

Challenges of Teaching English in Rural Areas: A Study of BRAC Primary Schools in Jessore

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Declaration

I declare that the Dissertation titled “Challenges of Teaching English in Rural Areas: A Study of BRAC Primary Schools in Jessore” submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree of MA in TESOL” is the result of my personal investigation; it has never been presented and submitted or in part for any other degree.

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Abstract

Language is one of the medium of expressing our ideas, feelings and emotions. If we think about language in present world, English is one of the most used languages in world and English is used to learn as a challenging language in the classroom. English is introduced here at the primary level and its inclusion continues until the tertiary level of Education. For this, in recent years, the government of Bangladesh has worked to implement a language policy to foster a communicative approach to English language teaching (ELT) at the primary level, where BRAC education program is trying to playing this role in BRAC primary school program for enhancing the student's skill. For implementing it foster, the study has explored towards the challenges of teaching English language at the rural BRAC primary schools. Both the teachers and students are the target group of people for this study. This study investigated the factors affecting student's performance in English language in rural BRAC primary schools. For this purpose, one set of questionnaire has been used to collect data from students to assess the situation of English teaching and learning in rural BRAC primary schools. English sessions has been observed using an observation checklist and interview as focus group discussion has been taken from the teachers in order to find out the real present scenario of teaching English language at the rural BRAC primary schools level. Both teachers and students were thought to play important role to ensure challenging English during the teaching and learning process in classrooms. The result of the study reveals that students were highly motivated to learn English for future expectations such as local and international communication, academic advancement and employment prospects. It also provides a scenario of English teaching system in rural areas of BRAC primary schools as well as the problems and prospects of English learning.

Keywords: English language, rural areas, education, teaching and learning

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List of Acronyms

CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
ELT:	English language teaching
BPS:	BRAC Primary schools
BEP:	BRAC Education program
NCTB:	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
ENL:	English as a Native Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
EFT:	English for Today
GTM:	Grammar Translation Method
ICT:	Information Communication Technology
FGD:	Focus group discussion
PSE:	Public school Examinations

Statement of original Authorship

I hereby attest that this dissertation submitted to BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University, 66, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212, in partial fulfillment of the degree of MA in TESOL, is totally based on my own investigation and written in my own language. I also attest that this paper has not been presented and submitted or partially—anywhere for any other degree. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no part of this thesis paper contains any copied or plagiarized material from any published or unpublished work of other authors except where due reference is made.

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Preface

The current study focuses on the diverse realistic challenges of teaching English in the rural areas and consequently, I attempted to investigate the scenario at the BRAC Primary Schools in Jessore. The main objective of the study was to contribute towards the quality improvements of English education in rural primary school of Bangladesh. By clarifying the actual scenario of the current teaching and learning environment, this study will attempt to suggest a way of how to improve achievement and effective English policy input in rural area of Bangladesh.

The study will also help the educators, material designers understand the present situation of English language teaching and learning in primary level. The result would be a guideline for the government and non-government organizations who work for improving English language skills at primary level.

I hope that the study will shed light and provide insight into the nature of Teaching English in Rural Areas.

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I am thankful to Almighty for giving me the patience for successfully completing this study; all praises and gratitude belong to Him.

I express my gratitude to BIL authority to allow me to pursue my MA in TESOL. By studying here, I have learned to work in details and adopted the new teaching techniques of modern days teaching.

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Dedication

To my loving parents

Nishikanta Biswas

Radha Biswas

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

The elevated status of English in today's globalized world has made English language education getting prime importance across borders. A broad goal of English language program is that of developing community to convey and interpret the message via written or spoken modalities to another person. We must not forget that students today will become the responsible workforce tomorrow for our country. If we do not have good teachers, there is hardly any way to create such desired workforce of international quality. Thus, lack of sufficient good teachers in English would result an imbalance between our urban and rural areas and thus, rural areas would always be deprived of getting or learning English properly. The objective of teaching English at the primary level in rural area is to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions and requests in English and carry them out. For the development of the communicative ability, the Government of Bangladesh has developed textbooks and materials through the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), which are followed by the BRAC primary schools under the BRAC Education program (BEP).

However, complains and reservations regarding our students' Basic English proficiency keeps perpetuating in all quarters. It is observed in many researches that most of the students of rural schools are unable to attain the primary English language competencies due to prevailing challenges of our education system. The problems are related to several factors like- inadequate classroom infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, shortage of teaching materials, unsystematic educational management etc. which are more acute in the rural areas. Since primary education is the foundation of human beings' life skills and our rural areas comprise the larger number of primary schools, it is important to investigate how English is being taught and dealt with in the primary classrooms in rural areas. And subsequently, it is needed to analyze how far students are attaining the desired English skills. Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze the scenario—as well as the challenges and perspective of teaching-learning English at BRAC Primary Schools in the context of the rural area in Jessore.

1.1 Background to the study:

Language is one of the most useful tools we have as humans. Without it we could not think of thoughts expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves (Di Pietro, 1994). Language is very important in education. The high status of English within a global economy of languages has meant that English language education is increasingly being promoted in international development initiatives. A broad goal of English programs is that of developing the communicative ability to convey and interpret a message via written or spoken modalities to another person. In our country, there is no doubt that we still have not established a standard of education in schools and colleges. Too many problems in our country need to be eradicated to embrace a comprehensive education system through which we can expect ourselves to be a richer nation. We must not forget that students today will become the key numbers of our country who would be responsible for the overall development of our country. If we do not have good teacher, there is no way we could expect to have a balanced society in future. And if there are not enough good teachers in English, then there would be imbalance that the urban areas students will be good at English, but students in rural areas would always be deprived of getting or learning English properly.

1.2 Context of the study:

English has become the modern lingua franca, i.e. the language of communication among speakers of other languages. As such, English can help bridge communication barriers across cultures. The last decade or so has been marked by a new phenomenon called globalization. This has a profound impact on different domains of life such as social, political and economic. It has also experienced significant changes in the communication dynamics of the world. English language is the most crucial gear of this new communication euphoria. English as a subject is of paramount importance in equipping the students to take up the challenges of the competitive survival and growing globalization in developing countries. English is the dominance countries to grow with the continued globalization of business and economic development, and that dominance continues to grow with the globalization of business through mergers and international investment. This is high time we started to see the future development of English as a world language and took proper initiatives to develop our English language learners to a global standard in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2009) The global distributions of English are often described

in terms of three contexts such as English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thus, the diffusion of English throughout the world is seen in territories, viz, ENL territories, ESL territories and EFL territories (McArthur, 1996). Although officially English is a national second language in Bangladesh, this does not make Bangladesh as ESL country, as there exists mainly a non-Anglophone environment outside the English classrooms. The CLT (communicative language teaching) situation in Bangladesh is thus comparable to other EFL countries (Karim, 2004).

1.3 Statement of the problem

English language teaching (ELT) has been investigated from various angles, including the extent of consciousness of the English language teachers, what happens in the ELT classrooms, what challenges they face while teaching English. As Bangla is spoken by most of the people, the practical use of English, especially in the rural areas, has become extremely limited. Bangladesh has had a long period of academic attachment to English to the acquisition of English as a foreign language. Against such a background, it is generally agreed that the standard of competency of our learners in English is not satisfactory. In the rural areas, it is much more disappointing. It has been seen that most of the students in rural areas cannot make good results in their public examinations. Even, those who passed in the existing exam system by memorizing and without achieving four skills cannot display enough competence in English. Primary level education is the base of the students for their better future. So the particular topic has been chosen as it is the basic level of the students and the teachers are entirely responsible for the students' learning at this level. However, the main purpose of this research will be to find out the challenges in teaching English at the primary level of BRAC Primary schools in rural areas.

1.4 Significance of the proposed study

For the development of Bangladesh, we need a large number of human resources. To build the human capital, English is essential in the present age of information and technology of 21st century. The knowledge of English is more critical as well as important in the context of the global marketplace, the knowledge of society and in the age of digital information technology, Farashuddin (2011). The former Governor of Bangladesh Bank said 'Proficiency in English is a must for the nation to abolish poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and indignity. Primary education system of Bangladesh is the largest all over the world. Primary education is also called

fundamental education to build a child. It is important to create a base of English at primary level, as 2-13 years is the proper time for learning language. Government of Bangladesh operates large number of primary schools, where BRAC education Program is helping them for ensuring primary education and now operating twenty-three thousand (23000) BRAC Primary Schools. Most of the schools are in rural areas of Bangladesh. For the student's primary level, necessary steps must be taken to have a good grounding in English through effective teaching. But there are many problems to implement English curriculum at primary level in rural areas. Students of rural areas are not able to understand English language in many cases. Moreover, in acquiring primary level competencies, the learning outcomes, the achievement rate is questionable among the rural primary school students, especially in English subject.

This research is aimed at contributing towards the quality improvements of English education in rural primary school of Bangladesh. By clarifying the actual scenario of the current teaching and learning environment, this study will attempt to suggest a way of how to improve achievement and effective English policy input in rural area of Bangladesh. The study will also help the educators, material designers understand the present situation of English language teaching and learning in primary level. The result would be a guideline for the government and non-government organizations who work for improving English language skills at primary level.

1.5 Thesis outline

This study examines the classroom related challenges that are responsible for the Bangladeshi teachers' inability of teaching English in the classroom. The outline of the study is here in brief for the quick overview.

Chapter I is about the introduction of the study. Here, I have shown the background of the study and have contextualized the study in term of study Bangladeshi classroom. This section includes the reasons and purposes of the study and shows the significance and scope of it as well.

Chapter II is an insight of the literature review that are relevant to the challenges of teaching English as well as the Bangladeshi context. At the end of the chapter, it will lead to the implication of the findings.

Then, Chapter III is about the information on the research design and research methodologies, including the research tools and instruments, analysis, ethics and limitation of the research. The systematic and thematic results of the findings are given in chapter IV.

Finally, the Chapter V is the analysis of the results where a connection is maintained between the findings and the literature reviews. The Chapter V is the conclusion of the study culminating the result and the discussion of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Introduction

The main purpose of using language is to communicate one's needs, necessities, feelings, thoughts and ideas to others (Banu, 2009 cited in Salahuddin, A. N. M., Khan, M. M. R., & Rahman, M. A. 2013). The teaching and learning processes involves two active participants in the classroom- the teacher and the learner language learning do not fall entirely on the teacher. The students must also assume more responsibility for the learning process (Quest, 2000). It is through interactions with each other. Teachers and students work tighter to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and content of the target subject (Allen and Valette, 1997, Quest, 2000cited in Obaidul Hamid, M. (2010)).

Teaching materials are very important in the whole process of teaching and learning to any subject. They make learning more pleasant to the students because they offer a reality of experiences, which stimulates self-activity and imagination on the part of the students. Attitudes refer to the sets of beliefs that the learner holds towards members of the target group and also towards his own culture (Brown, 2000). Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning. In education, attitudes are considered both as input and output. Motivation is the most used concept for explaining failure or success of a learner. Also motivation has been regarded as one of the main factors that influence the speed and amount of success of foreign language learners. (Gardener, 2006 cited in Hamid, M. O., & Honan, E. (2012). It has been that passive learning, lack of adequate materials for teaching, motivation of the students and attitudes towards learning keeping the rural area students inefficient in English language compared to urban students. Most of the students of rural schools are unable to attain the Primary English language competencies due to prevailing challenges in our education system.

Many scholars argue that the mother tongue plays a pivotal role in the learning of the second language and they add that this might be true in the sense that some languages share similar sounds. When the child has learnt to read in the second language as he/she mother tongue, it becomes easy for him/her to learn to read in the second language as he/she would be able to

apply the same skills of phonic word attack (Morris, 1966; Krashen, 2005; cited in Carsten and Parkinson, 2002 and Afolayan, 2008).

As part of effort to learn, more about quality instruction for English learners, educational researchers and teacher in the United States have looked at instructional practices in other countries. When those countries are faced with the same challenge of teaching children in English to learn to read and write in English, there has been greatest transfer of best practices (Caly, 1991; Holdaway, 1978; Frater & Standiland, 1994 cited in Bonnie & Mary, 2005).

There is also a comparison between native and non-native language during the process of teaching a second language. In the end, some suggestions were given for teaching a second language in the non-native environment of study. Kannan, (2009) researched on difficulties in learning English as a second language. He explained that English is known as the world language due to its wide scope. The Indian people treated English as an awful subject because when they very first time hear it, they are unable to understand it especially in rural areas. Therefore, the conclusion revealed that the English teachers have to cope with the difficulties while teaching English in rural areas. Students also faced difficulties in the learning English.

The main objective of this research is to find out the challenges of English language teaching in rural areas in the context of BRAC Primary schools.

2.1 Historical background of English in Bangladesh

English is a 'brand'. It is the global language in the present global village. It is the speedy horse, which is running incessantly towards and occupying its place in this global village. Bangladesh is also an inhabitant of this village. Therefore, English is now an important chapter in Bangladeshi people's life, covering from daily life to the education and profession, where primary English education is the base line especially in rural areas students.

English teaching in rural primary school has had many ups to downs. The purpose of studying English in the British period was to create a servant class. Those so-called servants were taught only the reading and writing skills in English. However, gradually the situation has been changed and thus the focus of teaching and learning English has been changed. To enable our students to

practice English in real life, the Communicative Approach or the CLT has been introduced in the classroom.

However, our English teachers did not receive this innovation warmly. Selim and Tasneem (2011) have criticized these ELT teachers by saying “When CLT came to Bangladesh the traditional English teachers vehemently opposed it because they were not ready for something new (p.41).” The teachers hardly felt the necessity of teaching spoken and listening skill as they were quite successful neglecting two other important skills of language learning through-listening and speaking (ibid).

However, though many days and years have gone by and the ELT passed many steps, but the situation of teaching in classroom has not changed much. Still the teachers are comfortable with the traditional materials and methods of teaching English. English for Today or EFT is still used as the main source of teaching English in classroom. EFT is a great source to teach and learn English as the inspiration of the book is to make students communicatively competent. But, how many teachers are self-sufficient to achieve that?

Researchers have found that the teachers are following the traditional methods of conducting the class in Bangladesh. Salauddin Khan and Rahman (2013) have conducted a study and wanted to know how the teachers conduct their English classes with roll calling, proceed with checking home works, continue with the GTM based lesson and ends with the home works. According to the teachers, they do not use any other teaching technique to teach their students (p. 46). They had said that the NCTB book EFT is the one and only source to teach English in most of the cases.

This is the common English classroom scenario of rural areas in Bangladesh. In such a classroom, how much the students are benefited to be competent in English? How much they are getting the support and environment to learn and practice in English.

2.2 English language in Primary school

Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Jerrome Bruner differ in important ways about their explanations of how children develop and learn, but they all agree that cognitive development of the

children's linked to construction of knowledge in the brain with in a social context cited in (Banu, 2009). They also agree that language development linking sounds, word and meaning as a mean of communications a critical element of cognitive development. Drawing on the set theories, researchers in language learning and teaching have developed the idea of Emergent Literacy. Caly (2001), the New Zealand educator who is one of the Emergent Literacy, underscores the critical importance of providing plenty of opportunities and active engagement with peer and adults in reading and writing situations. Caly (2001) emphasizes that children learn to read so that they read to learn. It is essential that the tools of learning, though language skills development in one language, normally the mother tongue, be acquired early. Otherwise, the child becomes handicapped as a learner and the deficits become cumulative as the child moves up the ladder in the school. It is difficult to organize special remedial support and learning opportunities for children when the system is not working well to begin with. The child does not have a chance to recover and remain a poor performer in school or drop out. A bilingual or multi-lingual approach to language learning and medium of instruction is followed in many multi-lingual countries such as Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. Multiple languages, usually well developed and rich in literature and knowledge content, are given equal status in the education system and in public affairs in these countries (Jackson, 2005). Bilingualism refers to a situation where equal esteem and value are accorded to at least two languages as the medium of teaching, learning, learning materials are available in both languages, and learners have the opportunity to become function all skilled and proficient in both languages. Where ethnic and linguistic minorities are disadvantaged and equal opportunities for them area concern, bilingual education is considered as a way of bridging the transition from the mother tongue and the national language for young learners. It is also a way of recognizing and respecting the linguistic and cultural identity of the minority populations.

2.3 Present status of English language in Bangladesh

Necessity of teaching English in the South Asian subcontinent was addressed first time in Lord Macaulay's minute of 1835 (KrishnaSwamy & Sriraman, 1995). Macaulay in his Minutes expressed the importance and usefulness of the education that would be given to the natives through the medium of English. He mentioned two objectives of such education. The first was to

create a class of natives who despite their blood and color through this education; would be English in culture and be able to “interpret” between the rulers and the subjects. The second was to create a “demand” for the European institutions. Clearly, both the objectives were designed to serve the interest of the Masters, not of the subjects. When it published, he said, “It will be the proudest day in English history” (Sadek, 2002). In Bangladesh, during the Pakistan period, as a legacy of British rule, English was a second language. The educated or even fairly educated people had to use English in offices, profession, education and other purposes. However, after the war of liberation in 1971, in independent Bangladesh, the official status of the English changed to a foreign language. In the monolingual country people do almost everything in Bengali and did not use English in real life communication. They started facing problems when they were required to communicate in English. Moreover, recently the EFL situation in post liberation Bangladesh, English has regained an important unofficial status.

English is used in many government, semi-government and private organizations along with Bengali (Ainy, 2001). The term curriculum can refer to a variety of things, including the courses taught in a school or a program, the document that list the courses taught, a set of teaching materials that are organized in some sequences of framework, or a framework for selecting and organizing learning experiences (Howel & Wolet, 2005). English curriculum at primary level of Bangladesh indicates the aims, learning outcome, teaching methods and techniques, teaching aids and materials, and evaluation system. Making English study effective from primary to tertiary levels needs a lot of inputs and resources like trained teachers, communicative teaching materials; and financial, infra-structural and management facilities. These resources are not equally available or favorable for learning English in all the educational institutions of the country. In some urban elite schools, these inputs are mostly available and the school leavers can use English, more or less, in their further study or in jobs that they choose. However, most of the rural schools lack in some or almost all these resources (Sadek, 2002).

Teaching-learning English in rural schools cannot be done in the way it should be done. In most cases, learning English means rote learning of grammar rules and textbook contents even without understanding. But unfortunately there is discrimination between urban and rural primary school students English language learning. Students from urban areas show better proficiency in comparison with the students from rural areas. Most of the urban students watch cable television;

have easy access to cyber café; a good number of them read English newspapers. As a result, the urban students often have the opportunity to use English outside their classroom. In some urban schools computer education has been made compulsory from very early years of schooling. This helps the students to learn and to use English words and vocabulary items related to information communication technology (ICT). Their proficiency level is, therefore, much higher than that of the rural students. This is worth noting in different competitive examination like admission tests in different universities and institutions, job interviews and other competitions. In most cases the urban competitors especially, those from the metropolis do better than others (Hasan, 2004).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Research design is generally a plan (Berg, 2004) or an architectural blueprint (Merriam, 1998) in order to accomplish a research. Besides, methods of study are always related to “a particular discipline or field” (Kvale, 2009: 325). It is formed with different types of actions. So, methods of research are involved with the plans for assembling, organizing and integrating information (Akter, 2008) in the ways of doing a research in a methodological process (Hossain, 2012).

Mason (1996: 19) opines that research methodology “reflects an overall research strategy”. In a word, research design is a complete guideline of a study where direction of data gathering, uses of instruments, processing and analyzing of collected data are focused thoroughly addressing the main research questions. In addition, research design guides the researcher with an important plan of actions and its constraints. In this case, the challenges notify which strategies are more suitable, productive and useful in a given situation (Patton, 2002:255).

Since the aim of the research was to find out the challenges of English teaching strategies at BRAC Primary in rural areas, mixed method approach was applied. The data and evidence were collected from a range of sources by using a combination of different data collection tools. Questionnaires (comprising both open-ended and close-ended questions) and observation checklist tools were used to follow the quantitative approach while teacher interviews and focus group interview (FGD) with teachers were applied under qualitative approach. I had visited different BRAC primary schools situated in Jessore Sadar Upazila rural areas to collect the data.

In the research methodology, I followed the research tools like; survey, teachers interview as focus group discussion and classroom observation. All the three methodologies were given equal importance in the research with the equal contribution to the found data.

3.1 Research design

A mix method combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used to analyze the research data. To design the quantitative data, I used Likert scale to collect and analyze the

numeric data. However, the items in Likert scale ranges were ‘Always’, ‘Sometime’, ‘Rarely’, ‘Never’.

Also to measure the participants’ personal opinion about the quality in English using, I used Likert scales ‘Level of quality’ which ranges from ‘Excellent’, ‘Good’, ‘Average’, ‘Below average’, ‘Lacking’.

3.2 Objectives of the study

3.2.1 Primary objective

- To investigate the different types of challenges of English teaching at BRAC Primary schools

3.2.2 Secondary objectives

- To identify the challenges of teachers to implement the English curriculum effectively in their classrooms,
- To understand the students’ approaches of coping with those challenges effectively as learners.

3.3 Research Questions

3.3.1 General Question

- What are the types and reasons of the challenges teachers face in teaching English in their classrooms?

3.3.2 Specific Questions

1. How capable are teachers to handle these challenges?
2. How do teachers deal with these challenges in classrooms?
3. How do students perceive these challenges as learners?
4. How do students cope with these challenges inside and outside their classrooms?

3.4 Samples

I chose the participants randomly chosen from five rural BRAC primary schools, where students belonged to grade IV in two schools and grade V in three schools. For selecting the sample of schools, I followed the purposive random sampling procedure. I collected the data through closed-ended and open-ended questions in grade four (IV) and grade five (V) in each school. The reason for choosing these classes was, since students had passed the first three years of their basic knowledge acquisition, they were bit mature in classes IV and V (ready to sit for public Examinations i.e. PSE after that).

The participants did vary in their classes and ages. I chose the schools from different rural parts of Jessore Sadar Upazilla. However, the total numbers of these participants were 50. Among of them, 30 were from grade V and 20 were from grade VI.

Furthermore, I conducted five Focus Group Discussion (FGD)—five from rural BRAC primary school teachers. I had observed English classes of three different teachers where the average attended students were 86. I selected five teachers from five primary schools randomly FGD.

3.5 Instruments

I used the following methods to collect data: students' questionnaire survey, interview with teachers as focus group discussion and classroom observation.

3.5.1 Students' survey questionnaire

The questionnaire for survey had 10 close-ended questions. The close-ended questions had (2-5) options, which varied according to the questions type. For conducted students survey, the questionnaire comprised questions related to students' views of classroom teaching, learning procedures, their motivational levels, the challenges they face and the approaches they made to adjust with those inside and outside their classrooms. I prepared survey questions to use the Bangla language to make understand easy for the students.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion

To get the qualitative data I conducted FGD with teachers. There were five teachers teaching in grade V who took part in the discussion. I made a positive environment with a smiling face and a friendly introduction with them. However, my concentration was on to drag the answers of the

preselected questions. In FDG, there were 10 open-ended questions. The open-ended questions had no option and therefore the participants had an option to provide their opinion. I took about 35 minutes to conduct the FGD with the teachers. In this case, I used Bangla as a language of interaction.

3.5.6 Classroom Observation

I observed three classes including three schools. I made a classroom observation checklist where I took the information from the class. While observing the classes, I tried to note down the points mainly covering the classroom infrastructures, classroom management, seating arrangement, teaching and learning methods and so on. The duration of school class was 45 minutes. However, the observation sheet has been included with the appendix page.

3.6 Data collection procedure

I administered the students while they were in answering the questionnaire. Some students felt shy and some students felt uneasy finding me, an unknown visitor, beside them. But, some of them seemed motivated and asked different questions to clarify their confusion related to the questionnaire. However, before distributing the questionnaire I became introduced to the students. There is a common tendency among the students to feel fear of teachers. This fear may hamper the responses and for this fear at the beginning I assured that, I would not play any role like a teacher. Rather, I claimed me as a seeker of some support and asked for help from them. These techniques really helped me to find the participants easy going and interesting.

I confidently administered the teachers' interview. With a friendly introduction, I clearly pointed out my objective and purpose. The teachers were in hesitation with some of the questions. But, I precisely described and clarified them my actual purpose.

3.6.1 Data Analyzing Procedure

There were quantitative methods of questions. The quantitative question was the close-ended type of question where students had options to choose the answer. There were not arranged any open-ended question for the students.

3.7 Reason for selecting the Areas

The different areas rural BRAC primary schools of Jessore Sadar Upazilla were selected willingly to find out and present the real pictures. The aim of the paper was not to distinguish the challenges of teaching English between the rural and urban educational institutions, rather collecting and getting general information about the challenges of teaching English in rural areas of BRAC primary schools.

I maintained strong ethics while and after collecting the research data. I had given the participants pieces of papers promising that the confidentiality of their names and would be strictly maintained. I had taken their written consent about the ethical issues and the participants allowed me to use the information only for my research purpose. I gave one signed copy to each of my interviewees and kept one with me for any further need.

3.8.1 Limitations of the study

I had faced some limitations in conducting the study. Arranging of teacher interview schedules with the busy English teachers had a big challenge. Additionally, arranging FDFs with the learners of BRAC primary level had difficult as they had their fixed cases in different times. Furthermore, students were confused thinking in their response that in the survey paper would be marked. Students were also shy and introvert at the beginning after seeing me as I was a ‘stronger’ to them. They had no fund to conduct the research, if any fund was available, the research could be conducted on a broader scale and more FDGs with students along with teacher interviews could be also enriched the result of the study to reach a more reliable answer to the research questions. Though I had faced some difficulties despite of, it could be a professional attempted to do an insightful data analysis linking with the literatures and reach a reliable and trustworthy conclusion of the study.

3.8.2 Delimitation

The study will be delimited to some Bangladeshi BRAC Primary level teachers and students who will directly participate in the study. The results will be generalized to the participants.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Consent from the target population will be acquired before using their information in the study due to ethical issues. Both teachers and students will always have the opportunity to decline from participating in the interview and all the interview responses will remain anonymous with names of students being altered and not identify the language institutes. Since this study will record teacher and student interviews, during the data collection, ethical implications of recording data will be taken into consideration. All the recordings will be stored securely with only the researcher and the supervisor having direct access to the data.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter describes the results from the student's survey questionnaires, teacher interview as FDG with the teachers and the classroom observations. The results found from the student's survey questionnaire are given in the first section of the chapter. The results found from classroom observations are mentioned in the next section. Finally, the results found in as FDG with the teachers are mentioned in the last part of this chapter. Results of the survey questionnaires of fifty students, five FDGs with five teachers and three classroom observations are presented here.

4.1 Findings from the Questionnaire Feedback

1. Like to study most:

From all of the students of rural BRAC Primary schools, 64% got more interest to read Bangla books, 16% liked to practiced math, 14% liked to read social science, and among of them only 6% liked to read English books. Hear the graph also shows that the numbers of students on Bangla readers were increasing and they got interest more to study Bangla rather than to study other subjects. On the other hand, the motivation for English was decreasing among the respondents rural BRAC primary schools.

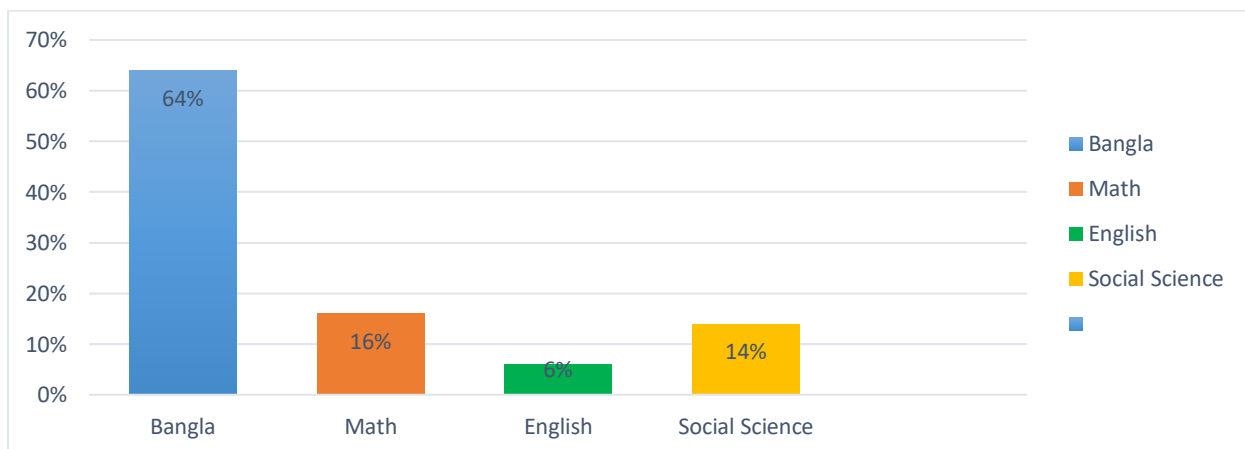


Figure 4.1: Students like to study most

2. Feeling about English:

Among the all respondents of rural BRAC primary schools, 70% expressed their compliance that English is hard, 14% did not like to read it, because they did not get understand easy and that is why they were feeling annoyance. 8% students felt interested about English and only 8% respondents felt that English was easy for them because they could read it in their own ways and teachers made them understand easily.

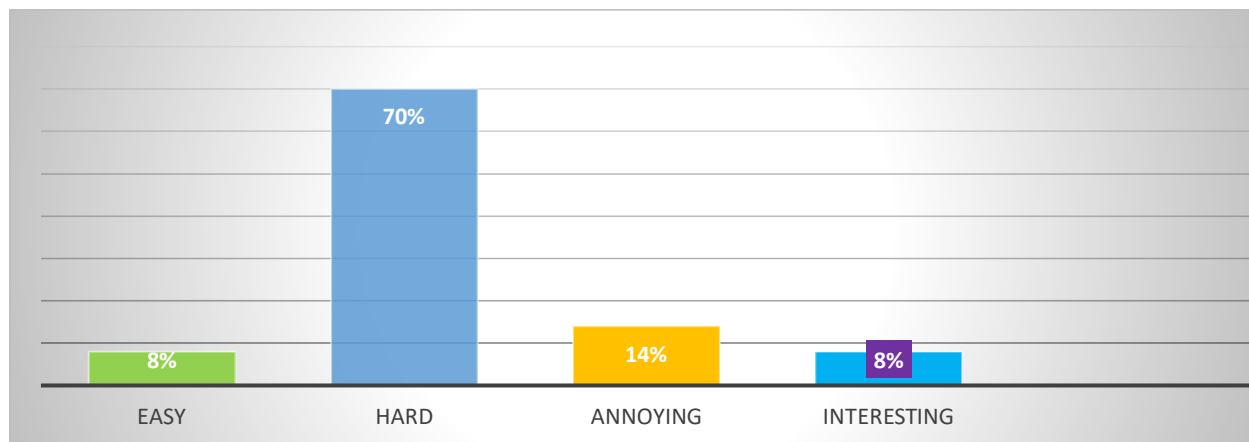


Figure 4.2: Students' feeling about English

3. Studying English:

From all respondents of rural BRAC primary schools, 66% mentioned that they read English books regularly whether 34% mentioned that they did not read English regularly. From the respondents who did not read English regularly, most of them believed that English was hard, they did not get interest to read it, teachers did not make them understand clear, and as a result they did not like to study English book every day.

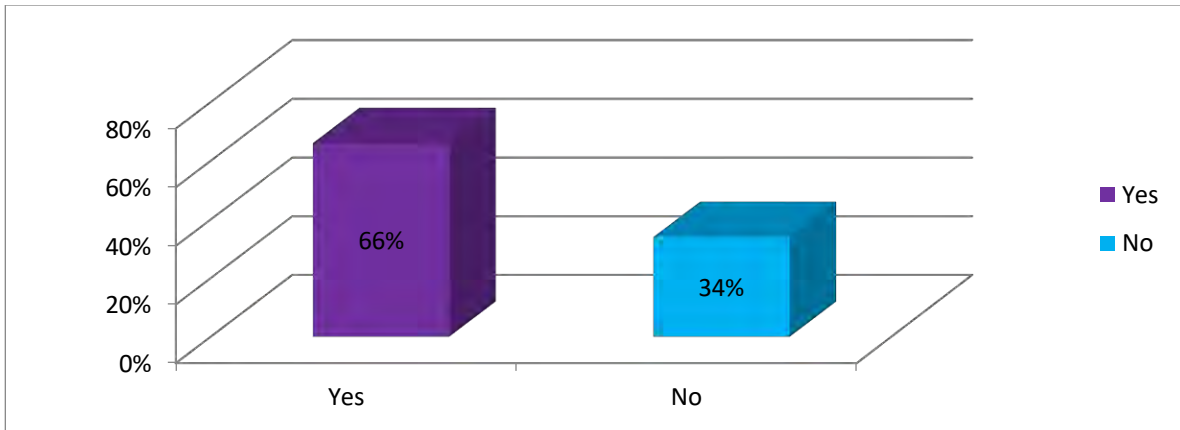


Figure4.3: Study of English regularly

4. Teachers make lesson easy:

Respondents of all grade four and five, only 48% believed that teachers were enough knowledge about the English lesson for this teachers make them the lesson easy. On the other hand, 52% thought that teachers did not make them understand clearly and as a result, they did not get interest to like to read English.

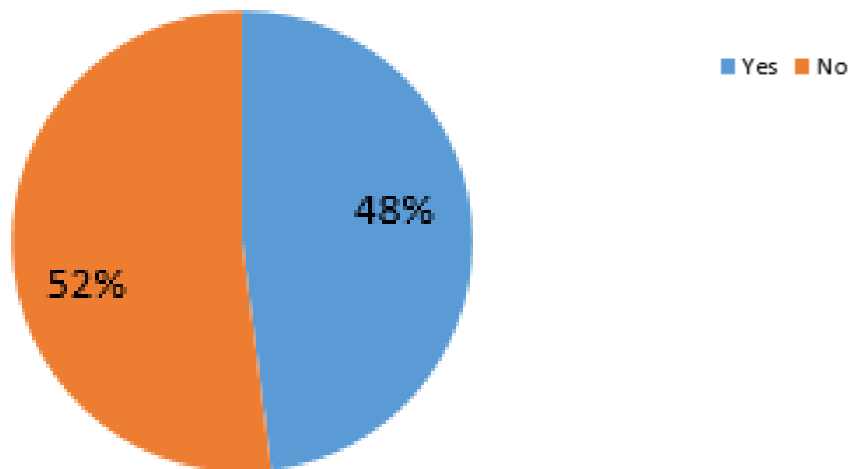


Figure 4.4: Teachers make the lesson easy

5. Ways of capturing lesson:

Among all students, 8% learners understood lesson in their own ways, 44% learners learnt from class teachers, 32% learners learnt with the help of private tutors and 16% learnt by reading guide books.

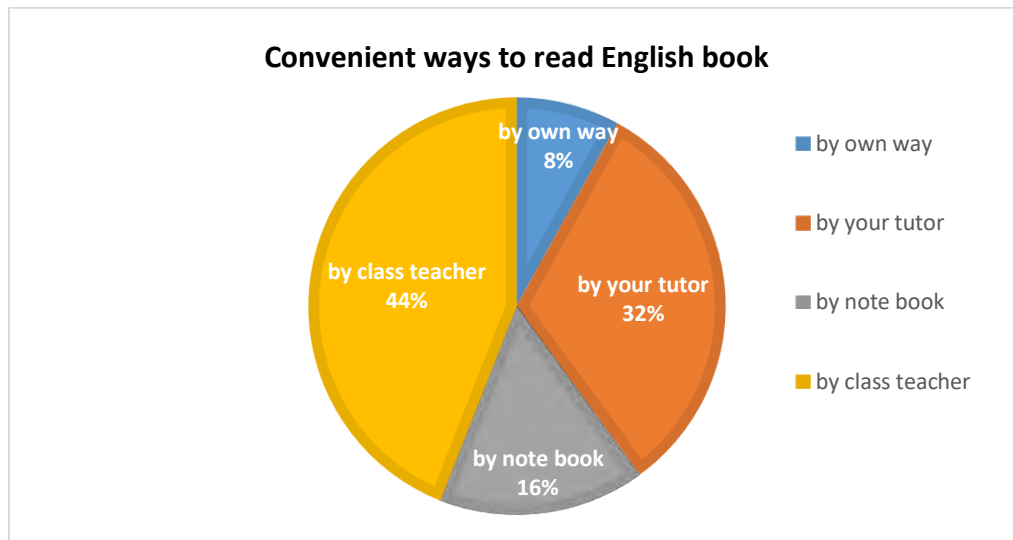


Figure 4.5: Convenient ways to read English book

6. Speaking exercise in the classroom:

Among all the respondents of rural BRAC primary schools, only 2% mentioned that English teachers always made speaking exercise in the class. While 22% mentioned that English teachers some time arranged speaking session in the classroom, 40% mentioned that English teachers rarely made speaking exercise in the classroom and 36% admitted that English teachers never arranged speaking exercise in the class.

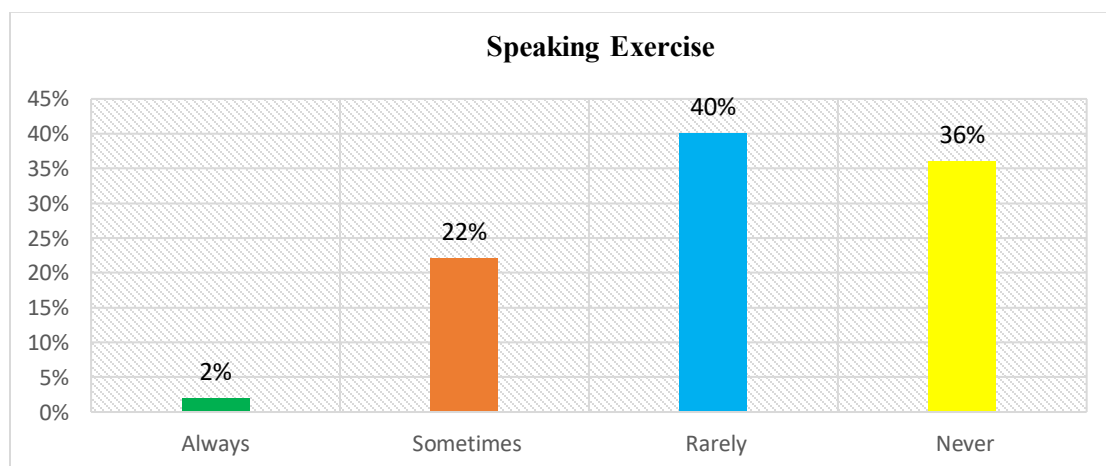


Figure 4.6: Speaking exercise in the classroom

7. Writing exercise in the classroom:

BRAC primary school students at rural areas claimed that, teachers did not make regular writing exercise. From all the students, only 2% mentioned that English teacher always made them do writing exercises whereas 78% opined that English teachers arranged writing exercises in the class “sometimes”. 10% mentioned that English teacher “rarely” made writing exercise and according to 10% students English teachers did not arrange writing exercise in the class at all.

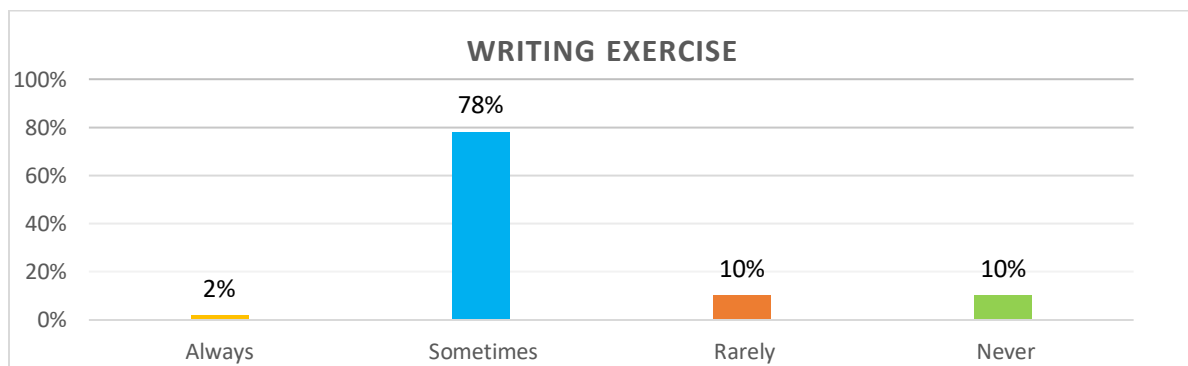


Figure 4.7: Writing exercise in the classroom

8. Reading exercise in the classroom:

From all the participants of rural BRAC primary schools, 22% mentioned that English teachers always made them do reading exercises in the class whereas 62% mentioned that “sometimes” English teachers made them do that. 14% mentioned that English teachers “rarely” made them do reading exercise and 2% mentioned that they never practiced reading exercise by the teachers in the class.

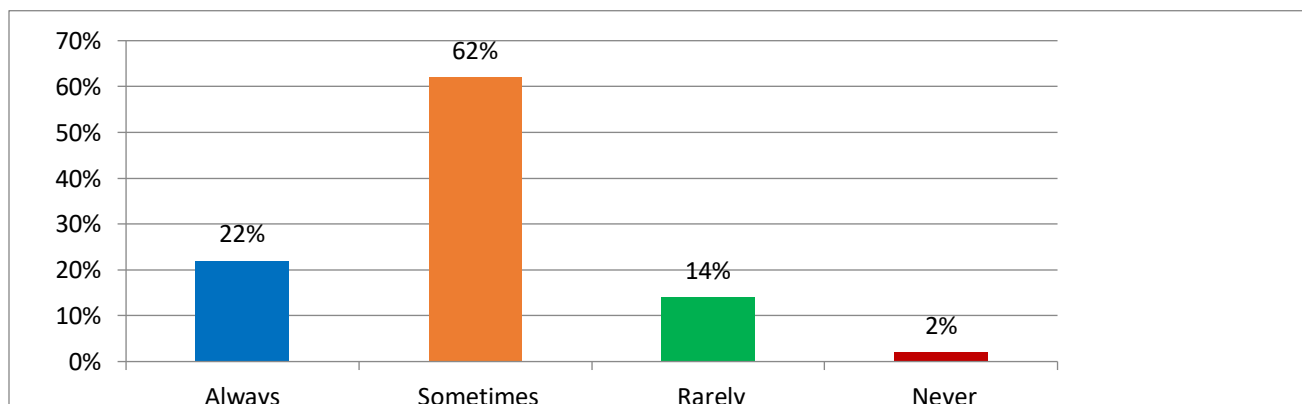


Figure 4.8: Reading exercise in the classroom

9. Listening exercise in the classroom:

From all the students, unfortunately, 76% students claimed that no rural BRAC primary teachers made listening practice in classroom because of the lack of proper materials. 18% students mentioned that “rarely” English teachers made listening practice in the classroom and 6% thought that “sometimes” English teachers made listening exercise in the class.

Listening exercise in the classroom

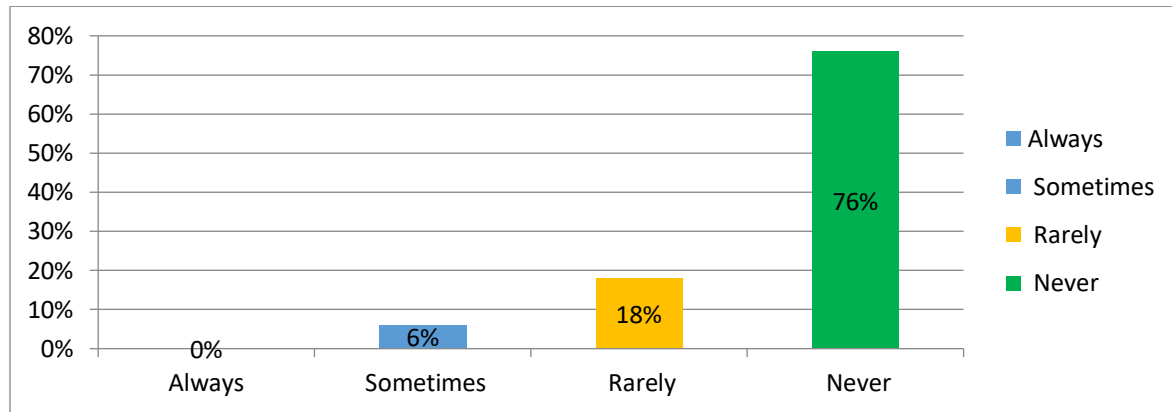


Figure 4.9: Listening exercise in the classroom

10. Opinion of students about their English level:

According to importance of all criteria of English level, all students of rural BRAC primary schools opinion, 50% mentioned that their English level was poor, 40% mentioned that their English level was okay, 7% mentioned that their English level was good and only 3% mentioned that their English level was excellent.

Students' opinion about their level of English

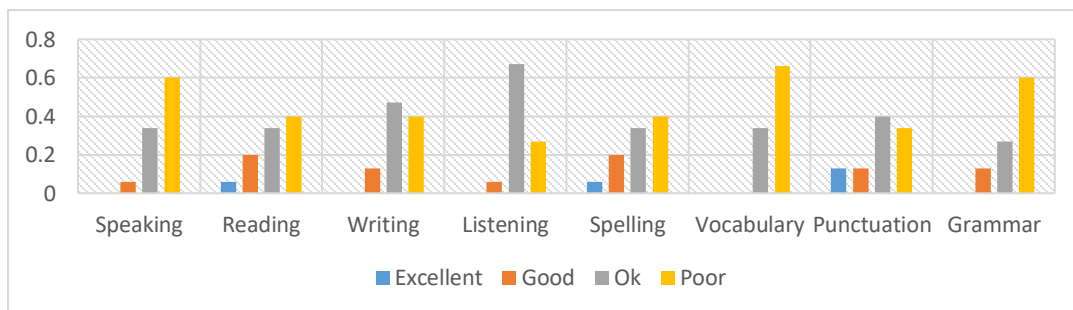


Figure 4.10: Students' opinion about their level of English

4.2 Classroom observation checklist:

Three English classes of BRAC primary school were observed. In terms of the points of observation checklist—like, learners’ motivation towards learning, classroom management, learners’ participation in classroom activities, classroom environment, ways of student feedback, teacher knowledge in-depth on subject matter, evaluation technique of class teachers, time management—it was found that among the three classrooms, all classrooms consisted of 28 to 30 students who were seated on the carpet with ‘U’ shape; sometime they could involve into several group activities. Teachers were interactive while conducting the classes. Almost of all observing classes, teachers used Bangla language. Teachers also asked questions and sometimes corrected students’ errors; sometimes teachers ignored those as well. They gave feedback orally, but most of the students did not talk about those to justify their performances. Due to lack of group works or pair works, the classes were more lecture-based and students were found not so involved with the classes. Teachers took more time to talk and students did not get enough scope for discussions. In some classes, teachers often failed to observe each student. Teachers used the textbooks as the main materials, but did not use supplementary materials, which were very effective for the students learning. From all of the points of view, it is found that in some of the cases only 12% teachers were good performers, 37% were average performers, 32% were in the below average level while 19% teachers were totally unable to teach (as shown in figure 4.11).

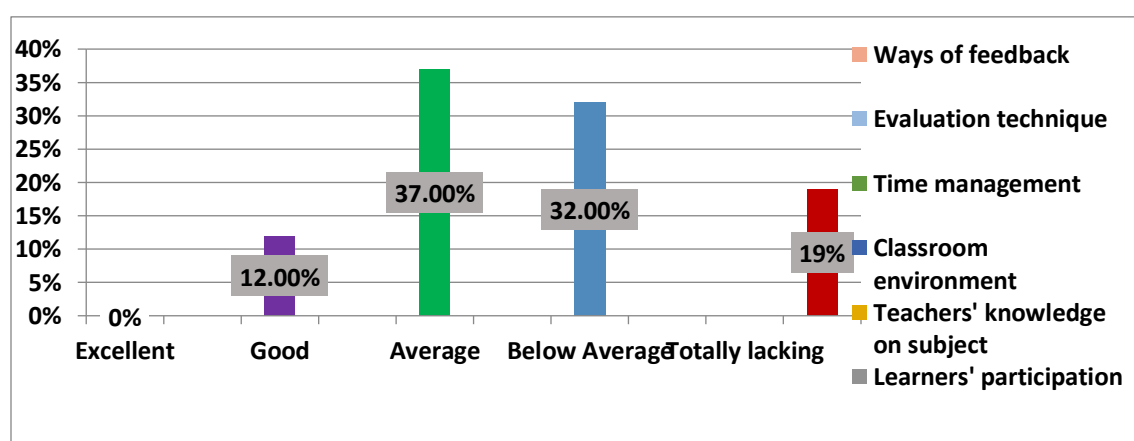


Figure 4.11: Orientation of the usage of classroom techniques

4.3 Focus group discussion with teachers:

Five English teachers whose classes were not observed were selected to find out the teachers' views about the challenges of English teaching implementation at rural BRAC primary schools. Teacher's responses were analyzed in qualitative approach.

1. Teachers' daily work load

All respondents mentioned that they had to take six classes everyday and every class had fixed time.

Teachers' favorite subjects

Among five teachers, three admitted that they would like to teach Bangla subject. They mentioned that it was easy for them to make students more knowledgeable through that subject. They could read and share their feelings with the teachers by using Bangla. The other two teachers mentioned science as their favorite subject and it was easy and interesting to teach.

Teachers' professional training in English

All the teachers of rural BRAC primary admitted that they had not received any professional or even subject-related training in English.

Conduct about English lesson

All teachers mentioned that they followed Teachers' Guide to conduct English lessons. First of all, they verified before every class which lessons had already been taught to the learners. Then, they selected the respective day's lesson which they would teach the students. They made students work in small groups, find out new words, discuss about spelling and ensure reading with meaning of the lesson. After that, they verified it in large groups and gave them homework for the next day.

Use teaching materials in English class

Most of the teachers mentioned that they were used only the textbooks as the main materials and sometimes used blackboard, chalk and duster. One of the teachers told that she sometimes used visual aids like card. She said that, the supplementary materials were very useful and matched with the objectives of the lesson. However, all of the teachers told that they did not get any

support to use extra teaching materials from the office. They also claimed that, they took six classes everyday and as a result, they did not get interest to use extra teaching aids.

Problems teachers faced while conducting English classes

One major problem of the teachers was their lack of proper grammatical knowledge and pronunciation patterns in English. As a result, they had to use Bangla in English classes all the time.

Initiatives taken for the weak and special need students in teaching

Most of the teachers mentioned that they tried to make students understand the subject matter repeatedly. They found out who were weak and with special features and accordingly gave priority to them. Two teachers added that they sometimes called their parents and suggested them what their duties were for the weak and special featured students. Sometimes they themselves went to special needs students' homes to check if they studied properly.

Students' realistic problems in understanding the lessons in English classes

The teachers were asked to mention their students were realistic problems in understanding the lessons in English classes. They said that shyness, lack of enough vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, pronunciation, lack of confidence and lack of proper materials were some of the problems that their students usually had to face in understanding the lessons in English classes.

Making students come out of those problems

The teachers advised that during English classes, teachers should spell most of the words explaining the meaning. Also, similar and opposite words along with the concepts should be cleared. Grammatical knowledge and reading of the English should be ensured.

Overall opinion about English teaching learning situation of Bangladesh

They admitted that they needed to know in details about English teaching learning situation of Bangladesh for their personal understanding. Also, they did not have any idea about English curriculum. As a result, they were not able to apply properly the teaching-learning techniques of

the curriculum in the class. Lack of the proper materials like audio-visual they cannot achieve four skills. They needed to receive properly subject-based training by which they could implement English teaching learning environment in class.

Chapter Five: Analyses of the Findings

5.1 Analyses of the Quantitative Data

It is obvious that students are more interested in studying Bangla rather than like to study more other subject. On the other hand, the admirers of English students are decreasing in rural BRAC primary schools.

Most of the respondents of rural BRAC primary schools expressed that English is hard. They did not like to read it because they did not understand it easily. And that is why they felt annoyance. Only a very few students felt interested in English and thought English easy because they could read it in their own and teachers made them understand things easily. Most of the respondents opined that they read English books regularly. The respondents who did not read English regularly believed that English was hard enough to make them disinterested. According to them, teachers did not make their problems understandable and clear and as a result, they did not like to study English book every day.

Only a few numbers of respondents of grade IV and V believed that teachers had enough knowledge about English lessons and they could make them the lesson easily. On the other hand, a large number of participants thought that teachers did not make them understand English lessons clearly and as a result, they did not get interest to read English. One third of the learners mentioned that they could learn English from their class teachers while the others learnt it either by the help of their private tutors or by reading guide books.

Among all the respondents of rural BRAC primary schools, only a very few number of students mentioned that English teachers always made the practice speaking exercise in the class. On the other hand, a few number of students mentioned that English teachers some time arranged speaking sessions in the classroom while a large number of students mentioned that English teachers rarely make speaking exercise in the classroom.

All the students claimed that teachers did not make regular writing exercise. From all the students, majority of the respondents mentioned that sometimes English teachers arranged writing exercise in the English classes whereas a few number of students said that English teachers always made writing exercise in the class.

A few students mentioned that English teachers always made them practice reading exercise in the class while a good number of them mentioned that sometimes English teachers made them reading exercise. Some students mentioned that they never practice reading exercise by the teachers in the class.

For listening practice, it is evident from the data analysis that no rural BRAC primary teachers made listening practice in classroom because lack of proper materials.

According to importance of all criteria of English level in rural BRAC Primary schools, half of the respondents mentioned that their English level was poor, a few students mentioned that their English level was okay and the others claimed that their English level was good.

In overall analyses, it can be said the lack of trained and skilled English teachers along with appropriate teaching materials and learning environment had been responsible for the unsatisfactory scenario of English education.

5.2 Analyses of classroom observation

As per the elements of observation checklist—like, learners’ motivation towards learning, classroom management, learner’s participation in classroom activities, classroom environment, the ways of student’s feedback, teacher knowledge in-depth on subject matter, evaluation technique of class teachers, time management—it was found that among the three classrooms observed, all the classrooms were had favorable conditions for teaching and learning, as well as pair and group work.

However, due to the insufficient efforts of the teachers, the classes were not interactive. Despite giving all efforts, most of the students were inactive. Because of lack of group works or pair works the classes were more lecture-based and students were found not so involved with the classes. Unfortunately, teachers had taken more talking time and students did not get enough scope for discussions. For want of proper monitoring and for not having supplementary materials, which were very effective for the students learning, was hindered. At the same time, teachers’ performance was not so good only a few performed well whereas most of the other teachers were average performer. A large number of students were teachers’ performance was below average.

5.3 Analyses of the focus group discussion with teachers

The FGD with teachers brought in forefront some crucial realities. Firstly, teachers were aware that their lack of proper training has been a great hindrance for them to become efficient teachers. They needed to be sufficiently trained in curriculum designing, materials developments, classroom management and evaluation. Teachers used only lecture methods and did not have any knowledge of modern language learning methods and techniques. This they were strongly dependent on the GTM method of taking classes and they did not have enough resources to teach English class. Teachers did not use necessary supplementary teaching aids and instructional materials. They used the text books as the main materials as well as chalk and duster. Visual aids or other supplementary materials could be more effective to teach English. Lack of listening lab or instrument did not give the proper opportunity to practice English listening.

Secondly, teachers were not aware of the aims, objectives of English curriculum. Due to this lacking of curriculum knowledge, teachers had been unable to conduct English language class in proper ways.

Thirdly, Teachers did not get proper access or support to collect extra teaching materials from the office. For this, students did not get attraction to learn English.

Finally, the workload of the teachers was too much –six classes on different subject matters per day—which consequently gave them no time to take subject-wise preparation for planning lessons.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Since English is a foreign language for the people of Bangladesh, students of our country find it a complex task in their education. Considering the global needs, English should be appropriately implemented as a subject at primary level. It is a matter of great sorrow that effective implementation of English curriculum is still far away, especially in rural areas of BRAC Primary schools. English is yet the matter of fear for students.

This study explored some challenges of implementing English teaching at BRAC Primary level in rural areas. Lack of effective teacher training, lack of quality teacher, unavailability of language skills learning tools are the most problematic factors towards implementing English teaching effectively in rural areas.

Recruiting highly qualified and specialized is teacher, providing adequate training for their professional development, increasing salary level so that they can respect their own jobs and proving sufficient materials for learning language skills could the solution of these problems. Therefore, it is expected that the authority will be concerned to solve the existing problems.

Appendix A

Survey Questions for the Students

Dear participant, please read the following questions carefully and answer according to your choice. Your replies will be only read for academic research.

A) Basic Information

Class:

Age:

Sex:

B) General Queries:

Put a tick before your choice.

1. Which subject do you like to study most?
 - a) Bangla
 - b) Math
 - c) English
 - d) Science

2. How do you feel about English subject?
 - a) Easy
 - b) Hard
 - c) Annoying
 - d) Interesting

3. Do you read any type of English book every day?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

4. Can your teacher make lesson easy for you?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

C. Way of capturing lesson:

5. Which one is convenient for you to read English book?

- a) On my own way
- b) With tutor assistance
- c) With note book
- d) With class teacher helps

D) Exercise of four skills

6. Does your teacher give regular speaking exercise in your class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

7. Does your teacher give regular listening exercise in your class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

8. Do you practice reading text regularly in your class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

9. Does your teacher give writing exercise regularly in your class?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

E) Self Perceived Level of English Competences

10. Please tell us about your current language level according to (1 to 4) choice:

English Skills	Rating			
	Excelent-4	Good-3	Ok-2	Poor-1
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				
Listening				
Spelling				
Vocabulary				
Punctuation				
Grammar				

Appendix B

Class Observation Checklist:

Name of observed School:

Name of observed class:

Date:

Number of students: Present----- Absent-----

Observation Checklist	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Totally lacking
Classroom management of teachers					
Learners' extent of participation in classroom activities					
Teachers' display of knowledge of subject matter					
Classroom learning environment					
Time management by teachers					
Technique of evaluation by teachers					
Teachers ways of giving feedback					
Teachers handling of individual students problems					

Specific commands: -----

Appendix C

Focus Group Discussion for Teachers:

Teacher's level:

Time:

Gender:

Date of Interview:

Interviewer:

1. How many subjects do you teach every day in your classes?
2. Which of those subjects is personally favorite to you? Why?
3. How many of you received professional training in English? If you did what are they and where?
4. How do you usually conduct your English lesson? Please describe it with explains.
5. Which types of teaching materials do you use in your English teaching?
6. Which sort of problems do you face while conducting English classes?
7. What initiative do you take for your weak and special need's learners? If yes, what are those?
8. Do you feel that students have realistic problems in understanding the lessons in English classes? What are those?
9. What can be done for making students come of those problems?
10. What is your overall opinion about English teaching learning situation of Bangladesh?

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