

**The Challenges Encountered by Primary School Teachers in Teaching English in Dhaka:  
An Explanatory Study**

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School  
Improvement

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

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

**Student's Full Name & Signature:**

*Tanita Hossain.*

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## **Approval**

The thesis/project titled “**The Challenges Encountered by Primary School Teachers in Teaching English in Dhaka: An Explanatory Study**” submitted by

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of Spring, 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement on January 14, 2024.

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## **Ethics Statement**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Med Research Ethics Committee of BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University. Permission to conduct data collection will be sought from the authorities at the respective study sites. Prior to the collection of data, each participant will be provided with an overview of the study's objectives, and informed written/verbal consent will be obtained.

## **Abstract**

In the globalized era, proficiency in English is important for educational, employment and cross-cultural understanding. Drawing insights from Piaget's cognitive development and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory within a constructivist framework, the study explores how teachers actively contribute to students' language construction. Despite significance of learning English, challenges persist, including linguistic and cultural differences resource constraints, diverse pedagogical approaches. The study aims to explore the existing practices, government pedagogies, and challenges confronted by primary school teachers. Research questions focus on teaching strategies implementations and challenges faced by both government and non-government primary teachers. The study's purpose is to comprehensively understand the challenges and practices, intending to improve English language education in the local context. The research holds significance in addressing the gaps between the curriculum, teaching, and testing, offering insights for effective strategies and improvements in the English language education system.

**Keywords:** Primary, School, Teachers, English language, CLT, Bangladesh, Curriculum, Framework, Challenges

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, father and my husband for their consistent support and love.

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **List of Acronyms**

CLT Communitive Language Teaching

NCTB National Curriculum and Textbook Board

PTI Primary Teachers' Training

Upazila Education Office (UEO)

Upazila Resource Centre (URC)

DPEd Diploma in Primary Education

## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Background

#### 1.1 Introduction

Learning English as a second language (ESL) is important in today's globalized world, where English serves as the primary means of communication in various fields such as business, science, and academic (Crystal, 2003). Proficiency in English not only opens door to educational and employment opportunities but also foster cross cultural understanding and develop their personal and intellectual growth (Graddol, 2006; Widdowson, 2003).

Teaching English to primary-grade students is essential as at an earlier age as students can grasp faster; with the knowledge of learning a new language their cognitive growth and communicative skills are enhanced and so are their problem-solving skills (Bialystok, 2001).

Both Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory offer valuable insights into the importance of teaching English to primary-grade students within a constructivist framework. These theories highlight how children actively construct their understanding of the English language, emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural context in learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1978)

With learning a new language at the primary grade students can interact with people in diverse linguistic backgrounds, fostering cultural competence (Cummins, 2000). Hence for knowledge expansion and access to success globally, most educational institutions worldwide offer courses that make English a prerequisite subject (Harper & Mok, 2016). In our context, the primary curriculum of Bangladesh has thus also made it mandatory for English for primary students (National Curriculum & Textbook Board [NCTB], 2023). However, the biggest challenge that a teacher faces while taking an English class is executing and planning the English lessons.

According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), learning occurs within a student's ZPD with appropriate guidance. Teachers can scaffold instruction by providing enough support to help the students understand and use English effectively, and then gradually decrease as their language skill improves (Vygotsky, 1978). While Piaget's theory of discovery learning suggests students construct knowledge through active exploration that is by using several activities like games, puzzles, peer learning approach, collaboration, etc these are also suggested by Vygotsky that enhances their language acquisition and cognitive development (Piaget, 1978). These practices are also seen to be followed in the teacher's guide of the National Curriculum for the subject English (DPED English Guide, 2023). Concerning these resources, this study will explore the current practices of the teachers in teaching English and their current challenges. Teaching English to primary-grade students poses numerous challenges for educators globally. Language acquisition at this development stage involves unique hurdles including varying levels of prior language exposure and the need for age-appropriate instructional strategies (Smith, 2018). Additionally, teachers often grapple with limited resources, large classroom sizes, and the demand for personalized learning experiences to address diverse learning styles (Jone and Brown, 2019).

## 1.2 Research Topic

The title of the research paper is 'The Challenges Encountered by Primary School Teachers in Teaching English in Dhaka: An Exploratory Study'. In this paper I intend to explore the existing English teaching pedagogies offered by the government, explore the existing practices, and do a comprehensive exploration of the actual context by exploring the teachers' existing practices and the challenges they are facing while teaching English to the primary grade students, specifically

of Grade 4th and 5th, at the end write recommendations from the findings that can bring improvement to the system.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

While the importance of learning English is evident, challenges are inevitable for ESL learners. Linguistic and cultural differences often present obstacles, affecting pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary acquisition, leading to potential miscommunication (Jenkin, 2000). Educational contexts, teaching methods and limited access to resources contribute to the problems in ESL acquisition, impacting academic performance (Cummins, 2000). Socio-economic factors, including resource constraints and the fear of making errors, also pose challenges to effective language learning (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Hence, despite the existence of theoretical frameworks, government guidance, and curriculum directives, primary-grade English language teachers encounter significant challenges in implementing effective instruction (Rahman et al., 2019). In Dhaka, Bangladesh, educators face various obstacles, including curriculum gaps, insufficient training, limited resources, and diverse pedagogical approaches (Ahmed, 2022). The primary English Language Teaching curriculum in Bangladesh is rooted in the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, emphasizing the development of communicative competence among EFL learners; however, a misalignment is observed between curriculum statements and classroom practices (Kabir, 2015). Similarly, teachers in Nepal share comparable challenges in teaching English to primary-grade students, such as adapting to classroom needs, staying updated with educational trends and technologies, managing heavy workloads, and creating an inclusive learning environment (Bhusal, 2015).

The existing literature underscores the widespread nature of these challenges and struggles and that addressing them is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching English education in primary schools. As teachers' insufficient knowledge about the curriculum, due to the lack of subject-specific training, large class sizes hinder individual attention, inadequate teaching materials, and the need for multimedia resources further hinder effective curriculum implementation (Kabir, 2015).

The consequences of not addressing these challenges are far-reaching, affecting not only the immediate educational outcomes but also the overall quality of English language education in the wider context. The limitations in current practices hinder the development of students' language skills and may perpetuate education inequalities. Hence Kabir (2015) states the necessity of providing the teachers with comprehensive guidance and knowledge aligned with the curriculum objectives and fostering proper teaching methods and classroom activities, along with providing multimedia resources to help the students be attentive and improve their English learning and speaking skills.

This research aims to investigate the difficulties faced by primary school teachers in Dhaka, shedding light on their current practices in teaching English. By doing so, the study seeks to inform strategies and propose improvements to the English language education system in these contexts.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

The research paper is conducted based on the research questions that will help to explore and identify the challenges, and existing practices of the government and non-government primary teachers while teaching English to the 4 and 5th grade students. The research questions are:



- How do school government and non-government primary teachers implement teaching-learning strategies while taking English classes at the primary level?
- What are the challenges being faced by the government and non-government primary school teachers in teaching English?

### 1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to do a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the challenges faced and explore the existing English teaching practice by primary school teachers in teaching English in Dhaka with the view to improving the quality of English language education in the local context.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

Teaching strategies are methods that teachers use to help students learn and meet their goals. Effective strategies are also important in helping them achieve their learning objectives (Paragae, 2023). The Ministry of Education (MOE) and National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) introduced Communicative language teaching in 1997, with the expectation that students would masters English. Despite the government teaching pedagogy of English at the primary grades, Uddin & Sharmin (2019) found that the primary school curriculum in Bangladesh does not include skills related to physical activities and peer interaction, creating a gap between what's taught and what's needed. Teachers also assess fewer skills than required, creating another gap between what's taught and what's tested (Amin & Greenwood, 2018). However, despite the twelve years of formal education, many struggle to apply English skills beyond the academic settings.

Understanding these gaps can help teachers understand which strategies can be used to effectively help students gain competencies. The importance of Education in English teaching is overstated. In an increasingly interconnected world, proficiency in English is not only a communication tool but also a key to accessing educational and career opportunities. Hence it is very important to explore and identify where the challenges are faced by the teachers in the current context. This will help us to improve the system and cater to their actual needs in delivering efficient classroom management in English.

### 1.7 Summary

This chapter introduces the significance of teaching English to primary students (4th and 5th grade), emphasizing cognitive growth and communication skills. It explores Piaget and Vygotsky's theories, highlighting the role of social interaction in language learning. The chapter outlines challenges faced by the 4th and 5th grade English teachers in Dhaka, including curriculum gaps and insufficient training. The research aims to identify and address these challenges, seeking to improve the quality of English league education in the local context.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have reviewed sources related to the challenges of teaching English to primary students and the pedagogies of teaching English to 4th and 5th-grade students. For this, I have reviewed varying published books, journal articles, and documents. I have also studied the national curriculum and the pedagogies that are followed to have a clear understanding of the national context of the curriculum. Furthermore, to have a deeper understanding of the pedagogies I have reviewed the documents about the relevant theories, the pedagogies of teaching English to primary students, classroom materials, and conducted classroom observations. These have helped me to develop a conceptual framework, and organize the themes and chapters. In a qualitative research paper focused on primary-level students in Bangladesh, the application of the theoretical framework will facilitate an in-depth analysis of challenges. By aligning research questions and data analysis with the theories, the study achieves specificity and precision, offering a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics within students' experiences and learning environments.

#### 2.2 The importance of English as a Second Language

Learning English as a second language, alongside one's native tongue is an exceptional skill in positive cognitive benefits, as highlighted by a study from the University of Edinburgh. Bilingualism, viewed as a form of brain training, refines mental development and enhances overall cognitive function. Proficient speaking in a second language requires not only linguistic ability but also sociolinguistic awareness, showcasing synthesis of skills important for effective communication (Alam & Khan, 2014).

### 2.3 The importance of Teaching English

English has become a global demand as its importance has been evident worldwide for communication and trade (Graddol, 2006). It also gives access to a wealth of information and knowledge worldwide. Hence along with proficiency in English, the opportunity to excel in a career increases, enabling one to explore different cultures and broaden their perspectives (Crystal, 2003).

### 2.4 Pedagogies of Teaching English at Primary Grades

In countries where English is not the primary language, innovative ways are used to make learning more effective, enabling learners' comprehension and their speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills. Strategies such as a more engaging and effective learning environment are created (Ampa & Nurqalbi, 2021). With the help of these strategies, learners can participate in more interactive, collaborative experiences, engage in more meaningful contexts for the use of language, and as well as receive feedback from peers and educators. Key approaches such as group work, project-based learning, and problem-based learning encourage learners to participate and increase their enthusiasm and motivation (Juneau et al., 2022).

Through the adaptation of creative, context-based, and innovative teaching strategies learners can show positive outcomes (Subramanian & Kelly, 2019). These strategies also help in enhancing learners; critical thinking abilities along with their skills in solving problems. According to Parker & Welch (2021) through the varying need-based strategies, learners' ability to understand is enhanced along with their retention and comprehension of new language and learnings. Speaking about the evaluation of the learnings, Benson & Brack (2010) stated that assessments need to be done based on learners varying competencies, such as their knowledge competency (critical

thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and communication), intrapersonal competency (teamwork, cooperation, communication, coordination) and interpersonal skills (self-management skills, cooperation, effective communication, and emotional relationship management). Eventually, this will help them to retain the essential skills needed to thrive worldwide.

## 2.5 Teaching English at Primary Grade:

### 2.5.1 Teaching English to Primary Grade Students

Primary grade learners are at their pivotal age of developing their cognitive and linguistic abilities. Learning English at a young stage helps in early improvements in memory, critical thinking, perception, and imagination (Stakanova & Tolstikhina, 2014). Along with these, it helps in developing their core language skills, such as: speaking, listening, reading, and writing that work as the foundation for fostering communicative competence (Akuzel, 2006). As primary students at a young stage go through development and growth the teacher needs to understand the importance of the learners and develop meaningful and engaging content in such cases. Primary grade English teachers play the most important roles in the learning process such as: acting as models, controllers, organizers, assessors, prompters, participants, resources, observers, and tutors in their classroom (Harmer, 2003). Cameron (2005) also says that teachers should make learning according to the classroom needs, that is by using auditory, tactile, and visual and any other methods or strategies that would instill their enthusiasm and motivation to learn English.

### 2.5.2 Teaching English in Bangladesh to Primary Education

The introduction of English as a compulsory subject in primary education in Bangladesh can be traced back to the early stages of the country's education system. The initial stages of introducing English into the primary education sector occurred when Bangladesh was still east Pakistan and Urdu and English were the official languages. However following Bangladesh's independence in 1971 Bengali (Bangla) became the official language, leading to changes to the primary education curriculum. English, Bangla, and mathematics are currently compulsory subjects at the primary level in Bangladesh (BELTA Journal, 2017).

The importance of including English in the primary education sector lies in its role as a bridge to global communication and preparation for the competitive world. The government of Bangladesh recognizes that early exposure to English can help students develop the competence needed for a global society (BELTA Journal, 2017). This decision signifies the country's commitment to achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030, including the goal of ensuring quality primary education for all children (EFA National Review 2015 - Bangladesh, 2014.)

To improve English language teaching learning at the primary level, the government has set specific aims and objectives in the Directorate of Primary Education English guide. This guide focuses on developing the professional skills of primary school teachers to facilitate effective English language teaching. The key objectives include familiarizing teachers with the primary English curriculum, equipping them with communicative language teaching methods, prompting child-centered teaching techniques, enhancing skills in using technology, and implementing formative and summative assessments effectively (DPED English Guide, 2023).

The methods and techniques adopted for training primary school teachers in English emphasized a participatory approach to learning. The training incorporates small group work, case studies,

debates, role plays, micro-teaching, and simulations, creating an interactive and engaging environment (DPED English Guide, 2023). This approach is designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective English language instruction in the primary grades.

### 2.5.3 Government Policies and Curriculum:

- Framework

Recognizing the global demand for English language proficiency, Bangladesh revised its English curriculum and syllabuses in 1996, aligning with the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. However, challenges have emerged in implementing this approach, leading to the introduction of a second paper on grammar and composition in 2004. Despite these adjustments, confusion persists regarding curriculum objectives and teaching methodology, impacting the quality of English education at the primary level. Many teachers struggle to effectively implement CLT due to inadequate English proficiency and pedagogy skills (Sultana, n.d). English language proficiency is paramount in the global marketplace, the knowledge society, and the digital age. Establishing a robust foundation in English skills at the primary level is crucial, serving as the cornerstone for students' confidence and competence in a highly competitive world (National Curriculum Framework, 2021).

The National Curriculum Framework (2021) in Bangladesh adopts a thematic and interdisciplinary approach, incorporating main subjects. This approach allows flexibility to tailor the curriculum to future needs. For English, the framework emphasizes a balance between real-life applications and understanding the contexts in which learners will use the language. The curriculum integrates various areas of discussion, such as History and social science, where history, economics, politics,

and geography are combined. Language education encompasses basic skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as alternative commutative skills.

- Supervision

In Bangladesh's primary education landscape, the Upazila Education Office (UEO), Upazila Resource Centre (URC), and Primary Teachers Training Institution (PTI) hold distinct roles in teacher supervision. The UEO, overseeing primary education at the upazila level, primarily focuses on administrative tasks, occasionally supervising teachers. In contrast, the URC functioning as a resource center, concentrates on practical support and regular academic supervision to enhance teaching skills. The PTI, an academic institution, specializes in theoretical education approaches and offers individualized guidance to teachers (Obaydullah and Talukder, 2020).

- Teaching Technique

The revised DPED (Basic Primary Teachers' Training) book, implemented in June 2023, focuses on Module 03: Curriculum, teaching-learning and assessment. This module aims to equip trainer-teachers with essential knowledge and skills related to English teaching practices. The contents of the module are designed to enhance the trainee's understanding of English teaching-learning practices, covering various resources such as language skills, lesson planning, and assessment methods. One critical component of the module is the emphasis on communicative language teaching (CLT). Trainee-teachers are taught about the common features of CLT, the differences between CLT and the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), and the challenges associated with implementing CLT in primary education. The book includes resource papers, worksheets, case studies, and other materials to facilitate effective learning during in-person training sessions at primary teacher's training institutes (PTIs). The trainer-teachers engage in activities such as



working on worksheets, sharing insights with peers and instructors, studying case studies, and reading resource papers to deepen their understanding of English teaching methodologies. The book serves as a valuable resource for trainee teachers to enhance their expertise in English teaching, with the expectation that they will continue to use it as a reference for designing daily teaching-learning activities even after completing their training at PTIs ([Revised DPED - Basic Primary Teachers' Training, 2023](#)).

- Certification

Primary school teachers are ideally required to undergo a one-year ‘Certificate-in Education (C-in-Ed)’ training, which equips them with essential pedagogical skills (Bangladesh Primary Education Statistics, 2021).

- Communicative Language Teaching

The shift from Grammar translation Method to communicative language teaching (CLT) in 1995 in education was driven due to the dissatisfaction of using traditional methods. GTM, a longstanding approach focused on translating sentences between languages and studying grammar parts separately. In contrast CLT was an innovative approach aiding to increasing learners’ audio-lingual methods, teaching realistic and socially necessary language. This evolution focused on a more meaningful communication rather than focusing on grammar study. Though in 2013 the curriculum was modified to make language ‘easier, simpler and effective’ through CLT but in Bangladesh’s context it faced challenges (Paul, 2022).

- Curriculum and Competency

The primary objective of teaching English at the primary level in Bangladesh is to cultivate competency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through meaningful and enjoyable activities. Aligned with the National Educational Policy of 2010, the revised curriculum emphasized the practical use of English for effective communication both locally and globally. The curriculum outlines specific objectives, including understanding and executing commands, developing communication skills for everyday conversations, achieving proficiency in reading, and fostering competence in writing. The competencies associated with each language skill are clearly defined in the curriculum. For listening, students are expected to recognize sound differences, stress, and intonation, while speaking skills involve appropriate use of English sounds and the ability to engage in various communicative functions. Reading proficiency encompasses skills such as reading aloud with proper pronunciation, recognizing numbers, and understanding different types of texts. Writing competencies include mastering non-cursive letters, using punctuation marks, and composing short, simple compositions. In addition to these language competencies, the curriculum incorporates real-life applications, such as filling out forms and participating in interviews. Emphasis is placed on foundational skills in listening and speaking, serving as a basis for developing reading and writing abilities. The curriculum acknowledges the global context and encourages teachers to create an interactive learning environment. Overall, the curriculum not only focuses on language skills but also integrates practical applications to enhance students' overall language proficiency. Teachers are expected to play a crucial role in implementing these competencies, emphasizing the importance of maintaining an optimal student-teacher ratio for effective classroom interaction.

## 2.6 Challenges of Teaching English

Primary school teachers worldwide encounter common challenges when teaching English. These challenges encompass linguistic aspects, such as vocabulary acquisition and grammar complexities, as well as pedagogical hurdles, including the selection of effective teaching methods (Nunan, 2003; Pinter, 2011).

Additionally, despite having guidelines and teachers receiving consistent training a lot of challenges have been found:

Previous research conducted in Dhaka and similar contexts has explored the challenges faced by primary school teachers in teaching English. Studies highlight the complexities teachers encounter, including linguistic limitations, pedagogical uncertainties, and resource constraints (Rahman, 2012; Haque, 2016). A study by Obaydullah and Talukder (2020) found that there is a lack of coordination between UEO, URC, and PTI that impacts the effectiveness of teacher supervision and thus the quality of the teaching method is not monitored. Furthermore, in urban primary schools in Bangladesh, about 96% lack a clear understanding of communicative language teaching (CLT), despite receiving training (Khanam & Hoque, 2021). Furthermore, it has been found that a considerable number of teachers are presently engaged in school settings without having completed the C-in-Ed training. The discrepancy highlights a significant gap in the educational system, with implications for the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools (Bangladesh Primary Education Statistics, 2021). Moreover, 70% of 10 years old students face difficulties in reading as well as reading comprehension of any paragraph and passages (Rahman & Korobi, 2023)

## 2.7 Theory of Constructivism and its Principles in Teaching English

Constructivism, an effective teaching approach for primary-grade English students, emphasizes active participation in the learning process (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). By creating a visually engaging classroom environment with colorful English dictionaries readily accessible to students, educators can encourage exploration and vocabulary development (Dixon, 2010). Moreover, the display of student-centered postcards fosters engagement, appreciation, and creativity among students (Williams, 2016).

Constructivism encourages a shift from the traditional teacher-centered model to a student-centered one (Vygotsky, 1962). In this approach, students actively construct their understanding by drawing on their experiences and prior knowledge. Teachers take on the role of facilitators, guiding students in their learning process and creating a democratic classroom where students connect new information to their existing knowledge (Vygotsky, 1962; Burner 1996).

This approach promotes critical thinking and independence (Burner, 1996). By adopting a reader response strategy, students are empowered to form their interpretations of literature based on their experience and understanding (Rosenblatt, 1978). In essence, applying constructivism in a primary-grade English classroom creates an engaging, student-centered environment that enhances the language learning experience (Dixon, 2010; Williams, 2016).

## 2. 8 Relevance of Constructivism with Bangladesh's Curriculum of Teaching English

In the DPED teacher's guide for English in primary grade, the incorporation of social and cognitive constructivist theories is evident throughout the curriculum. Social constructivism, rooted in the work of theories like Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). On the other hand, cognitive constructivism, as advocated by Piaget, focuses on the cognitive process and individual construction of knowledge (Piaget, 1950).

The teacher's guide skillfully integrates both perspectives to enhance language teaching and learning.

Through the teacher's guide, the social constructivist approach is evident in various sessions. For example, in the "How We Learn a Language" session 1, trainees are encouraged to reflect on their personal language learning experience and engage in group discussions to differentiate between language learning and acquisition. This reflective and interactive process aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, the 'teaching reading skills' session 9 promotes active discussion and group work to construct knowledge about effective reading skills instruction. These collaborative activities are consistent with the social constructivist perspective.

The incorporation of cognitive constructivism is evident in sessions such as 'exploring the English curriculum' session 2, where trainees are asked to relate the primary curriculums with the English for today's contents. They are encouraged to analyze the curriculum and, thus, actively engage in cognitive processes of knowledge construction. Similarly, in the 'introducing new vocabulary' session 19, participants are asked to identify and analyze stages of teaching vocabulary. These activities align with Piaget's theory, emphasizing the individual construction of knowledge through cognitive processes (Piaget, 1950).

Additionally, the 'micro-teaching' sessions are noteworthy examples of how both social and cognitive constructivism are integrated. During these sessions, trainees actively demonstrate teaching techniques in a simulated classroom environment setting and reflect on how to improve their teaching practices. These practical experiences foster both social interactions, where trainees

learn from each other, and cognitive processes, where they reflect on and construct knowledge about effective teaching methods.

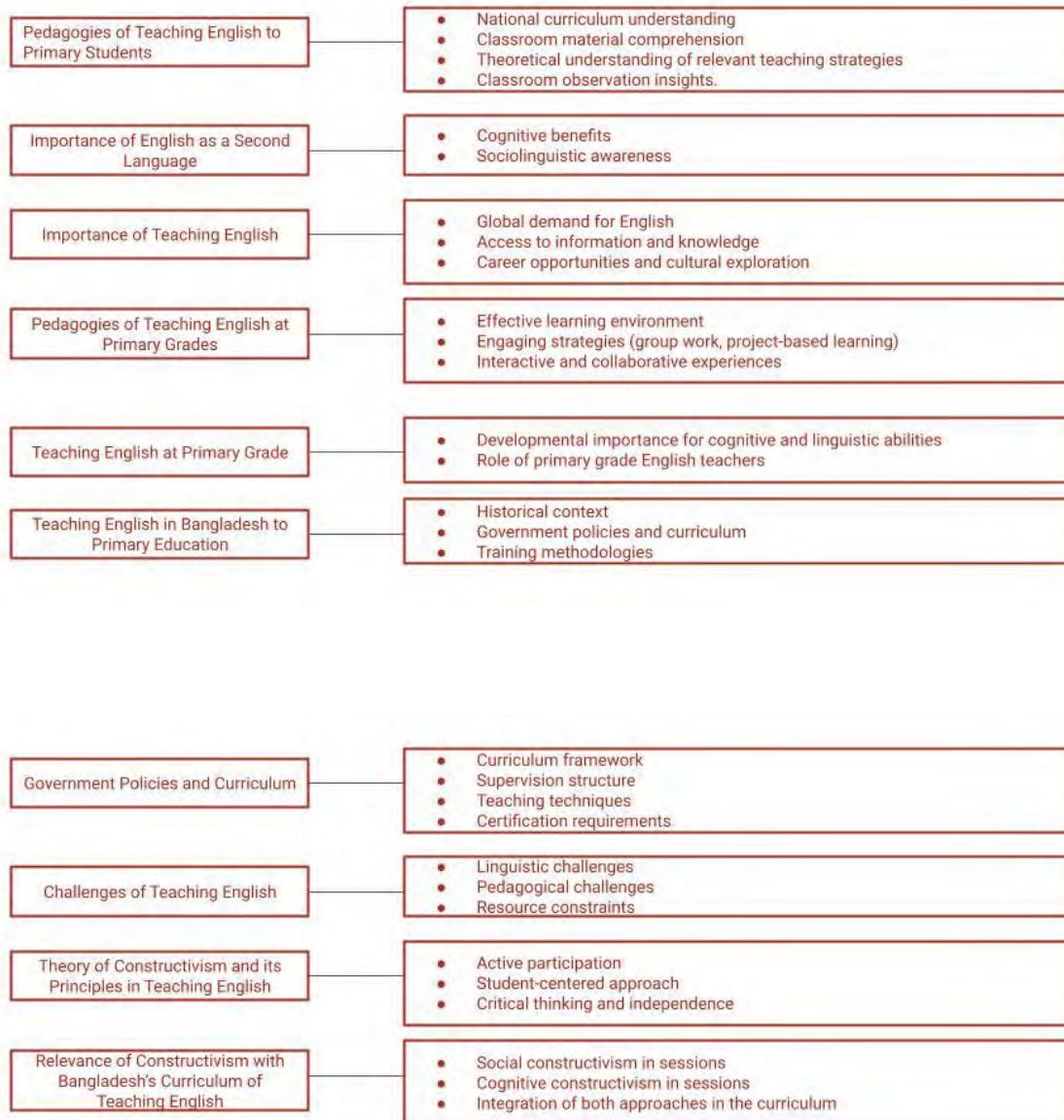
The incorporation of both social and cognitive constructivist principles in the DPED teacher's guide underscored the importance of active learning, collaboration, and reflection in the teaching and learning process. These pedagogical approaches are consistent with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the roles of both social interaction and cognitive processes in knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1950).

## 2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is guided and developed in alignment with the research questions, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teaching strategies implementation and the challenges faced by primary school teachers in teaching English in Bangladesh. The integration of Constructivism underscores the importance of a student-centered approach and active learning strategies in enhancing English language education at the primary level. The proposed pathway establishes a logical flow connecting literature, challenges, theories, and practical implications for effective English language teaching in Bangladesh's primary schools.

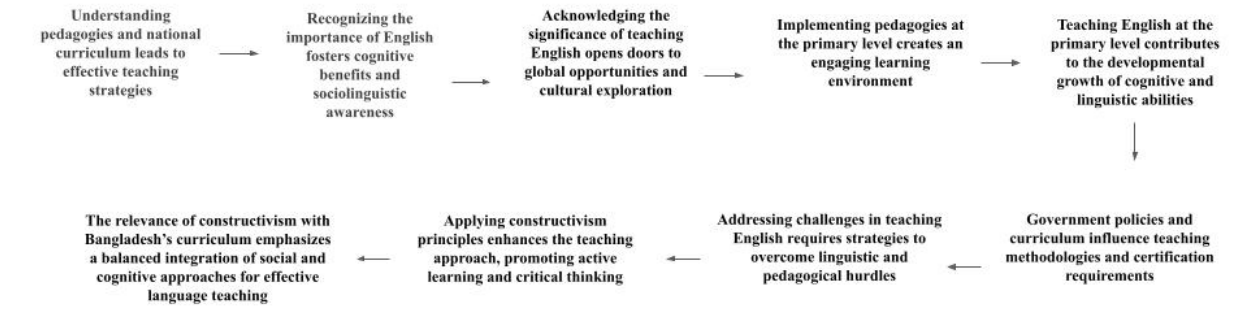
Factor/Variables Identified:

Figure 1



Pathway/Conceptual Framework:

Figure 2





## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Overview

The chapter explains how the research is designed to study primary school teachers in Dhaka, focusing on their current practices in teaching English. The following section covers the research approach, sample and sample size, sampling technique, data collection techniques, analysis, limitation of study, ethical issues, and trustworthiness.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

The study used a qualitative approach to understand research issues in depth. To address these concerns, I selected both government and non-government schools as the research site. I observed the classroom practices followed by the teachers and conducted a one-to-one interview with the Head Teachers and Assistant teachers. The themes were developed by using inductive reasoning from interviews and observations in the classrooms.

#### 3.3 Rationale for Qualitative Approach

The qualitative research approach involves exploring and understanding human experiences, behaviors, and phenomena through in-depth analysis of non-numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The current study delved into a thorough exploration of teachers' existing classroom practices and challenges in teaching English to primary school students, specifically in grades 4 and 5. The research questions aimed to understand how teacher's classroom practices, their challenges along with any support that they seek while teaching English in both government and non-government classrooms. To achieve this, the study used a qualitative approach, conducting

one-to-one interviews with government and non-government teachers, as well as Headteachers, to closely grasp the practices and the challenges of teaching English. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to gain insight into English teaching practices.

### 3.4 Research Site

The selection of a research site is essential in qualitative research as it provides the context for an in-depth exploration of human experiences and behaviors (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The current investigation took place in both government and non-government primary schools in Dhaka. The choice of this location was based on my familiarity with the school's context. I had some contacts in this area who helped me gain access and establish a connection with the teachers. This support facilitated the collection of data that was rich in information.

### 3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

In qualitative research, purposive sampling means choosing participants using specific criteria. This ensures a focused look at different perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study focuses on primary school teachers teaching 4 and 5th grades English and headteachers from both government and non-government schools. The participants' practices and challenges were explored through interviews. A total of eight participants, comprising 5 primary school male and female teachers (both government and nongovernment) and three head teachers were interviewed. Additionally, four classes from 4th grade and two classes from 5th grade were observed, and four classrooms of the same teachers were observed twice. The purposive sampling of government and non-government primary school teachers and head teachers was made because they were accessible, had recognition in the community for providing quality education, and had

been receiving training from the government. The selection of these schools provided insights into current classroom teaching and the challenges of teaching English to 4th and 5th-grade students.

*Table 1*

*Sample and sample size*

<b>Government Primary School</b>		<b>Non-government primary school</b>		<b>Total Head Teacher</b>	<b>Total Assistant Teacher</b>	<b>Total Participants</b>
Head Teacher	Assistant Teacher (1 Male, 3 Female)	Head Teacher	Assistant Teacher (2 Females)			
1	4	2	2	3	7	10

### 3.6 Data Collection Methods

In qualitative research, the data collection process involves gathering rich, contextually nuanced information through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study information by interviewing both primary school teachers in teaching English and headteachers of those schools have been gathered. Additionally, classrooms were observed to collect data to investigate the teachers’ existing current teaching practices and the challenges they encountered in teaching English.

#### 3.6.1 In-depth interviews with primary English teachers and head teachers

In qualitative research, one-on-one interviews are conducted either over the phone or in physical meetings, ensuring an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To gather information, I conducted phone interviews with both government and non-government primary schools' 4th and 5th teachers. The aim was to explore their classroom practices, as well as identify the challenges they face. Seven teachers participated in these interviews and their classrooms were also observed.

For interviews, I developed an interview guide with two parts. Part A covered demographic information such as educational qualifications, professional training, and teaching experience. Part B consisted of open-ended questions related to teaching strategies and challenges. The questions in part b were categorized into two areas:

Questions about teaching strategies included inquiries about the methods used in English classes, training received, adapting strategies, assessing effectiveness, and the roles of interaction and engagement of students in the classroom.

Questions about challenges addressed issues such as language skills, understanding the existing curriculum, support, and addressing resource limitations, school administration or government, managing student engagement issues, I also prepared an interview protocol for headaches which is a structured guide with predetermined questions that ensure consistency and gather in-depth information from the participants. I divided it into Part A for demographic information and Part B for open-ended questions. Part b focused on opportunities and challenges faced by primary-grade teachers in teaching English. Questions covered the types and effectiveness of training for government and non-government primary English teachers, challenges in implementing training, and the support provided to address the challenges. At the end of the interviews, participants had

the opportunity to add further information or provide recommendations for the curriculum and ask any questions they had.

### 3.6.2 Classroom observation

Observation is vital in qualitative research, providing firsthand insights into human behaviors, contexts, and phenomena, enhancing the depth and authenticity of data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this research, I observed classrooms to address two key areas: how do primary school teachers implement teaching-learning strategies in English classes and what challenges do they face in teaching English? The observations aim to understand the strategies used by teachers, the effectiveness of these strategies, and the challenges encountered in teaching English to primary-grade students.

Primary classrooms typically followed a routine with a significant focus on numeracy. English classes at most of the schools were scheduled for 25 minutes every four days with an average class size of 40-60 students. I observed eight primary classes across two government and non-government primary schools with each classroom observed twice. The topics covered in these classes mainly revolved around vocabulary revision and paragraph writing.

During the observations, I paid attention to how teachers implement the government's curriculum and teaching methods. To guide the observation process, I created an observation guide focusing on curriculum coverage, teaching methods employed, and challenges faced. The observation guide included aspects such as content delivery (description and importance of the contents to the students) and classroom management (students' attitudes and teachers' strategies). Additionally, there was a spec for any special notes in the observational protocol.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The importance of data collection in qualitative research is its role in gathering detailed and contextually rich information, leading to a comprehensive understanding of human experiences and behaviors (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Being a full-time professional, conducting in-person interviews was challenging due to the participants' schedules and the current unsettling situation in the nation. Therefore, I opted for a telephone interview as a more practical method of data collection. With this approach, I have the flexibility to accommodate teacher's schedules and maintain their convenience. Before calling the teachers, I scheduled the interview time and obtained their verbal consent, documented physically on the consent letter during classroom observation.

During the interview, I initiated a safe and comfortable space for them to speak by asking about their well-being, expressing gratitude for their time, and the significance of their role and I reassured them about maintaining confidentiality.

The interview then proceeded to gather demographic information and explore their teaching practices less formally and more conversationally. On average, each interview lasted about 30 minutes. The same process was applied during the interview, lasting around 25 minutes.

Following the in-depth interviews, I observed the respective teachers' classes, focusing on English teaching in 4th and 5th grades. Before the observations, I developed the observation guide and used it during observation for note-taking.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research is highlighted as it allows for the systematic interpretation and uncovering of patterns, themes, and insights within the collected data, contributing to a deeper understanding of the researched phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Thematic data analysis is crucial in qualitative research for identifying and interpreting patterns, trends, and meaningful insights within the data, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

In relevance of finding themes, I conducted a thematic data analysis.

1. Familiarization with the data: initially I thoroughly reviewed the transcription to immerse myself into the details. Additionally, I repeatedly listened to the recordings to comprehend the underlying message and made pertinent notes.
2. Generate initial codes: In this phase, I systematically organized the data by color-coding small chunks of information from the transcripts to link them to my research questions. I then grouped them under specific codes.

*Table 2*

Interview Extract	Codes
<p>Every time I introduce a new topic, I try to draw real life scenarios with the classroom content. Sometimes before introducing a new topic, I start with a story or ask questions where students engage and then I connect it with the content. This way the lesson becomes meaningful and practical to them. After</p>	<p>Deliverance of practical examples                      Easy to learn                      Peer learning approach                      Availability of resources</p>

<p>explaining the importance, I then show them how to do it with visuals, handmade materials, and anything that is easy to learn. I ask them to do it in groups, where they learn from one another (AT3)</p>	
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Interview Extract	Codes
<p>I have always followed the teacher's guide, whenever i am confused or need a clarification about the content I try to understand it first and then deliver the learnings to my students (AT1)</p>	<p>Followed Teacher's Guide for assistance</p>
<p>At the beginning of the year, they start from scratch even if they are in grade 4 or 5. I balance competencies by dividing the class into three groups, each group has a balance of good and weak students who help each other (AT4)</p>	<p>Identification of problems and strategic planning for classroom management</p>
<p>Training has always been helpful for us to deliver the new content to the classroom</p>	<p>Effective use of training</p>



<p>efficiently. We understand how to create new strategies to teach (AT5)</p>	
<p>It becomes difficult to implement the training in the real classes as the class size is very large, so not all students receive the equal care they deserve (AT4)</p>	<p>Large classroom size</p>
<p>Students come from different economic backgrounds, not everyone's family members and surroundings are educated. Every time a new topic is introduced or homework is given they keep forgetting what they learned in the classroom as there is no one to guide them at home. Hence, we have to repeat the same topic thrice (AT2)</p>	<p>Students from varying economic backgrounds with no educational support at home</p>
<p>Since children of all backgrounds study here, their competency levels aren't the same, and not all are competent enough, not all have educated family members who would help them to practice their learnings from school or guide them in their studies. Especially after the lockdown, there has been a massive disparity</p>	<p>Gap in the competency  Problem identifying what to do and how to reduce the problems</p>

<p>of competency among students. It becomes challenging to identify what content can be developed in classes fruitfully and which competency to target by the end of the year.</p> <p>(AT5)</p>	
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3. Identifying the Sub-Themes: The codes are further separated into broader sub-themes. I carefully examined the codes and organized them according to specific sub-themes.

*Table 3*

Codes	Sub-themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deliverance of practical examples</li> <li>● Easy to learn</li> <li>● Peer learning approach</li> <li>● Availability of resources</li> <li>● Followed Teacher's Guide for assistance</li> <li>● Identification of problem and strategic planning for classroom management</li> <li>● Effective use of training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers focus on using available and engaging resources, and practical examples to make learning meaningful.</li> <li>● Teachers focus on a peer learning approach to make learning easier and faster to grasp</li> <li>● Teacher's make use of the government's Teacher's Guide for teaching</li> <li>● Teacher makes effective plans to manage learning in classroom</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers make use of the training teaching method</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large classroom size</li> <li>Students from varying economical background with no educational support at home</li> <li>Gap in the competency</li> <li>Problem identifying what to do and how to reduce the problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers face difficulties conducting classes with larger classroom</li> <li>Teacher's face difficulties in introducing new topic timely due to the repetition of same topic in the classroom</li> <li>Teachers face difficulties mitigating the gap of each students' competencies</li> <li>Teachers struggle to identify how to reach the target goal with all students by the end of the year</li> </ul>

4. Review the sub-themes: I documented all the data associated with specific sub-themes to ensure accurate representation. Subsequently, I combined themes into themes, cross-checking to align them with the research questions.

Table 4

Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deliverance of practical examples</li> <li>● Easy to learn</li> <li>● Peer learning approach</li> <li>● Availability of resources</li> <li>● Followed Teacher's Guide for assistance</li> <li>● Identification of problem and strategic planning for classroom management</li> <li>● Effective use of training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers focus on using available and engaging resources, practical examples to make learning meaningful.</li> <li>● Teachers focus on peer learning approach to make learning easier and faster to grasp</li> <li>● Teachers make use of the government's Teacher's Guide for teaching</li> <li>● Teachers make effective plans to manage learning in the classroom</li> <li>● Teachers make use of the training teaching method</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher's current practices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Large classroom size</li> <li>● Students from varying economical background with no</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers face difficulties conducting classes with larger classroom</li> <li>● Teacher's face difficulties in introducing new topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher's challenges</li> </ul>

<p>educational support at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gap in the competency</li> <li>● Problem identifying what to do and how to reduce the problems</li> </ul>	<p>timely due to the repetition of the same topic in the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers face difficulties mitigating the gap of each student's competencies</li> <li>● Teachers struggle to identify how to reach the target goal with all students by the end of the year</li> </ul>	
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5. Define themes: I refined the themes to ensure they precisely conveyed the intended meaning. For instance, I scrutinized the theme “teacher's practices” and realized it lacked specificity. Consequently, I refined it to “teacher’s practices of teaching English at primary grades”. I then clarified the theme’s meaning and rechecked the alignment of sub-themes, the Teacher’s perception of teaching English to primary-grade students.
6. Writeup: Finally, I incorporated the themes into the results and analysis sections of the report.

### 3.9 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Before each interview, I made a preliminary phone call to secure verbal consent and schedule a convenient time. Participants were informed about receiving written consent during classroom

observations. The call outlined the study's objectives, addressed participants' queries, and emphasized the option to discontinue the interview at any point. Consent letters contained comprehensive study information. The same procedure was followed for classroom observations and participants' confidentiality was maintained through assigned codes (e.g., T1, T). During the interview, I refrained from imposing my beliefs, ensuring an unbiased approach. The collected data were strictly used for the study's purpose.

### 3.10 Trustworthiness and Rigor

In this study I ensured trustworthiness through data triangulation, supervision review, and audit trial.

For triangulation, I gathered data from various sources including government and non-government primary teachers instructing in English for 4th and 5th grades, headteacher interviews, and classroom observations. Employing one-to-one in-depth interviews and classroom observations allowed me to explore teachers' existing practices and challenges in teaching English at the primary level.

To ensure peer review I regularly discussed the research process with my supervisor who provided oversight and feedback.

In establishing an audit trail, I conducted a comprehensive literature review before starting the thesis, identifying a research gap, and reviewing articles, books, and documents. This literature review informed my choice of data collection methods, such as interviews for teacher' perceptions and classroom observations for their practices. After developing the tools, I conducted a pilot interview, made necessary tool adjustments, and proceeded to collect data. Through analysis generated themes as sub-themes, culminating in the discussion chapter I presented the alignment

or contrast of my findings with other studies. Possible reasons for such alignment or contrast were discussed in consideration of previous research.

### 3.11 Limitations of the Study

As a full-time professional it was challenging to observe class while the new content was delivered in the classes. Although observing the revision classes provided some insight, witnessing the presentation of new content would have been more impactful for the research paper.

## Chapter 4

### Chapter 4: Result

#### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings from analyzing the data. It begins with a thematic analysis involving observation of classrooms, interviews with headteachers, and grade 4 and 5 subject's English teachers. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first section covers's teacher's existing practices in the classroom, the challenges they face in teaching English, and lastly the support they seek to improve their teaching method. The data is organized into three broad themes each with various sub-themes.

#### *Themes and sub-themes*

*Table 5*

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Teacher's current practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Usage of available and engaging resources and practical examples</li><li>• Focus on peer learning approach</li><li>• Usage of Teacher's Guide</li><li>• Strategic planning to manage classroom</li><li>• Implementation of Teacher's Training</li></ul>
2. Teacher's challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Issue with large classroom sizes</li><li>• Issue with repeating the similar topic</li><li>• Issue with mitigating the gap of students' competencies</li><li>• Issue with reaching the target goal for the year</li></ul>



#### 4.2 Teacher's Practices of Teaching English to Primary Grade Students:

This theme covers teacher's comprehension and their approaches to teaching English to primary-grade students. Government primary school teachers undergo six days of training annually, covering all subjects, while non-government school teachers receive minimal to no training. Teacher's existing practices on teaching methods vary considerably. Government school teachers consistently exhibit positive teaching patterns, incorporating enjoyable activities, effective pedagogy, and participation strategies. Non-government school teachers also make learning interactive and develop their unique teaching strategies. Based on their existing teaching practices, I have categorized the five sub-themes:

##### 4.2.1 Usage of available and engaging resources and practical examples:

Delivering new content to the classroom through the connection of real-life examples and by engaging conversation and striking conversation has shown positive results in learning. The majority of the interviewed teachers from both government and non-government schools have used this strategy even while delivering revised content. One interviewee from a non-government school said:

“Students understand content when they can connect it with practical examples. So before introducing any new topic or starting a class, I ask them questions, help them to think, and then bring relevant examples that help them to understand what the topic is about and why we would be studying about it in the class” (AT2).

In learning English students are even taught with concrete materials and any other materials that can help them grasp the content faster. Classrooms of government schools have materials of numbers, alphabets, and names of the weeks that help students pick up

subconsciously. Another interviewee said: “We primarily use textbooks for learning and practice; however, we also use materials such as poster papers, and hand blocks to help them visualize the topic better”. (AT3)

About being engaged an interviewee mentioned “Asking questions and engaging them in the teaching-learning process is very important. This pushes them to be comfortable to share if the topic is clear to them or not” (AT4).

#### 4.2.2 Focus on peer learning approach:

The peer learning approach has been visible in government schools only. As the majority of the classrooms had a maximum of 80-90 students in each section, the strategy has shown to be effective. In its effectiveness, one interviewee shared: “As the classroom sizes are large, it becomes impossible to give attention to each student. Moreover, students in the classroom have varying competencies. Some are fast learners, some are slow learners, some are stuck in the basic writing skills, some are advanced in writing paragraphs, some are spontaneous in reading while some still struggle to read out four-letter words. Keeping all the problems in mind we have decided to divide the class into groups, with each group having a balance of students who are both weak and competent. In groups, the competent ones share and help each other to understand the lesson” (AT5).

Another interviewee, AT6 mentions “Peer learning approach has become a common practice in the classrooms with large sizes”.

#### 4.2.3 Usage of Teacher’s Guide:

Teacher’s Guide is a helpful handbook that helps teachers understand the content and how to deliver it in the classroom. The government school teachers have mentioned it to be followed in their training, however as the non-government teachers haven't received any

government training, they solely rely on the teacher's guide. One interviewee mentions "I downloaded the teacher's guide from the internet. Initially, when the content was new to us, I would study the teacher's guide. It shows the steps of what the content is about, how to demonstrate it in the classroom, and how to do the practices. In a way, it is a guidebook for us. I do not use it frequently but whenever I have confusion, I take help from it and then I'm able to properly facilitate the topic in the classroom" (AT2).

#### 4.2.4 Strategic planning to manage classroom:

Small or larger classes, each school has shown different types of problems, yet the teachers have found out with strategic plans to solve these. Considering the competency gap the biggest problem one interviewee mentions "As they are the students from the pandemic era it is very important to remember that not all students are in the same level of the grade's competency. The beginning of each year is the time for us to give the students refreshment learning. We teach the students English from scratch in the first three-four months if needed; we revise them of the alphabet, number pronunciations, and other teachings that can help them to reduce the gap. (AT2). Talking about the strategic planning of effective teaching one interviewee mentions "Even after providing the students with the peer learning approach and remedial teachings it is not enough and the gap persists that hampers in the classroom and the students struggle to follow up, in this regard we provide the less competent students with special classes after the school hours." (AT4).

#### 4.2.5 Implementation of Teacher's Training:

The teacher's training has been very effective in teaching the lessons in the classrooms. "Engaging the students from the beginning, making them curious about the lessons, and group work are all a part of the teaching methods that we were taught in the classroom."

(AT3). As so mentioned, it was visible in most of the government schools. Despite the classes being a revision class the teachers have been seen to engage the students from the beginning of the class by asking questions and sharing stories. About the effectiveness of the training, one interviewee mentioned “Every year we receive training. The training is provided for all subjects of all grades, no specific subject training is always provided for all. Sometimes only specific grade training is taught, for example, this year the new curriculum is taught for grade 1. Previously through the training, I read the diploma in primary education. Through this training/diploma, I learned several ways we can teach, and how to find out the best ways to make learning meaningful. Till now these training sessions have been helping me to incorporate them in my teaching method” (AT6).

#### 4.3 Teacher’s Challenges in Teaching English to Primary Grade Students:

Upon observing the classrooms, and interviewing the Headteachers and Assistant Teachers of 4th and 5th Grades I will be highlighting the challenges the teachers have faced while teaching and managing the classroom. Despite findings and bringing solutions of the problems, some of the key challenges have been found that need to be addressed I have divided this section into three sub-themes:

##### 4.3.1 Issue with large classroom sizes:

Teachers of the government schools have shown “We are doing everything we can, but the teaching methods are not as effective as they could be if the classroom sizes were limited. Due to a larger class size, we become mentally and physically drained to manage the noise, grabbing students’ attention. Managing the classroom takes up a lot of time from developing the lesson effectively. Most of the time we are not able to finish the topic that we had planned for the class” (AT6).

#### 4.3.2 Issue with repeating a similar topic:

Large classrooms or not, even in the revision classes of both the government and non-government school teachers have struggled to keep up with the previous topic that was taught and practiced. Lessons were delivered new where the students were either asked to practice the vocabulary or memorize the paragraphs and then write it. “There were a lot of days when I had to stretch a topic for several weeks just to help them grasp it. Even months after when they were asked to do it I had to do it from the beginning because they had forgotten it. Because of the lack of practice at home, they keep forgetting and it becomes time-consuming to repeat a topic over and over again.” (AT3)

#### 4.3.3 Issue with mitigating the gap in students’ competencies:

One of the biggest struggles all teachers are facing is aligning the students with the grade level competency or to a similar level of competency. To this one interviewee mentions “Because of the school closure of COVID a huge gap was created, along with that as these students do not come from a supportive and educated background, they do not receive proper educational guidance at home. Hence, we struggle every day to keep alignment with these students and to enhance their four skills in English. (AT2).

#### 4.3.4 Issue with reaching the target goal for the year:

Due to all the challenges, the majority of the teachers have confessed that none of them were able to achieve the target goal of the year. One interviewee mentioned: “Grade 4’s last competency is to be able to write and comprehend paragraphs. However, the students in grade 4 along with grade 5 are struggling to write simple sentences. For both grades whenever we give them to write any seen paragraphs (topics from the exercise) they can write few sentences properly, on the other hand, if we ask them to write about unseen

paragraphs (relevant topics but the ones that are not in the exercise of the books) then we struggle to write even one single sentence. In this case, if we teachers struggle to reach the goal by the end of the year, it becomes difficult for them to attain the grade level competency of the next grade” (AT3).

## Chapter 5

### Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore into the research questions' findings, covering teachers' existing practices, their challenges and the support they seek. Additionally, it explores the scope of teaching English at primary grade and concludes with recommendations for further study.

#### 5.2 Discussion

In this section, I elaborate on the findings and analyze them in the context of the two research questions. The study, based on interviews and observations of classrooms, explored the context of the government and non-government primary school teachers' existing practices, their challenges and the support they are hoping to get in order to improve their teaching method. Furthermore, the scope of teaching English at the 4th and 5th grade is thoroughly examined to uncover between the findings and other research outcomes, offering insights into the reasons behind such alignment or contrast.

#### 5.3 Analysis of the research questions

5.3.1 How do school teachers implement teaching-learning strategies while taking English class at the primary level?

In the context of Bangladesh, The National Curriculum Framework (2021) focuses on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, highlighting the importance of balancing real-life applications and understanding the contexts in which learned will use the language. The use of real-life examples and ensuring the students understand the context of the topic has been very visible in the classrooms. In both the government and non-government primary school's teachers have frequently used examples, held conversations with the students in order to draw the

connection of the topic with the learning. The practice of introducing stories in the classrooms despite being a revision class was also very much visible. Most school teachers divide the classrooms into groups where each group has a balance of students with competent and less competent students. Some teachers have even arranged extra classes / special classes for students who struggle with some specific skills of English. This approach has been followed to make learning more effective.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the process in which teachers can scaffold instruction by providing enough support to help the students understand and use English effectively and then gradually decrease as their language skills improves along with – Piaget's theory of discovery a learning process in which students construct knowledge through active exploration such as games, peer learning approach collaboration etc. are seen to be followed in the teacher's guide of the National curriculum for the subject English (DPEd English Guide, 2023). Teachers teaching English at the primary grade have shown remarks in mostly Piaget's theory of discovery in the classroom through peer learning approach and very less practice of Vygotsky's ZPD has been visible. In such a context, teachers mostly prefer showing as much as possible and then continue for the students to practice among themselves. The consistent and gradual process of scaffolding was not much practiced. (Vygotsky 1978; Piaget 1978).

It was learnt that primary school teachers are required to undergo a one year 'Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed)' training, equipping them with essential pedagogical skills (Bangladesh primary education statistics, 2021). The revised curriculum focuses on cultivating competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing through practical and enjoyable activities, aligning with the National Educational Policy of 2010. On the other hand, the DPEd teacher's guide for English in primary grades incorporates both social and cognitive constructivist principles (Vygotsky, 1978;



Piaget, 1950). Sessions such as ‘How We Learn a Language’ and ‘Introducing New Vocabulary’ encourage reflection, group discussions and cognitive processes to enhance language teaching and learning. The DPED (Basic primary teacher’s training) book (2003) focuses on enhancing the professional skills of primary school teachers. The training emphasizes a participatory approach, incorporating small groups work, case studies, debate, role plays, micro-teaching, and simulations to create an interactive and engaging learning environment (DPED English Guide, 2023).

In alignment of this statement teachers agreed upon focusing on all four competencies of English. Despite students being assessed on these four skills, focus on writing and reading have been given most priority in both government and non-government schools. In this regard, teachers have confessed and it was also found that students were consistently asked to practice reading, understanding vocabulary and writing paragraphs. They are limited to classroom practices and sometimes to writing competitions, but no creative and innovative ways are introduced to enhance their listening or speaking skills. In which regard, speaking and understanding of the English language was overlooked. As for the one-year certification, government teachers receive training each year and some have received certificates on ‘Diploma in English’ ‘Diploma in Primary education’. Training each year has made them understand how to deliver a topic, manage the classroom and strategically plan their teaching - learning methods. However, The DPED (Basic primary teacher’s training) book (2003) has been successful in helping both the government and non-government school teachers to deliver topics.

Globally, on the other hand, similar to a lot of different contexts of implementing teaching - learning practices have been seen while incorporating the cross-cultural pedagogical practices.

In China for instance, primary school teachers often lend traditional teaching methods characterized by attention, discipline, whole class instruction, recitation and drill. The focus is

more on rote memorization, grammatical and lexical accuracy (Yang, 2016). Japanese primary schools focus on active engagement in communication, joy of language learning and intercultural understanding (Triana, 2017). India on the other hand with a diverse linguistic background focuses on activity/task-based learning, listening, understanding, reading with correct pronunciation and developing fluency in speaking. The approach encourages students to express their thoughts freely both inside and outside the class, fostering their habit of listening, reading and conversing, ultimately aiming to develop grammatical rules in the learners' minds (Periyasamy, 2022).

### 5.3.2 What are the challenges being faced by the primary school teachers in teaching English?

Despite theoretical frameworks and government guidance, primary-grade English language teachers encounter challenges in effective instructions (Rahman et al., 2019). The misalignment between curriculum statements and classroom practices further complicates the situation (Kabir, 2015). It has also been found that primary school teachers in Bangladesh face obstacles such as curriculum gaps, insufficient training, larger class sizes and limited resources (Ahmner, 2022). Despite the government's efforts, challenges persist in implementing CLT due to inadequate English proficiency and pedagogy skills (Sultana, n.d). Teachers despite showing their strengths in starting a class have also shown frustration and confusion in handling classrooms and providing efficient teaching methods. Despite having years of training teachers have mentioned their learning and methodologies not aligning with the current context of all students in the classroom with different competencies, big size classrooms and shortage of time.

Teacher supervision in Bangladesh involves the Upazila Education office (UEO), Upazila Resource Centre and primary teacher's training institute (PTI) (Obaydullah and Talukder, 2020). Despite having a monitoring body, teachers have said very often they visit schools and the feedback isn't very efficient. Hence, they do not understand if their teaching methods need to be

upscaled or how they can overcome their challenges differently. The revised DPED book (2023) highlights the importance of communicative language teaching (CLT) in English instruction and incorporates activities to deepen trainees' understanding of English teaching methodologies. However, teachers have still shown difficulties in truly understanding the methodologies. Some say that it is due to the classroom size, the time limitation and the competency gap among all students. The consequences of not addressing these challenges extend beyond immediate educational outcomes, impacting the overall quality of English language education and perpetuating education inequalities (Kabir, 2015). Overall, this has shown teachers to be clueless and having to take assessments and end the year with the possible competencies they could help each student to reach the next grade mostly through reading, writing and speaking.

In India, teachers face challenges primarily in government schools due to the lack of interest, limited English periods, overdependence on teachers for spoon feeding contributions, big classrooms and examinations being focused more on sentence structure rather on students' creative abilities (Periyasamy, 2022). Primary school teachers in Japan face challenges due to the unique structure of the education system; where a lack of certified English teachers were seen, non-specialized homeroom teachers and struggles implementing Foreign Language activities (FLA). The teachers being incompetent and not having the training and support contributes to their lack of confidence in teaching the language, overall resulting in an inefficient way of teaching (Triana, 2017). Lastly, Chinese primary school teachers face the most challenges due to the historical emphasis on rote memorization and traditional teaching methods. The use of communicative approaches is limited due to the lack of fluency among teachers, passive role of statements and limited exposure to English outside the classrooms (Yang, 2016).

5.4 Conclusion:

I conducted a study to explore the classroom practices and challenges faced by English teachers in 4th and 5th grades in both government and non-government schools. As part of this research, I interviewed headteachers and observed classrooms. The participating teachers expressed positive views regarding the curriculum, governor - provided teaching materials, and training. However the current content, characterized by a significant competency gap among students, challenges in reaching grade level competency, larger class sizes and limited resources, poses difficulties for teachers in effectively managing and developing institutions.

#### 5.5 Recommendations:

Based on this study, the following recommendations are proposed for teachers, policy makers and further research on teaching English to 4 and 5th graders:

- Maintain consistency in the monitoring body's scope of classroom visitation, observation and providing constructive feedback to teachers, enabling them to focus on areas for improvement.
- Address the issue of classroom sizes and management by involving all stakeholders in the resolution process.
- Provide training for teachers to adapt to the current context of managing and delivering topics in classrooms with diverse and misaligned grade level skills and competencies
- Provide schools with a limited budget for using materials for classrooms and encourage teachers to utilize those in the classroom to enhance the learning experience
- Modify the curriculum to align with the current context of students' grades and skills. Additionally, provide training for teachers to effectively implement the modified curriculum, mitigating competency gaps and enhancing instructional efficiency.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix**

#### **A. Consent Letter**

**Unique ID:**

**Date:**

**Name of the participant:**

I'm Tanita Hossain, a student in the Master's programs for Educational Leadership and School Improvement at BRAC University. I'm doing a research project as part of my master's degree. I would like you to join my study.

During this research, I'll ask you some questions about your background, the current school you're teaching and your experiences and challenges in teaching English to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students/ The interview will take about fifteen-twenty minutes of your times. Your cooperation is importance. And you can choose not to answer any questions or stop the interview at any point. If your decided not to participate, it's absolutely fine and won't face any issues.

Your information will be kept completely confidential, and your privacy is a priority. Only those involved in the study will have access to the data I appreciate your willingness to help. If you agree to participate, please sign below:

---

Interviewee's Signature/ Thumb impression and Date

---

Researcher's Signature/ Thumb impression and Date

## **B. Interview Guide**

**Unique ID:**

**Date:**

**Name of the participant:**

### **Part A: Social Demographic Information**

1. Name:
2. Phone Number:
3. Age:
4. Years of Teaching Experience:
5. Educational Qualification:
6. Professional Degree:
7. Did you receive any training for teaching? If yes, mention the names/types of training:
8. Did you receive any specific training for the subject English? Yes or No:

### **Part B: Interview Questions**

1. Can you share some of the teaching strategies you regulate use while teaching English to the primary students?
2. How do you ensure that you're teaching strategies align with the learning objectives teaching English to the primary students?
3. Have you implemented any innovative teaching methods that you believe have significantly contributed to the class of your English classes?
4. How has the training by the government (if received any) been effective in teaching English to the primary grade students?

5. How do you make the most of the available resources in your English classes for primary students?
  6. Do you collaborate with other teachers? If yes, how do you collaboratively work to bring improvement of teaching learning practices for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students?
  7. Can you share the main challenges you face as a primary school teacher while teaching English?
  8. What particular challenges do you encounter in implementing the English curriculum for primary students?
  9. How do you address the diverse needs and learning styles of primary students in your English classes and what challenges arise in doing so?
  10. Do you face challenges related to the varying language proficiency levels of primary students in your English classes, please share your experiences.
- Do you have any recommendation for other teachers or for the government for the improvement of teaching-learning experiences in teaching English to primary grade students?
  - Do you want to add more information?

### **Part C: Classroom Observation Protocol**

**Teacher's Name:**

**Gender:**

**Grade:**

**Subject: English**

**Name of Content:**

**School Name:**

**School Type:****Learning Outcome:**

Teaching – learning process

Classroom size and available resources (pictures and posters)	
Classroom set up, seating arrangement and use of instructional materials	
Use of any multimedia or technology in teaching English	
Identify the level of student engagement and participation in English activities	
Describe the teaching strategies used by the teacher during the English class	
Describe the student-student and teacher- student interactions in class activities	
Describe how the teacher encourages students' collaboration and discussions in English lessons	
Identify/describe how the teacher aligns the lesson with the English curriculum	
Identify/describe any challenges faced in implementing specific elements of the curriculum	



Identify any challenges due to the resource scarcity or inadequacy	
Identify any challenges related to students' engagement and diversity in the English learning environment	
Identify any challenges due to the lack of support or opportunities for professional growth	
Special Note (if any)	

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