Constriction of English Language Learning in a Developing Country— A Qualitative Study in Bangladesh

By

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the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the constriction of students' English language learning due to the challenges faced in a developing country, and the study is conducted in the context of Bangladesh. Eventually, the exploration leads towards understanding how the learning is being constricted and in what magnitude. Qualitative method was employed to explore the students' learning experiences of English in Bangladesh which in fact shaped the direction of this study. The findings suggest, students' learning of English is being constricted essentially in terms of their superior cognitive abilities such as critical thinking and creativity which impact communication skill also. Rote learning and fallen integrity rather appear to be significant constituents in this process of constriction as the catalyst and/or byproduct. Among few anticipated measures from the findings, cautions against the students' tendency to give minimum effort is the notable one. Hence, findings from this study may aid in the endeavors of bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Keywords: Constriction; Developing Country; Bangladesh; English; Language; Cognitive; 21st Century Skills

Dedication

Abbu, Ammu and Shajib

Thanks a lot for always staying beside me in my ups and downs. I would like to dedicate this

thesis to you for your tireless dedication to me.

Acknowledgement

THANK YOU Allah— for who I am and for the blessings that made me reach this far. I do not have enough words of appreciation for my thesis supervisor Md Al-Amin to express my heartiest gratitude for his guidance and inspiration throughout this journey. You are a true educator in my eyes who have enthused me to reach beyond the boundaries of doctrines and appreciated my spirits. I am thankful to my external examiner Ibrahim Hossain for his valuable feedback on the work. I would like to thank all my teachers and faculties from whom I have learned so far. I am also thankful to my family members and friends for their constant supports and suggestions in this journey of mine. Finally, though I can not acknowledge you by your names for privacy, I would like to express gratitude to all my participants without whom this study would not be possible at all. Thanks a lot for your valuable contribution and support to me despite your busy schedules.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

<div align="center">**Chapter 1**</div>

<div align="center">**Introduction**</div>

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Bangladesh is a developing nation where education is considered one of the secrets behind the development. Being the medium of international communication, English language, hence, gets a reflexive priority in Bangladesh to be included in the national curriculum. In turn, this paper presents the attempt of linking the areas of glitches found in a developing country and how that constrict the students' learning of English in the context of Bangladesh. If the journey succeeds in creating a holistic portrayal of this situation, it can aid to the endeavors of bridging the gap between existing English curriculum and its outcome. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the constriction of students' English language learning due to the challenges faced in a developing country. It, eventually, aims at finding how the students' English language learning is constricted in Bangladesh, and what the magnitude of this constriction is. The insights will hint why the policy or in other words the curriculum following CLT method is not working, not just from the perspective of limited resources, trained teachers or infrastructures but from the endeavors of students as they are the crucial stakeholder in this process. Thereby, this study makes an effort to bring in a new direction of concern and few critical features of the complex problem to concentrate on.

The operational definition for the term 'constriction', from here on, will be "the gradual minimization or compression". In this respect, constriction of learning will refer to gradual minimization and/or compression of the learning. Beside, the term 'cognitive' employed in this paper is not limited to cognitive competences, but refers to the mental processes involved during learning; whether it is critical thinking or communication, students need to go through some mental processes to learn. The study was also tapered by focusing on the students' experiences who was going to sit for or already completed their Higher Secondary School

Certificate (HSC) examinations from Dhaka division.

1.2 Background

"Ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"— it is one of the goals proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) for realizing the sustainable development for the planet (2015, p. 19). From then safeguarding and escalating the education sector has become the center of attention particularly in the developing countries. The reason behind that is the knowledge and skills attained through education which essentially uphold "sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (United Nations, 2015, p. 19). As a developing country, in this circumstance, Bangladesh is also actively striving to reach for the goal of education proclaimed by the UN. However, the global standards required for sustainable development are principally addressed to the developing countries, and they need to accomplish those with their limited resources and infrastructures (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018b). It indicates as well as describes the struggles Bangladesh is facing in this journey of developing its education sector, and one of the biggest challenges here is the scarce resources whereas another is the deficient infrastructures.

Within the above mentioned state of education in Bangladesh, this study particularly focuses on the English language learning situation. In the contemporary world, English is no longer a communication medium only but the main reasons for learning English recently are the sense of class, status, power, knowledge and gaining wealth. Without English, people can not communicate globally and thus will remain backward in every sphere of modern world. Accordingly, the government policy of Bangladesh considers English language to have a correlation with economic development and with "the ability to contribute and compete in the global area and so made English compulsory throughout schooling" (Al Amin & Greenwood,

2018b, p. 120). The national curriculum therefore prioritizes listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of English language as well as their appropriate usage for effective communication in real life. The English curriculum (2012a, 2012b & 2012c) follows Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in primary, secondary and higher secondary level of education, in order to enable the students to communicate effectively and globally. However, in reality there is gap between the policy and practice. The outcome that was supposed to be with the implementation of CLT, neither matches with the target nor the curriculum (Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). Specifically, there is a gap between the students' oral and written competencies as well as discrepancy between the curriculum and the practice in classrooms (Rasheed, 2011). It is the result of high stakes examinations among which Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) are crucial ones paving the way to future progress. Students need to sit for SSC examination after completing 10 years of schooling at primary and secondary levels, and they sit for HSC examination at the completion of two years in higher secondary level. Therefore, these high stakes examinations shape the teaching and learning process significantly (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018a; Sultana, 2018). Apart from that all the stakeholders such as: the students, teachers, parents, institutional authorities and others play crucial roles in this process.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This study explores the constriction of students' English language learning due to the challenges faced in a developing country. During this exploration, the researcher reviewed relevant literature to understand the concerns better. This search started with the skills required to prosper in the contemporary world and the UN's call for attention to the developing countries. Even so the investigation revolved around the English language learning situation within the education sector. Later the researcher reviewed literature regarding language learning in developing countries, predominantly about Bangladesh. From there, the significance of this particular study becomes apparent.

2.1 Prominence of English Language in Bangladesh

Developing countries are striving towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) following the UN's proclamation in 2015. According to a recent report by the UN, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Central and Southern Asia are lagging behind than the rest of the world in terms of educational opportunities for which the students can not participate in the complex global economy (2019). It also emphasizes on the fact that learning crisis not only hampers individual development but also the whole country's future (2019). Therefore, like other developing countries Bangladesh is striving to improve its education sector. Especially, English is emphasized in this journey because of its importance for international communication and participating in the global economy (Chowdhury, Sarkar, Mojumder, & Roshid, 2018). Nonetheless, the agenda of sustainable development itself needs a common language to bring the entire world in one platform and that language is English (Zygmunt, 2016). Therefore, English has become an important factor to work on in Bangladesh that would eventually play a crucial role for the country's development.

4

As a precursor of stepping into the modern world, Bangladesh is advancing its education sector along with the English curriculum in accordance with the requirements of 21st century. Regarding 21st century education, Bialik and Fadel (2015) differentiated between knowledge and skills where they talked about the core subjects such as math, language, robotics etc and the skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. According to them, knowledge is the "understanding" whereas skills refer to the "actionability" which ultimately execute the knowledge into the real world (2015, p. 2). They briefly mentioned about the information, media and ICT literacy as well as life and career skills. Similarly, Chu, Reynolds, Tavares, Notari and Lee (2017) talked about the 21st century skills but in a different manner. They divided the skills in three sets; learning and innovation, digital literacies, and life and career skills. However, the set of learning and innovation includes components like core subjects, critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. Here they referred to reading, writing and arithmetic by core subjects. Above all, these skills compatible with the globalized modern world, particularly critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration are greatly involved in the English curriculum of Bangladesh (National Curriculum, 2012). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also a growing sector in Bangladesh due to the striving competition to catch the fast pacing world. Bangladesh government has taken many initiatives to implement ICT in the education sector; Access to Information (a2i) and the Multimedia Classroom (MMC) are two example of those (Mou, 2016). However, according to Mou, ICT in education sector is not fully developed yet due to infrastructural barriers, lack of resources, lack of skilled teachers etc. like other less developed countries (2016). Successful implementation of ICT can aid in teaching and learning English according to the 21st century needs.

At the end, although there are many initiatives to enhance the English language of Bangladeshi students, the situation is not favorable yet. The basic problems that Bangladesh

faces as a developing country are the limited resources and infrastructures. The economic condition of Bangladesh is yet to be improved where around "24 percent of the population still lives in poverty; more than half that lives in extreme poverty, surviving on less than USD$1.9 a day" (Trines, 2019). According to the International Labor Organization, in 2018, 27 percent of the youths aged between 15 to 24 were not involved in any kind of education, employment or training here (Trines, 2019). Without any education or employment of such a large number of apposite population, the quest of sustainable development rather seems to be an overwhelming pressure to hold a place in the world economy. Conversely, mastering English language can act like an instrument to step up in this race, since it is considered as a skill to compete in the global market. English can play an important role to empower various entities for contributing to the country's economic growth and sustainable development (Chowdhury et al., 2018). Here, the problem arises, when resources and infrastructures are insufficient compared to the requirements for developing the education sector since there are number of expenditures for teacher training, learning materials, educational institutions etc. Till now the government has built thousands of schools especially in rural areas and provided substantial amount of resources, but many of them remain incomplete due to inadequate funding and school infrastructures (Trines, 2019). Eventually, Bangladesh is striving to "catch-up with providing teachers and infrastructures to its population of 170 million" for attaining the SDG of education (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018b, p. 119).

2.2 Rationale Behind the English Curriculum in Bangladesh

The Government initiated CLT in Bangladesh in late 90s. National Curriculum Textbook Board (NCTB), from then on, stresses the development of communicative competence in English among the learners in all three levels of education. The National Curriculum (2012b) of Bangladesh followed constructivist theory in order to design the curriculum for the secondary level of education, where the learners would not just blindly

intake the information provided by the teacher rather they would actively participate in the knowledge construction process. It will lead them to be experimental learners and therefore critical as well as creative thinkers of the nation. The curriculum and text books for secondary and higher secondary levels were designed with these perspectives in mind, however, the result is somewhat different than the expectations. The central objectives for implementing CLT were that the students would "acquire competence in all four language skills, i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing", and "develop creativity and critical thinking through English language" (National Curriculum, 2012b, p. 74). The curriculum was designed this way with the intent that students will be able to communicate in English and thereby would establish themselves globally. According to the National Education Policy 2010, the future generation would be able to compete in the 21st century modern world by learning English for communication purposes (National Curriculum, 2012b & 2012c). It was also the reason for including skill based learning in the curriculum. Therefore, the National Curriculum of English also comprises the 21st century learning skills.

The National Curriculum of Bangladesh follows the constructivist theory for designing the CLT based curriculum. According to the constructivists' perspective (Fosnot, 2005), a person learns through the process of active knowledge construction including assimilation and accommodation. Here, assimilation refers to the intake of information or knowledge from other sources which essentially leads to the accommodation of that knowledge through various stages of adaptation; the person uses the assimilated knowledge to create, reflect and experiment with for further construction of knowledge (Fosnot, 2005). Likewise, Bloom's taxonomy model (Krathwohl, 2002) is a practical set of objectives to check the status of the learning process; its cognitive domain illustrates the stages in which a person gradually advances his/her knowledge construction process or cognitive development. Therefore, this model can be utilized in accordance with the theory of constructivism to understand the rationales behind the National

Curriculum of Bangladesh. The stages start with 'remember' as the very basic of human cognition and increasingly advances with 'understand', 'apply', 'analyze', 'evaluate', and lead to 'create' at the advanced stage (Krathwohl, 2002). According to the model (Krathwohl, 2002), 'remember' is just the recognition or recalling of information where as 'understand' and 'apply' are superior skills of cognition. However, 'analyze', 'evaluate' and 'create' are the top hierarchical skills in that model (Krathwohl, 2002), which represents the superior level of active knowledge construction process and the critical thinking as well as creativity of the learners.

Both the theory and practical model help us to understand the situation of the students' English language learning in terms of the curriculum. According to the objectives and agenda of the National Curriculum, the incorporation of CLT should have make the students proficient communicator of English. Moreover, the students should be well accustomed to think critically and creatively as per the intention behind the curriculum. Yet, the reality here is quite different from the idealistic objectives those were to be met.

2.3 Reality of English Language Learning in Bangladesh

The reality of English language learning in Bangladesh does not match with the visions of the National Curriculum. The objectives of acquiring four language skills along with creativity and critical thinking ability behind the curriculum of English should have been fulfilled with the employment of CLT. However, fulfillment of these objectives, communicative competence (Rahmatuzzaman, 2018) and creativity as well as critical thinking (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018a) are uncertain according to the present situations of the students. In addition, the practice that was supposed to be followed with the implementation of CLT, does not match with the curriculum that is followed in the actual English classrooms as well as in the testing procedures (Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). Students do not need to communicate in English during their classes, and most importantly even the instructions in

English classes are delivered using both Bangla and English. Students are not interested enough to speak in English even though teachers encourage them (Rahman & Karim, 2015). According to the studies, till present days, the teachers and students are comfortable with Grammar Translation Method (GTM) more than CLT where they frequently translate between Bangla and English (Rahman & Karim, 2015; Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). In terms of deductive grammar teaching and writing process, the influence of GTM is prevalent in the classrooms. The students memorize the writing items fixed for the examinations and in that way they can write well (Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). Anyway, students' writing skill develop more compared to their speaking skill, since at least they remain involved in some kind of writing activities unlike speaking ones (Rasheed, 2011).

All of these issues regarding the curriculum and its proper implementation in classroom teaching-learning situations are the result of the very testing procedure itself, particularly the public examinations. For instance, SSC and HSC are high stakes examinations, and therefore these have immense impact on the teaching and learning process (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018a; Sultana, 2018), especially in secondary and higher secondary levels. It can be called the washback effect as well that is inevitable in terms of a high stakes exam and therefore, leaves an impact on the curriculum (Sultana, 2018). By practicing and memorizing the content beforehand, students can write those well in the examinations. This drill of examination questions and answers by both the schools and private tuition classes, students get accustomed with rote learning instead of critical thinking and creativity (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018a). Beside that, students are reluctant to communicate in classrooms even if some teachers inspire them to do so. Inclusion of listening and speaking test in the high stakes examinations might encourage the students to communicate in the classrooms (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018a).

Lack of trained teachers is a crucial problem that impacts the efficacy of CLT in Bangladesh. The teachers lack trainings to conduct communicative classes or CLT-based

classes which ultimately results the failure of CLT approach of the national curriculum (Rahman & Karim, 2015; Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). According to Trines (2019), the teachers are often poorly trained. The main reasons behind lack of trainings of the English teachers are location, schedule conflict, time limitation and lack of ongoing support (Fabee & Sultana, 2019). In this situation, the government can provide online trainings which would help in their continuous development as well as their skill of using ICT (Fabee & Sultana, 2019); then the teachers can also use this ICT skill to enhance their students' communicative competency. However, here the major issue is the financial limitations. According to Hamid and Erling (2016), the policies undertaken in Bangladesh to ensure English education for all and the quality for implication, are not realistic based on the financial situation. Apart from that maintaining the quality of English education while providing across the country may be challenging due to the present socio-economic situation of Bangladesh (Hamid & Erling, 2016).

Classroom size also plays a major role in lowering the efficacy of CLT in Bangladesh. Large classrooms make it difficult for the teachers to concentrate on the students individually and conduct group activities within the very limited amount of class time (Rasheed, 2011). Most of the times the classrooms remain overcrowded; teacher to student ratios were 42:1 in the secondary schools in 2016 whereas the official target ratio is 30:1 (Trines, 2019). According to Hamid, Sussex and Khan (2009), large classrooms often lead to the dependency on private tuition in Bangladesh. In large classrooms, teachers often are unable to provide attention towards the students on one-on-one basis or in small groups. This requirement by the students and their parents, make them lean towards the private tuition or coaching classes (Hamid et al., 2009). Beside, intensive practice according to the examination questions ensures good grades in the examinations to some extent; whether it is true, it is at least the belief among the students and parents (Hamid et al., 2009). However, the growing industry of this private tuitions or

coaching centers are still at full-bloom due to the parents' appeal as well as teachers' insistence for their own business, although the government is trying to ban this notion (Trines, 2019).

2.4 Contribution to the Literature

Within the context of Bangladesh, there are number of studies that address the issues regarding inappropriate application of CLT in English classrooms. There are also numerous studies on the barriers behind implementing CLT or the barriers disturbing this method from being effective. Above all, most of the previous studies found so far were revolved around the inefficient policy planning, mismanagement of authority, limited resources, inadequate infrastructures, lack of trained teachers, and specifically from the angels of these issues. In contrast, this particular study attempts to get into the root of the problem by evaluating the concerns from the lens of the students; in other words, it explores what is happening with the students' that they are not accomplishing the vision of the National Curriculum. The reason behind this intent is— students are crucial stakeholders of the learning process and without their active effort there will be barely any learning. This study, therefore, explored how the students' learning is being constricted along with a focus on the constraints that may arise in a developing country. From the findings, this study suggests some key issues to work on for involving the students' effort so that they actively participate in the learning or knowledge construction process. Hence, this study provides a new direction to search for increasing the efficiency of existing curriculum.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study investigates the constriction or gradual minimization of the students'
learning due to the challenges faced in a developing country like Bangladesh. To explore the
probability and level of the impact caused by the challenges, the study was initiated by
interviewing few participants, which aided in shaping the research questions. Thereby, this
research process was an evolving one. At first, the research question for this study was—

> How do the challenges in a developing country impact the students' learning of
> English?

Later, as the study went on, the question was narrowed down and the study continued based on
the following queries:

> 1. How do the challenges faced in Bangladesh constrict the students' English language
> learning?
> 2. What is the magnitude of this constriction for learning English among the
> Bangladeshi students?

A detailed research methodology may help in understanding the directions and diversities of
this study. Besides, this section labels and explains the methodological procedures embraced
for this study, which will essentially endeavor in measuring the aptness of this study and the
implementation of its research findings to suitable contexts.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning
individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell,
2018, p. 41). Therefore, qualitative method was used in this particular study since it is an
exploratory one in nature to find out the gradual minimization of the students' learning. The
researcher opted for case study or to be more precise, explored the case at hand in depth by

assembling data from varied sources as suggested by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell (2018). This study seeks for the English learning experiences of the learners and explores the challenges on their way as well as the consequences. As a result, it required an in-depth understanding of the learning experiences that could be achieved well through a qualitative research due to the versatility of every individual.

3.2 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study with a semi-structured interview questionnaire and interviewed two English language learners for that purpose. After the pilot study it seemed that the researcher needed to keep majority of the questions open ended otherwise the interviewees would incline to answer only what they are asked to not mentioning the details or any back-story. Letting the participants share their stories was also an important lesson from the pilot study. For example, one participant was asked about how good he was in writing and he was very confident about that. Later on it seemed that he used to memorize everything following the syllabus and that is how he used to get good grades, but the researcher almost missed that information since there was not any specific question regarding memorization nor about writing process. Beside, follow-up questions were needed to be asked that totally changed the direction of next questions. The remarkable fact the researcher found out was that he/she initially thought of interviewing several English language learners who are part of the population which might cause the results to be one sided or less reliable. After the pilot study, it seemed that the data would be more enriched and reliable if he/she included other stakeholders' perspectives as well. It led to rethink about the participants of this study.

3.3 Population, Sampling and Participants

The population for which the research finding is applicable are the students who have received 12 years of education according to the national curriculum of Bangladesh, whose first language is not English and medium of instruction was Bangla. Since there were some

particular characteristics that needed to be present in order to serve the purpose of this study, sampling was done through purposive approach. These characteristics were: Bangladeshi English language learner, English was not their first language, school's medium of instruction was Bangla from early childhood, would sit for or completed HSC examination, and studied in the Dhaka division. Moreover, one of the reasons behind going for qualitative method is to purposefully select participants "that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018, p. 262).

The research was conducted in Dhaka and 10 participants eventually agreed to take part in the interview. The core participants for this study were six students who fulfilled the requirements of sampling process. Later, three English teachers were interviewed who teach students similar to the sample participants for this study. Finally, one specialist was interviewed who has closely worked for the development of teaching and learning English in Bangladesh. The rationale behind interviewing the teachers and the specialist was to collect data from varied sources that would help to understand the reliability of the findings from other participants. The general profiles of the participants are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

General Profile of the Participants

No	Pseudonym	Profession	Age	Gender	Academic Background
1	Shajib	Student	20	Male	HSC
2	Mou	Student	18	Female	HSC
3	Lamia	Student	18	Female	HSC
4	Maruf	Student	19	Male	HSC
5	Sami	Student	19	Male	HSC
6	Dipa	Student	19	Female	HSC
7	Meheli	Teacher	36	Female	M.A. in English (Literature)
8	Rifat	Teacher	40	Male	M.A. in English (Literature)
9	Parul	Teacher	50	Female	M.A. in English (Literature), Professional Development Trainings
10	Fahmina	Specialist	35	Female	M.A. in English (Linguistics and ELT), Professional Development Trainings

3.4 Instrumentation

According to J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, researcher works as the key instrument in qualitative approach (2018), which was also true for this study. In addition, there was a questionnaire; the researcher started interviews with a structured questionnaire consisting 25 questions. However, after the pilot study, the researcher had to change that structured questionnaire since it was restricting the diversities and detail experiences of the participants. Therefore, the researcher added few questions and specific areas of inquiry (see Appendix A) keeping the field open so that the interviewees could share their own thoughts and ideas beyond the questions. The participants were also encouraged continually to share their experiences and thoughts even if something was not mentioned by the researcher. Apart from the interviews, writing samples and relevant records (see Appendix B and C) were collected from the participants to cross check their responses.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Most of the participants were initially interviewed face to face in an informal setting according to appointed time. They were asked questions those were relevant to the study purpose and follow-ups depending on their responses. Besides, they were encouraged to share their personal experiences those they thought relevant. Later on, all the participants were contacted via telephone whenever there was any confusion or further query. Apart from that the researcher observed writing samples of the participating students to compare the findings from interviews and check the status of their learning.

All of the interviews were not audio-recorded, rather the researcher took field notes for all the interviews as recommended by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell (2018). Moreover, due to the difficulties in speaking English, data was collected from the participants using Bangla to some extent. Particularly, Lamia, Maruf, Sami and Dipa were having real trouble to speak in English which further emphasized their lack of speaking practice. However, the data

collected from them are presented in the results section by translating in English without any change in the meaning.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

This study was exploratory and that is why both the data collection and data analysis were recursive in nature. Whenever any new inquiry, interpretation or established theme was there, the researcher went back to the data collection phase. There was continual movement while studying between the database and emerging themes— it is also termed as inductive and deductive data analysis (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018, p. 257). In fact, during the data collection, the direction of this study was also amended at one point. In the course of analysis from the assembled data, the researcher employed two major phases. At first phase, the researcher presented the results thematically. At the second phase, from these thematically presented results, the researcher seeks for the areas that have been gradually shrinking due to the constraints faced in Bangladesh.

For interpreting the data, important issues from each participant's interview and writing samples were coded, and later shared codes were drawn together according to different themes (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018). These themes are presented in the results section; after that the researcher reconfirmed those thematic findings with the participants. Apart from that, a narrative is presented as well for sketching an inclusive vivid picture of the participants' English language learning experience in Bangladesh.

Next, the researcher went for the analysis which directed towards the main aim of this exploration. From the results, the researcher investigated for the traces of impact on the students. One specific impact became eminent and that is on the cognitive dimension or in other words, superior learning skills. This investigation led towards several partitioning of this particular impact which showed the range of continuous minimization the students' learning

process was undergoing. These categories consisted of common concerns present in all the participants.

The analysis presented in the discussion section encompasses and reinforces the responses to the central research questions. The discussion is expanded based on the insight of reviewed literatures in relation to the exploration of this study. Above all, the analysis of this exploration is mapped in a chart which also makes the stream of this study easy to follow and comprehensible.

3.7 Obstacles and Limitations

One of the main obstacles in conducting this study was time limitation. Since this study was exploratory, during the interviews the focus shifted from the previous one after gaining insights about the students' situations. Therefore, later the researcher felt time constraints to complete the study. Another obstacle was the participants' unwillingness and fear to record interviews for which the researcher needed to take extensive notes. However, the participants were genuinely helpful throughout the study to let the researcher call them via telephone whenever they were needed.

The limitation of this study is that it is a short scale research, therefore the data is not extensive and widespread. For this reason, the findings may not be true for larger and different contexts yet. The present study is conducted by only one person without any funding for which it is short-scale; in future it can be conducted in large-scale with a more focused stance.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The study took ethical aspects into consideration throughout the entire research project. The researcher was careful enough to not make any kind of disruption for the relevant personals or issues. The aim of this study was explained beforehand to all the participants and the interviews started only after gaining their permissions.

Most importantly, the researcher maintained the confidentiality of the participants in all stages of the study as recommended (J. W. Creswell & J. D. Creswell, 2018), which was a great concern to the participants. Any kind of identifying information is adjusted or unstated in the entire study.

Apart from that the researcher also took consideration of the participants' convenience and comfort. The participants were contacted according to their convenient time without disrupting their regular schedule. The researcher was also supporting enough to the participants so that they would feel comfortable to share their personal experiences.

Their convenience and comfort were also considered in terms of recording the interviews. Many of the time the researcher took extensive notes due to the participants' discomfort regarding audio-recording. Beside, when the participants were unable to communicate or having trouble to express complete thoughts in English, they were encouraged to use Bangla.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Interviews and writing samples from the participants representing the population for this study portray one side of the coin, and therefore perspectives on the same issue from various stakeholders were taken into consideration. Interviews from the relevant teachers and a specialist were taken on this respect. The results of this study thereby was accumulated through the triangulation of data from various sources.

The issues derived from the data and their consequent themes are presented in the results section as they were in original; those themes were rechecked with the interviewees to avoid any kind of misinterpretation. Beside, contrasting perspectives of the participants were taken into consideration to create a realistic portrait of the situation. The thematic results and their interpretive analysis are presented in separate sections so that the findings of this study can be reviewed by the audiences which also opens door for any further interpretation.

<center>**Chapter 4**</center>

<center>**Results**</center>

This section presents the narrative of a participant's English learning experience and the findings from the participants that are allotted in several interrelated categories.

4.1 Fahmina's Story

While interviewing the specialist— Fahmina regarding the issues related to the teaching-learning situation in Bangladesh, the researcher came to know about Fahmina's own experience of learning English. It was remarkably supportive to the exploration of this study. The study attempts to explore the constriction of students' learning and thereby looks out for their endeavors. Fahmina's story demonstrates the significance of a student's appreciation and attempts in learning as well as gives an overview of the situation in Bangladesh.

Fahmina is a 35 years old Bangladeshi female who completed her B. A. in English from a private university of Bangladesh, and later she completed her M. A. in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Dhaka University. She worked with an English language development program for a long period, where she had to train the English teachers across the country and their trainers. She mainly trained primary to secondary level teachers and their trainers; her focus was essentially on English language where she taught appropriate ways of teaching. Later, she became an education specialist there and worked for the national curriculum of English as well.

Fahmina categorized herself as an advanced user of English language. She learned Bangla as her native language, and it was the language used in her home. Though she started to learn English as a language at the age 4, actually her learning process was started from age 2-2.5 (approximately). Fahmina said:

My parents used to teach me English rhymes and at the same time they used to point out objects or incidents of that rhyme from my surroundings. Sometimes they used to

<center>19</center>

show me various items or objects using pictures. And I could relate those things in real life. When I was approximately 3 or 4 years old, my parents started to tell me English stories by showing relevant pictures. What is interesting, I used to try to read those stories like my parents, though I hadn't learned the English alphabets till then.

Later she was taught the alphabets and some basic words which helped her to read those stories on her own. At the age of 6, she used to try reading stories like news presenter.

I was always fascinated listening to the English news on BTV. My father used to watch the news at 10 pm everyday and I used look at the news presenter speaking so nicely. I was so fascinated that I loved reading aloud my English stories to be like the news presenter. It became my habit to act like a news presenter from then. Even in my older age, may be it was class four and I was 9 years old that time— I continued that news presenting thing. My father became very serious about the primary scholarship examination and became strict about my study. But I was the total opposite. More than studying for exams and scholarship, I liked reading story books. To tell the truth, I actually love to read books more than anything. So what I did was I used to read aloud my story books like a news presenter during my study time and my father couldn't even tell that I wasn't actually studying. I always used to show off that I was studying in this way. Now that I look back, I think that unknowingly it helped me to improve my English a lot. Specifically speaking— my speaking skill got much better because of that.

Fahmina's reading and writing skills were also improved due to her extensive reading of story books. Starting from childhood, her source of English language input were story books, cartoons, and later on movies also. According to Fahmina, she could learn English at her home as her parents inspired her learning; especially her father inspired her to speak English at home

no matter how much mistakes she used to make during speaking. This friendly environment helped her to learn English language.

On the contrary, Fahmina's academic learning environment for English was not that much pleasant. The medium of instruction was Bangla until the tertiary level of education, and the status of English was only a subject. No skill of language was particularly focused in her 12 years of education including school and college. The teaching style was almost same in all the levels of education (primary, secondary and higher secondary); only the complexity level was changed for each level. They had to use a text books called *English For Today*, and a selected book for grammar & composition. Though there were grammar, reading and writing practice, these were not focused as different skills. According to Fahmina:

> English classes were very much conventional; we had to read the lessons from texts, and based on that reading we had to do some writing tasks. Our teachers used to teach grammatical structures in English second paper classes with lots of exercises, it was the grammar translation method. We weren't exposed to the contexts, or any real life examples to learn those grammars.

Class work and home work had no difference at all; sometimes the teacher used to ask questions from the assigned reading, and the students had to answer those in verbal manner. Most of the students used to get nervous for the teacher's anger at their mistakes instead of taking the (learner's) mistakes normally. There were no speaking opportunities as well for Fahmina till tertiary level; teachers and students used to speak Bangla in English language class. If anyone would try to speak English, many used to laugh at the mistakes; it was discouraging for the enthusiastic learners.

However, the traditional learning process of her English class did not help her in learning English. Moreover, she could not memorize grammar structures and the reading contents as per the text; it used to cause her bad result. She stressed:

I couldn't even speak in English before the teacher as he used to point out my every mistake. He went as far to complain my father that I was weak in English. Later, I explained to my father about what happened. One day, the same teacher deducted my marks pointing a word that was actually correct. I told him that it was correct but he was totally unwilling to listen. Next day, I went with a dictionary and showed that it was correct.

Like these, Fahmina used to face troubles coping with the teaching ways of her English classes. On the other hand, the learning procedure and learning environment at Fahmina's home helped her significantly to learn English as her second language.

According to Fahmina, though the English curriculum has been developed after she completed her education, the scenario is still the same. She encountered similar classroom situation or similar teaching procedure many times due to her work in this area. During the trainings on teaching methods, techniques and using learning materials, she needed to inquire about the teaching procedures first and accordingly train the English teachers. Even with the CLT based textbook *English For Today*, the classrooms were almost like she once experienced herself. For her, practicing and communicating in English both in classroom and outside classroom are very significant for being a proper user of English.

At the end, Fahmina's experience being a language learner in Bangladesh as well as an expert in this field, showed the existing picture of learning English in Bangladesh. Use of GTM instead of CLT method, ignoring the language skills in traditional classrooms, overlooking the students' requirements for learning etc are key issues found from her experience. In terms of the students' endeavor, aspiration of students and needs for them to understand the importance of learning English appropriately are two major components for success.

4.2 Participants' Perspectives

Each of the following categories represents the participants' views on related issues. In addition, according to the participants, the teaching and learning process they were undergone was very consistent in nature across the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels in terms of the quality, effectiveness, learning materials, informal learning, assessment etc.

4.2.1 Quality. The guiding principle for English teaching and learning according to the NCTB is CLT method which reflects through the main text *English For Today*. This text book is aimed to focus on separate language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing through the reading passages and poems along with interactive exercises. However, the real scenario in class was quite different as stated by the participants. The student participants mentioned that they were exposed to read and answer few questions from the text book in class as per with the reading comprehension segment for their examinations. They also informed that the language skills and relevant exercises mentioned in their textbooks were not practiced as instructed in the textbook itself. In other words, the listening and speaking skills were almost forgotten and the reading and writing skills were practiced as required by their syllabuses and examinations.

According to the student participants, in majority of their English classes they were exposed to the rule-to-practice procedure. They were taught and needed to learn the rules from their grammar books and practice the exercises. In terms of grammar teaching and learning, there was hardly any different opinion. Furthermore, for the writing works, there were always selected topics which they would like to memorize for writing well and getting better marks in the examinations. In each level of their education, as Sami and Dipa said, they would mainly practice paragraphs, essays, compositions, letters, emails and so on for the writing parts according to their grades. The type of writing items varied but the procedure was same in all

levels— learning how to write that writing item and memorizing or taking ideas on several possible topics. Dipa said:

I need to prepare for the items in the exam earlier. Otherwise I won't be able to write in the exam. If there is anything that I haven't read before, my mind goes blank.

Majority of the students' responses agreed in terms of speaking English in class as well. As mentioned above, the speaking and listen skills were hardly practiced in class, but what is more that the conversations of English class were mainly in Bangla. Beside, as opposed to the CLT method followed by NCTB, there was barely any interactive activities, creative and critical thinking tasks. The only activities the students were involved were related to the examination syllabus; one of which was solving *model questions* for examinations.

The participating teachers' responses followed the students' but in a different manner. According to them, very few students were interested in learning anything that would not be in the exams. Whenever they were asked to learn anything outside the upcoming examination, they used to become less interested. In contrast, if anything was discussed related to the examination, most of the students payed attention; especially if there was any suggestion or something that might appear in examinations. However, for the students, good grades were important for maintaining a better reputation in their academic lives as well as for a better career. In this regard, the participating teachers talked about the other stakeholders' requirements in terms of good grades of the students, especially the institutional authorities and parents.

The above mentioned responses regarding the quality were also in line with the experiences of the specialist. The quality of teaching and learning English, therefore, appears to be in the same cycle with the effectiveness and assessment.

4.2.2 Effectiveness. The effectiveness of the teaching process can be evaluated through the students' learning and the actual effectiveness of the learning process is reflected in the

students' lives. According to the participants, both students and teachers, English learning was limited to the purpose of good grade not for the purpose of learning a language in most cases. For them, very few students learned English as a medium of communication in their student life since they were not required to communicate in English up to their higher secondary level. Besides, in terms of writing, since there was always a probable syllabus even for the public examinations, the students used to opt for learning the writing items beforehand for good grade rather than taking risk to write something on their own. As a result, as stated by the participants, the students could not learn to use English as a language to communicate their thoughts other than fixed set of rules, vocabulary and writings. Shajib and Mou, although they agreed upon the poor communication skill of the students, they themselves were quite good communicator of English. Especially, Shajib was apparently an excellent speaker of English including the pronunciation though his writing were not in the same level as his speaking skill. He told:

> I improved my speaking skill on my own by watching movies and videos on the internet and practicing regularly at home. It was because of my eagerness to communicate in English.

However, he was not satisfied with his writing which he could not improve on his own. He also mentioned:

> I always tried to write on my own during exam but my marks were not satisfying. Other students would write better following the books. So, I had to follow the books for memorizing the writing items even though I didn't want to.

After explaining the actual intention of NCTB and their integration of different language skills in the *English For Today* textbooks, the participating students mentioned that they would have probably learned English better than they were if followed the intended procedure. As stated by them, they would have at least learned to communicate in English with others to some extent which was essentially the aim of NCTB's CLT based curriculum.

However, due to the lack of proper implementation, this highly substantial effort is loosing its effectiveness as well as efficiency as said by the specialist. She suggested that:

> To ensure the efficiency of CLT, one must aware the students and their parents of its long term effectiveness as well as the authorities should be under the government's continuous scrutiny.

4.2.3 Trained teachers. A participant stated:

> Trained teachers can be the most important resource a student may have which could either lead towards the success or failure.

Other participants agreed to this statement as well. It was apparent from another participant's view about the quality of English classes that:

> Even though the English textbooks are in line with the CLT curriculum to a great extent, the teaching methods are not up to date as the curriculum itself.

It was due to the lack of teachers who were well trained in teaching as per the CLT curriculum provided by NCTB. According to the student participants, they followed what they were taught by their teachers and what was required for doing well in examinations.

However, in this respect, what the participating teacher mentioned was the institutional authorities' strict requirements of good grades from the students especially in the public examinations. As a result, the teachers were supposed to train the students in such a way so that they could bring glorious achievements for the respective institutions. Therefore, the teachers better opted for aiming at the examinations and taught according to that. Apart from that as the teachers said, they were not well trained in the CLT method to conduct classes following the instructions in textbooks or curriculum and in some cases it was exceptionally hard to follow due to having very large classes. In this regard, an experienced teacher participant also agreed and informed that:

Due to many teacher training programs nowadays teachers are familiar with CLT method but the number of trained teachers is not very high. Besides, the training programs are generally conducted for short period of time and not monitored always after the program ends.

The specialist also responded in accordance with the teacher participants and informed that she worked in this same issue for several years across the country. According to her:

Due to lack of proper training of CLT as majority of the English teachers in Bangladesh are not from ELT background, the curriculum is not properly followed in English classrooms.

She worked for improving this situation in that long term program and said:

Now what it needs is the continuous inspection of the government to maintain the proper methods of classroom teaching; otherwise the situation will be like before again.

When the student participants were asked in this concern, whether they were interested to follow the textbook's instructions in class or the examination syllabus, four of them opted for the examination syllabus. Two students, Shajib and Mou, preferred the textbook or in other words CLT method, who surprisingly were better user of English language than the other four. Mou mentioned that many of her teachers used to give her less marks compared to some other students since her writings were not as good as them. She said:

I used to write the writing parts during examinations on my own because I was always weak in memorization. But other students could write well by memorizing. So I would get less marks than them.

Mou always appreciated it more when the teachers followed the examination syllabus and suggestions more leniently as well as involving them in critical and creative activities rather than just memorizing.

4.2.4 Learning materials. Regarding learning materials, the *English For Today* by the NCTB was widely appreciated by the participants— especially after explaining and showing how it was supposed to be utilized and what it could do. Other than the main textbook, there were apparently two concerns from the participants. One was about the supplementary material along with the main text, and the other was about the multimedia materials.

The participating teachers mentioned that in order to carry all the activities provided in the *English For Today*s, they often would need supplementary materials and it would be better if government would deliver those materials to the institutions or teachers. Beside, they also talked about problems of grouping a large class for interactive activities and the time limit of 30 to 45 minutes. These issues needed to be addressed according to them by the concerned entities.

Multimedia classroom is a current initiative by the government and schools are gradually being equipped with multimedia materials like computers, projectors, speakers etc across the country. Yet, not all schools and classrooms are under this initiative and some are not fully equipped. The participating teachers agreed that using multimedia materials like picture, audio, videos and PowerPoint presentations were useful for students' understanding and making them interested in the lessons. However, according to them teachers needed to be trained in using those facilities since many of them were not well accustomed to these technologies. Apart from that getting multimedia materials delivered from the institutions or government would make this journey particularly easier for the teachers who faced difficulties to collect those as suggested by the teachers. The student participants also showed their excitement regarding multimedia materials since it matched to their interest.

The specialist also was affirmative concerning the supplementary and multimedia materials. In fact, she and her team "used to provide extra materials and multimedia materials

like audio recordings to all the teachers" they educated for using those in their respective classes. She also mentioned that:

We used to opt for recordings on cell phones when there was not any other way to use multimedia materials and instructed the trainee teachers to do so.

4.2.5 Supports for students with special requirements. The participants notified that in terms of the students who have special needs or requirements, there were hardly any special facilities related to teaching in class. There was not any definite response regarding the presence or absence of the facilities in total concerning them. If any student was physically challenged he/she might be supported by other classmates and the teachers in needs, but there was no separate facility solely to teach them.

Apart from the students with special requirements, there are many students who are specifically habituated with particular learning styles. Shajib talked about his practice of English speaking which he learned through audio-visual materials from internet. According to him:

I learn things better if I listen and watch something rather than just reading from books. Mou on the other hand was someone who used to learn better if she read something and analyze that on her own. However, Lamia depended on memorizing rather than analyzing anything on her own, and during memorization she used to prefer reading out loudly so that she could listen what she was reading. Another significant issue was highlighted from Lamia's learning preference:

I can understand and learn better by discussing everything with my friends. In that case I depend less on memorization. But there is no such opportunity in class.

Upon asking about supports in classes according to their preferred learning styles, the participants could not inform about any such thing. The participant teachers also notified that in traditional large classrooms it indeed became unworkable to inquire about every student's

29

needs and learning style; for them if the classrooms were small enough then it could work. Yet, there was another option which was very common and practiced by all the student participants at least for once— English coaching classes. Sami said:

> I used to do one English coaching in a coaching center. But my marks aren't improving. So I have joined another English coaching in my college. There I will get shorter and more accurate suggestions for exams.

Though it might be considered as an extra support for whoever need some extra attentions; in light of the participants' response, it seemed like a full package containing suggestions, learning exam syllabus and practicing model questions.

4.2.6 Informal learning. Studying outside classrooms seemed common to all the participants since students needed to learn at their homes whatever they were taught in the classes. Moreover, studying for examinations was very conventional to all the participants. The contents for their learning outside classrooms, at any rate, were nothing but the reading comprehension exercises, grammar rules and exercises, paragraphs, compositions, letters, applications and other writing items.

Furthermore, when the question was about practicing or using English outside classrooms, it appeared unusual to most of the student participants except for Shajib and Mou; one of whom was well acquainted with speaking in English where another one's hobby was reading books including English. The rest of the student participants were barely involved in practicing English neither in reading and writing nor in listening and speaking outside classrooms. Only Maruf talked about reading English newspaper at home which helped him in improving his vocabulary as well, but even then he did not cross the line in terms of being creative in the examinations due to his teachers' encouragements about following books. He said:

Before I used to study very less. So I would think of something to write during exam. But now I am serious about study and try to complete the syllabus. So I get better marks. If there is any topic in the exam that I haven't read, I try to write that. But I get less marks in that.

Upon asking about utilizing English movies or songs for improving English; Sami, Dipa, Lamia could not confirm that though they had often watched English movies. In addition, none of the student participants could use English at home to speak nor any of their parents would encourage them to do so.

4.2.7 Assessment. Assessments during the 12 years of education could be categorized in two types depending on their significance and range; institutional and public examinations. Participating students were assessed throughout their all levels of education mainly through exams, either monthly examinations or term-end examinations depending on the institutions' requirements. According to all participants, the syllabuses for those examinations were mostly in line with the public examinations they were expected to sit for.

The public examinations were apparently the rule maker for the institution examinations according to the comment on institutional examination. In Bangladesh there are mainly JSC, SSC and HSC examinations which are held publicly by the government. These are the high stakes exams that are important for higher education and career in Bangladesh; the participants also were in accordance with this perspective concerning public examinations. All of the student participants reported about the importance of doing well in the public examinations, not only on their own accord but also for their parents and institutions' strict guidance. The students themselves wanted to do better anyhow in the public examinations even if they were serious during institutional examinations or not, due to the weight these examinations carried in their whole lives. The participating teachers also shared similar point of views.

However, the concern found from the interviews, whether it was institutional or public examination, was the blindfold of exam syllabus. As the participants said, the examination syllabus was the guideline for study. It also explained the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning situations mentioned before. Considering the participants' perspectives including the specialist, the syllabus or question pattern of public examinations was the reason behind not practicing CLT method in classrooms, since the students were not always interested to practice something that would not be in the examinations.

One common finding from all of the student participants and agreed by the teachers too was solving model questions. A test paper named *Nobodut* seemed kind of a prototype of English test paper. Surprisingly all the student participants had more or less practiced model questions from this test paper for their SSC and HSC examinations. The teachers also talked about encouraging their students for practicing model questions from the test papers. Furthermore, Sami stated:

> If someone solves the whole *Nobodut* test paper, he will definitely get common questions in the exams.

Suggestion was apparently an important aspect of the examinations where almost every student would at least try or expect suggestions for exam; some were content with regular one whilst some used to need very short suggestions. Mou at any rate was in totally opposite to this ideology; she in fact faced difficulty due to suggestions. She said:

> Whenever the teachers provide any suggestion, all the students learn and memorize those things. But I can't memorize. I write freehand during the exam. At the end, others get better marks but I get average marks.

Shajib and Maruf, on the other hand, could prepare and write better with suggestions although they could write on their own whenever required. Sami, Dipa and Lamia were in favour of suggestion contrary to Mou; they would write better if practiced beforehand following the

suggestions otherwise they used to face difficulty during examinations. They hardly could think much about any new or less familiar topic. Though Lamia could get away with longer suggestions, Sami and Dipa would need short suggestions for examinations. Dipa, furthermore, mentioned that she sometimes felt so troubled to write anything new that she would submit blank answer script or pass the time by writing totally irrelevant words, sentences or copying segments from the question paper.

During the interviews one aspect came to the light which was not directly related to the research questions but significant for this study— corruption in examination was very common according to the participants. Copying from classmates, matching answers and correcting mistakes were very common among the students. According to the participant teachers, they were also well aware of this fact, but it was very difficult to guard a large number of students and point out this types of corruption. Even some of the participant students also admitted that sometimes they had copied from their friends or matched answers when the questions were tough. However, according to them many students used to take written notes on small chits, back of the ruler, rubber and many more for cheating in the examinations. The participating students informed that these corruptions used to occur not only at the institutional levels but at the public ones as well. During their SSC and HSC examinations, the institutions encouraged them to help each other for attaining better results. Regardless of the types of corruption, the aim of passing or getting good marks in the examinations by any mean was evident.
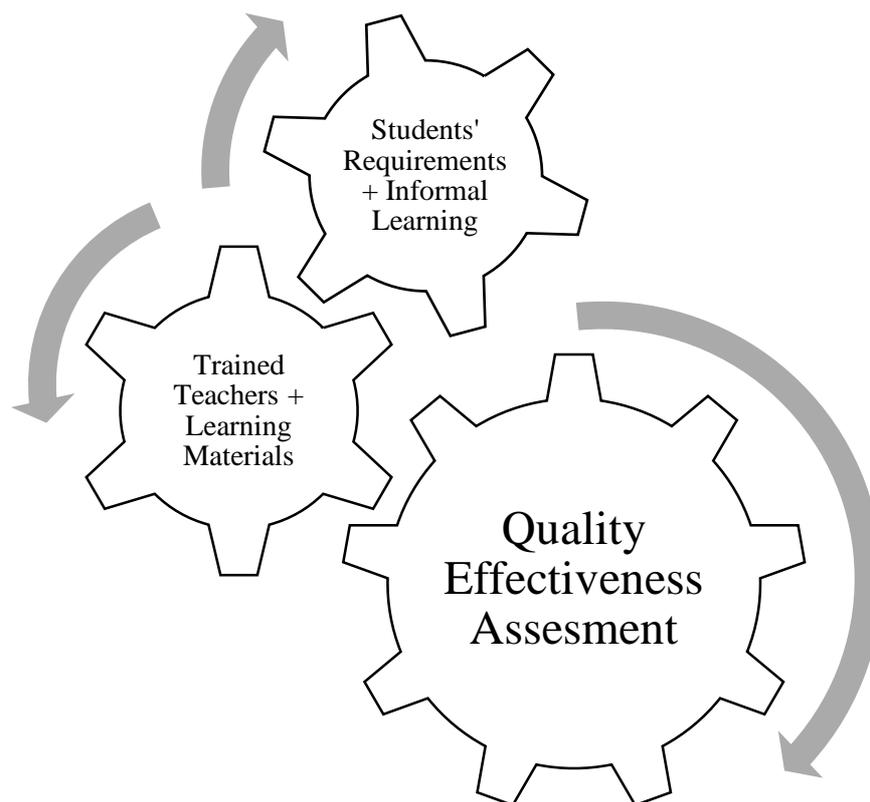
Figure 4.1. Relation among Different Categories.

Above all, it can be said that all the afore mentioned categories are closely interrelated; each of them influences the other categories. To give an overview of their interrelatedness, the preceding diagram (Figure 4.1) have three separate allocations. The very first allocation shows the close relation among the quality of teaching-learning, its effectiveness and the impact of assessment procedure. In the next allocation, there are trained teachers and learning materials, which ensure the quality and effectiveness of teaching-learning. The third allocation is the students' requirements and informal learning which are necessary for effective learning but these are not closely related to other categories. All of these categories conjointly create an image of the practical teaching-learning experience the participants had faced in Bangladesh.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The leading query of this study is to find out the extent of constriction or compression students face in Bangladesh in terms of learning English language. In light of the reviewed literatures and background study along with the data collected from the interviews, the analysis shows the magnitude of compression on the students' learning.

The results from the data reveal the constraints arise in the education sector of Bangladesh and the consequences students face while learning English. From these constraints and consequences, an impact on students— the compression in their learning process becomes evident which is discussed by exploring several functions required by the aspiration of this 21st century as well as the critical features devolving the learning process.

From the analysis, it appears that the constriction is occurring mainly in terms of *cognitive* dimension as well as *communication*. However, in this paper, cognitive ability refers to the mental processes involved in learning and in that way communication skill is also a manifestation of higher level mental processes.

According to the results, mediocre quality of teaching-learning, lack of trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, insufficient informal learning and negative impact of assessment are the core problems faced by the students. While analyzing how these constraints could constrict the learning, several distinguished characteristics emerged which were common phenomena across the findings. Those characteristics are interrelated and together lead to the gradual minimization of the students' superior learning abilities, especially the 21st century learning skills. The course of analysis or in other word, the exploration of this study is mapped in the following chart (Figure 5.1) for the ease of comprehension.
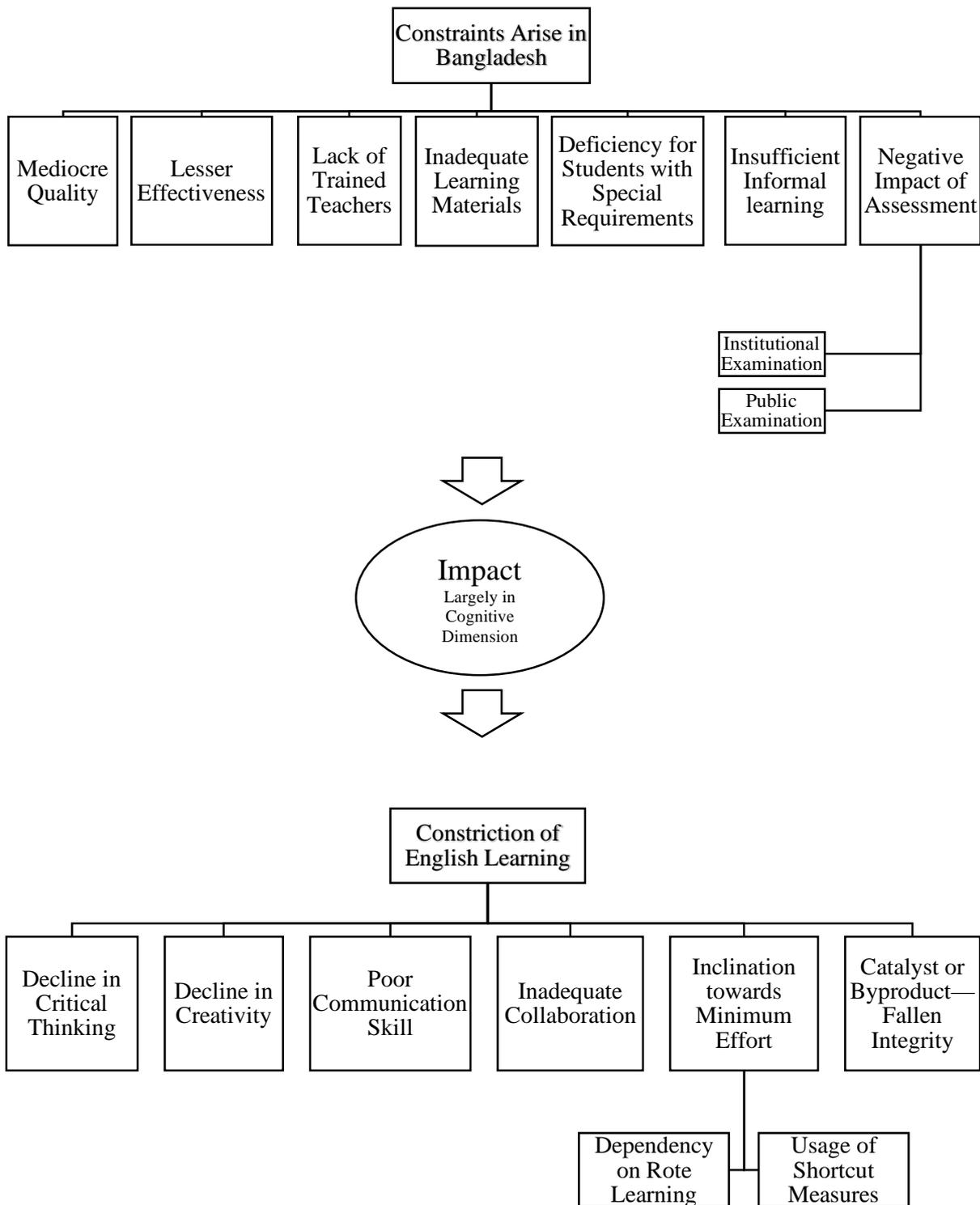
Figure 5.1. Constriction of Learning English Language in Bangladesh.

The results of this exploration to discover the compression students are undergoing in Bangladesh not only reinforce the reality of this particular impact but also attempt to detect the degrees of compression. The previously mentioned complex problem is articulated here systematically for getting a clear image of the situation. The following extensions, thereby, respectively reports on the constriction students face while learning English in Bangladesh, and the degrees of that constriction. By doing so, both of the research questions of this study are synchronously addressed within these two extensions. The first extension responses to the question— How do the challenges faced in Bangladesh constrict the students' English language learning? Whereas the second one responses to— What is the magnitude of this constriction for learning English among the Bangladeshi students? Finally, a noteworthy enigma arises concerning fallen integrity which might be a catalyst and/or a byproduct of the students' constricted learning.

5.1 Constriction of English Language Learning

Since Bangladesh is a developing country and therefore undergoing through various changes in political, economical, sociocultural and educational sectors; the entire system is yet to be full fledged. As a result, absolute scrutiny of the government on all the wings of different sectors is absent from the arena. It is also the underlying reason behind the initiation of all the problems faced in terms of learning English as found from the interviews. From the results of the study conducted, the constraints arise in education sector of Bangladesh because of the scarce resources and deficient infrastructures are explicitly manifested.

Mediocre Quality of teaching and learning is one of the constraints faced in a developing country. Although the curriculum provided by NCTB is a well developed CLT based program, the implication of that same curriculum is way different than the desired one (Rahmatuzzaman, 2018). The main focus of CLT— communication, which is the central aim of learning a language is totally absent from the teaching-learning picture in Bangladesh. As

seen from the interviews, there was hardly any communication in English involved in classrooms. Even the medium of instruction in English classrooms were Bangla to some extent. Apart from communication, the writing activities are carried out in such a way that in fact restricts the critical thinking and creativity of the students by involving rote learning. Proper code of conducts is required for implementing CLT in classrooms due to various interactive activities. Lack of appropriate arrangements for that and government's strict inspection are two of the main reasons behind the low esteem in terms of conducting CLT based classes. Compromising the quality of teaching and learning leads to lesser effectiveness. NCTB's aim of enabling the students to communicate in English and to be able to think critically as well as creatively (National Curriculum, 2012b) is barely achieved. The participants of this study informed their considerable amount of struggles to communicate and write in English using their own thoughts. If the basic agenda of a curriculum is not fulfilled, then it lacks its effectiveness to a great extent.

Lack of trained teacher is another problem found in a developing country due to less resources, infrastructure problem and lack of good governance. Beside that inadequate learning materials and inappropriate use of the existing materials are also results of the same challenges. Inappropriate use of the NCTB's *English For Today* is one of the biggest examples of this fact for which participant students were not able to communicate in English. Deficient facilities for students with special requirements is another constraint faced in developing country. Where the regular maintenance of the classrooms according to CLT method is not achievable till now, special attention to the disadvantaged or weak students is far more away from its implication due to lack of trained teachers and resources. On the other hand, coaching centers are on the race of doing business depending on these special requirements of students (Hamid et al., 2009) which is causing much more trouble ultimately. Due to lack of awareness concerning informal learning, students are focused on rote learning following the syllabuses even outside their

38

classrooms. It was evident from the interviews that the participants who were good communicator, they all had exposure to English outside classroom. Making the students aware of what they should do and what not for learning English properly is the job of the relevant institutions who would have worked better under government's verifications.

The negative impact of assessment both in case of institutional and public examinations is in alarming state. The whole teaching-learning situation is mainly bounded by the examination system, especially the high stakes public examination like SSC and HSC. According to the results, the suggestion based study, studying only the items that will be in the public examinations, memorizing the suggested items for better marks, avoiding speaking and listening skills since these are not tested in public examinations etc are the consequences of SSC and HSC examinations syllabus as well as system. Above all, the students' motivation is exercised at wrong place, they are motivated for good grades instead of learning English for communicating. The solution of these problems are mainly at the government's hand for which it needs provide considerable attention to the public examination policies. For instance, Fahmina talked about making the public tests based on CLT that would lead CLT based teaching and learning. However, this process is very challenging for the government in a developing country due to the overall situation and problems faced in the country.

In the above circumstances, students' learning not only get restricted but also get minimized gradually due to the continuous and long term exposure to the faulty learning procedures. It is because the students gradually incline more and more towards the rote learning instead of thinking critically and being creative. When the same process continues for years after years in all levels of education, they lack practices which could enhance their cognitive skills. As a result, later in their life, it becomes difficult to suddenly think and write critically as well as creatively. The participants who never practiced to write on their own could not write a single thing whatever easy topic they were asked to write on. In contrast, who had some

exposure to write or think on their own they were able to write at least something whether that is correct or incorrect. Only the students, who were involved in learning English critically and creatively without dependency on rote learning, were able to come up with instant ideas that were way better than the others. It was evident from the results, the students who did not practice or use their critical thinking ability and creativity, forgot to think in that way later in their lives. Beside, they did not learn to communicate in English since they did not need it and barely had any exposure of English communication. This process is referred in this study as the constriction of learning or in other words, the gradual minimization of superior cognitive abilities.

5.2 Magnitude of Constriction

From the analysis regarding constriction of learning, it is evident that the students' learning abilities are getting lowered day by day and this impact ranges in diverse aspects. However, those degenerated aspects are predominantly related to cognitive abilities. By categorizing the diminishing abilities, the magnitude of this issue could be perceived better.

5.2.1 Decline in critical thinking and creativity. Memorization was a repetitive fact during the interviews and observations which is considered the common and easiest way of doing well according to the majority of participants. Memorization, thereby, closes the doors for other cognitive abilities. If someone is relying on memorization only, he/she will gradually loose the capacity to think critically and creatively. Neither he/she will learn to solve a problem at hand nor he/she will learn to create something new. On the other hand, if someone does not put the effort to think critically and creatively, he/she will end up having no other option than memorizing to do well in the exam. It is also evident from the interviews; Sami, Dipa and Lamia who never tried to read anything outside their exam syllabus and to write by thinking themselves had gradually lost their power to think on their own. In contrast, Shajib and Mou who had some exposure to outside learning activities and tried to think on their own when

necessary were quite well in thinking the unknown. Whenever there was anything in the examination or somewhere else that they did not know, they could come up with a solution and create something on their own. Apart from the writing skill, critical thinking and creativity are equally important for speaking skill also. While communicating, one needs to create infinite set of sentences according to the contexts and requirements which is not possible without these cognitive abilities. Critical thinking and creatively are higher level facets of learning in terms of both constructivism (Fosnot, 2005) and Bloom's taxonomy model (Krathwohl, 2002). These are considered as superior levels of knowledge construction and learning. However, these ideas like critical thinking and creativity are diminishing from the minds of students since they have got other ways around, and this type of rigid learning process is gradually leading towards unlearning.

    5.2.2 Poor communication skill and inadequate collaboration. Poor communication skill was one of the key issues found from the interviews. The most common problem among the participant students in terms of English language was that they could not *communicate* in English. Only Shajib among the six students was able to communicate well in English, Mou could communicate to some extent, whereas the rest could hardly speak in English. During the interviews, it became evident that they barely use English for communication even in their English classrooms. At the end, the students are not learning to communicate in English which was the main purpose behind NCTB's approach to CLT method. Collaboration, subsequently, is also ignored during the teaching and learning process since CLT is not properly employed in classrooms. The interactive activities for instance, pair works, group works and others are overlooked during teaching the lessons (Rasheed, 2011). In this regard, communication and collaboration are closely linked with one another. Communication in classrooms does not refer teacher to students' talk only but also the students to students' talk as well; it involves collaboration to some extent. In other way round, collaboration involves a greater deal of

communication. If the students are involved with collaborative works in pairs or groups, there will be interactive activities which will open doors for communication in English as well as help from others in knowledge construction. Furthermore, there is no better way of learning to communicate aside from communicating with others. However, because of the constraints of a large classrooms and resources, it becomes difficult to practice collaborative activities in classrooms. According to the results of this study, even though sometimes the students would like to improve their speaking skill, there was hardly any initiative or effort in communicative activities since their attention essentially revolved around the short term goal— the examination grade. In contrast, Lamia, who could always learn better in group discussion with her friends, did not get such opportunity in her English classrooms due to lack of collaborative works. In fact, she could not realize before this interview that she might have learned to speak in English if she had got chance to learn English collaboratively with her friends. This again reinforces the need for paying attention to the students' needs while teaching.

5.2.3 Inclination towards minimum effort.

Dependency on rote learning. From the interview of all six students, it can be seen that five of them are inclined towards rote learning to different extent. Whether it is because they are unable to think anything beyond what they read or they can not write up to the expectation without preparation, students are depended on memorization. By employing rote learning, it is possible to accomplish writing activities to some extents when the topics are predictable but the vulnerabilities reflect during any communicative and/or unpredictable event. It is the very first step of human learning according to the concept of assimilation in constructivism where the learner just receives the information for his/her further knowledge construction process be it intrapersonal or interpersonal (Fosnot, 2005). It is also the lowest level of learning for human cognition which is 'remember' according to the Bloom's taxonomy model (Krathwohl, 2002).

The majority of the students remains in this very first level of learning due to their dependency on memorization which hold them from advancing their learning of English.

Usage of shortcut measures. The other areas of constriction in learning are seemingly triggered by the students' inclination towards shortcut for success rather than going through a solid base of learning. Except for Mou, from all the participants, one fact is evident that they opted for suggestions rather than harnessing their own learning. Their main focus was to get better marks by studying less, especially memorizing tailored items where they do not need to think anything. This shortcut way leads the students towards more rote learning and less critical thinking as well as creativity.

5.3 A Catalyst or Byproduct— Enigma of Fallen Integrity

Inclination towards shortcut cause students to loose integrity in many situations. The student participants revealed that many times students join coaching just to get suggestions for institutional as well as public examinations. Sometimes these suggestions are in reality the informal versions of examination questions. In other words, by paying extra cash they manage to cheat in the examinations. Apart from that, cheating during the examination is no longer considered a crime rather it seems to be a very normal activity; copying or checking answers from one another, taking written notes and so on are not even regarded as corruption. Moreover, the institutions are also engaged in this completion of doing well in the examinations that is acting as a stimulus in this situation. At the end, the key word becomes— Fallen Integrity. At one hand, fallen integrity incites to embrace shortcut measures no matter what to maintain good result. On the other hand, when the students can not do well in the examinations with their own effort but need to maintain good results for better future or any other reason, they fall for shortcuts which lead to unethical performances.

Chapter 6

Final Thoughts

The study suggests that while learning English in Bangladesh, the students undergo a constriction, especially in the cognitive dimension due to the constraints or glitches found in a developing country. These constraints in learning English are principally caused by the limited recourses and infrastructures. Ultimately the students' learning decreases with time as their skills are not practiced or utilized. Here, the study does not intend to fixate on either GTM or CLT method, rather focuses on the learning itself. Still, since the curriculum follows CLT method and it is consistent with the skills required in 21st century, the study emphasizes on the desired outcome of it. At the end, the best methods to teach can only be comprehended by knowing the status and needs of a particular group of students. Whether it is a discrete method or combined one, the desired outcome is to communicate using the language. Here, the important factor appears to be the smooth transition between methods and/or levels of students' learning.

6.1 Point of Departure to Link the Gap

The research findings as presented in the results and discussion sections can be encapsulated in two broader aspects for getting into a point of departure to link the gap between the policy and practice as well as the curriculum and outcome. One is the central issue among the students which is causing the cognitive limitation in learning, and another is the potential route to heighten the students' learning of English as desired to rejoice sustainable development.

Inclination towards minimum effort is the central issue among the students that leads to all other degrees of constricted learning. Decline in critical thinking and creativity, inadequate communication and collaboration skills, dependency on rote learning, usage of shortcut measures, and a distinct constituent— fallen integrity; all of these are interrelated and results

44

of students' tendency to give minimum effort. Therefore, it could be promising while deciding the policies and practices, if this central issue is handled with cautions. For instance, if the exam questions are so unique that can not be predicted beforehand and require the actual skills to answer, then the rote learning will automatically be of no use and the students will need to think critically plus creatively. Knowledge of a crucial factor can aid in boosting their effort—student's desire to learn English and triggers of that desire.

A potential route to enhance the students' English learning is anticipated based on the insights from this study; it is listed thereafter. However, *proper utilization of the scarce resources* and *a scrutinizing body to maintain the infrastructures* in both macro and micro levels are the two keys to enable this proposition.

- Balanced quality of teaching and learning among private, public, privileged and unprivileged institutions.

- Trained teachers and appropriate learning materials as well as settings.

- Smooth transition between different teaching methods and levels of students' learning based on the status and needs of the students.

- Curriculum and examination syllabus that reinforces the skills to be learned, not memorization of suggested or fixed topics.

- Examination or test need to asses the required language skills rather than the memorization capability; questions need to be unpredictable to avoid suggestions, memorization and corruption.

- The teaching-learning process along with the assessment needs to be under government's scrutiny both in micro and macro levels.

6.2 Future Direction

The present study is a short scale one for which the data is not extensive and widespread. As a result, the findings from this research may not be true for larger and diverse

contexts. Further studies can be conducted in large scales and also in different contexts. Moreover, this study is an exploratory one to find out the real scenario of the students' learning. Based on its findings, a more concrete and quantitative study can be conducted for assurance regarding the implications and probable applications of this study. Apart from that the present study encompasses several dimensions in terms of students' learning. Quality and effectiveness of the learning, curriculum, syllabus, textbook, assessment and few other relevant issues were considered during the study regarding constriction of learning. Each of these areas can be investigated separately in future for getting into the core of the problem as well as having a stern basis for solution.

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Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire

I would like to know about your experience in learning English language; therefore, I want to ask you some questions regarding when and how you have learned English. I would like to know also about the difficulties you faced during your learning process or personal stories if you remember those. Your identity will be kept anonymous and any identifying information will not be provided anywhere in the report. Thank you.

Personal Profile

1. What is your age?
2. Where do you live?
3. In which educational level or profession you are?
4. Do you have any hobby? What are those?
5. Which language do you use in home?
6. What was your first language?
7. When did you start learning your second language?

Learning Experience

1. Where and under what circumstances you learned English (e.g. home/school/any other)?
2. Was there anyone who told you to learn it?
3. Was there anyone who taught you English like a language teacher?
4. What aspects of English did you learn at first (rhymes/alphabets/any other)?
5. How did you start reading?
6. How did you start speaking in English?
7. Did your hobbies help you in learning English (music, movies, books)?
8. What was your school, Bangla medium or English medium?
9. Which language was used to teach in your English class?
10. How much you learned in the school in case of English language?
11. What aspects of English they focused on from the beginning?
12. In which grade you were that time?
13. What happened in secondary and post-secondary level? Did they use the same method like primary level or they improve it?

14. In your school English For Today had been used for teaching English; were there separate classes for each of the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) like *English For Today* book?

15. What about grammar? Was there a separate grammar class (in primary school, secondary school, higher secondary school or college)?

16. How did you learn grammar? Did you have to practice a lot of grammar exercises?

17. Did you have to write in English during class?

18. Did you need to speak in English during class?

19. What kind of speaking or writing activities did you have to do in different levels of study? (ie. primary school, secondary school, higher secondary school or college)

20. What kind of class work and homework you had to do? What was difficult for you?

21. Was there any other source of English input except for the syllabus you had? Please mention each of them.

22. Did you have opportunities to practice English inside the classroom or outside your classes?

23. At what level of education you got the maximum opportunity to practice your English?

24. When did you get the maximum opportunity to practice your English?

25. Do you think it is more effective if the teacher teaches everything directly whatever you need to learn?

26. What should be the priority according to you— teaching grammar, or teaching the speaking and writing skills?

Areas for Questions
1. Learning experience
2. Quality of learning
3. Teaching styles
4. Learning materials
5. Learning at home or outside classroom
6. Examinations

Thank You

'One of my dream is to create an IT farm. and & After graduation I will father all knowledge and create an IT farm. From this farm people will able to get work and also they will able to make their work their there. In this modern era an IT Farm is very important place. I will give jobs to talented peoples

Rainy day is a special day for a student. We fell happy for absanted school, college. Personally I love rainy day's. It is a lazy day for me. For a funny person it is a lovely day. Hospos is a lovely food for a rainy day. We feell happy and enjoyment. But it stay after 3 or 4 days. this time it way so borring. We fell Jall in our house.

Dear sir,

After a few days ago, I have seen a news on a job in your company. And I am interested on it. I know, your company is most powerful company in our country. If, your pray I will my best try. And, I hope that, I am the perfect candidate for the job. So, you pray and hope. that you joined that, I will best try for your company.

p.t.o.

One of the Institutional Examination Syllabuses

Syllabus for 1st Term Exam - 2019
English First & 2nd Paper

Unit: 1 to 9

Paragraph:
1. Etiquette and Manners
2. Adolescence
3. Food Adulteration
4. Historic Seventh March Speech
5. Dream
6. Diaspora

Completing Story:
1. Grasp All, Lose All
2. Happiness Lies in Contentment
3. A Liar Shepherd
4. Failure is the Pillar of Success
5. Unity is Strength
6. An Honest Wood Cutter

E-mails :
1. Suppose your friend got first prize on debate competition. Write an e-mail congratulating him on his success.
2. To your friend telling him about your preparation for the exam.
3. To your friend congratulating him for his brilliant result.
4. To your friend about your plan after the HSC Exam.
5. To your friend about your progress of studies.
6. To your friend describing the foods and food habits in Bangladesh.

Describing Graph: Serial 1, 7, 14, 21, 23, 24 (from Advanced Model-2019 Edition)

Writing Theme of Poems:
1. The School Boy
2. Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind
3. Out and Out
4. The Traffic Police
5. Dream - 01
6. Dream - 02

Re-arrange: Serial 1 to 40 (from Advanced Model, 2019 Edition, Page-553....)

Second Paper:
1. Connectors - $10 \times \frac{1}{2} = 05$
2. Completing Sentences - $10 \times \frac{1}{2} = 05$

Fill in the Blanks:
1. Without Clues will be textual - $10 \times 1 = 10$
2. With Clues will be non textual - $10 \times \frac{1}{2} = 05$

Selected Lessons for Without Clues : (According to the New Text - 2019)

U-1, L-1
U-3, L-1
U-4, L-1
U-6, L-1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
U-7, L-1
U-8, L-4
U-9, L-4

Note: Summary = 05
Flowchart = 05