It is a much simpler version of the framework which the researcher has modified according to the context and the purpose of the research. It shows that anxiety is one of the major psychological aspects which is detrimental to learners' improvement in English language skills, specifically in a foreign or second language learning situation (Razak et al., 2017). Here, Foreign language anxiety is a specific type of anxiety related to foreign language learning situation (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128), in spite of being derived from general anxiety that people feels within themselves. This foreign language anxiety can occur in online English language classes due to different factors which is related to the four skills of language learning- listening speaking, reading and writing. According to previous studies, speaking is the most anxiety provoking skill for the students. For instance, Philips (1992) found a negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and speaking performance of the students; as it is seen that the learners having higher level of anxiety are more likely to say less and use short

units in the communication process. Similarly, listening anxiety is related to foreign language anxiety and studies show that students experiencing higher level of foreign language anxiety often have higher level of listening anxiety as well (Hussein, 2005). Sellers (2000) investigated the connection between language proficiency and reading anxiety which indicate that the students experiencing higher level of foreign language anxiety usually less understand the language content of a passage and suffer from having more off-task thoughts in comparison to other students. However, the result of the same study has shown a few positive aspects of foreign language anxiety on reading skill as well. Last but not the least, exploring the relationship between writing performance and anxiety, research has shown that students who are less proficient in the target language experience higher level of anxiety. It is because they have insufficient vocabulary which hampers the ability to express their ideas (Daud et al., 2005).



Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study is a Qualitative study which is again supported by some quantitative data. This qualitative research approach is “best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). In this study, online English language classes are explored to uncover the participants’ experience of foreign language anxiety in the online platform. Hence, this process is suitable for the researcher to build a complete picture of foreign language anxiety among secondary level students and to have profound understanding of the current situation of online English language classrooms.

3.2 Research Site

The research site includes five Bengali medium schools in Dhaka which are selected conveniently. Schools which have been continuing its academic works through online classes during this pandemic are chosen to get appropriate data for the research.

3.3 Research Participants

The research participants are 74 secondary level students and five secondary level English language teacher. All the participants are selected conveniently. These participants include one teacher from each school and the number of students varied from school to school. They are grade 9 and 10 students (age range 14-17 years including both male and female), who have been

attending online English language classes, and secondary level English language teachers (both male and female) who have started taking online classes during this Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, they could contribute in this research by sharing their perceptions and experience of Foreign (English) language anxiety in online English classes.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The participants of this research are selected through Purposive sampling. In this research the targeted population is secondary level students and English teachers of Bengali medium schools in Dhaka, specifically the schools which are conducting educational work through online platform. The researcher in this research selected students who have at least 10 months of experience attending online classes, and teachers who have at least five years of teaching experience, including having at least 10 months of online English teaching experience in secondary level.

Institution	Number of Teachers Interviewed	Number of students in FGD	Number of students Surveyed
A School	1	6	14
B School	1	8	15
C School	1	7	20
D School	1	6	10
E School	1	6	15

Table 1: School wise number of research participants

3.5 Data Collection Methods

For this qualitative research, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview are the main research tools. In addition to that, this research is supported by some quantitative data using a survey questionnaire. The researcher collected the qualitative data (FGD and interview) through zoom calls to get data from the students and the teachers. Survey is used to collect data from the students through Google form as well. All these procedures completed online ensuring safety of the participants amidst this pandemic. Prior to the data collection, a consent form was sent to the parents of the students (as their age is below 18), the teachers and the Head Teacher of the schools for them to know the purpose of the research mentioning that the collected data will be presented anonymously in the research.

3.5.1 Focus group discussion

FGD being one of the main data collection tools, the researcher arranged five FGDs (one for each school) with the secondary level students to know their perspective about foreign language anxiety in this ongoing online English language classes and their English language learning experience in online platforms. The researcher played a role of a facilitator and recorded the discussion through zoom app. Firstly, the researcher gave introduction to the group and tried to create a friendly environment so that participants can feel at ease to share their opinion to the group. The FGD questionnaire has 5 probing questions to get in depth idea of the students perception of the research questions. Nonetheless, each of the FGDs had at least six participants and was about 45-55 minutes long. Focus group discussions promote self-disclosure among participants and the interaction is more likely to bring out the best information. It works best when participants are similar and cooperative with each other because sometime in individual interviews one might be hesitant to provide information (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Hence, for

this study the focus group participants are classmates so that they feel comfortable talking to each other.

3.5.2 Interview method

Interview being another major data collection tools, the researcher interviewed five secondary level English language teachers of Bengali medium schools. All the five interviews were about 45-50 minutes long and I recorded all the conversation of the interviews through zoom app. The researcher started with some rapport building question to make the participants comfortable, and interview guide helped the researcher to keep the conversation on track. Also, the researcher asked some follow-up questions which were not mentioned in the interview questionnaire, because it was necessary to get a better understanding of the participants' point of view. These in depth interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to have one to one discussion for detailed information. Moreover, teachers' interview strengthens the data as teachers are one of the main stakeholders who observe the students' English language learning throughout the online classes. Furthermore, every individual having their "own social history and an individual perspective on the world" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 722), interviews is an effective way to access their insight.

3.5.3 Survey

The survey questionnaire includes two multiple choice questions and 15 Likert scale statements to support the answer of the research questions. The researcher got the important ideas from these survey questions and used those through some contextualization. The studies include Language Listening Anxiety Scale (Hussein, 2005), Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (Saito et al., 1999), Chinese Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986; Luo, 2011),

English Writing Anxiety Scale (Lee, 2005). Here, all the 50 students are surveyed conveniently through Google forms.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

In the FGD, the researcher played the role of a facilitator by creating a friendly environment in the beginning and just reading out the questions to the participants. Not to mention, the researcher have studied in a Bengali Medium school of Dhaka in my secondary level studies. During the time of conducting FGD and interview, the researcher tried to be mindful of her role as researcher in this particular context so that her previous experience does not mold the participants' opinions. In addition, the researcher's role includes ensuring safety of the research participants maintaining the ethical issues in every phase.

3.7 Data Analysis

In data analysis method, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data by Coding. In qualitative research, this process summarizes the collected data into smaller number of themes (Creswell, 2013) and present through narrative passages. Along with these, the supporting quantitative data is analyzed through percentages.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

A consent form is sent to the respective institutions as well as the as the parents prior to data collection as the secondary level students are aged below 18. Confidentiality had been maintained regarding the participants' identity by presenting the data using pseudonyms. Here, the consent form included a brief description on the research and the researcher's contact so that they can ask for any further actions if necessary. Moreover, the participants had the complete freedom to withdraw themselves at any point from this research. Also, the researcher deleted the

recorded data of this study after the completion of this research to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Nonetheless, the whole data collection procedure was conducted virtually keeping in mind the safety issues during this pandemic. However, the researcher taught English for two years, and studied in a Bengali medium school herself. Hence, the researcher tried to deal with her bias by not engaging in the conversation and just playing the role of a facilitator in the FGD and interview.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

The researcher did an in depth study on reviewing the literature for having a profound knowledge regarding the subject matter which helped in carrying out the study. From the study, the researcher developed a research proposal which gave the research a structure. Last but not the least, the researcher collected data from different sources (FGD, Interview, and Survey) to triangulate information and justify the themes coherently to ensure validity of this research. This is because “If themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study” (Creswell, p.302, 2014).

3.10 Limitations of the study

As all data for this research is collected virtually due to the Covid-19 situation, the researcher had to face quite a few challenges. Due to online data collection, the researcher could not observe the full body language of the participants. Also, some of the participants could not keep their video turned on due to the instability of their internet connection. For this, the researcher could not observe their facial expressions which might hinder in showcasing the complete picture of the participants in this study.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes all the data that the researcher collected from FGD and surveying secondary level students as well as interviewing secondary level English language teachers in Bengali medium schools. This chapter will also focus on the results from the collected data which will be discussed in response to the central research questions according to the following themes-

- Attitude towards online English language classes
- Foreign language anxiety in online English language classes
- Causes of foreign language anxiety in online English language classes
- Language skill based anxiety
- Impact of foreign language anxiety in online English language classes

4.2 Attitude towards online English language classes:

Both the teachers and the students consider online English language classes as a decent temporary initiative during this covid-19 pandemic, not appropriate as a permanent solution for English language learning. Though students are not habituated in online English language classes yet students, especially higher grade students from grade 9 and 10 are getting benefits from online English classes as they are matured enough to understand that they have a board examination ahead and these classes are not going to come back. However, the consensus achieved by most of the groups was that neither the students nor the teachers prefer online

English classrooms over physical English language classrooms as they had to suffer from the instability of internet connection and other limitations of online English classes. Whenever the students miss some contents in the online English classes due to technological issues, they feel nervous about asking teachers to repeat the parts they have missed.

According to majority of the teachers, students' attitude towards online classes highly depends on their personality traits and online learning mostly depends on students' self-motivation. For some students, schools are not just a place to study rather an open window from which they can see the outer world and a source of their entertainment as well. On the other hand, for some others who do not like abiding by the rules, or do not like to travel to school might prefer online classes. One of the teachers, Ms. Nadia mentioned,

Some, some, I think some students are enjoying online classes. The other day one student called the day before Eid for wishing. I asked him, how are you enjoying online English classes? He said, I think I am enjoying online English classes the most may be. I do not like rushing for school, rickshaw is not available, and in rainy days roads are muddy. Now I am free from all these struggles. I am at home, studying well comfortably and I am enjoying it. However, I think most of the students do not prefer online English classes (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021).

In addition to that, one teacher highlighted that sincere students are more likely to prefer online English language classes because there is no wastage of time in online classes due to classroom management issues. Some students also supported this point and brought it up in the FGD. They believe that it is easier for them to understand what the teacher is saying in English in the calm and quiet classroom environment as the teacher can mute students in the online classes.

Moreover, the students stressed the possible scopes and opportunities of online English language classes. Here, teachers can now share screen and show interesting English videos which was not quite usual in physical English language classrooms. It provides more exposure to English and language learning resources in lesser time frame which facilitates in English language learning. To support, the quantitative data also showcased that 59.50% students feels good about online English language classes with 32.40% students finding it average because of several limitations such as internet instability, limited time and less scope for peer to peer interaction etc. disclosed through the FGD data.

Furthermore, the teachers also reinforced the opportunities of online English classes as students can get more study materials because digital contents related to the lesson can easily be shared online. Regarding this one of the teachers, Mr. Rahim stated,

In online English classes, the listening part of the English For Today book is easily being practiced now, which was mostly ignored in the physical classrooms as we had to shift to multimedia classrooms for that. However, I think slow learners would still prefer physical class over online because individual attention is needed for them (Personal communication: Interview #3, 28-05-2021).

As opposed to that, one of the issues brought into light in the discussions was that teacher monitoring is not quite possible in online English classes. Hence, students feel a bit lazy to participate and get distracted easily as they can easily hide behind the camera and do things as they please. One student named Rafiq said,

“In online classes, I feel lethargic as students are less responsive and that is why I feel online English classes are mundane. It does not provide the actual feel of a language

learning classroom. I get easily distracted and I can give less attention. That is why I think I learn less in online English language classes” (Focus group notes #5: 27-05-2021). Another reason for preferring physical English classroom mentioned by the students was the lack of interaction in online English classrooms as for learning any foreign language, interaction is one of the most important parts of the process. One of the students, Tania stated,

“I feel isolated in online English class. I miss learning and communicating with my peers. In physical English class we used to work in groups sometimes, and I really enjoyed it. But in online English classes, apart from a few, most of the students hardly participate” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

However, the survey result fluctuates from this perspective of the students. The results show, 41.89 % of the students agreed that they feel isolated in online English language classroom whereas 51.35% students disagreed about it.

In addition, the students indicated that eye contact is missing in online English language classrooms. This limits the students from practicing eye contact in real life conversation. Not only eye contact, but also there is time limitation in free zoom application which has shortened the English language class timing resulting in lack of practice in online English classes.

Another thought provoking issue discussed in one of the FGDs is the lack of technological training of the teachers. One of the participants name Nabila said-“I think there are lots of scopes and opportunities in online learning platforms but due to the inexperience of the teachers, we are not being able to make the best out of it” (Focus group notes #4: 10-06-2021).

The above contradictory opinions demonstrate the possibility of differences between online and physical English language classrooms. To make it evident, 85.10% students mentioned in the

survey about the significant differences between online and physical English language classrooms.

4.3 Foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms:

According to the English language teachers, foreign language anxiety persists among the students in online English classes though there were several contradictory opinions about it among students. Overall, the level of anxiety is less in online English language classes than physical English language classes and this anxiety mostly depends on the skill they are learning at a specific moment which teachers can understand really well. For instance, one teacher named Adnan mentioned that “When I call students in online English classes to say something, they say that they will write it down and show it to me in chat” (Personal communication: Interview #1, 03-06-2021). Also, another teacher, Ms. Lima said that-

Yes, I have observed anxiety among my students, and I understand that. Whenever I ask them to do anything or tell them to ask any questions in online English classes, they seem to get nervous. Whenever I ask them any question, they tend to hide and try not to answer. This is a very common phenomenon in my online English classes. For example, today I gave them some writing exercises in class. I have taught them interrogative narration in class and gave them classwork on that topic. Thereafter, when I asked them to tell me what they have written. As always, only one student responded. The Other students do not speak up easily. They worry about giving wrong answers. They hesitate and we do understand their hesitation (Personal communication: Interview #4, 02-06-2021).

Most of the teachers think that students' biggest anxiety in online English classes is that the teacher might ask questions individually. They are not anxious about learning English (having input) rather responding to questions (giving output) in English.

A number of students also shared that unstable internet connection in English classes sometimes raises their anxiety level. Because while rejoining classes, they think that they might not be able to follow the class further because of the gap. One student named Ussash articulated that "in online English classes, if the teacher asks me any question after rejoining, my heartbeat raises and due to nervousness I tend to forget the answer even if I did not miss that part and know the answer" (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021). Furthermore, survey responses show that 71.62% of the students are concerned regarding unstable internet connection in online English language classes. Besides, responding to the statement, "In online English classes, I feel I will not be able to understand anything even if I miss a tiny part which frightens me", 54.05% students agreed whereas 37.84% students think otherwise.

Discussing on how students understand that they are feeling anxious, one of the students, Anika stated that, "I understand that I am feeling nervous while speaking in online English classes because my words get stuck and I start to stammer even if I know what I am supposed to say" (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021). Then Shawdipta added, "When teachers ask something my words gets jumbled up and legs start shivering, but when I finish giving the answer, it goes away and I feel normal" (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

Moreover, it came out from the focused group discussions that grammar is another area where students tend to struggle and this weakness makes students nervous sometimes. Therefore, foreign language anxiety is visible when students are asked grammatical questions. It is because sometimes they feel scared thinking about the accuracy of their perceived answers. Furthermore,

students get concerned about their impression in front of the teachers and think that incorrect answers might give negative impression of them.

Remarkably, several other teachers noticed that some students who used to be quite nervous in physical English language classrooms seemed to be less anxious in online English language classroom because when they turn their cameras off they feel less judged by their peers and less scared of their teacher. Mr. Rahim mentioned that “Hesitation and nervousness is less in online English classes” (Personal communication: Interview #3, 28-05-2021).

To support that, several students stressed on the teachers statement and mentioned that they feel less anxious in online English classes than the physical English language classrooms as well. It is because one of the biggest concerns of students which make them nervous is the possibility of their peers’ criticism. Students tend to worry about their peers reaction if they make any errors or mispronounce any words while speaking and in online English classes some students think that peers pay less attention to what others are saying which gives them a feeling of security. In Lucky’s words,

I feel less scared in online classes because peers do not stare at me in online class or pass any comments in online English class. Also, I do not feel someone is criticizing me for my English speaking skills in online classes. That is why I can speak at ease in online classes because I feel there is less judgment even if I make some major errors (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

To add to that, Afran said,

Actually, after online classes started, at first when teachers used to ask questions in English class I used to feel puzzled and think whether I will be able to give the right answer or not, or what if my pronunciation goes wrong? Or what will others think about

me? But then I realized that it is easier in online classes. I feel that no one is watching me except the teacher. That is why I do not feel shy. I feel good in online classes. I do not get nervous anymore (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

The survey responses also approve this perception, from the responses of the statement, “In online English classes, I expect to do poor in classes even before I enter them”, it can be said that most of the students (71.62%) denied overthinking about not being able to learn English before joining online English classes, yet 21.62% of the students still have that extreme level of anxiety in online English classes. In addition, 75.68% students responded that they do not feel more anxious in online English classes in comparison to other classes, but 21.62% students said they feel more anxious in online English classes rather than the other subjects. Statement regarding another probable issue, “I get worried when I can’t watch the lips or facial expressions of the person who is speaking in online English classes” disclosed that 62.16% students disagreed which means they do not feel nervous because of this issue, though 25.68% students agreed that this issue causes problem in online English language classrooms and make them nervous.

Last but not the least, a few of the students completely denied the existence of foreign language anxiety among them in online English language classes. Apurbo said, “I don’t feel nervous in online English classes. I learn with interest. Even if I make any error, I ask the teacher and clear out my confusion. And for my mistakes if people laugh at me, I don’t really care about that. I am always open to learning” (Focus group notes #5: 27-05-2021).

4.4 Causes of foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms:

Interview and FGD of the teachers and students unraveled various reasons behind foreign language anxiety among students in online English language classrooms. Not only has it showed the impact of less exposure of English environment in online classrooms but also it puts

emphasis on the roles of students, peers, teachers and other causes which have direct or direct impact on provoking foreign language anxiety among secondary level students.

4.4.1 Less exposure of English language:

Lack of exposure of the language is also one of the major reasons behind the anxiety students feel anxious as per the teachers. All of the five teachers mentioned that English being a foreign language, it naturally seems very difficult for the students to understand because people of our country do not speak in English. Also, most of the students rarely have any scope to hear this language or get any exposure of this language outside classroom. Even majority of English teachers in Bengali medium schools do not talk in English in the class hours. That is why, it is not mandatory for the students to speak English in online English language classes all the time. Students participating in FGDs also supported this reason, and shared, when suddenly the teacher asks something in English, students tend to hesitate replying back in English language. As a result, students are not habituated in speaking English which escalates foreign language anxiety among them.

4.4.2 Lack of motivation among students:

Teachers also believe that students struggle in learning English because of their lack of motivation. This level of motivation varies from one student to another. Though the importance of motivation is a significant factor behind learning a foreign language like English, some students who belong from a lower socio-economic background struggle to hold on to this motivation during the economic crisis amidst the pandemic. Mr. Adnan mentioned that “students belonging from lower socio economic background do not get the proper care and guidance from home to culture and practice English. This lack of practice hinders their confidence over

competency of English language and grows anxiety among them” (Personal communication: Interview #1, 03-06-2021).

4.4.3 Personality Traits:

One of the salient causes unraveled in the discussion is that the level of anxiety varies from person to person depending on their personality traits. For instance, some students find learning English interesting and they take the criticism of the peers and teachers as an opportunity to rectify and learn better. Ratul said, “I don’t feel anxious in online English classes. I don’t worry about giving out wrong answers. I like learning new words and I enjoy learning English. The only struggle I feel in learning English is to speak in English” (Focus group notes #2: 26-05-2021).

Additionally, some students mentioned about their adaptability in any situation which they think is the reason to not feel nervous in any of the English language classes. Asif shared-

“I never felt nervous in online English classes because I can adapt well in any situation. And if I talk more about online English classes, I know that in zoom app, most of the students do other works and get distracted easily. But who wants to learn and sincere can learn well from online English classes as well” (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

On the contrary, other students worry a lot about the reaction of the teacher and the peers while practicing English language which increases the tendency of nervousness among them in the online English language classrooms. Muna said, “When teacher ask anything, I tend to overthink. I fear that he might get angry if I say anything wrong” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

4.4.4 Fear of failure in front of the peers:

One of the major reasons working behind foreign language anxiety among students agreed by most of the students in the discussions was the impression in front of the peers. Peers probable reaction is what they worry the most about while participating in the online English language classes. Though many of them agreed that the scope for peers' reaction and criticism is quite less in online English language classrooms, yet their thinking and previous experience had set their mentality to such extent that they still worry about making errors and its consequences which makes them anxious in even online English language classes. In Bakul's words,

Often it happens that I feel like I know the answer but I do not have the courage to say it in front of the class worrying about it being wrong. We think what would be our impression in front of the peers and the teacher if we make any error in front of them And in online classes, thinking about these things, we are more reluctant to answer the questions (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

Tina added,

While reading in online classes, I wonder what are my peers is thinking. What if my pronunciation is not right? What if my peers are talking or laughing about it behind the camera? Whether I am making any mistakes or not, I tend to think about the students' reaction behind the camera as I cannot see them in online English classes (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

4.4.5 Learning gap:

In the interview, one teacher has mentioned about learning gap being one of the root causes of students' foreign language anxiety in the upper levels. According to the teacher, in our examination system, it is easier for students to pass to the next grade without having the required

English language competency for the next level. And this learning gap creates a barrier in the following levels that the students reach. The learning gap is more prevalent in students who belong to lower middle class background because they have less opportunities of getting help in studies from their family and their families tend to be less concerned about doing well in studies.

Regarding this, Mr. Adnan shared-

Learning gap makes English hard for the students to catch up with the level of English in higher grades. That is when students starts having thoughts of their incompetency in English and feels anxious while participating in English language activities even in online English language classrooms (Personal communication: Interview #1, 03-06-2021).

It is also considered by the students is that the specific weakness in certain areas of the language itself is another significant cause behind foreign language anxiety in online English classes. These certain weakness gets bigger with time and creates anxiety among the students. A few students disclosed their struggle in Grammar and vocabulary in English for which they find the language quite hard to learn. Mitu stated- “In higher grades, teachers do not teach or revise grammar; they just give us exercises to practice assuming we know everything. But there are some grammatical contents where I still struggle” (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

One more reason behind this learning gap considered by the teachers is the tendency of rote memorization among students. As our examination system does not incorporate all four skills of language, some students memorize contents in English to write in their examination scripts. In this regard Ms. Lima said,

Students who are habituated to rote memorization get nervous because they think that they might forget and not get enough time to recall what they have memorized if they are asked to speak. Even while writing, these students experience anxiety, thinking that they

might forget a few lines and as their learning is completely based on rote memorization, they will not be able to complete it; because they do not have the linguistic skill to write something on their own in English language (Personal Communication: Interview #4, 02-06-2021).

Also, another teacher argued that, listening and speaking skills of the students do not develop among the students like the other two skills, as the English language curriculum of our country puts emphasis on only reading and writing skills. That is why whenever an English teacher asks the students to answer something verbally in English they get anxious as they are not habituated to speaking in English.

4.4.6 Teacher-Student relationship:

Another reason came up in the focused group discussion was the relationship between the English language teacher and the students. The teacher's behavior in class and with the students has a significant impact on how the students feel in the online English language classroom and while interacting with the teacher. If the teacher is friendly, it creates a motivating environment in the language classroom for students to share their ideas and take participate in the lesson. Conversely, strict behavior of the teachers intensifies their anxiety in the online English language classrooms and disengages them more from the class activities. Baker stated,

I am weak in grammar. In a grammar class, I get indifferent in the class as I cannot understand anything. Once I got scolded for this when I could not answer the question the teacher asked. I felt very sad at that time. From then, I feel very insecure in participating in the class (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

4.5 Skill based foreign language anxiety among students:

Both the interviews and focused group discussion has brought to light the existence of foreign language anxiety which is related to the four skills of a language- reading, writing, listening and speaking.

4.5.1 Reading Anxiety:

From the teachers' perspective, English language reading anxiety is less among the students in online English classes. Most teachers said that they have never observed reading anxiety among students. Mr. Adnan shared,

I did not see any reading anxiety in my students. They are always very enthusiastic about reading in online English language classes. Whenever I ask something to read aloud from book, many students unmute themselves and say "Ma'am me", or write in chat about their eagerness for reading aloud (Personal communication: Interview #1, 03-06-2021).

Discussing about the skills, reading is the part where only a few students mentioned about having anxiety which supports the teachers' belief in this regard. Most of the students rarely feel anxiety in tasks based on reading in online English language classrooms. According to Toru, "I rarely feel nervous in online English classes, that only at the time when the teacher tells us to read a big English passage. Overall, I don't feel that much anxious" (Focus group notes #5: 27-05-2021).

In addition, the survey results show that 52.70% students do not feel nervous while teachers ask them to read aloud anything from the text whereas 43.24% thinks that they feel more or less nervous at that time. Moreover, 58.11% students disagrees with the survey statement, "When I'm reading English in online classes, I get so confused that I can't remember what I'm reading", which means majority of the students do not forget what they are reading about while reading,

whereas only 36.49% think otherwise. It supports the teachers' perception that students feel less anxious in reading English.

Nonetheless, another teacher named Ms. Nadia mentioned about her doubt about the students' avoidance in English reading activities online. She said,

When I ask someone to read aloud who never reads in class, just at that time, either their internet connection gets lost or they cannot hear me properly. They just send me a text that "Ma'am I cannot hear you". We are not sure whether they can listen to us or not (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021).

4.5.2 Writing Anxiety:

Most of the teachers agreed that, students rarely have any writing anxiety in online English classes. They are habituated in writing English from the very beginning of their education. Though they might make errors in sentence structure, still they mostly prefer writing over speaking because it gives them a sense of secrecy from the people around them in both online and offline English classes. In Mr. Shahid's words, "While students are writing in English, they can think and write at ease because they feel that no one is seeing what s/he is writing, and after submitting the write up, only the teacher would see it, that also when s/he will not be around. It gives them a sense of safety and comfort while writing" (Personal communication: Interview #5, 07-06-2021).

The students' perception from the FGD also matches with the teachers' one here, revealing further a new angle to view it. From Nezam's perspective, "When I am writing, no one can see what I am writing behind the camera. It gives me relief and that is why I don't feel nervous while writing. But I feel nervous when suddenly the teachers asks me to turn on my camera and show my copy" (Focus group notes #4: 10-06-2021).

In addition to that, one of the students named Tabassum shared, “I don’t feel nervous if we are given any writing task in online English language classes because in online we can secretly take help from internet and complete our task easily. Also, in writing we have time to think and then write.” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

Moreover, according to the survey, for the statement “My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on writing something in English in online classes”, 55.41% students responded negatively as opposed to the 39.19% positive responses, which supports majority of the students’ and teachers’ belief about having less writing anxiety in online English classes.

To note, even after acknowledging that they feel less anxious in writing tasks, some students further added that in online English language classes, they tend to avoid writing, and interestingly the reason behind is neither anxiety nor weakness in writing. It is lack of scopes for teacher monitoring in online English language classes which the students take advantage of. One of students named Shawdipta said, “Now in online English classes, we avoid writing even if the teacher tells us to do so because teachers cannot see what we are doing” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

Though in FGD students mentioned in detail about their tendency of avoiding writing in online English classes, the survey results is quite contradictory to this. 70.27% of the students responded negatively to the statement- “As the teacher cannot see what I am doing behind the screen, I avoid writing in English in online classes even if the teacher tells me to do so”, which means students do not avoid writing in online classes whereas, only 22.97% students agreed to the statement.

On the other hand, few students mentioned about having anxiety while writing in English. One of them named Sarna stated, “Whenever the teacher tells us to write something, I feel nervous at that time thinking whether I will be able to write it or not” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021).

4.5.3 Listening Anxiety:

All the teachers interviewed in this research mentioned about the existence of English language listening anxiety among students. Ms. Nadia shared her experience,

Once I took the whole class in English, in the next class half of the students were absent. When I tried to figure out the problem, they said no one understands your class, Miss. Why would someone not understand my class? I took the class in an understandable way. Problem is that they do not understand the language well. Sometimes the kids say, Miss, the thing that you were saying, could please repeat it in Bengali? (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021)

The reason behind is that they are not trained well from the very beginning in doing English classes fully in English. That is why students get anxious every time a teacher takes class completely in English because they already believe that they will not understand the class because it is conducted fully in English.

While sharing experience, Ms. Lima said, “Very few students try to understand what I am saying while taking class in English. Most of the students are not sincere and don’t feel curious to listen to me” (Personal communication: Interview #4, 02-06-2021). Not to mention, Mr. Karim added, “Most of them can write well, and most of them got A+ in the board examination, but they cannot grasp well by listening because their listening skill is not developed in schools” (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021).

In FGDs, the students also highlighted issues regarding foreign language listening anxiety in online English language classes which supports the teachers' statements. They mentioned that one of the reasons behind their disinterest in the class is the language barrier. Also, the time constraints in online English language classes make it difficult for students to seek help to the teachers. For instance, Nitu mentioned,

When Sir takes class in English, I don't understand well. That is why I lose interest in class and stop listening further. I don't even feel like to ask question to the teacher.

Because the teacher will need more time if we tell him to repeat everything in Bengali.

But we don't have enough time in online classes (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

Another student Mouree said, "When new words come up during online English classes, in a passage or in teacher's lecture, I get stuck thinking about that word and forget what the teacher has taught before" (Focus group notes #2: 26-05-2021).

Nonetheless, a different opinion came out from some of the students as they think that English language classes should be conducted in English for better learning. In Ratul's words,

"I prefer the teacher conducting class in English because other than that we don't have enough scope to listen to English and learn from it. And no one around us speaks in English" (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

Though in FGDs the number of students preferring listening activities in online English classes are very less due to listening anxiety, survey results shows the opposite. The students' response in the survey shows that 64.86% students do not feel intimidated during any listening activities though 29.73% students have experienced anxiety. Also, 62.16% negative response of the students on the survey statement- "During listening activities in online English classes, I get confused when I don't understand every word which makes me forget what I've heard"

demonstrates that students have less listening anxiety, in contrast to the 33.78% positive response.

4.5.4 Speaking Anxiety:

English language Speaking anxiety is the most common anxiety existing among students in online English language classrooms, agreed by all the teachers interviewed. Mr. Adnan stated, “Students get nervous while speaking in online classroom because they think they have to speak smoothly. But in writing they can take time to think and then write” (Personal communication: Interview #1, 03-06-2021). Also, a student named Farhan further mentioned that, “Whenever teacher asks us to just write a summary of a text, we do not face any problem. But when the teacher asks us to say the summary of the text in our own words promptly, I feel anxious and I get stuck” (Focus group notes #2: 26-05-2021).

A bit different perspective came out from the perception of one of the teachers, Ms. Nadia who mentioned that-

When the word anxiety comes, I would rather say what the students feel while speaking in English is more shyness than anxiety. Our kids feel shy to talk in English. And why do they feel shy? Because students do side taking, they mock their peers and make them feel shy when they try to speak in English (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021).

Speaking anxiety is an area where most of the students have also agreed to have faced anxiety the most. Majority of the students feel anxious when the teachers ask them any questions. According to a Nusrat, “Whenever the teacher asks me something in English, I get so scared that I often forget the answer that I was supposed to say, even if I know the answer very well” (Focus group notes #1: 18-05-2021). Faruk explained further,

Even if I know the answer, I do not feel like saying it because I start thinking what if I can't say it properly like the teacher? What would be the impression of mine in front of the teacher? What would the students think about me? What if they laugh behind the screen at my mistakes? These kinds of thoughts succumb me while speaking in online English classes (Focus group notes #2: 26-05-2021).

Now if we look at the survey, students' responses on the influence of peer's reaction in speaking anxiety is quite interesting as it neither confirms nor denies speaking anxiety in online English language classes. Here, for the survey statement- "I am afraid that the other students laugh at me behind the screen when I speak English in online classes", the percentage of students responding both positively and negatively are 39.19%, and 22.7% students avoided answering this question by referring to "no comments". Nevertheless, 51.35% students think that in online classes they feel comfortable in speaking as they feel no one can see them, whereas only 27.03% students differ.

Moreover, not getting accustomed with the language is another reason for the speaking anxiety shared by the students which they think is visible in their actions during online English classes. Sadia mentioned,

I feel anxious because I am not habituated to speak in English and I cannot find the right words while speaking in English. I worry how I would start and end, and how I would continue conversation and answer back in English, because whenever I think, my thinking is in Bengali and then I have to translate it in my head and it takes quite a bit of time. And as English speaking is not practiced in class I tend to overthink a lot about what others will think about me. Especially when the teacher asks us to explain

something in English I get stunned and very nervous” (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

In another discussion Tonmoy said that-

I only feel anxious when I have to speak in English, other than that I feel fine. In the first online English class, the teacher asked me to introduce myself in English. I know how to introduce myself in English, I have read and written paragraph on this many times. But still while I was speaking, my voice was shaking. Students who have not as much good result as mine could speak better than me. I felt very shy and very bad about myself at that time (Focus group notes #5: 27-05-2021).

However, as mentioned earlier, students also highlighted in the discussion that in compare to physical English language classes, they feel less anxious while speaking in online English language classes. It is because they do not need to do face to face conversation here, where the scope of passing comments and judgment is lot more than the online English classrooms. The survey results also support this thinking of the students. The survey response showcases that majority (56.76%) of the students disagree about trembling while speaking in online English classes, as opposed to 33.78% students who still shiver in anxiety.

4.6 Impact of foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms:

Foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms has significant impact in the language learning process of the students. Firstly, students avoid communication with their teachers in English classes due to speaking anxiety. Secondary level English teacher Ms. Nadia mentioned that, “Indifferent students are getting more scopes to avoid. They know the all the techniques to avoid in online classes” (Personal communication: Interview #2, 20-05-2021). Students also agreed that due to less scope for monitoring, they avoid participating in different

tasks in online English language classes and this lack of practice ultimately hampers their language learning. This results in lack of communication between teachers and students and it creates learning gap because they do not clarify their confusions due to this anxiety whereas communication is a must for learning any foreign language. For example, Mamun said,

Because of nervousness, we hesitate to ask questions even if we miss any part due to internet issues, and without asking questions we cannot learn well. When we feel nervous we cannot concentrate on what the teacher is teaching. Teacher keeps on giving lecture and we tend to think and live in our own imaginary world. And it creates a loophole in our language learning (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

Another student named Asif added, “Sometimes my classmates say that they have understood everything and the teacher don’t need to repeat it. At that time I feel really uncomfortable to ask anything even if I have a lot of confusion” (Focus group notes #4: 10-06-2021).

Foreign language anxiety not only impedes the speaking ability of the learners, but also slows down development of their listening skills. As most of the students are not interested to hear in English, teachers have to conduct English classes using Bengali language. And because of this anxiety of listening to English, students lag behind in listening skill and thus their English language learning is hampered a lot. On another note, when students get scared, they are more likely to make silly mistakes even after knowing the answer, only because of the tension. Repetition of things like this are said to have negative mental impact on the students.

Furthermore, according to the teachers one of the most important and effective way to improve language competency is by practicing. However, Mr. Rahim indicated that “students who have English language anxiety practice less and that is why their improvement graph is not

satisfactory. Actually as English is a foreign language, the more one practices it, the more it gets better” (Personal communication: Interview #3, 28-05-2021).

Remarkably, students stressed that in terms of the examination, this anxiety does not have any notable impact as the examination results are not affected by it.

The focused group discussion also brought up a completely different perspective of the positive impact of foreign language anxiety among the students. Thinking about the impact of foreign language anxiety on the examination, Ria mentioned,

I don't think nervousness has any impact on my results because I only have anxiety when teacher asks me to converse in English. At that time I struggle to create quick sentences and also think if it is grammatically correct or not. Most of the students are weak in listening and speaking and these two skills are not assessed in examinations. In examinations everything is written based. That is why I don't think it affects my result in any way but it does affect my language learning (Focus group notes #5: 27-05-2021).

Nevertheless, one positive side of foreign language anxiety is that it sometimes motivates the students to practice more and do their best to be better in that language. For instance Joy stated, “The anxiety that I feel in online English classes, drives me to work hard and do better in English. As this is hampering my language learning, I feel I need to overcome this anxiety” (Focus group notes #3: 02-06-2021).

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study attempted to explore the students' and teachers' attitude towards foreign language anxiety in online English language classrooms and then tried to find out the reasons behind this anxiety from their perspectives. This research paper previously discussed about foreign language anxiety and its types, various physical and emotional reactions related to it as well as the possible causes of this anxiety around the world. The results overall reveal that in this particular context of Bangladesh, foreign language anxiety is less among students in online English language classes and identified some major causes behind it.

5.1.1 Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Language Classes:

Based on the literature review, foreign language learners usually enter the classroom with anxiety (Yoshida, 2010). However, the results of this study show that most of the students do not start the online English language class with anxiety beforehand. According to Pichette, students who have high level of foreign language anxiety prefer online courses because it provides them with a sense of anonymity as it makes them feel that they are not obligated to interact with their peers (2009). The qualitative data of this study revealed some specific kinds of students who prefer online English language classrooms rather than the physical one. These include mostly students who used to have high level of foreign language anxiety in physical English language classes and some sincere students who favor the calm and quiet environment of online English classes. Students who had high anxiety in physical English language classrooms feel safe behind the cameras in online classrooms because in online platform there is much lesser scope for peer

criticism. Moreover, in the literature review, a study conducted by Alberth (2011) disclosed an opposing view; as some students prefer conventional classrooms over online courses for effective learning, whilst some other students prefer online courses. However, the quantitative data of this research confirms that majority of the students have positive impression towards online English language classes. Nevertheless, the qualitative data explains that though the students and the teachers welcome this online initiative during this pandemic, they prefer physical English language classrooms over the online ones mostly due to unstable internet connection, lack of teacher monitoring, limited class time and less scope for peer to peer interaction.

5.1.2 Understanding Foreign Language Anxiety among Students:

Anxious students can be recognized through several characteristics such as disengagement in the classroom activities, being uncomfortable and scared about making mistakes throughout the learning experience and try to avoid new linguistic forms as well (as cited in Burden, 2004). In the qualitative data of this study, the teachers' perception is anxious students tend to hide and are less responsive because of overthinking about the possible errors. Moreover, Horwitz et al. mentioned about anxious students' tendency to show avoidance behavior such as being absent or irregular, and nonetheless, forgetting previously learnt vocabularies and grammar when they are being tested (1986). In the interview data of this study the teachers' narration of a situation where 50% students remaining absent is visible because of the class being conducted in English. Also, the students here shared their experience of forgetting the answer when teachers ask them any question even they know it beforehand. According to Andrade and Williams, some physical and emotional reactions are common among the learners who are anxious, such as- faster heartbeat, mentally going blank, burning cheeks, sweating and feeling a throat lump (2009).The

research participants partially agree with it, because here students have not only shared about their experience of heartbeat raise and mind going blank but also added shivering of legs when they feel anxiety. Moreover, expressive and verbal reactions are visible among students which planning and producing in the foreign language (ibid.). The qualitative data agrees with the student's anxiety about doing output related task and brought up students' experience about their words getting stuck and jumbled up while speaking and starting to stammer due to foreign language anxiety.

5.1.3 Reasons behind Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Language Classrooms:

For the question of why foreign language anxiety happens among students, in the literature review one study shows that the learners mostly experience anxiety due to the feeling of failure to achieve a goal and the desire to become efficient in communication (Burden, 2004). Nonetheless, in this particular research, learning gap has been identified as one of the root causes of foreign language anxiety even in online English language classrooms by mostly the teachers, which grows with passing into higher levels and works as a major factor to diminish the self-confidence of the students. One research in Chile during the Covid-19 pandemic indicated two main challenges of online classes- lack of interaction with students and poor internet connection (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Majority of the research participants including both the teachers and students agreed that unstable internet connection is indeed one of the major causes of anxiety in online English language classes. Additionally, previous research shows that sometimes the teachers are accountable for rising foreign language anxiety among students (Williams and Andrade, 2008, p.187). The research participants especially the students consider the, teacher- student relationship and teacher's behavior in the online classroom as an important factor, including the strict ways of correcting student mistakes. Moreover, Alberth claimed that

in online courses students' personal characteristics can have significant influence on learners' performance; and also highlighted the advantage of the students having previous technological exposure (2011). Though the issue of technological exposure has not come up in any of the qualitative or quantitative data, but less exposure of English language has been established as one of the major causes by both the students and the teachers. Other than that, the findings of this research completely agree with the influence of learners personal traits because positive attitude towards learning through mistakes has proved to be helpful in language learning. The literature review also demonstrates that digital learning is dependent on initiative and motivation as students can get easily distracted while learning through this platform (Kirovska-Simjanoska, 2016). In the qualitative data, the teachers shared motivation as a significant factor in online English classes, but in this context learner motivation can sometimes be affected by their socio-economic background.

5.1.4 Foreign Language Anxiety in relation to Four Skills of Language:

5.1.4.1 Speaking Anxiety:

From the literature review, we can again see the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the four language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing. Philips in his study stated about the negative impact of foreign language anxiety on the speaking performance of the students (1992), and Young (1999) has indicated fear of negative evaluation as the main cause behind (as cited in Yassin & Razak, 2018). The research participants of this study also completely agree with it, because speaking is the part where anxiety has been found the most in online English classes though in lesser extent than the physical English language classrooms, and the underlying cause fear of failure in front of the peers as well as the teachers has been agreed to be a prominent cause by both the teachers and the students.

5.1.4.2 Listening Anxiety:

Previous studies revealed that communication apprehension (Vogely, 1998) and self-confidence (Kim, 2000) are two major factors behind foreign language listening anxiety. Here, the results of this research confirms communication apprehension as a vital cause behind listening anxiety because the qualitative data shows the students' disinterest in class due to the language barrier, which results in their avoiding behavior in online English classroom activities and sometimes even being absent in classes itself. However, conflict arises when the supporting quantitative data opposes most of the qualitative data, as some students expressed their preference of conducting classes fully in English. The researcher expected positive response of the students regarding listening anxiety in the supporting quantitative responses as well. The researcher thinks that the deviation in the results means most of the students are confused about their feeling of listening anxiety and it usually reveals through long and deep conversations rather than short surveys. Also, the number of research participants who participated in the survey is larger than the close qualitative FGDs, which again refer that many students feel less listening anxiety in online English language classes.

5.1.4.3 Reading Anxiety:

Subsequently, a research conducted by Sellers indicates that students who experience higher level of foreign language anxiety have negative impacts on reading anxiety such as understanding the reading contents less because of having more off-task thoughts (2000). However, according to the research participants, majority of the students do not experience anxiety in reading tasks in online English classes with a few exceptions mentioned by the teachers.

5.1.4.4 Writing Anxiety:

Considering the writing anxiety, Daud et al. (2005) has shown that less proficient students suffer from higher level of writing anxiety due to lack of vocabulary and their incompetency to express efficiently. Furthermore, three dimensional concept of anxiety including cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior has been negatively related to the writing anxiety impacting the language learning ability of the students (Cheng, 2004). Conversely, this specific research found writing anxiety rare among the students in the online English language classroom, as this platform provides students a sense of anonymity. Though the qualitative findings pointed out the students' avoidance tendency in writing, the reason explained by the learners' was not anxiety rather it was lack of teacher monitoring in online classes.

5.1.5 Impact of Foreign Language Anxiety:

Chen & Chang have showed that foreign language anxiety has a negative impact on the academic performance of the students in foreign language learning (2004). The findings of this research brought into light that foreign language anxiety has significant impact on the language learning process of the students by impeding the speaking as well as listening ability of the students; yet in this context it does not affect the academic performance of the students because of listening and speaking being exempted from the assessment system. Besides, the participants shared that when students get scared, they are more likely to make silly mistakes in the learnt contents and repetitions of these things have negative mental impact on the students. In addition, the results demonstrate that this foreign language anxiety deters students from communicating with the teachers, which in the end grows the learning gap among students. Interestingly, that is how this study again takes us back to the previously mentioned "chicken egg discussion" (Sparks

and Ganschow, 1991) by the debating about low proficiency being the ‘cause’ or ‘result’ of foreign language anxiety. Nonetheless, this research highlighted a positive impact of foreign language anxiety as well, which motivates the learners to work hard for better result.

As this research reveals the causes of foreign language anxiety both from the teachers’ and the students’ perspective, the findings can be shared with the English language teachers and other personnel who designs the teacher trainings so that they can better construct and take the trainings keeping in mind how to cater the issue of foreign language anxiety among students. This research data could be significant while the teachers will be given specific trainings, they will be able to take better foreign language classes where the level of anxiety among students would not be threatening and this might improve the English language teaching learning process the children go through in the educational institutions.

The research would have been more thorough if data could be collected through English language classroom observation. This would have given a better insight to how students are participating in the online English language classes as well as the way teachers are conducting these classes. Moreover, mixed method research could also have been followed for measuring to what extent students feel foreign language anxiety based on each of the language skills in online English language classroom of Bangladesh.

5.2 Conclusion

This research has provided an overview of secondary level students’ and English language teachers’ beliefs on the present situation of foreign language anxiety among students in the online English classes during the covid-19 pandemic as well as demonstrated the underlying causes. It has also shed light on the impact that foreign language anxiety have on online English

language classes and the ways to improve in the context of Bangladesh. The major findings include that foreign language anxiety is less in online English language classrooms mostly due to the scope of being invisible to everyone by merely turning off the camera. It makes the students feel safer from the fear of negative evaluation by their peers for making errors; and as student-student interaction is limited in online English classes, it helps some students to be more communicative in online English classes than the physical ones. Nonetheless, the online platform creates the anxiety of missing parts of classes due to technological issues which increases learner anxiety by making them feel insecure about their abilities to grasp the contents of the online English language classes. The examination-centric education led to the finding of the teachers' adherence to speak in Bengali while teaching English to the students, mainly because of the deep-rooted learning gap of the students from previous classes which makes the complete English environment incomprehensible for the students. Hence, students are more comfortable in reading and writing activities rather than speaking and listening (though listening activities are rare) even in online platforms. Along with these, this research also found out some learner variables such as students' personality, self-motivation, and situational variables such as learning environment and teacher-student relationship which have significant effect (positive or negative) in causing foreign language anxiety among students in online English classes.

For a country like Bangladesh, which has started this online education as a response to manage the crisis in the education sector due to the pandemic, has a long way to go in online English language pedagogy. Hence, since the issue of foreign language anxiety is seen to be reduced among students in online English classes, their perception and suggestions should be kept in mind while developing curriculum for improving future online English language education in this country.

5.3 Recommendation

Recommendations based on this study which will help to improve the language learning situations and create further opportunities for research are as follows-

- For facilitating foreign language learning of the students, teachers should create a friendly classroom environment and maintain an amicable relationship with the students.
- Create peer learning opportunities through interesting collaborative tasks, such as project work, pair work, small group work, games, role-plays etc. in online English language classrooms using zoom breakout rooms or other applications.
- Teachers should deal properly with learner's errors and provide feedbacks by emphasizing on students' strengths rather than failures. It could be done by always beginning with a positive comment on what a student has achieved and ending with positive comments as well.
- Teachers should help learners to accept the fact that mistakes are an unavoidable natural part in the process of foreign language learning from which they can learn a lot, so that learners do not get demotivated for making errors.
- Teachers should establish empathy as a classroom norm so that students understand the effect of passing negative comments about their peers during English classes and refrain from doing it, which will ultimately make learners more comfortable in participating in the online as well as physical English language classrooms.
- Teachers should conduct English classes in English language with minimal use of the native language from the beginning of the schooling so that the students can get more exposure of English language and get habituated to it, which will lead to the decrease of their anxiety level while listening to English.

- Further research can be conducted following mixed method research to bring out more detailed information regarding the extent of foreign language anxiety students have depending on the four skills of language in online English language classroom in the context of Bangladesh.
- Policy makers can utilize this data to make specific trainings obligatory for teachers so that they can support students better to reduce foreign language anxiety.

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Appendix A

Survey for Students

এই সার্ভেটি “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Secondary Level Online English Language Classes during Pandemic” নামক একটি গবেষণার জন্য ডিজাইন করা হয়েছে। মাধ্যমিক স্তরের শিক্ষার্থী হিসাবে আপনার প্রতিক্রিয়া এই গবেষণার জন্য খুবই মূল্যবান এবং প্রয়োজনীয়। এজন্য আপনার সম্মতি থাকলে আপনাকে আন্তরিকভাবে সার্ভেটি পূরণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। এই সার্ভে এর তথ্য কেবলমাত্র গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে এবং এর তথ্য গোপনীয় রাখা হবে। আপনার সহযোগিতার জন্য ধন্যবাদ।

ব্যক্তিগত তথ্যঃ

শ্রেণিঃ

শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামঃ

প্রথম ভাগঃ আপনার পছন্দগুলিতে টিক চিহ্ন দিন।

১। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাস আপনার কেমন লাগে?

ক) ভাল

খ) খুব ভাল

গ) মোটামুটি

ঘ) ভাল না

ঙ) খুব খারাপ

২। আপনার কি মনে হয় অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাস আর অফলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসের মধ্যে অনেক পার্থক্য আছে ?

ক) হ্যাঁ

খ) না

গ) দুইটা একই রকম

দ্বিতীয় ভাগঃ নিচের প্রত্যেকটি বক্তব্য এর জন্য পাশে ৫টি করে অপশন রয়েছে। আপনার পছন্দের অপশন এর বৃত্ত ভরাট করুন।

ক্রম	বক্তব্য সমূহ	সম্পূর্ণ একমত	আংশিকভাবে একমত	মন্তব্য নেই	একমত নয়	ভিন্নমত
১	যখন শিক্ষক আমাকে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে কিছু পড়ে শোনাতে বলে তখন আমার অনেক ভয় লাগে।	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
২	আমি যখন অনলাইন ক্লাসে ইংরেজিতে কিছু পড়ি, তখন আমি এতটাই নার্ভাস হয়ে যাই যে আমি কি পড়ছি সেটা মনে রাখতে পারি না।	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
৩	শিক্ষক অনলাইন ক্লাসে কিছু লিখতে দিলে আমার মাথায় লিখার মতন কিছুই আসে না।	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
৪	অনলাইন ক্লাসে যেহেতু শিক্ষক আমাকে সামনা সামনি দেখতে পায়না, তাই ক্লাসে শিক্ষক ইংরেজিতে কিছু লিখতে বললেও আমি	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	তা না লিখে বসে থাকি।					
৫	অনলাইন ক্লাসে ইংরেজি শুনে করা লাগবে এমন কোন কাজ দিলে আমি ভয় পেয়ে যাই।	○	○	○	○	○
৬	আমি অনলাইনে ক্লাসে ইংরেজি শোনার সময় দু'একটি অজানা শব্দ শুনলে সেটার চিন্তায় বাকি যা শুনেছি সব ভুলে যাই।	○	○	○	○	○
৭	অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ইংরেজিতে কথা বলার সময় আমার হাত পা কাঁপতে থাকে।	○	○	○	○	○
৮	আমার মনে হয় অনলাইন ক্লাসে আমি ইংরেজী বলার সময় অন্যান্য শিক্ষার্থীরা পর্দার আড়ালে আমার কথা শুনে হাসে।	○	○	○	○	○
৯	অনলাইন ক্লাসে ইংরেজীতে বলতে আমি স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য বোধ করি যেহেতু কেউ আমাকে সামনা সামনি দেখতে পাচ্ছে না।	○	○	○	○	○
১০	অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে আমি সবসময় হঠাৎ করে ইন্টারনেট সংযোগ চলে	○	○	○	○	○

	যাওয়ার দুশ্চিন্তায় থাকি।					
১১	অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে আমি কোন একটি ছোট অংশ মিস করলেও ভয় পেয়ে যাই, কারণ আমার আমার মনে হয় আমি পরে আর কিছুই বুঝতে পারব না।	○	○	○	○	○
১২	অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে কিছু শিখার আগেই আমার মনে হয় আমি সেটা পারব না।	○	○	○	○	○
১৩	অন্যান্য বিষয়ের অনলাইন ক্লাসের থেকে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে আমার অনেক বেশি ভয় লাগে।	○	○	○	○	○
১৪	অনলাইন ক্লাসে আমার নিজেকে অনেক একা মনে হয়।	○	○	○	○	○
১৫	অনলাইন ক্লাসে কেউ ইংরেজীতে কথা বলার সময় তার মুখের ভাবভঙ্গি দেখতে না পারার কারণে আমার বুঝতে সমস্যা হয় এবং আমি নার্ভাস হয়ে যাই।	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix B

FGD Questionnaire for Students

এই ফোকাস গ্রুপ ডিসকাশন টি “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Secondary Level Online English Language Classes during Pandemic” নামক একটি গবেষণার জন্য ডিজাইন করা হয়েছে। মাধ্যমিক স্তরের শিক্ষার্থী হিসাবে আপনার মতামত এই গবেষণার জন্য খুবই মূল্যবান এবং প্রয়োজনীয়। এজন্য আপনার সম্মতি থাকলে আপনাকে আন্তরিকভাবে ডিসকাশন টিতে অংশগ্রহণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। এই আলোচনার তথ্য কেবলমাত্র গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে এবং এর তথ্য গোপনীয় রাখা হবে।

আলোচনাটি সর্বোচ্চ ১ ঘন্টার হবে। শুরুতে আমি প্রশ্ন করব। সেই প্রশ্ন নিয়ে আপনারা একে একে নিজেদের মতামত দিবেন। অন্য কারও মতামত শোনার পর যদি আপনার সে সম্পর্কে কিছু বলার থাকে তবে সেটাও বলতে পারবেন। আলোচনাটিতে সবাইকে একে অন্যের প্রতি সম্মান বজায় রেখে কথা বলার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। আপনার সহযোগিতার জন্য অগ্রিম ধন্যবাদ।

১। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ইংরেজি শিখার পরিবেশটা কেমন বলে আপনার মনে হয়? আপনি কি অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাস পছন্দ করেন? তার পেছনে কারণ কি?

২। আপনার মধ্যে কি অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে কোন রকম ভয় কাজ করে? যদি আপনার উত্তর হয়, তাহলে আপনি কিভাবে বুঝতে পারেন যে আপনার মধ্যে কোন একটা ভীতি কাজ করছে?

৩। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসের কোন কোন সময় আপনার বেশি নার্ভাস লাগে?

৪। আপনার কি মনে হয়, অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে যেই ভয় আপনার মধ্যে কাজ করে সেটার কারণে আপনি ইংরেজিতে ভাল করতে পারেন না? আপনার এমন কেন মনে হয়?

৫। কি কি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করলে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে আপনার ভয়টা কমে যাবে বলে একজন মাধ্যমিকের শিক্ষার্থী হিসেবে আপনি মনে করেন?

Appendix C

Interview Questionnaire for Teachers

এই ইন্টারভিউটি “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Secondary Level Online English Language Classes during Pandemic” নামক একটি গবেষণার জন্য ডিজাইন করা হয়েছে। মাধ্যমিক স্তরের ইংরেজি শিক্ষক হিসাবে আপনার মতামত এই গবেষণার জন্য খুবই মূল্যবান এবং প্রয়োজনীয়। এজন্য আপনার সম্মতি থাকলে আপনাকে আন্তরিকভাবে ইন্টারভিউটি টিতে অংশগ্রহণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। এই আলোচনার তথ্য কেবলমাত্র গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে এবং এর তথ্য গোপনীয় রাখা হবে। ইন্টারভিউটিতে সর্বোচ্চ ৪৫ মিনিট সময় লাগবে। আপনার সহযোগিতার জন্য অগ্রিম ধন্যবাদ।

- ১। আপনি কোন ক্লাসে ইংরেজি পড়ান? কত বছর ধরে আপনি ইংরেজি পড়াচ্ছেন?
- ২। আপনার কি অনলাইনে ইংরেজি ক্লাস নিতে ভাল লাগে? অনলাইনে ক্লাস নেয়া শুরু করার পর এখন পর্যন্ত আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা কেমন?
- ৩। আপনার কি মনে হয় ছাত্রছাত্রীরা অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাস পছন্দ করে? আপনার কেন এমন মনে হয়?
- ৪। কিছু ছাত্রছাত্রী যে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ভাল মত ইংরেজি শিখতে পারে না, এর পেছনে কি কারণ আছে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
- ৫। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে কি কোন রকম ভয় কাজ করে? কি কারণে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে ভয় কাজ করে ?
- ৬। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসের কোন জিনিস ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ভয় টা বাড়িয়ে দেয়?/ কোন কোন সময় ছাত্রছাত্রীরা বেশি নার্ভাস থাকে বলে আপনার মনে হয়?
- ৭। অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে যেই ভয় ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে কাজ করে সেটার কি কোন প্রভাব পড়ে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ইংরেজি শিক্ষার ওপর? পড়লে সেটা কিভাবে?

৮। কি কি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহন করলে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ভয়টা কমে যাবে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

Appendix D

Consent Letter for Head Teacher

My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to allow the students and teachers of my educational institution to participate in the study titled as “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Language Classes During Pandemic” to be conducted online for partial fulfillment of M.Ed thesis of the researcher. I understand the purpose of the research project is to learn about the perspectives of secondary level students regarding their experience on foreign language anxiety in their online English language classrooms. The students will participate in a focus group discussion session (FGD) for about one hour and an online survey, and the teachers will participate in an interview for about 45 minutes regarding this research.

I agree to let the students and teachers of grade 9 and 10 of my institution to participate in the research knowing the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw them from participating in the study at any point of this research.

- The identity of the institution and the participants will be concealed. The data will be presented in an anonymous way.
- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved on the students participating in the study.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the researcher of my decision.

If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact Shakika Rubaiat.

Contact no: +8801628575696

Email: shakika.rubaiat@teachforbangladesh.org

Name of the Head Teacher: _____

Signature: _____

Name of the School: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Consent Letter for Teachers

My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to participate in the study titled as “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Language Classes During Pandemic” to be conducted online for partial fulfillment of M.Ed thesis of the researcher. I understand the purpose of the research project is to learn about the perspectives of secondary level students regarding their experience on foreign language anxiety in their online English language classrooms. I will participate in an interview for about 45 minutes regarding this research.

I agree to participate in the research knowing the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw from participating in the study at any point of this research.

- The identity of the institution and the participants will be concealed. The data will be presented in an anonymous way.
- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved on the students participating in the study.
- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the researcher of my decision.
- If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact Shakika Rubaiat.

Contact no: +8801628575696

Email: shakika.rubaiat@teachforbangladesh.org

Name of the Teacher: _____

Signature: _____

Name of the School: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Consent Letter for Parents

My tick on the “Yes” below indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to allow my child to participate in the study titled as “Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Online English Language Classes During Pandemic” to be conducted online for partial fulfillment of M.Ed thesis of the researcher. I understand the purpose of the research project is to learn about the perspectives of secondary level students regarding their experience on foreign language anxiety in their online English language classrooms. My child will participate in a focus group discussion session (FGD) for about one hour and an online survey regarding this research.

I agree to let my child participate in the research knowing the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw my child from the study at any point of this research.

- The identity of participants will be concealed. The data will be presented in an anonymous way.
- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved to my child participating in the study.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and will not affect either student grades or placement decisions. If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the school of my decision.

If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact Shakika Rubaiat.

Contact no: +8801628575696

Email: shakika.rubaiat@teachforbangladesh.org

Name of the Parent: _____

Signature: _____

Name of the Student: _____

Name of the School: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H

Sample Interview Transcript

Interviewer: আসসালামু আলাইকুম স্যার, কেমন আছেন?

Interviewee: ভাল। আপনি কেমন আছেন?

Interviewer: জী স্যার ভাল আছি আলহামদুলিল্লাহ। আপনাকে অনেক ধন্যবাদ স্যার আপনার busy schedule থেকে সময় দেয়ার জন্য।

Interviewee: না না ঠিক আছে। আপনিতো আমার ফ্রি সময়তেই meeting fix করেছেন।

Interviewer: আচ্ছা স্যার। Still I really appreciate your help। শুরু করার স্যার আগে আপনার অনুমতি দরকার ছিল। আপনি যদি অনুমতি দেন তাহলে আমি কি এই সেশন টা record করতে পারি? শুধুমাত্র আমার research এর কাজের জন্য। research শেষ হয়ে গেলে recording টি ডিলিট করে দেয়া হবে।

Interviewee: Sure! No problem!

Interviewer: Okay Sir. তাহলে শুরু করি। আমার প্রথম প্রশ্ন হল আপনি কোন ক্লাস থেকে ইংরেজি পড়াচ্ছেন? এবং কত বছর ধরে পড়াচ্ছেন?

Interviewee: আমি মূলত অষ্টম শ্রেণী থেকে দ্বাদশ। এই পাঁচটা ক্লাসে ইংরেজি পড়াচ্ছি পড়ানো অভিজ্ঞতা নয় বছর কিন্তু এটা স্কুলে। কিন্তু কলেজে পড়াচ্ছি তিন বছর ধরে।

Interviewer: Thank You.

Interviewee: ২০০৮ থেকে এখন পর্যন্ত চলছে

Interviewer: আচ্ছা, (Ummm), Thank You. আচ্ছা, আপনি যদি Grade 9 and 10 বলে থাকেন, তাহলে 2018 থেকে আগে থেকে Grade 9 and 10 ও করাচ্ছেন।

Interviewee: জি হ্যাঁ। একদম ক্লাস ৪ থেকে 12

Interviewer: Umm... ও সবগুলি ওকে ঠিক আছে। আচ্ছা আপনি তো আগে নিশ্চয়ই ফিজিক্যাল ক্লাসরুমে নিতেন এখন তো নতুন করে প্যানডেমিক এর সময় শিফট করা লেগেছে আমাদের এডুকেশন সিস্টেম শিফট হয়ে গেছে.

Interviewee: হ্যাঁ

Interviewer: এই অনলাইনে ইংলিশ ক্লাস নিতে আপনার কি ভালো লাগে? মানে এতদিন ধরে এক বছর মনে হয় হয়ে গেলো প্রায় আপনাদের শিফট করার।

Interviewee: এক বছরের বেশি

Interviewer: এক বছরের বেশি। Ok. Great. So, আপনি যদি আপনাদের Experience টা শেয়ার করতেন আপনার নিজের অনলাইনে ক্লাস নেয়ার?

Interviewee: আচ্ছা আমার Experience এর কথা যদি বলি, সেটা হচ্ছে আমি সরাসরি বলতে পারব না যে ভালো লাগেনা। ভালো লাগে। এটা একটা আলাদা একটা Taste। আসলে একটা কথা হচ্ছে পৃথিবীটা যেভাবে এগোচ্ছে, মানুষতো চাইবে সময় বাঁচাতে। মানুষের হাতে সময় খুব কম। সুতরাং একটা সময় এমন হবে যে সবকিছু অনলাইনে চলে আসবে। আমার মনে হয় এখন কিন্তু আমি যদি আমার ঘরে বসে, পাঁচটা দেশের পাঁচ জন যদি meeting করতে পারি, এর থেকে সহজ ও সুন্দর বিষয় আর কিছুই হতে পারে না। মানুষ কিন্তু এখন সময় বাঁচাতে চায়, একটু কষ্ট কম করতে চায়। একটু আরামপ্রিয় হয়ে গেছে মানুষ। So, virtually এখন আমাদের যে মিটিং গুলো হচ্ছে। যেমন, এখন আপনি আমার সাথে কথা বলছেন, কোথায় আপনি বসে আছেন, কোথায় আমি বসে আছি? কিন্তু কাজটা আমাদের কত সুন্দর হয়ে যাচ্ছে দেখেন।

Interviewer: জ্বী

Interviewee: সুতরাং, মানুষ অনেক বেশি আপডেটেড হতে চাইবে। কিন্তু এখানে একটা কিন্তু থেকে যাচ্ছে। যে পড়াশোনার বিষয়টা। আমার মনে হয় যে এটি ভার্চুয়ালে নাহলে আমি অনেক বেশি খুশি হব। সবকিছু আসলে ফোনে ফোনে হয় না। এখনো অনেক কাজ আছে যেটা আমি.. আমি নিজেই নিজে কন্সফার্টেবল ফিল করিনা। আমি বলি যে, "ভাই, ফোনে তো এত কথা বলা যায়না। আপনি কি লালবাগে আসতে পারবেন? আমার বাসায় এখানে আসতে পারবেন? অথবা, আমি কোথায় আসলে ভালো হবে বলেন, আমি চলে আসবো। " এমন অনেক বিষয় আছে যেটা ফিজিক্যালি সামনাসামনি হওয়া ভালো। এবং পড়াশোনায় বিষয়টা যদি কোন দিন যদি ভার্চুয়াল না হয় তাহলে আমি সবচেয়ে বেশি খুশি হবো। কারণ বাচ্চাদের সামনে থেকে পাওয়া, কাছে থেকে বোঝানো, ummm... বোর্ড ব্যবহার করা, হ্যাঁ বা আকার-ইঙ্গিতের যে বিষয়গুলো আছে। এই বিষয়গুলো যদি আমি স্পষ্ট ভাবে বোঝাতে চাই, তাহলে অফলাইনটা বেস্ট। আমি বেটার ও বলবো না, এটা বেস্ট। আমার মনে হয় এটা সবচেয়ে ভালো হয় সামনাসামনি, যেটাকে আমরা বলছি Direct Interaction হ্যাঁ। খুব কাছাকাছি হলে ক্লাসরুমে সকল বাচ্চারা সবাই থাকবে, একজন আরেকজন কে দেখবে। তাই না? এই বিষয়টা আমি সবচেয়ে বেশি prefer করবো। আর সবচেয়ে বড় কথা হচ্ছে যে, Attention পাওয়া যায় না full attention কখনো আপনি পাবেন না। Attention missing হবে। আপনি সামনাসামনি দেখতে পাচ্ছেন না। হ্যাঁ। আর আমাদের দেশের যে নেটওয়ার্কিং সিস্টেম। সেই সমস্যা তো আছেই। সেটা তো একটা অনেক বড় সমস্যা। হঠাৎ করে ভিডিও অফ হয়ে যায়। সাউন্ড চলে যাচ্ছে। হ্যাঁ। আমি ডেকেই যাচ্ছি বাচ্চাকে তার কোন খবর নেই। সে হয়তো আমাকে কোনো প্রশ্ন করেছে। আমি somehow network buffering কারণে শুনতে পারিনি। সবকিছু মিলিয়ে এটা কিন্তু আমরা 100 percent successful বলতে পারছি।

Interviewer: জি স্যার, Thank you so much. আপনার perspective থেকে ত শুনলাম as a teacher। এখন আপনি যে ক্লাস নিচ্ছেন, আপনার কি মনে হয় students রা কি এই shift টা পছন্দ করেছে? যে অনলাইনে ইংরেজি ক্লাস কি তারা পছন্দ করে? আর আপনার মনে হওয়ার পেছনে কারণগুলো কি?

Interviewee: আচ্ছা। কেউ কেউ। কেউ কেউ। কেউ কেউ পছন্দ করেছে। আমার একটা স্টুডেন্ট আমাকে ঈদ এর আগের দিন ফোন করেছিল উইশ করার জন্য। স্যার কেমন আছেন?

আমি বললাম হ্যাঁ তুমি কেমন আছ? বলছে স্যার ভাল, ক্লাসেস চলছে অনলাইনে। আমি বললাম কেমন এনজয় করছ? ও বলছে স্যার সবচেয়ে বেশি এনজয় আমি করছি। আমার এত কলেজে যাওয়া, ছোট্টাছুটি করা, রিকশা পাওয়া যায় না, বৃষ্টির দিনে কষ্ট, রাস্তায় কাঁদা, হ্যাঁ এত কষ্ট থেকে মুক্তি পেয়েছি। আমি বাসায় আছি, আমার কাজগুলো করছি, পড়াশোনাও হচ্ছে সবই হচ্ছে, আমার ভাল্লাগছে। আমি এনজয় করছি! তো এরকম মানুষ ও কিন্তু আছে যে বাসায় বসে (হাসি) তারা খুব comfortable feel করছে। যে তারা মনে করছে ভালও, কিন্তু বেশিরভাগ তাই এটার পক্ষে না। ঐ যে বললাম বাচ্চাদের interaction পাওয়া যায় না। আপনি সবাইকে reach করতে পারছেন না, আপনি সবার attention নিতে পারছেন না। এভাবে তো loss হয়ে যাচ্ছে। আমাদের টার্গেট টাই ফুলফিল হচ্ছে না। আমরা বাধ্য হয়ে তখন কি করছি? সিলেবাসটা ছোট করে দিচ্ছি। কেন্ন সিলেবাস ছোট হচ্ছে এটা বুঝতে হবে। কারণ offline এ আপনি যতটুকু area cover করতে পারছেন, অনলাইনে সেটা পারছেন না। slow হয়ে যাচ্ছে কিন্তু! process টা slow হয়ে যাচ্ছে। offline এ আপনি একসাথে যতগুলো পড়াতে পারছেন, অনলাইনে সেটা পারছেন না, আমরা পারছি না। এই সমস্যা টা থেকে যাচ্ছে। যার কারণে সিলেবাস complete হচ্ছে না। একটা lacking তো থেকে যাচ্ছেই। আর বাচ্চারা কিন্তু উদাসিন হয়ে যাচ্ছে। কারণ আমরা সামনা সামনি বাচ্চাদেরকে যতটা attract করতে পারি ক্লাসে, অনলাইনে তা পারা যায়না। সুতরাং কেউ কেউ পছন্দ করছে অনলাইন টা। কিন্তু এর সংখ্যা খুবই কম। আর আমিও খুব একটা পছন্দ করছি না। এত সারাক্ষণ ঐযে electric জিনিসের আশেপাশে বসে থেকে, অ্যা, নাকে কানে এতগুলো তার গুঁজে, এটা আসলে ভাল লাগছেনা খুব বেশি একটা। প্রথম কিছুদিন খুউউব বিরক্ত লেগেছে, আমি তো ভাবছিলাম কতদিন না জানি continue করতে পারব জানিনা। তারপরে এখন পর্যন্ত চলছে। কিছুটা ভাল লাগছে এখন আশ্তে আশ্তে। ঐ যে, মানিয়ে নেওয়ার একটা বিষয় আমাদের, আমরা খাপ খাইয়ে নিচ্ছি আসলে পরিস্থিতির সাথে। কিন্তু আমরা নিজেরাও জানি যে, কোন একদিন সব ঠিক হবে, পৃথিবী সুস্থ হবে। আমরা আবার offline এ ফিরে যাব। ঐ expectation নিয়ে আমরা এগুচ্ছি। আর কেউ যদি কানে কানে এসে বলে যে সারা জীবন এভাবেই ক্লাস নিতে হবে তখন কি হবে আসলে জানিনা। এই টা বোধ হয় বেশিদিন সম্ভব হবেনা।

Interviewer: জী স্যার। এই অনলাইনে ইংরেজি ক্লাসে দেখা যায় কিছু স্টুডেন্টস ভাল মত ইংরেজি শিখতে পারে না। struggle করে। এর পেছনে কি কি কারণ আছে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

Interviewee: Struggle বলতে আসলে কি, যারা ভাল, বরাবরই ইংরেজি তে ভাল, ওদের কাছে offline online দুটোই same। যাদের আগ্রহ আছে যে আমি শিখব, অরা কোন না কোন ভাবে শিখছেই। কিছু কিছু স্টুডেন্ট এর আগ্রহ এত বেশি, হয়তো রাত ১১ টার সময় মনে পড়েছে একটা কিছু। ও আমাকে টেক্সট করেছে, “Sir, are you free?” আপনি যদি ফ্রি থাকেন আমাকে কি answer টা একটু দিতে পারবেন? তারপর অনেকেই লিখে, what is the difference between ‘affect’ and ‘effect’? এধরনের প্রশ্ন বাচ্চারা করে। আগ্রহ যার আছে, তার কিন্তু আছে, হুম? আর struggle এর যে বিষয় টা, বাচ্চাদের খুব বেশি struggle করতে হচ্ছেনা তো। কারণ আমি বলছি, কারণ অনলাইন থেকে, মানে আমরা যখন অফলাইনে শিফট হলাম, তখন টিচাররা, তাদের, ummm বলতে পারেন সিলেবাসটাকে এমনভাবে ডিজাইন করেছে যে বাচ্চাদের খুব বেশি একটা struggle করতে হচ্ছেনা। আমরা চাই যে সবসময় আমাদের বেটার সার্ভিসটা দিতে, একজন টিচার কিন্তু সব সময় চায় যে তার বাচ্চাটাকে সে তার চেয়ে ভালমতো করে শেখাবে। যেই lacking গুলো তাদের সময় ছিল, সেগুলো যাতে না হয়। আর এখনকার টিচার রা তো মাশাআল্লাহ অনেক বেশি আধুনিক, হ্যাঁ? আমাদের হাতে গুগল আছে, আমরা যে কোন প্রশ্নের উত্তর সাথে সাথে পেয়ে যাচ্ছি, বাচ্চাদেরকে দিতে পারছি। আমাদের সময় কিন্তু এই সুবিধাগুল ছিল না, আমরা যখন স্টুডেন্ট ছিলাম সুতরাং সত্যি কথা বলতে বাচ্চাদের খুব খুব বেশি struggle করতে হচ্ছেনা। আমাদের সময় তো স্মার্টফোন ছিল না আমাদের একটা dictionary ঘেঁটে ঘেঁটে শব্দ বের করতে হত। এখন লিখলে সাথে সাথে শব্দের অর্থ, synonyms, antonyms, pronunciation চলে আসছে। English এর ক্ষেত্রে আমি বলব, অন্য সাবজেক্টগুলার ক্ষেত্রে তো আমি আসলে জানিনা, কিন্তু English শেখা এখন অনেক বেশি সহজ। আর সবচেয়ে বড় কথা হচ্ছে বাচ্চারা social networking এ এত বেশি involved, ওদের এখন foreign friends হচ্ছে foreign partner হচ্ছে, হ্যাঁ? যেসব cousin রা দেশের বাইরে থাকে, তাদের সাথে প্রতিনিয়ত কথা হচ্ছে। বাচ্চারা কিন্তু এখন ইংরেজি খুব সহজে শিখতে পারছে। আমি বলছি আমাদের সময়ের থেকে এখন শেখা টা অনেক বেশি সহজ, easier than our times. সুতরাং অনেক বেশি struggle করতে হচ্ছেনা। যারা

বরাবরই ভালও তারা ভালই করছে। আর যাদের আগ্রহ নেই, তারা তো struggle করবে না, কারণ ওদের শেখারই দরকার নেই। কিন্তু খুব একটা কষ্ট হচ্ছেনা। এখন খুব সহজেই ইংরেজি শেখা সম্ভব, ঘরে বসে।

Interviewer: Thank you Sir. আর স্যর অনলাইন ক্লাসে বাচ্চাদের মধ্যে কি কোন anxiety, hesitation, nervousness কি আপনি observe করেছেন? বা feel করেছেন আপনার experience এর মধ্যে?

Interviewee: অনেক বেশি। প্রচুর। আমি বলি, শ্রী আমাদের ইংলিশ ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ teaching এ যে ৪টা method আছে তার মধ্যে সেকেন্ড হচ্ছে direct method যেই মেথডটা আমাদের কারিকুলামে ফলো করার কথা। গভমেন্ট থেকে একটা umm... বলতে পারেন যে একটা এরকম এজেন্ডাই আছে, হ্যাঁ। যে ইংলিশ টিচাররা ইংলিশ ছাড়া ছাড়া কথা বলতে পারবে না। এবং এটাই হওয়া উচিত। একটা ভাষা আপনিতো শুধু পড়েই শিখবেন না। আপনি শুনে শুনে শিখবেন, আপনি দেখে দেখেও শিখবেন। দেখে দেখে কিভাবে শিখবেন, ওই যে এনিমেটেড নিউজ গুলাতে ডায়লগ শুনছি নিচে সাবটাইটেল দেয়া থাকছে। এভাবে কিন্তু অনেক ভাষা শিখা যায়। সম্ভব। সহজ ভাবে শেখা সম্ভব। আমাদের ক্ষেত্রে যে জিনিসটা হয়েছে direct method follow করতে গিয়ে, যেমন, আমি আগে English medium স্কুলে ছিলাম। ওইখানে তো বাংলা বলার কোনো সুযোগই নেই। এখন যেহেতু আমরা বাংলা মিডিয়াম স্কুল ও কলেজে এসেছি। এখন বাংলা বলার সুযোগ আছে। সমস্যা নাই, ইংলিশ মিডিয়ামের মত অতোটা strict না। কিন্তু বাংলা বলা উচিত না, তবু আমাদের বলতে হয়। এই যে আপনার প্রশ্নের উত্তরটা এর মধ্যে আছে। যে বাচ্চারা অনেক বেশি নার্ভাস হয়ে যায়। প্রথম দিন আমি আমার demonstration class এ যেদিন full English এ লেকচার দেওয়া শুরু করলাম। Most of the students হা করে তাকিয়ে ছিল, ওরা যে কিছুই বুঝতে পারছে না, সেটা আমি বুঝতে পারছি তো। কারণ আমাদের ওইযে গোড়ায় গলদ বলে একটা বিষয় আছে শুরু থেকে ওইভাবে বাচ্চাদের তৈরি করা হয়নি তো যে ওরা শুনে শুনে সাথে সাথে রিসিভ করবে but they can write well এরমধ্যে কিন্তু বেশিরভাগ এ প্লাস পাওয়া স্টুডেন্ট।

Interviewer: (Chuckles)

Interviewee: এসএসসি পরীক্ষায় এ প্লাস পেয়েছে, জে এস সি পরীক্ষায় এ প্লাস পেয়েছে, ইংলিশ এ প্লাস পেয়েছে। কিন্তু শুনে ধরতে পারছে না, কারণ তাদের listening skill টা তৈরি করা হয়নি। ওরা শুধু reading আর writing টা তৈরি করেছে। চারটা skill টাই সমানভাবে develop করতে হবে। না হলে তো সমস্যা থাকবেই। And বাচ্চারা কেন nervous হবে না। বাচ্চাদেরকে আমরা ওইভাবে আসলে তৈরি করিনি। তৈরি করতে পারিনি। ব্যর্থতা আমাদের। বাচ্চারা তো nervous হবেই, ওরা তো ভয় পাবেই। আর ভয়! ভয়ে শব্দটা যখন আসে তখন ভয়ের পেছনে ভয় থেকে বড় যে শব্দটা আসবে সেটা হচ্ছে লজ্জা। আমাদের বাচ্চারা ইংরেজিতে কথা বলতে লজ্জা পায়।

Interviewer: জি

Interviewee: আর লজ্জা কেন পায়? ওই যে পাশের থেকে ওরা Side talking করে তো। পাশের থেকে ওরা টিটকারি দেয়। তারপর হচ্ছে ওরা লজ্জা দেয়। এই জিনিসটা থেকে আমাদের বের হয়ে আসতে হবে আসলে ইংরেজি না বলতে পারা কোন কোন লজ্জা না শিখতে পারাটাই লজ্জা। আর শিখতে গেলে, ভুল তো হবেই। এমন কোন কাজ আছে যেটা শিখতে গেলে ভুল হয় না। সুতরাং বাচ্চারা প্রচুর পরিমাণে nervous হয়, এর পেছনে আমরাই দায়ী। ঠিক আছে, আমাদেরকে curriculum টা কে এমনভাবে design করতে হবে যখন সবাইকে বলতে হচ্ছে যখন ওদের speaking এ 10 মার্ক listening এ 10 মার্ক এরকম করে যদি আমরা দিয়ে দিব। ওই যে বললাম বাচ্চারা মার্কসটা কে চেনে, আর কিছু চিনুক না চিনুক, ওরা মার্কস চেনে। আমাকে 10 এ 9 পেতে হবে। যেন বাসায় গিয়ে আমি আব্বুকে বলতে পারি, এটা বলে কিছু একটা চাইতে পারি, "আমি 10 এ 9 পেয়েছি, আজকে আমাকে pizza hut থেকে পিজা এনে দিতে হবে।" হ্যাঁ, সেগুলো কিন্তু বাচ্চাদের মধ্যে অনেক আছে। আমি নয় কেন পেলাম না? আমিতো অনেক ভালো বলেছি। সুতরাং, যখন প্রত্যেকটা skill এ আলাদা আলাদা marking system তৈরি করতে পারব। এমনতেই আমার মনে হয় ওরা শিখতে পারবে। এবং আমার খুব কষ্ট লাগে, এমনও হয়েছে। আমার আমার এখানে আসার আগে, আমি অন্য একটা স্কুলে, এখন যেখানে আছি সেখানে ঢোকার আগে অন্য একটা স্কুলে একটা ক্লাস নিয়েছিলাম। খুব কষ্ট লেগেছে। সেটা হচ্ছে গিয়ে বেশি, মানে, যখন আমি পুরো ক্লাসটা ইংরেজিতে নিলাম, পরের ক্লাসে অর্ধেকের বেশি স্টুডেন্ট আসেনি। তো

আমি যখন যাচাই করার চেষ্টা করলাম। কি ব্যাপার! ওরা বলছে স্যার আপনার ক্লাস ওরা কেউ বোঝে না। আরে! ক্লাস বুঝবে না কেন। ক্লাস তো আমি বোঝার মতো করে নিয়েছি। সমস্যাটা হচ্ছে, ভাষাটা বুঝে না। So আমাদেরকে বাধ্য হয়ে মাঝে মাঝে ইংরেজিতে কথা বলতে হয়। মাঝে মাঝে বাচ্চারাই বলে, "স্যার, একটু আগে যে কথাটা বললেন ওটাকি একটু বাংলায় বলবেন?" তখন আমাকে বলতেই হবে। কারন আমার উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে ক্লাস টা কে বোধগম্য করা। বাচ্চাটা আমার lesson plan টা বুঝতে পারছে কিনা? সেটা আগে নিশ্চিত করা। ভাষা ও একদিন নিজের থেকে শিখে যাবে। কিন্তু যে টপিকটা ওকে আমার এখন বোঝানোর দরকার সেটা আজ থেকে 2 বছর পর ও নাও বুঝতে চাইবে। সুতরাং, ভাষাটা আমাদের কোন শিক্ষার অন্তরায় না হয়, এটাকে মাথায় রেখে ইংরেজি বাংলা যৌথভাবে সুন্দরভাবে সমান্তরালভাবে ব্যবহার করে কিভাবে ক্লাস টাকে বোধগম্য করা যায় এটা যদি চেষ্টা করা হয় তাহলে বাচ্চাদের ভয়-ভীতি ও কাটবে। এবং লজ্জাটা তখনই কাটবে যখন সবাই একই কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড়াবে। যখন আমি গ্রুপ করে দেবো, প্রত্যেকটা গ্রুপকে আসতে হবে এবং মাত্র 1 মিনিট করে বলতে হবে। তখন ও একটা মানসিকভাবে প্রস্তুতি নিবে যে, ইংলিশ ক্লাসে তো ইংলিশে কথা বলতে হয়। এরকম ছোট ছোট করে চাপ সৃষ্টি করতে হবে বাচ্চাদের। "চাপ" শব্দটা আসলে negative একটা শব্দ, চাপ বলা যাবে না। ওকে মানে curious করতে হবে। হ্যাঁ ইংরেজি বললেই, ইংরেজি বলা যায়। চেষ্টা করতে হয়।

Interviewer: আচ্ছা, থ্যাংক ইউ। জি এখন যদি বলতেন অনলাইন ক্লাসে কোন কোন জিনিসগুলো স্টুডেন্টদের anxiety কিংবা ভয় বাড়িয়ে দেয় বলে আপনি মনে করেন? কোন কোন সময় স্টুডেন্টরা নার্ভাস থাকে বলে আপনার মনে হয়?

Interviewee: Writing এ বাচ্চাদের কোন anxiety নেই। কোন কালেই ছিলনা। ওদের যেকোনো একটা জিনিস লিখতে বললে সুন্দর করে লিখে আপনাকে ছবি পাঠিয়ে দিবে সময় মতন। এই ভুলটা হয় না। সমস্যা হয় reading এ। যারা ক্লাসে reading করতে চাইতো না, তারা এখন রিডিং পড়তে চায় না। আর যারা সব সময় পড়তো ওরাই, "স্যার, আমি পড়বো আমি পড়বো। স্যার প্লিজ প্লিজ আমি পড়বো স্যার।" আরে বাবা! তুমি তো সব সময় পড়ো, যারা পড়ে না তাদেরকে জিজ্ঞেস করি। যখন আমি এমন কাউকে ধরি যে কখনোই পড়ে না। হয়তো তার লাইনটা কাট হয়ে যায়, অথবা সে শুনতে পায়না। সে আমাকে একটা টেক্সট করে যে স্যার আমি আপনার

কথা শুনতে পাচ্ছি না। When we are not sure either সে শুনতে পাচ্ছে কি পাচ্ছে না। এই যে সমস্যা গুলো, anxiety হয়, সবচেয়ে বেশি anxiety হয় তখনই যখন আমি বাচ্চাদের একটা প্রশ্ন করি। কারণ কি? আমি শুরুতে একটা কথা বলেছি আমরা কিন্তু বাচ্চাদের টেনশন টা পুরোপুরি নিতে পারছি না। অনেক বাচ্চা আছে, খুব শক্ত একটা বাস্তব। হেডফোনটা কানেক্ট করে লিংকে ক্লিক করে ওরা ওদের কাজে চলে যায়। আমি ডেকে যাচ্ছি, ডেকেই যাচ্ছি কোন খবর নাই। Attendance টা দিচ্ছে, yes sir, present sir তারপরে নাই। যে বাচ্চাটা চলে গেল, অনেক বাচ্চা আছে, আসলে বাচ্চাদের ক্লাসে তো ভিডিও অন করে বসার কথা, অনেক গার্ডিয়ান আছে তারা ফোন করে বলে, "স্যার আমাদের বাসার পরিবেশটাতক ওরকম নয়। আমি আপনাকে রিকোর্ড করছি যদি ভিডিওটা অফ করা যায়।" আমাদেরকে বাধ্য হয়ে, বিশ্বাস করেন! পারমিশন দিতে হয় যখন গার্ডিয়ান বলে। তখন তো কিছু করার থাকেনা। ভিডিও অফ করলে আমি কিন্তু বাচ্চার movement দেখতে পাচ্ছি না। সে কি আদৌও কি ক্লাসে আছে? নাকি লিফটটাতে টাচ করেছে গেমস খেলছে, পাবজি খেলছে, মেসেঞ্জারে টেক্সটিং করছে ফ্রেন্ডের সাথে। ওই যে এটেনশন যেহেতু নিতে পারিনা। অ্যাটেনশন নিতে না পারার কারণে ওর ওই গরজটা কমে যায়। আরে ধুর! ক্লাস হচ্ছে ক্লাসের মতন হোক। আমি আমার মতন থাকি। যখন আমি হঠাৎ করে কোনো প্রশ্ন করি। "তুমি কি আমার প্রশ্নটা বুঝতে পেরেছো?" ওর কানে তো এয়ারফোন দেয়া আছে। "জি স্যার, জি স্যার বুঝতে পেরেছি।" "বলোতো আমি কি বলেছি?" এ্যা। ঐতো আটকে গেল। এটা হল বাচ্চাদের সবচেয়ে বড় anxiety, যে স্যার প্রশ্ন করবে একটু পর। ওর ইচ্ছা করে ক্লাসে একটু মনোযোগ দিব, কিন্তু সে চাইলেও পারে না। কিভাবে পারে না কারণ ও তো আমার সামনে নাই। ও তো ওর মতই আছে। স্যার প্রশ্ন করবে জেনেও তারা মনোযোগ দিচ্ছে না। এবং স্যার যখন প্রশ্ন করে, এই উত্তরটাও তারা দিতে পারে না। সবচেয়ে বড় anxiety টা ওইখানে একটু পরে কর প্রশ্ন করবে প্রশ্ন করলেও কি উত্তর দিব? বাচ্চারা চায়ও avoid করতে। আমি যখন বারবার প্রশ্ন করি, "তোমরা কি বুঝতে পেরেছো?" "Yes sir," "ঠিক আছে তো?", "ইয়েস স্যার", "কোন প্রবলেম নেই তো?", "নো স্যার"। ঠিক পরে যখন প্রশ্ন করি তখন কথা বলতে পারছে না। ওরা চায় কত তাড়াতাড়ি yes sir, yes sir বলে ক্লাসটি শেষ করা যায়। ঠিক আছে। ওরা ভয় পায় স্যার কখন প্রশ্ন করে বসবে। এটাই সবচেয়ে বড় anxiety. শেখার ক্ষেত্রে কোনো anxiety নেই। ওরা জানে যে টিচাররা সময় মতন সিলেবাস ও ক্লাস শেষ করে দেবে। সেটা নিয়োগের কোন টেনশন নেই। ওদের টেনশন হচ্ছে প্রশ্ন করলে কি উত্তর দিব।

Interviewer: কি কি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহন করলে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ভয়টা কমে যাবে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

Interviewee: ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা বুঝতে না পারার reason টাই হচ্ছে, curriculum এ প্রবলেম। ছোটবেলা থেকেই যদি এই সকল জিনিস included থাকতো। ইংলিশ মিডিয়ামের বাচ্চাদের দেখেন ওরা ক্লাস ওয়ান থেকে ফ্লুয়েন্টলি ইংলিশে কথা বলছে কারণ ওরা হচ্ছে listening skill টা after birth develop করে ফেলে। ওই পরিবেশটা ওদের তৈরি করে দেওয়া হয়। এবং আমাদের এমনও হয়েছে যে একটা বাচ্চা ভুলে বাংলা বলে ফেলেছে punishment "তুমি দাঁড়িয়ে থাকো পাঁচ মিনিট"। ও জানে ওর ফ্রেন্ড এর সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে থাকতে হবে। তো লজ্জা। বললেও সে তখন আর বাংলা কথা বলেনা। এটা আমি ইংলিশে ক্ষেত্রে বলছি শুধু। অন্য সাবজেক্টে তো আমাদের ইংরেজী বলার দরকার নেই। একটা ক্লাসে ইংরেজি বলাই যায় খুব একটা কঠিন বিষয় নয়। এমনও হয় বাংলা বলতে বলতে অনেক সময় আমরা ইংরেজিতে টিচাররা কথা বলতে হবে, এটা ভুলে যাই। এই বিষয়গুলো অনেক সমস্যা সূত্রাং এই জিনিসগুলো শুরু থেকে যদি include করা হয়। প্যারাগ্রাফ এ 10 মার্ক, একটা অ্যাপ্লিকেশনে 10 মার্ক, এরকম যদি listening ও speaking এ 10 10 মার্ক থাকতো, তাহলে guardian ও সিরিয়াস হতো। হয় হয়, listening এতো 10 মার্ক আছে। এটাতে তো শূন্য পাওয়া যাবে না। এটাতে যেভাবেই হোক বাচ্চাদের এখন শিখিয়ে দিতে হবে। বাসায় যে home tutor আসে তাকে বলতে হবে, স্যার listening এ কিন্তু ১০ মার্কস। এটা কিন্তু ভালো মতন শেখাবেন। আমি আমার একটা অভিজ্ঞতার কথা বলি, আমার এক স্টুডেন্ট এর বাবা কুয়েত থেকে, সরি কাতার থেকে আমাকে ফোন করেছে। "স্যার আমার ছেলে খুব ভালো ইংরেজি লিখতে পারে, যখন রচনা লেখে তখন পনেরোতে তেরো পায়। কিন্তু ইংরেজি বলতে পারে না। শুধু ইংরেজি লিখতে পারলে তো হবে না, পৃথিবীর সবার সাথে তো লিখে লিখে কন্টাক্ট করবে না। সবার সাথে কি লিখে রেখে কন্টাক্ট করা সম্ভব? কারো কারো সাথে আপনাকে বলে বরং বেশিরভাগ মানুষের সাথে বলে যোগাযোগ করতে হবে। এরকম একটা এক্সপেরিয়ন্সের কথা বললো, যে আমাদের এখানে world এর best বারোটা ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ইউনিভার্সিটি থেকে বারোটা ইঞ্জিনিয়ার এসেছিল। World এর best বারোটা ইউনিভার্সিটি থেকে। They had the best results. 12 জনের একজনও ইন্টারভিউতে সাকসেসসফুল হয়নি। শুধুমাত্র তারা স্পিকিং fluently বলতে

পারেনি। যদিও তারা অন্যান্য দিক দিয়ে ভাল ছিল। কোন সমস্যা হলে আপনাকে তো তা বুঝিয়ে বলতে হবে আর এখানে আপনাকে ইংলিশ বলতেই হবে। সুতরাং ভাষা ঐভাবে শেখা উচিত যেন আমরা বলতে পারি। শুনলাম শুনলাম শুনলাম কিন্তু বলতে পারলাম না। এখানে তো লাভ হলো না। সুতরাং, listening and speaking এর যদি আলাদা মার্কস টাইপের কিছু একটা দেয়া যায় ওই মার্কস দেয়ার আগ পর্যন্ত আগ্রহ তৈরি হবে না। আমি আপনাকে একটা কথা বলি কি, হ্যান্ড রাইটিং ডেভলপ করার জন্য ট্রানসলেশন স্টাডিজ টা খুব বেশি জরুরি। আমাদের কিন্তু ইংলিশে কিন্তু ট্রানসলেশন মার্কস আছে। এমন কিছু কিছু জায়গায় মার্কস বৃদ্ধি করলে বাচ্চারা এবং অভিভাবকরা এর প্রতি আগ্রহ দেখাবেন এবং সিরিয়াস হবেন। ভাষা শিক্ষার জন্য ট্রানসলেশন স্টাডিস আমাদের জন্য অনেক জরুরী। এর কোনো বিকল্প নেই। কিন্তু আমাদের কারিকুলামে অনেক জায়গায় এবিষয়টি গণ্য করা হয় না ফলে এর উপর কোন আমল করা হয়নন। এই আফসোস আপনি কাকে বলবেন? আমি যদি আলাদা করে শিখাতে চাই বাচ্চারা কারিকুলামে নেই বললে শেখার প্রতি আগ্রহ দেখায় না। ফলে অভিভাবকরা সিলেবাসে এই বিষয় নেই বলে আমরা শিখাতে চাইলেও তারা এটি শিখানোর প্রয়োজন বোধ করেন না। সুতরাং এ বিষয়ে যদি পরীক্ষায় 10 মার্ক ও থাকে তাহলে তারা ট্রানসলেশন শিখে আসবে এবং প্রেজেন্টেশনে দেবে। কিছু জিনিসে এভাবেই পরিবর্তন দরকার এবং এভাবেই বাচ্চাদের পড়াশোনায় ও ভাষা শিক্ষায় মনোযোগী করা সম্ভব।

Interviewer: স্যার এমনিতে অনলাইন ইংরেজি ক্লাসে যেই ভয় ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে কাজ করে সেটার কি কোন প্রভাব পড়ে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ইংরেজি শিক্ষার ওপর? পড়লে সেটা কিভাবে?

Interviewee: অবশ্যই পড়ে বাচ্চাদের মধ্যে সেই সিরিয়াসনেস তো নাই। ক্লাসরুমে আমি যেভাবে আমি ওকে ধরতে পারতাম, এখন কিন্তু আমি ওভাবে তাকে ধরতে পারিনা। ও জানে স্যার সবাইকে আলাদা করে ধরতে ধরতে টাইম শেষ হয়ে যাবে জুমে তো টাইম লিমিট আছে। এ সময় স্যারের অ্যাটেনডেন্স নিতে হবে, হোমওয়ার্ক ও দেখতে হবে, সবকিছু মিলিয়ে টাইম অনেক লিমিটেড। চাইলেও আমি 2 মিনিট বেশি নিতে পারছি না। কিন্তু ক্লাসরুমে কিন্তু এরকম হয় না। বাচ্চারা 5 মিনিট এক্সট্রা চাইলে দেয়া যেত কিন্তু এখন তা দেয়া যায় না। আগের মতন এখন আর ধরতে পারছি না। আর যেই anxiety এর কথা আমরা বলছি সেটা নেই তো। এনজাইটি মানে কি, বাচ্চাদের উচিত ছিল এনজাইটি থাকা যে আমরা শিখতে পারছি না এই এনজাইটি থাকা উচিত

ছিল। কিন্তু এখন যেটা আছে সেটা উল্টো স্যার প্রশ্ন করলে উত্তর দিবো কিভাবে? ওই ভয়। আমি শিখতে পারছি না এই ভয়টা কিন্তু তাদের মাঝে নেই। আর আমি আগে ক্লাসরুমে যে ক্লাস নিতাম, তখন যে বাচ্চারা সিরিয়াস ছিল এখন তারাই সিরিয়াস রয়ে গেছে। আর যারা ক্যাজুয়াল ছিল তারা এখন ক্যাজুয়ালি রয়ে গেছে। তাদের মধ্যে কোন পরিবর্তন নেই। একটা বিষয় থাকতে পারতো যে স্যার আগের সরাসরি ক্লাস নিতো তাই ভয় লাগতো কিন্তু এখন স্যার আমার কাছে নাই এখন ভয়ের কি আছে তো এখন সিরিয়াস হওয়া যায় পড়াশোনার ব্যাপারে। কিন্তু দুঃখজনক এই পরিবর্তনটা আসেনি। সুতরাং আমরা বাচ্চাদের ওই ভাবে catch করতে পারছি না বিধায় যারা উদাসীন ছিল তারা indifferent আছে। আর যারা সিরিয়াস তারা সিরিয়াসই আছে। যাদের শিখতে হবে ওরাই শিখছে, আর যারা মনে করছে তাদের ইংরেজি ভালো লাগেনা কারা সুযোগ পেয়ে যাচ্ছে সেখান থেকে নিজেদের সরিয়ে ফেলার।

Interviewer: Thank You Sir. আমার প্রশ্ন এখানেই শেষ। This has been very helpful. আমার রিসার্চে আপনার মতামত অনেক কাজে লাগবে। আপনাকে আবারও ধন্যবাদ সময় দেয়ার জন্য এবং আপনার opinion elaborately জানানোর জন্য।

Interviewee: আমারও নিজের করে ভাল লাগলো। Glad I could help.

Interviewer: আচ্ছা স্যার, ভালও থাকবেন আর দোয়া রাখেন। আল্লাহ হাফেজ।

Interviewee: আল্লাহ হাফেজ।