

Analyzing the Factors Behind Weakness in English Language Skills Among Higher Secondary Students in Upazila Level Institutions of Bangladesh: Challenges and Recommendations

Submitted by

Salma Mostafa Nusrat

ID 23272004

A dissertation submitted to the Department of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Governance and Development

Master of Arts in Governance and Development (MAGD)

BIGD, BRAC University

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

- a. The dissertation submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
- b. The dissertation does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
- c. The dissertation does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
- d. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature

Salma Mostafa Nusrat

ID 23272004

Approval

The thesis titled “Analyzing the Factors behind Weakness in English Language Skills among Higher Secondary Students in Upazila Level Institutions of Bangladesh: Challenges and Recommendations” submitted by Salma Mostafa Nusrat, ID 23272004, of her spring semester of 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Governance and Development on 17 November, 2025

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:

(Member)

Dr. Shaila Ahmed

Assistant Professor & Research Fellow

BIGD, BRAC University

Programme Coordinator:

(Member)

Mohammad Sirajul Islam

Coordinator (Academic and Training Programme)

BIGD, BRAC University

External Expert Examiner:

(Member)

.....

Mehnaz Rabbani
Chairperson, MAGD Dissertation Viva Panel
Director, Operations, Strategy, and Partnership
BIGD, BRAC University

Departmental Head:

(Chair)

.....

Imran Matin, PhD
Executive Director
BIGD, BRAC University

Ethical Statement

I do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Analyzing the Factors behind Weakness in English Language Skills among Higher Secondary Students in Upazila Level Institutions of Bangladesh: Challenges and Recommendations” is my own research under the supervision of Dr. Shaila Ahmed, Assistant Professor, BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The total dissertation is prepared for academic purpose and solely aimed for the partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in Governance and Development.

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Salma Mostafa Nusrat

ID 23272004

Spring 2025

Master of Arts in Governance and Development

BIGD, BRAC University

Abstract

All of us know that English is spoken all over the world as it is an international language but it is a matter of great regret that most of the students of Upazila level institutions of Bangladesh are not good in English language. It is a big issue for our country as we need skilled manpower who will be able to compete in national and international level. Without having good knowledge in English it is almost impossible for a person to be a skilled manpower. So, the researcher tries to find out major causes of this problem. The researcher has given some recommendations to overcome this problem. The recommendations will help to alleviate this problem.

Key words- language, proficiency, upazila, urban, technology, economy.

Dedication

To my parents Dr. Mohammad Mostafa & Vikarunnessa,
who brought me up and sister Dr. Asma Mostafa

Acknowledgement

At the beginning I would like to express my greatest appreciation to almighty who has given me the knowledge and opportunity to perform my higher study in an internationally recognized institute like BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University. For duly performed my research I am indebted to many other persons and agencies.

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Finally, I am thankful to my best friend Mr. Golam Mostafa Hemel for his kind support and inspirations.

Salma Mostafa Nusrat

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List of Acronyms

EIL- English as an International Language

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

ELE- English Language Education

ELT- English Language Teaching

ENL- English as a Native Language

ESL- English as a Second Language

CLT- Communicative Language Teaching

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Chapter One

Introduction

In India, the trend of learning and teaching of English Language introduced with the entrance of the British people. They saw three types of education systems: in the north existed the ‘Aryan’ system, in the south there was the ‘Dravidyan’ system and another one was the ‘Muslim’ system. We can say that Missionaries were the motivators to introduce English in India. However, the fight for the supremacy of language on the Indian land had inaugurated in the form of English-Portuguese struggle for lingua-franca. Later, Thomas Macaulay’s policy of selective English for higher education had attained the huge victory. So, English was able to establish itself as an academic discipline in India. It was able to do it with the setting up of universities in Madras, Mumbai, Kolkata in 1857. The Kolkata University Commission Recommendation (1919) gave a new advice. It suggested that the medium of teaching for most subjects up to high school phases was to be the vernacular, but for advanced phases it should be English. At that time, English was the language and instrument of the colonial authority. Later, The Indian sub-continent was separated into two countries (India and Pakistan) on 14 August 1947. As a multilingual country Pakistan took English as a link language. The new Government of Bangladesh introduced the mission of restructuring the ‘English language teaching and learning System’, after the liberation of Bangladesh. Bangladesh inherited present set-up of English language coaching with all its faults and merits.

Chapter Two

Relevance of the Policy Issue to Contemporary Challenges

People from multifarious regions speak in English most frequently. By considering English language as a means of statement, we can address it by several names such as global language, lingua franca and international language. Each name holds different characteristics. A language which is used to interconnect with persons from multifarious regions is named an international language. In global sense of EIL, the prime purpose of English language is to empower utterers with the ability to part with other their concepts and philosophy. EFL is a tool of statement, which is used widely as a mutual/shared language among talkers who originate from multifarious linguacultural (cultural and language) situations.

In order to be an international language, a language wants to attain a universal position. As English has a status of being a global language, it can be used as a medium of communication in some sectors of a region, for example- in the law courts, government, education system and the media. Moreover, a language can be created a priority in a state's foreign language training, whether this language has any certified position or not.

The expression 'World Englishes' has three possible senses. Firstly, World Englishes is functionally an 'umbrella label' term that takes all variations of English worldwide. Secondly, World Englishes mentions to 'new Englishes' like Asian English, African English in a narrow sense. Thirdly, it denotes to the extensive- ranging method to the learning,teaching of the English worldwide.

Today 1.75 billion persons express in English language at an appropriate level. Among them 600 million people use English as a second language, there are 400 million native talkers and 600 million speak English as a foreign language. More than 80% of communication in English is held between non-native speakers of English. Similarly, in the next 10-15 years, the number of English speakers is likely to reach a peak of around 2 billion.

In the world of English language education (ELE) or English language teaching (ELT), the rank of English differs for socio-political and demographic motives. English is distinguished as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL). English is trained as a native language where English is the focal language for the most of the people. The most prominent geographical areas of ENL are: Canada, Australia, the Irish Republic, England (UK), Liberia, New Zealand, Northern Ireland (UK), Wales (UK), South Africa, Scotland (UK), and the United States.

English is trained as a second language in states where English is not the main language but is an official and important language and also were colonies of any of the English-speaking nations. Bangladesh, Cameron, Fiji, Botswana, Cyprus, Kenya, India, Hong Kong, Ghana, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Panama, the Philippines, Singapore, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda are prominent ESL regions. Bangladesh is supposed to be a fellow of Outer Circle according to the theory of three concentric circles (Inner, Outer and Expanding). However, the position of English in Bangladesh is EFL due to socio- political reasons.

In some countries, English is learned at schools. In those countries, English language is not used much in the everyday lifecycle of the persons. There English is taught as a foreign language. In such nations, scope of using English out of the schoolroom/classroom is limited. In China, Indonesia, Japan and the Middle East countries --- English has got the status of a foreign language.

Addressing the problem of weak English skills in Upazila-level institutions, aligns with broader development goals, including reducing inequalities (SDG 10: aims to decrease discrimination inside and amongst nations, confirming equal chances and encourage inclusivity) and attaining equitable education (SDG 4: focuses on confirming inclusive and unbiased quality education and encouraging lifetime learning chances for all). We need English language in various national and international sectors. So, this research has both international and national relevance. (NCTB, n.d., p.134-137)

Chapter Three

Problem Statement

English is helpful and useful. In Bangladesh, learners inaugurate learning English from class one to twelve class. They start to learn it as a compulsory subject but they cannot command over English well. Yet, learning English plays a very central, noteworthy, crucial, important, vital and significant part to lead a happy, prosperous life. So, the evaluation of the causes of learners' weakness will be very helpful to all those persons who like to progress in English. In order to interconnect with the different people of other countries, we need to learn English. In favour of an all-inclusive progress of learners reading, communication skills, writing, speaking and listening, all are correspondingly significant to be highlighted.

The reasons of learner's weakness in English language skill are-

Poor Basic Knowledge-

Students of educational institutions of upazilas in Bangladesh struggle with English because of weak basic knowledge developed during the period of primary and secondary education. Insufficient skilled teachers, need of attractive books, inattentiveness in reading, giving benevolent marks by teachers, obsolete teaching methodology, poor family background contribute to their weakness from the beginning of their education life. So, later it becomes difficult for the learners to cope at advanced levels.

Need of Skilled English Teacher

There is a deficiency of good, skilled English instructor, teacher at upazila level institutions still now. Upazila level institutions always face this type of problem. Sometimes we get some politically recruited teachers at institutions. The Chairman, the local politicians and the Managing Committee may recruit some teachers by taking donation. Many upazilas arrange interview and written test as a showing system. As instructors are not skilled in English language, a nation cannot hope that learners will be able to get good knowledge from them. Many teachers, instructors have no proper, adequate knowledge of Vocabulary, English Grammar and above all, four skills of English language. Even some

teachers, instructors don't know how to make conversation in English at all though those teachers always try to teach English in the classroom. For this situation, Secondary Level students fail to show the ability of learning English properly. Moreover, most of the government colleges have not sufficient teachers.

Economic Constraints

We have some monetary limitations all over the nation. Persons residing at upazilas have to keep their living, depending on the pity of cultivation. Still, we have no significant industry. The mainstream of the individuals are agriculturalists, small businessmen, daily labourers, foreign labourers: most of them are underprivileged and unschooled. In a nutshell, it can be said that most of them don't know what to or how to write and read. These guardians are unable to take care of their children's learning process. Sometimes, they are unable to guide properly because of their occupation and busy time-schedule. Most of the mothers who live at upazilas are illiterate or less educated. These mothers are unable to help their children in study. Moreover, due to scarcity, many juvenile learners drop out from the long-cherished visions despite quality. They never ponder of getting advanced schooling. Thus, financial limitations hamper their expectation and dream when they want to continue more.

Problem in Street Communication

In Bangladesh, most of the upazilas are underdeveloped. The street communication arrangement of these upazilas is not good. Numerous learners reside in the distant, isolated hamlets, which have no light of education. Many female and male learners are not brave enough or eager enough to go to educational institutions because of lengthy distance. Sometimes some blameless maidens fall target of rape, eve-teaching, snatching and so on. Such incidents are seen almost all the year round. The juvenile students fail to study properly because of these problems. (Islam,2023, pp.214-215)

Lack of Interest in Reading-

It is a matter of great regret that most of the juvenile learners of upazilas do not like to study books. They do not like to read serious books. They

prefer video games or other entertaining activities to study. Most of the male learners want to go to Middle-East to work as labourers.

Religious Emotion

In Bangladesh, most of the people are Muslims. The predominantly Muslim culture of Bangladesh influences perceptions of English. Some conservative families may prioritize Arabic for religious studies over English, while others encourage English for secular education and employment. Moreover, madrasah education system is cheap and some guardians think that they will be able to go to heaven if they teach their children Arabic. As most of the people of upazilas are religious persons, western-centric English textbooks and media can create a sense of guilty, cultural alienation.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher has used a mixed methodology. The researcher has made quantitative and qualitative questions for this paper. An online survey has been conducted among the students by the researcher. The researcher has given some qualitative questions to the teachers, instructors. The researcher has also arranged a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among the learners. For this paper, the researcher has made an analysis of several written documents.

Data Collection Method

1.Surveys:

Organized forms directed to pupils to accumulate calculable data on teaching methods, resources, and challenges.

2. Interviews:

Semi-structured discussions with educators, instructors provide qualitative insights into the socio-cultural and institutional factors affecting English learning.

3.Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

FGDs with students explore their experiences and perceptions of learning English.

4.Documents Analysis:

Review of textbook and curriculum guidelines to evaluate the alignment between policy and programme.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis

1. Surveys

In surveys students give us some suggestions about teachers' roles to improve their English language Skill. These are-

Teachers should motivate students to speak, read, write and listen English regularly. Teachers can help by encouraging regular practice, focusing on four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), using interesting methods, giving helpful feedback and using technology to make learning fun. Teachers should break down fear about speaking English. Teachers should help them in translation. Teachers should practice English in the teaching space and inspire pupils to communicate in English. Instructors should implement storytelling, role-playing, debates, and group discussions to make learning fun. Teachers should correct student's mistakes positively and guide the student for improvement. Introduction of new words daily and explanation of grammatical rules through practical examples. Teachers should modernize their teaching methods instead of choosing book-based curriculum.

We get notions about students' strategies which they use to improve their skills in English language. These are:

Some students Speak English with friends, family or even thyself to build confidence. They read books, newspapers, and online articles to improve vocabulary and comprehension. Learners watch movies, listen to podcasts, and follow English news to enhance listening skills. They maintain a journal, write essays, or engage in online discussions to improve writing skills. Some students learn new words daily and use them in sentences. They utilize apps like Duolingo, BBC learning English, or Grammarly for interactive learning. They try to form thoughts in English instead of their native language to improve fluency. Some students participate in English clubs, online forums, or discussion groups. They have enrolled in online English courses or tried to attend spoken English classes. They ask teachers or fluent speakers to correct their mistakes and guide them.

In order to make English learning more effective in their institutions students have wanted to implement some initiatives. These are-

Encouragement of group discussions, debates, and role-playing activities to improve speaking skills, incorporation of language-learning apps, online courses, and interactive exercises. They want the access to English books, newspapers, and magazines to improve vocabulary and comprehension. They want to write essays, journals, and creative pieces regularly. They want to listen podcasts, audiobooks, and English movies with subtitles for better listening skills. They want regular quiz and language tests to track progress. Students want trained teachers with modern methodologies and interactive teaching styles.

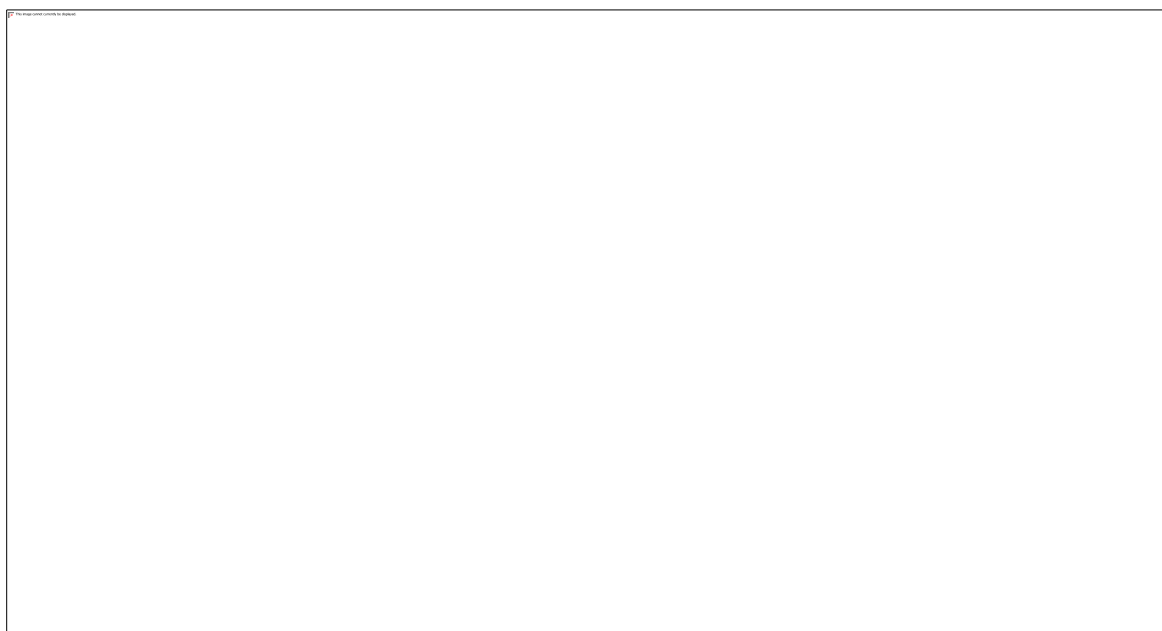


Fig. 1 Pie diagram showing percentage frequencies of preferred language for daily communication (n=94)

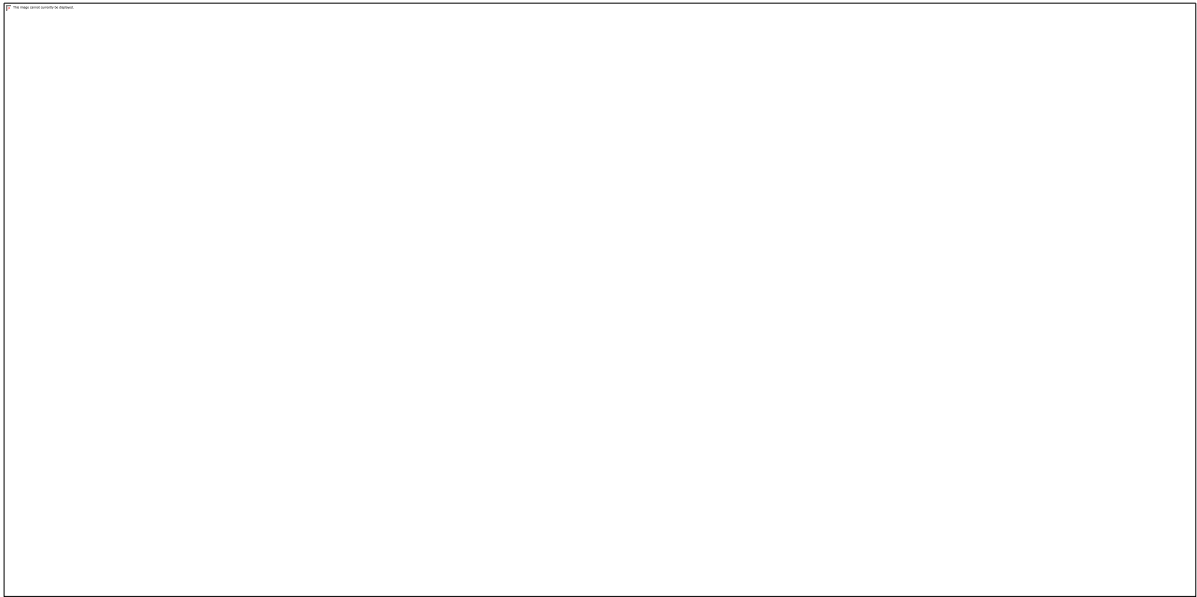


Fig. 2 Pie figure viewing percentage frequencies of English language used by teachers in English classes (n=94)

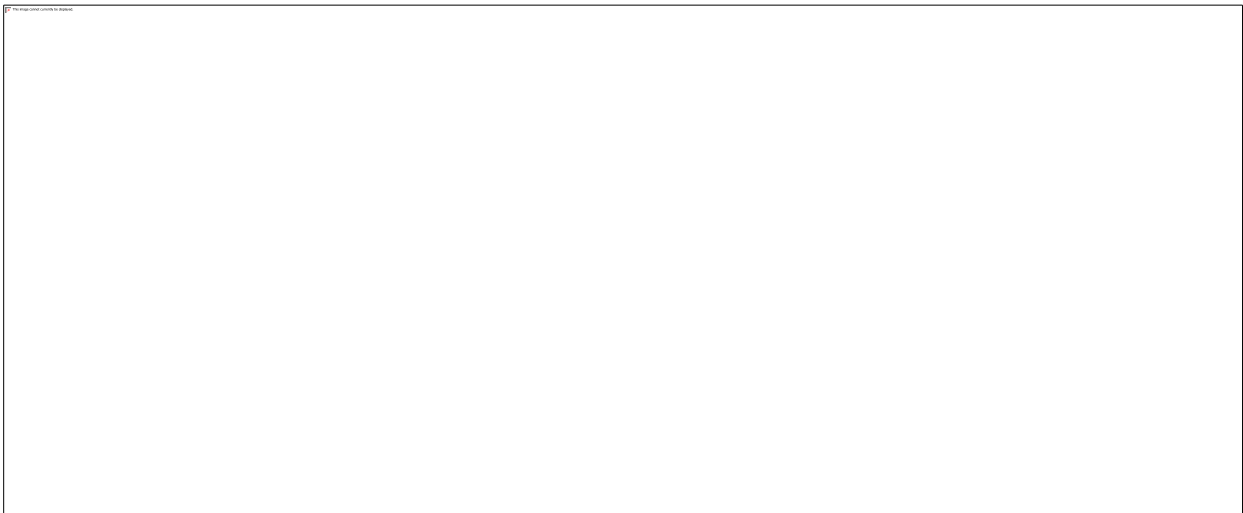


Fig. 3 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of interactive English classes (n=94)

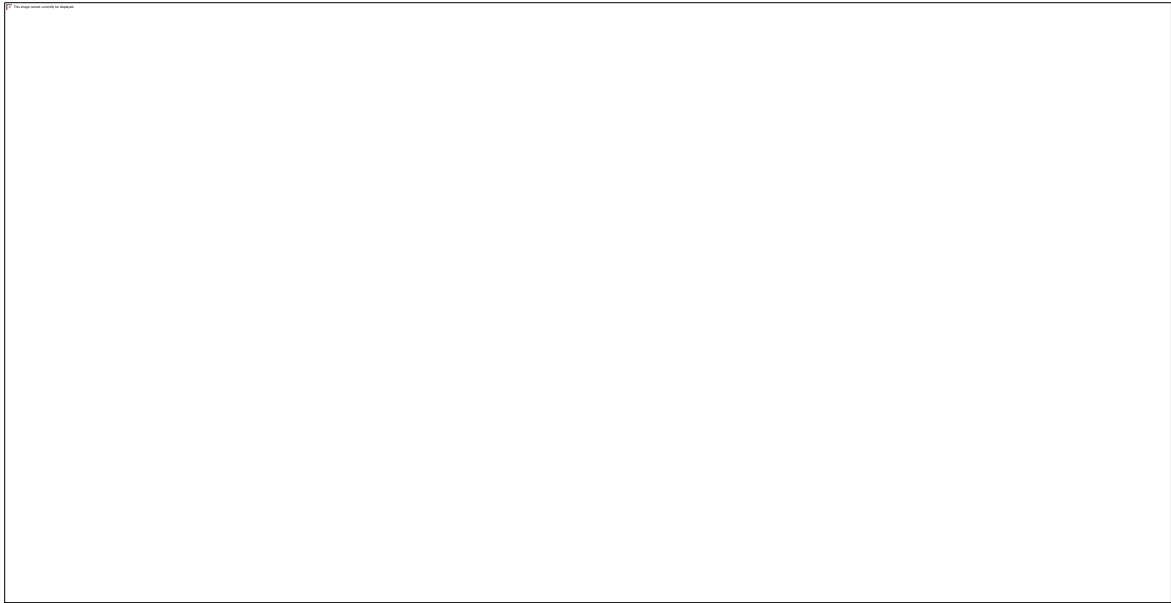


Fig. 4 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of comfort asking questions in English during English class (n=94)

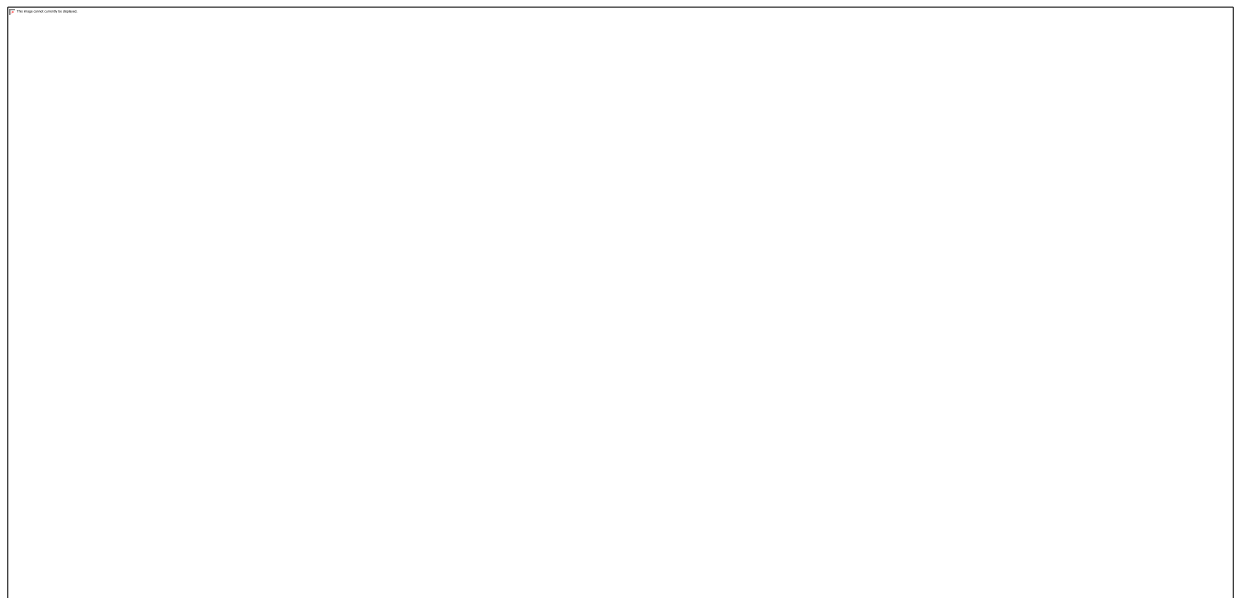


Fig. 5 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of practice speaking English in institution (n=94)

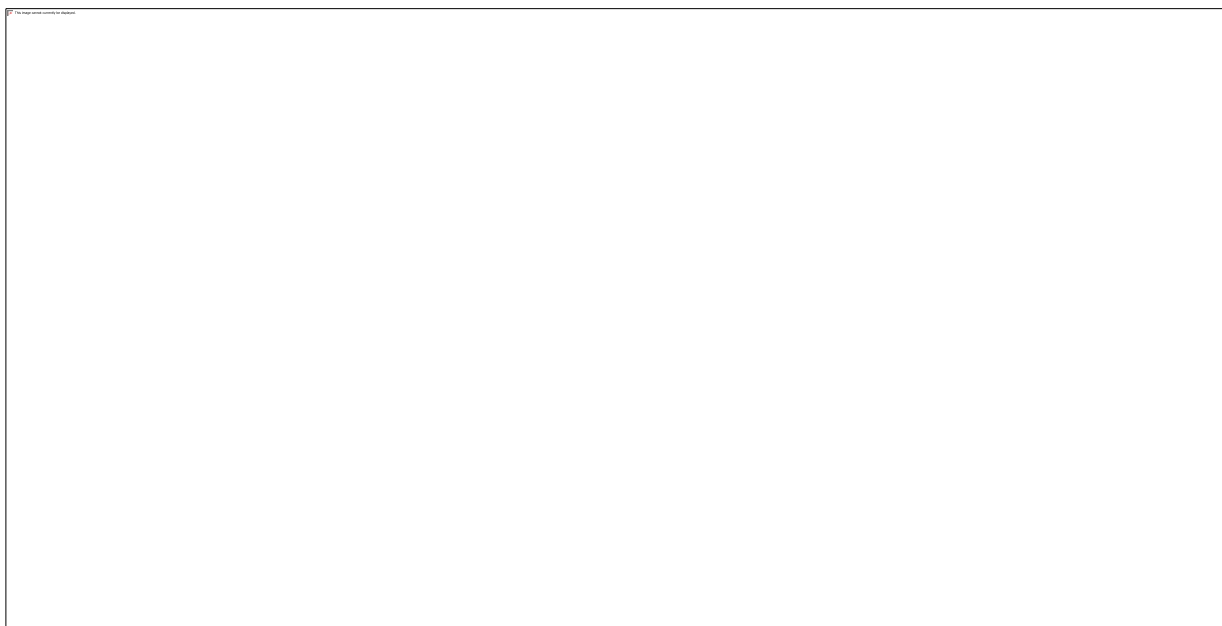


Fig. 6 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of receiving enough grammar and vocabulary instruction in class (n=94)

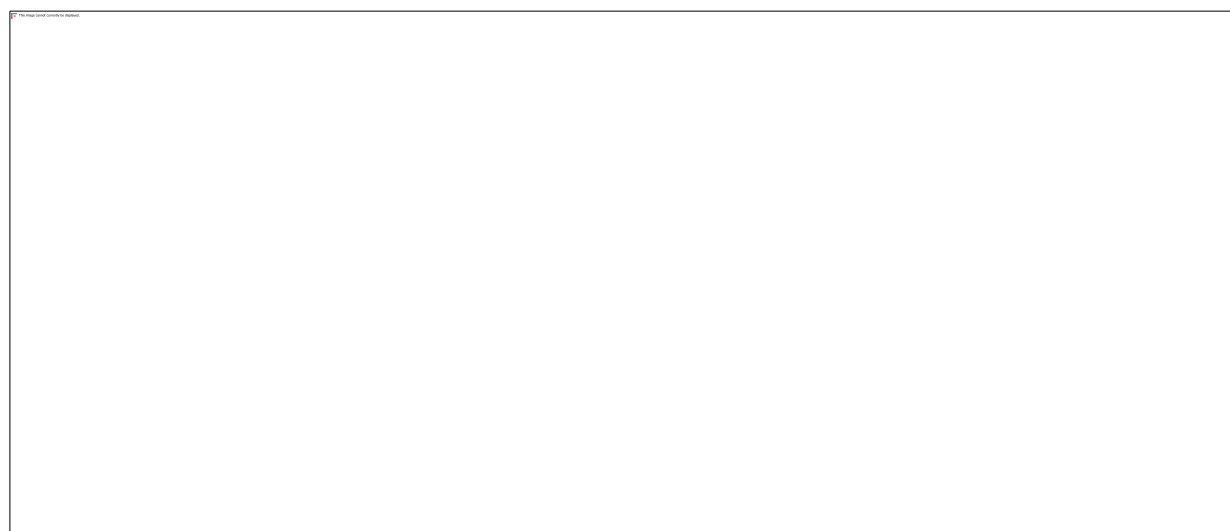


Fig. 7 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of hours per week spend studying English outside of institution (n=94)

Fig. 8 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of reading English books, newspapers or articles regularly (n=94)

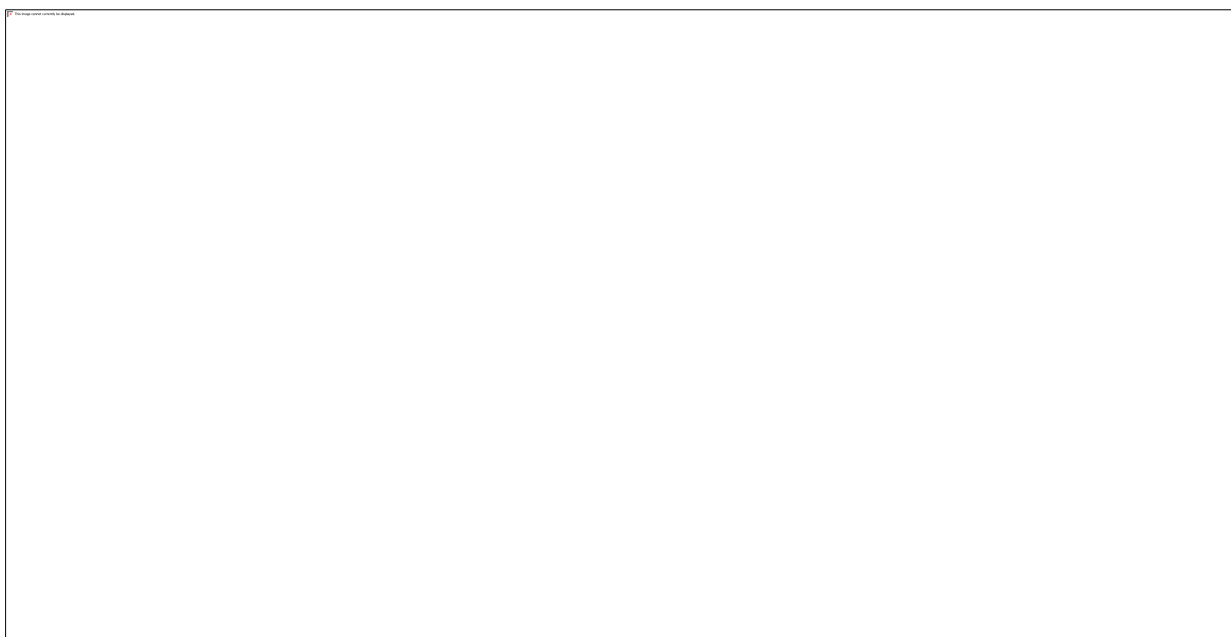
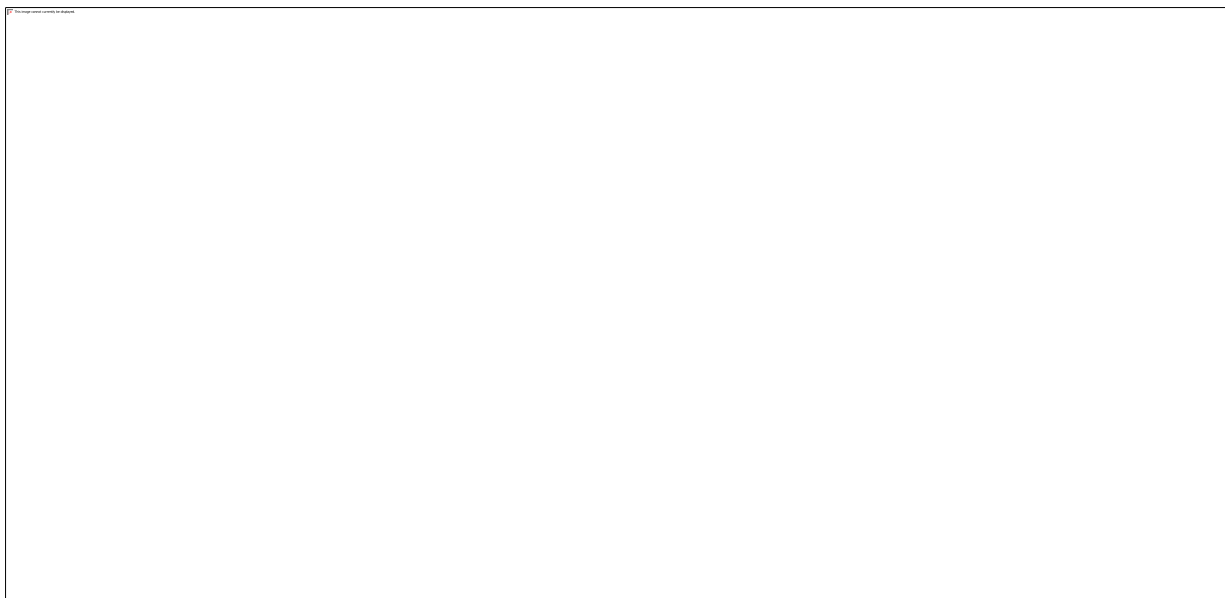


Fig. 9 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of watching English movies, TV shows or YouTube videos (n=94)



Fig. 10 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of using English in societal media posts, messages or comments (n=94)

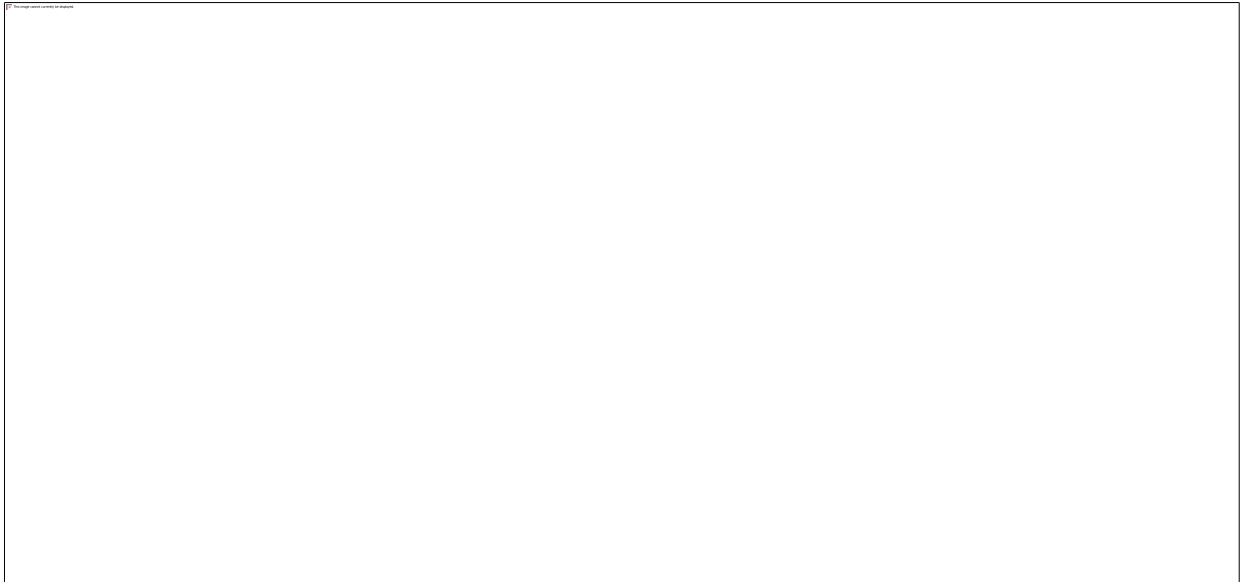


Fig. 11 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of practice writing English outside of class assignments (n=94)



Fig. 12 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of most difficult aspect of English of respondents (n=94)

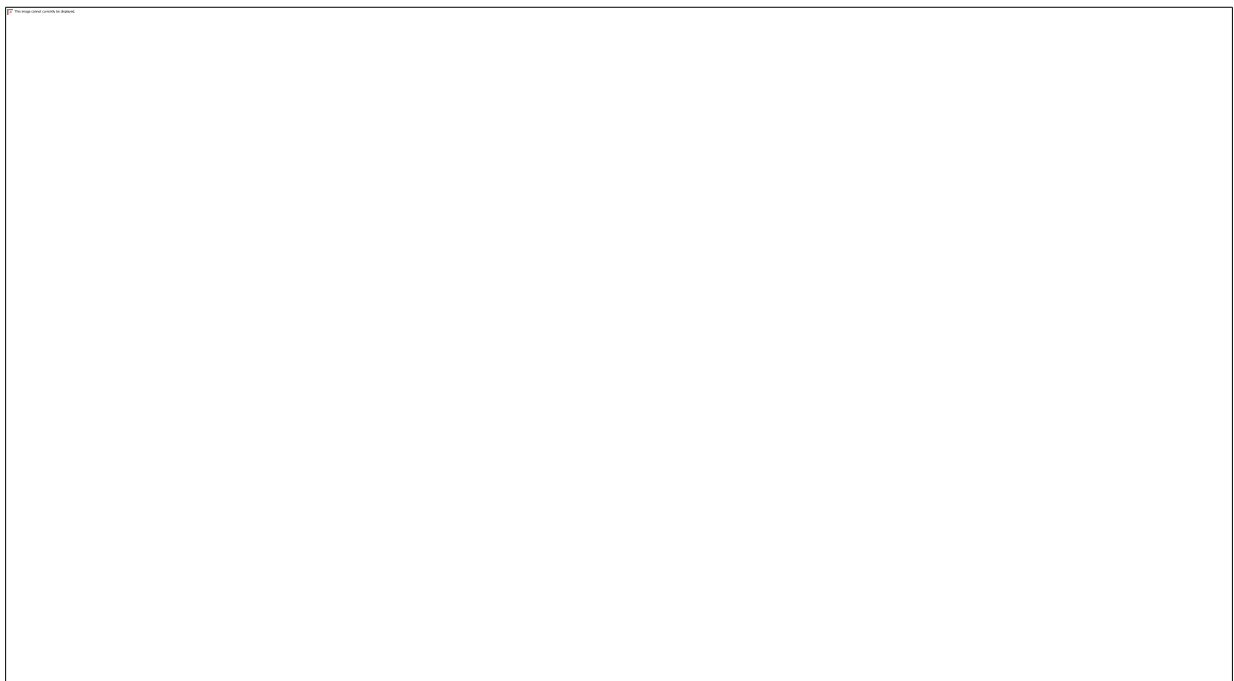


Fig. 13 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of access to an English tutor or coaching centre (n=94)

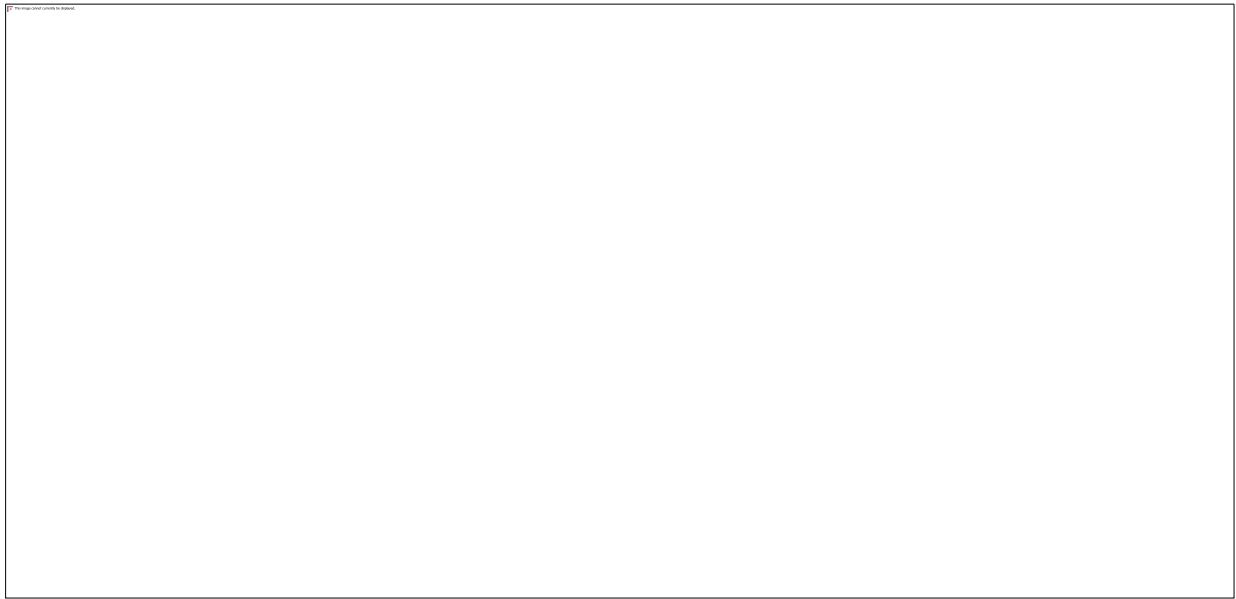


Fig. 14 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of encouragement of family members to speak English at home (n=94)

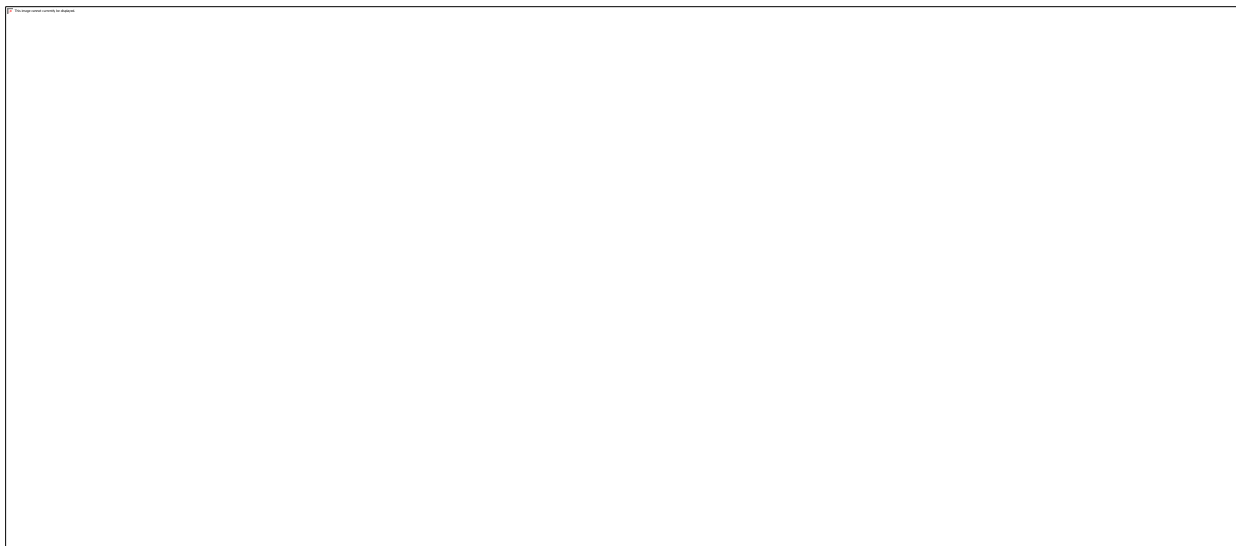


Fig. 15 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of feeling of respondents about English examinations (n=94)

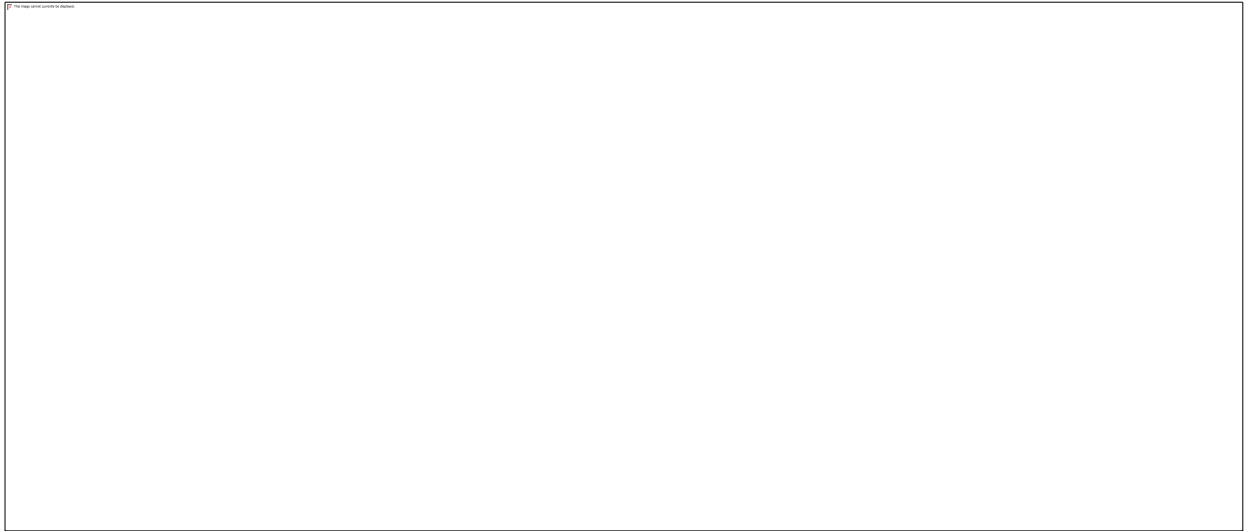


Fig. 16 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of challenge in learning English (n=94)

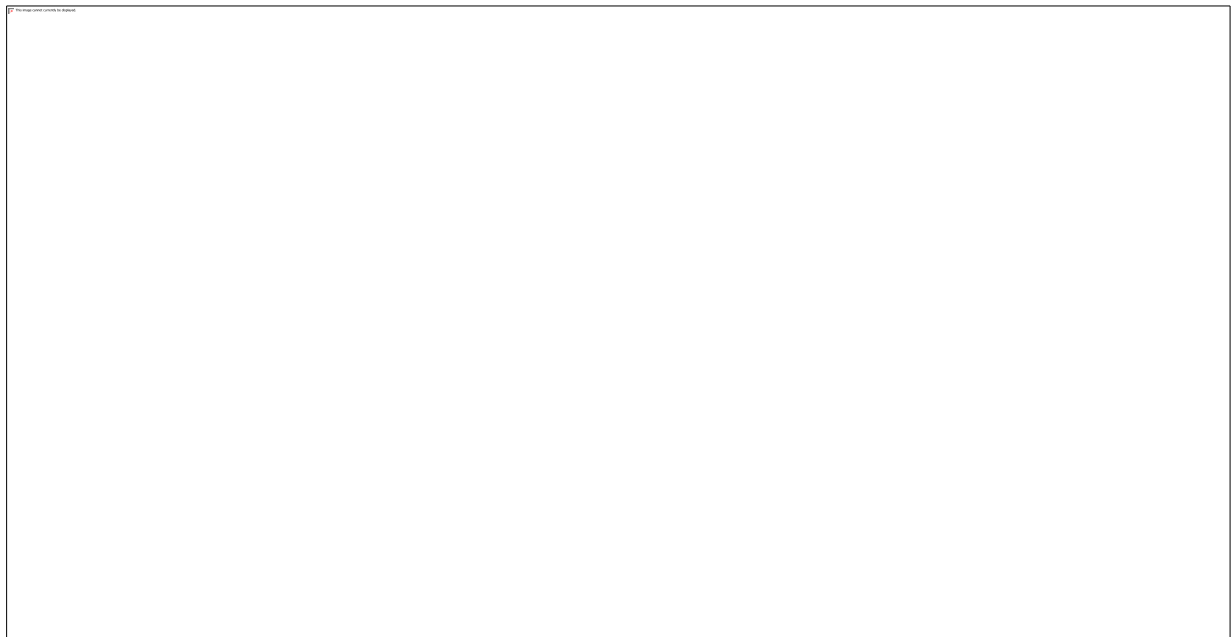


Fig. 17 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of importance of English for respondent's future (n=94)

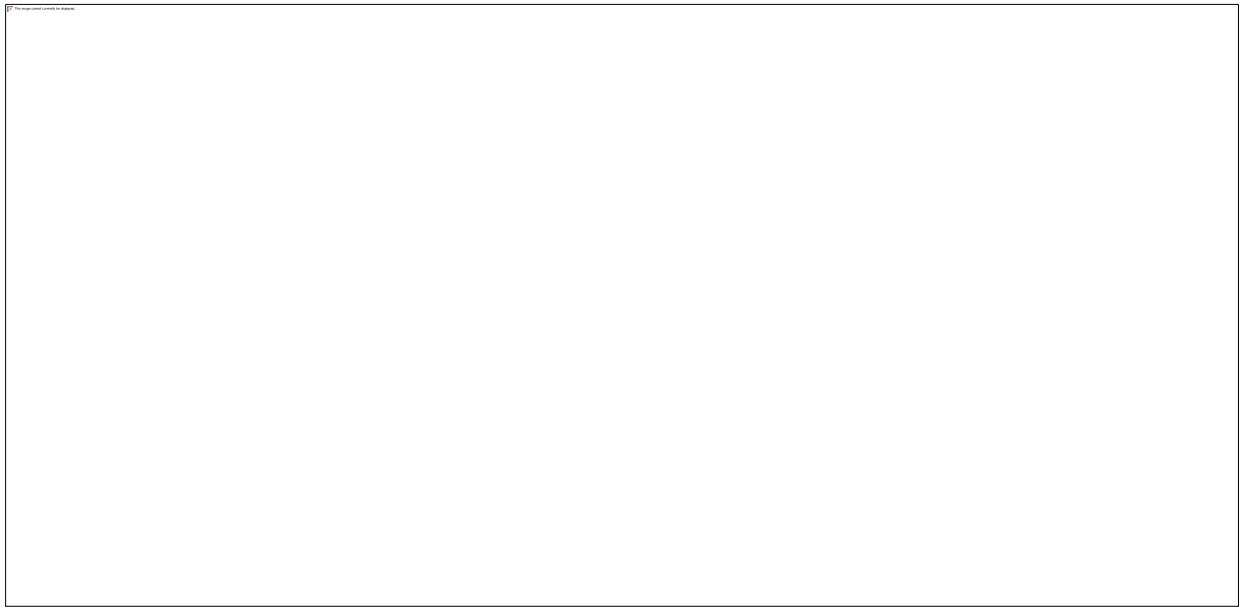


Fig. 18 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of interest in improving English skills (n=94)

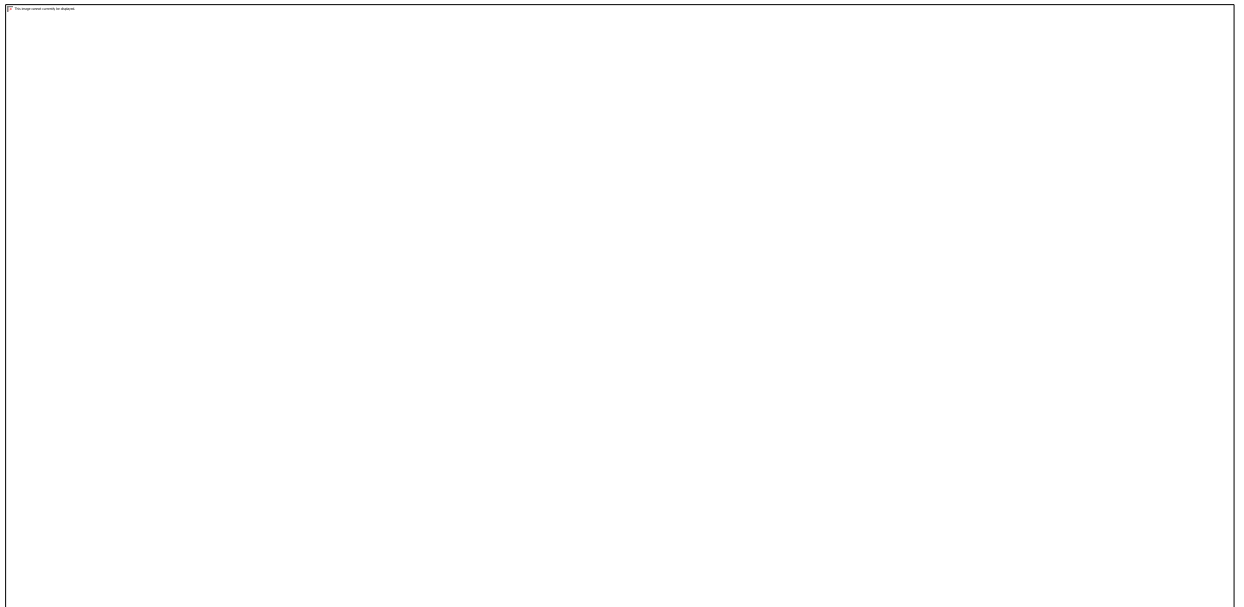


Fig. 19 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of motivation to learn English (n=94)

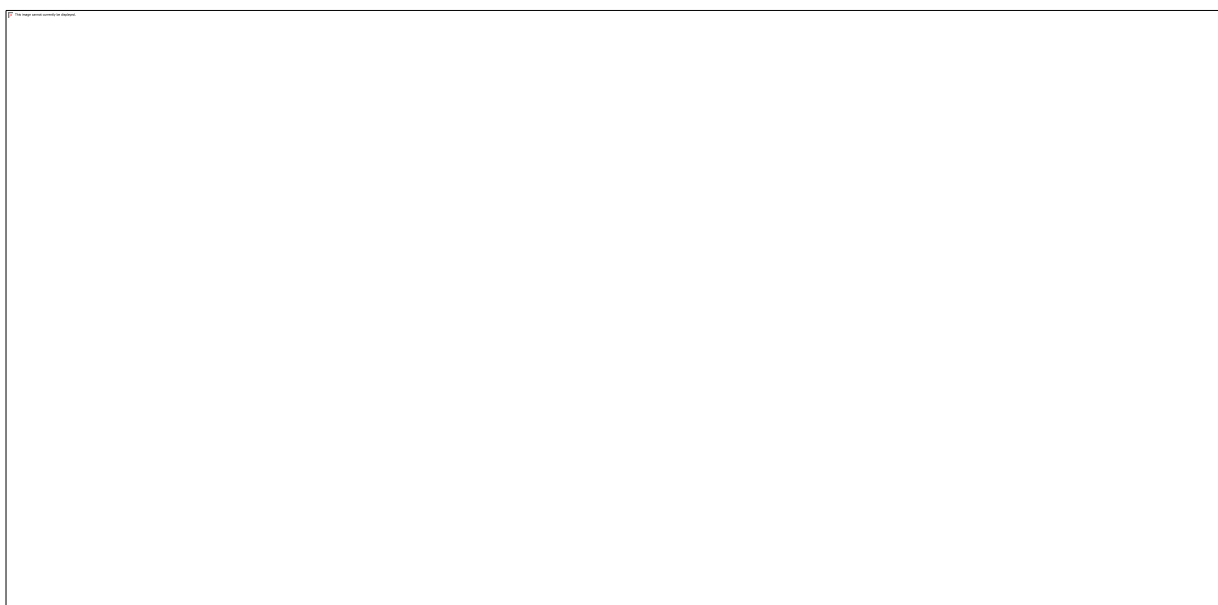


Fig. 20 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of more use of English in classroom discussion (n=94)

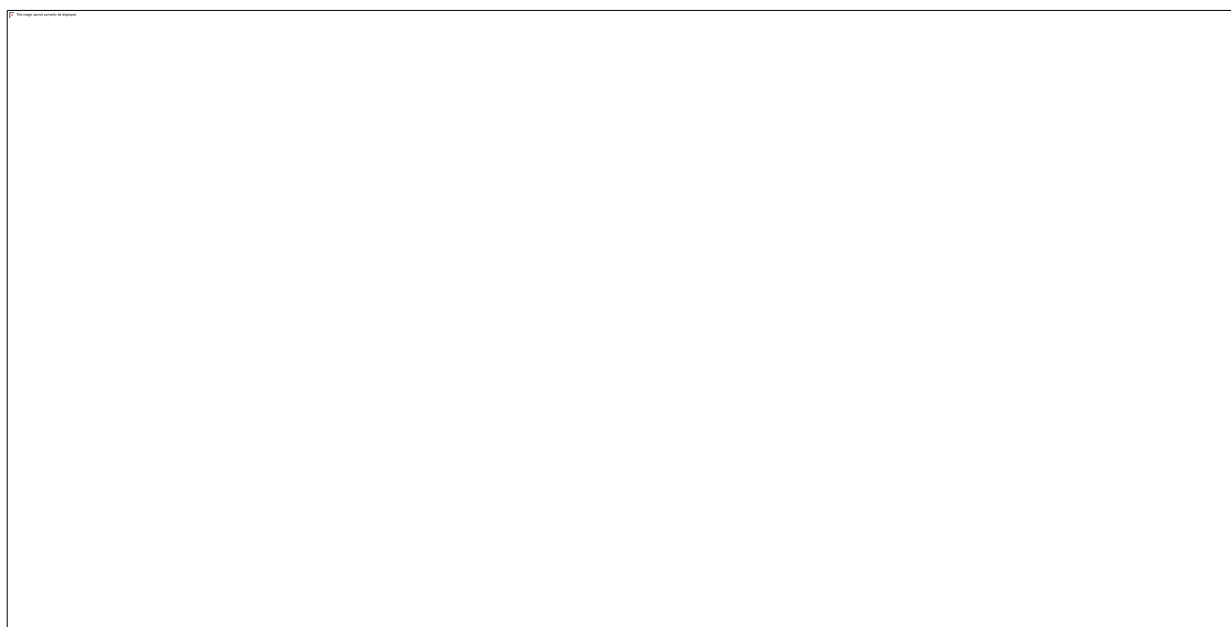


Fig. 21 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of joining English language club or speaking group (n=94)

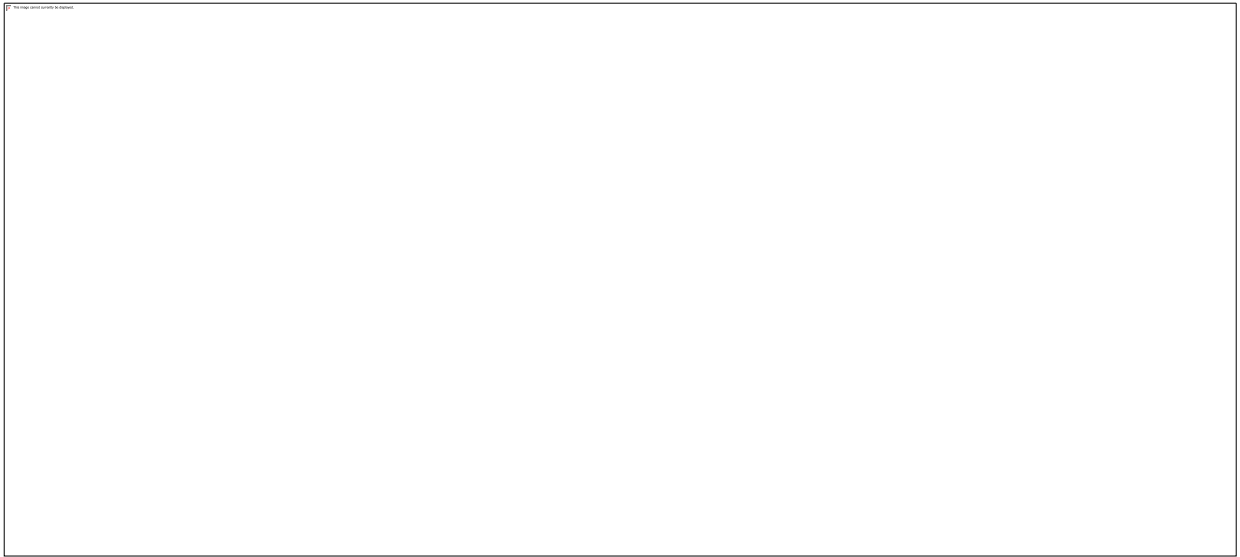


Fig. 22 Pie diagram viewing percentage frequencies of English learning support respondent needs (n=94)

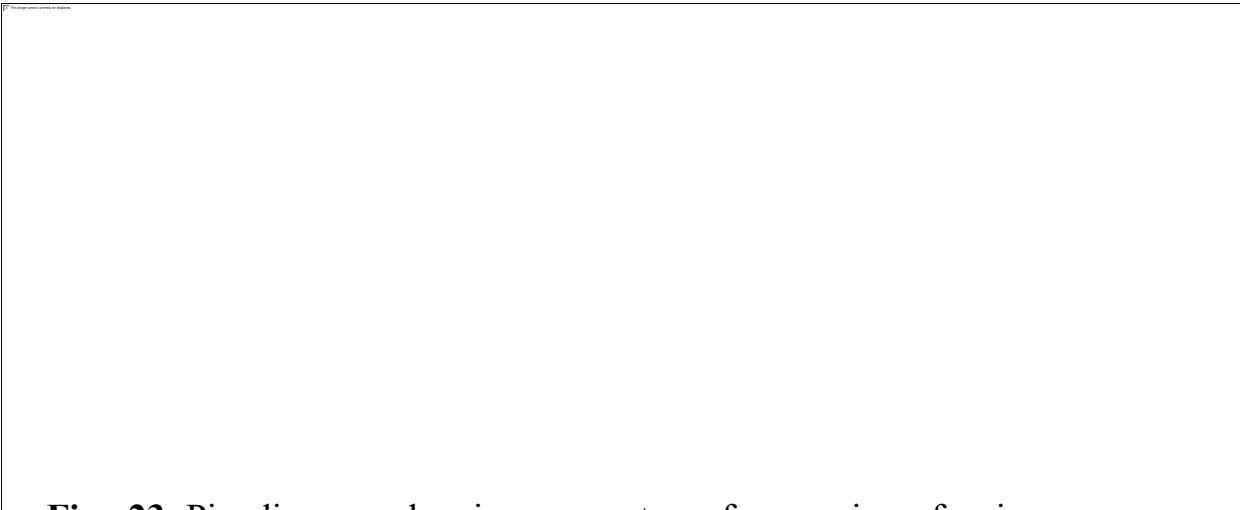


Fig. 23 Pie diagram showing percentage frequencies of using resources (n=94)

Q#	Question Summary	Type	Median Possible?
20	What is your main challenge in learning English?	Open-ended(category)	No
21	Do you think English is important for your future?	Yes/No/May be	Yes
22	Are you interested in improving your English skills?	Yes/No/May be	Yes
23	Do you feel motivated to learn English?	Yes/No/May be	Yes
24	Do you think English should be used more in classroom discussions?	Yes/No/May be	Yes
25	Would you join an English language club or speaking group if available?	Yes/No/May be	Yes
26	What type of English support do you need most?	Open-ended	No
27	What kind of resources would help you improve your English?	Open-ended	No
28	How can teachers help students improve their English skills?	Open-ended	No
29	What strategies do you use to improve your English?	Open-ended	No
30	What suggestions do you have to make English learning more effective in your institution?	Open-ended	No

Fig. 24- Chart showing questions 20 to 30 Review (With Median Eligibility)

Steps to Calculate Median (for Q21 to Q25)

I will assign numeric values for answers:

Yes=3

May be=2

No=1

Median of each questions will be found in numeric response

Based on a sample of over 90 responses

Question	Median (Numeric)	Interpretation
21	3	Yes
22	3	Yes
23	3	Yes
24	3	Yes
25	3	Yes

Fig. 25- Median Results(Q21-Q25)

The median answer is “Yes” for questions 21-25. It indicates that most learners affirm the motivation and importance toward learning English and support greater English use in the clubs and classroom.

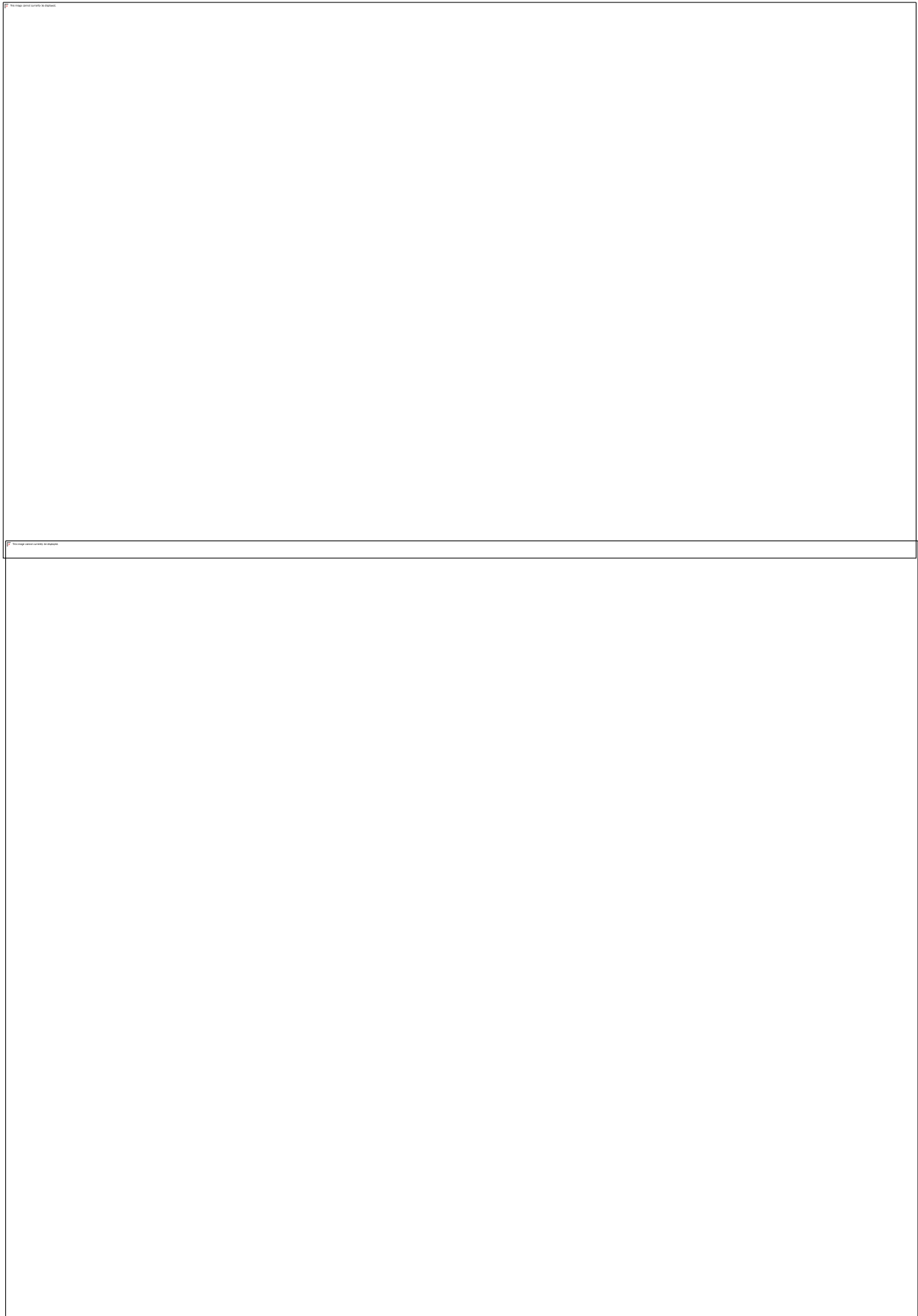


Fig.26- Picture of Standard Deviation

2. Interviews

Some semi-structured interviews with teachers have given qualitative insights into the socio-cultural and institutional factors affecting English learning. These are given below-

Homes with English books, house tutors, educational TV shows, movies, language -learning apps (Duolingo, YouTube Lessons, Podcasts, Language Exchange Platform), quiet study space, less criticism for errors, multilingual environment help the learners to increase their skills in English language. Rich and educated families can afford international trips, or bilingual schools to accelerate learning. Travel or interaction with English-speaking friends makes the language feel more practical and engaging. Teachers should assign interactive homework (e.g., interviewing family members in English) to bridge home-school learning.

Most Bangladeshi families do not practice English at home. So, they miss a key opportunity for fluency. Many guardians do not speak in English, especially in rural areas of upazilas. Guardians of rural areas of upazilas are not able to help with conversation, pronunciation, or creative writing. These guardians depend on “rote learning methods” (e.g., memorizing the answers). Children who code-switch (mix Bangla & English) are sometimes mocked, so they reduce confidence. Urban elite families may encourage debates, storytelling, or English-speaking clubs. They enroll children in English medium schools or kindergartens. Parents often link English proficiency to high-paying jobs (e.g., doctors, engineers, corporate jobs). They push children toward “science/technical fields”, neglecting humanities where English creativity matters. Many parents also see “English as a key to success” for jobs, higher education, migration. So, they push children to “memorize textbooks” and focus on “exam scores” rather than fluency.

Learners should listen music, watch movies, TV shows, podcasts to get accustomed to natural speech patterns, accents, and colloquial expressions. They can improve pronunciation and intonation by mimicking native speakers through YouTube, TikTok or Netflix. If they see correct grammar in use (e.g., subtitles, news articles, memes), it will reinforce their ability to make proper sentence structures. Their writing on social platforms (e.g., comments, tweets, blogs) will provide informal practice. However, informal English (e.g., slang, incorrect grammar in memes) may lead to mistakes if not balanced with formal

learning. Moreover, if they watch videos without active engagement (e.g., repeating phrases, taking notes) that may limit progress.

Balancing native language and English learning can be challenging for students. Languages simultaneously can strain memory and attention, especially when grammatical structures or vocabulary differ significantly. Students may mix languages (code-switching), it may lead to confusion in formal settings. Heavy academic workloads may leave little time for consistent English immersion. Moreover, native language dominance in daily life reduces chances to practice English naturally.

Wealthier families can buy English storybooks, workbooks, and flashcards, while low-income students may rely only on school-provided (often limited) materials. Interactive tools (e.g., ABC mouse, Lingokids) require subscriptions or devices that low-income households may not afford. Elite private schools often have native English-speaking teachers, smart classrooms, and immersive English programs. Underfunded public schools (especially in rural areas of upazilas) may lack trained English teachers or use outdated methods (e.g., rote memorization). Schools in affluent areas may have English labs, multimedia tools, and libraries, while poorer schools struggle with basic textbooks. Post-pandemic, many primary schools use digital platforms (e.g., Raz-Kids, Starfall), but children without tablets/computers or internet miss out. Wealthier families expose kids to English cartoons (e.g., Peppa Pig) or YouTube channels (e.g., Super Simple Songs), while others may lack access. Higher-income families may enroll children in English-medium preschools or extracurricular activities (e.g., drama clubs), while others lack options. Some governments distribute English textbooks or launch radio/TV lessons (e.g., Kenya's EDU-TV), but reach is inconsistent. Organizations like Pratham (India) or Room to Read provide free books and remedial classes, but coverage is limited. Poor foundational English skills in primary school can lead to struggles in higher grades, especially in STEM subjects often taught in English.

Peer interactions, both inside and outside the classroom, play a significant role in shaping students' English learning experiences. Engaging with peers from different backgrounds enhances cultural awareness, helps students to use language in a practical way. Students often mimic peers' language habits, both positive (slang, idioms) and negative (errors). However, fear of judgment may hinder some students from speaking. If peers frequently use incorrect grammar or slang, learners may adopt those mistakes. Overbearing peers can monopolize conversations, limiting others' opportunities to practice.

The 1952 '**Language Movement**' can create a tension between embracing English for global communication and preserving Bengali identity. Rural students, with limited access to quality English education, might see it as an elitist barrier, reinforcing inequality. Additionally, the rise of Bangladeshi English writers (e.g., Tahmima Anam) and localized English (e.g., "Banglish") helps students reconcile English with their cultural identity. Bangladesh's dual-language curriculum (Bangla-medium vs. English-medium schools) creates divergent perceptions. English-medium students often see themselves as more global, while Bangla-medium students may feel disadvantaged but culturally rooted. National policies promoting Bangla for identity, English for development reflect an attempt to balance both.

Most curricula of Bangladesh follow a progressive structure, starting with basics (vocabulary, grammar) and advancing to complex skills (reading comprehension, writing, speaking). Textbooks often include thematic units that contextualize language learning. Many curricula are designed to meet national or international standards ensuring key competencies are covered. Modern textbooks often incorporate listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW) exercises, promoting balanced language development. Many publishers now provide online platforms, audio tracks, and interactive exercises to reinforce learning.

Some curricula of Bangladesh focus heavily on grammar rules and test preparation, neglecting real-world communication skills. Many textbooks use simplified or artificial dialogues, which don't prepare students for natural English conversations or accents. In many schools, especially non-English-speaking countries, spoken English is under-practiced due to large class sizes or teacher limitations. Curricula may lag behind modern language trends (slang, digital communication) or diverse English varieties. Textbooks may not cater well to different learning speeds or interests, making lessons less engaging for some students.

Research suggests that smaller class sizes generally lead to better outcomes for language learners, though the extent of the benefit depends on various factors. Smaller Classes are a combination of more individualized attention, increase of student participation, better classroom management, stronger teacher-student relationships. Experienced instructors using collaborative learning (pair/group work) can mitigate some downsides in the large classrooms. Tools like language apps, AI tutors, and online exercises can supplement instruction in large classes. Well-designed group activities can

increase practice opportunities even in bigger settings. Studies suggest that classes of “15–20 students” are ideal for language learning, though benefits plateau beyond a certain point. Smaller classes are especially helpful for lower-proficiency learners who need more support. In well-resourced environments with strong teaching methods, larger classes may still achieve good results.

In Bangladesh, the assessment and examination structure influences teaching methods, student motivation, and learning strategies. Here’s how: Exams in primary schools (especially Primary School Certificate - PSC) often emphasize memorization of grammar rules, vocabulary, and fixed question patterns. Students focus on repetition and recall rather than speaking, listening, or creative writing. Teachers prioritize “test-specific drills” over communicative English to ensure high scores. Since exam results affect school rankings and teacher performance, English lessons become “exam-centric”. Creative activities (e.g., storytelling, group discussions) are often sidelined in favor of “structured textbook exercises”. Little emphasis on “pronunciation, fluency, or real-life communication”. Most assessments are “written exams”, neglecting oral skills. Students may score well in grammar but struggle with “conversational English”. The absence of listening tests in primary exams means students get little practice in “understanding spoken English”.

Government-Initiated Programs - University offers diploma courses like Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) and Master of Education (M. Ed) with a Focus on English. Some institutions offer Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) courses. British Council, Bangladesh conducts workshops on modern ELT (English Language Teaching) approaches. English Language Teachers’ Association (ELTA) organizes conferences and training sessions for English teachers. Platforms like Coursera, FutureLearn, and Udemy offer courses on English teaching methodologies. Some NGO-run schools (e.g., BRAC schools) and urban private schools have better libraries with “storybooks, picture dictionaries, and graded readers”, which help to improve vocabulary and reading skills. NGOs (e.g., BRAC, Teach for Bangladesh) and some government training programs (like “English in Action”) provide teacher training to improve classroom techniques. The “National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)” books are the main resource, but they focus more on “grammar-translation” than “communication skills”. Some schools supplement with “private publications (e.g., "English for Today" workbooks)”. A few elite schools use “international curricula (e.g., Cambridge Primary)” with better resources. NGOs and donor-funded projects (e.g., “USAID’s Esho Shikhi”) distribute free learning materials. Mobile apps (like “BBC Janala” in the past)

provided low-cost English practice. National Education Policy (2010, revised 2021) emphasizes English from Grade 1. English in Action (EiA) Program (2018-2024, funded by UK Aid) trained teachers and introduced interactive methods. Some persons actively supervise English classes, but many lack expertise in English pedagogy. Schools often lack funds for English materials (e.g., storybooks, audio-visual aids). Sometimes, bureaucracy makes delays in fund disbursement and resource distribution. Moreover, remote schools receive less attention from education officers. BRAC, Save the Children, and others supplement government efforts with teacher training. British Council & USAID run programs to enhance English skills. Primary Teacher Training Institute (PTI) offers “Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed)” and “Diploma in Primary Education (Dip.Ed.)” programs, which include English teaching methodologies. National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) conducts subject-based training, including English pedagogy, for primary teachers. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) organizes workshops and refresher courses for English teachers. BRAC provides teacher training programs focused on communicative English and child-centred teaching methods. English in Action (EIA – British Council) offers training in interactive English teaching techniques, including digital resources. USAID supported programs such as “Shobai Miley Shikhi” (“Everyone Learns Together”) for improving English instruction.

3. Focus Group Discussions:

FGDs with students have explored their perceptions and experiences of learning English. These are given below:

They have said that they are interested in learning English and they enjoy their classes. They think that they need English everywhere. The status of English language (international language) and technology motivate them to learn English. The teaching methodology of their teachers are grammar-based, textbook-focused. Students have said that they have enough opportunities to speak in English at classrooms but they do not practice regularly. Sometimes they use English outside of the classroom to greet friends, talk with friends. They have only books to learn English. They have no audio/video aids, internet access. They think that their teachers are well trained in teaching English effectively. Some students have said that they have 60-70 students in their class and it affects negatively in their learning. Others have said that they have 45 students and they do not feel any problem in it. They face problem in vocabulary and they cannot write English because of having lack of grammatical knowledge. They feel shy or are afraid of making mistakes in English. Their friends, family and teachers are supportive when they try to use English. They think that if they are attentive in English classes, classes will be more helpful or interesting. They have no

language club and they want a spoken English club to improve their English skills. They also want rich library and trained teachers to improve their English.

4. Document Analysis

In Bangladesh students of Higher Secondary Level have to read two subjects for English language. These are- English First Paper and English Second Paper. For English First Paper they read a book named English For Today. This book has real-life relevance and thematic variety. It promotes reading skills, encourages holistic language learning as per Communicative Language Teaching principles. It contains both global and Bangladeshi cultures but there is little resources or structured guidance for speaking and listening practice. The book gives emphasis on reading and writing. Sometimes writing tasks become mechanical. The grammar of this book lacks depth and systematic progression. The book is difficult for learners of weak basic knowledge. The success of this book depends mainly on effective teaching methodology of the skilled teachers.

The syllabus of English Second Paper mainly contains grammar and composition. We may divide grammar into graded levels with more practice and examples. We may implement task-based learning for grammar and writing skills. For example- learners may write a complaint letter about a local problem

Chapter Six

Recommendations

Need of Attractive Text Book

The language of the book named “English for Today” is complex, critical and unattractive, the language of it is not simple and attractive. Language is very important to attract a reader. The book has various types of unattractive contents, most of the contents are full of problems of the country and society. Students will not like to read these contents. I think we should include the write-ups of native writers so that pupils will be able to know about the lettering style of the native writers, they may feel eager to read those write-ups. Moreover, the printing and paper quality of the book are not good. National Curriculum & Textbook Board, Bangladesh (NCTB) should include colourful pictures in this book. By observing colourful pictures students may feel interest to read this book.



Figure 24: Textbook of Class 11-12

Redesign the Assessment System-

We have two board examinations. These are- Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examination. The pass marks of each subject are 33. A student will be able to get 33 in exam without writing any English sentence correctly. In our evaluation method it is easy to get 33 but difficult to get 80. I think we have to modify our evaluation system. In order to ensure basic quality of a student we have to modify question pattern. Without fulfilling some basic criteria, a student will not be able to get pass marks. Moreover, sometimes some teachers give benevolent marks to the students. This practice is not always good.

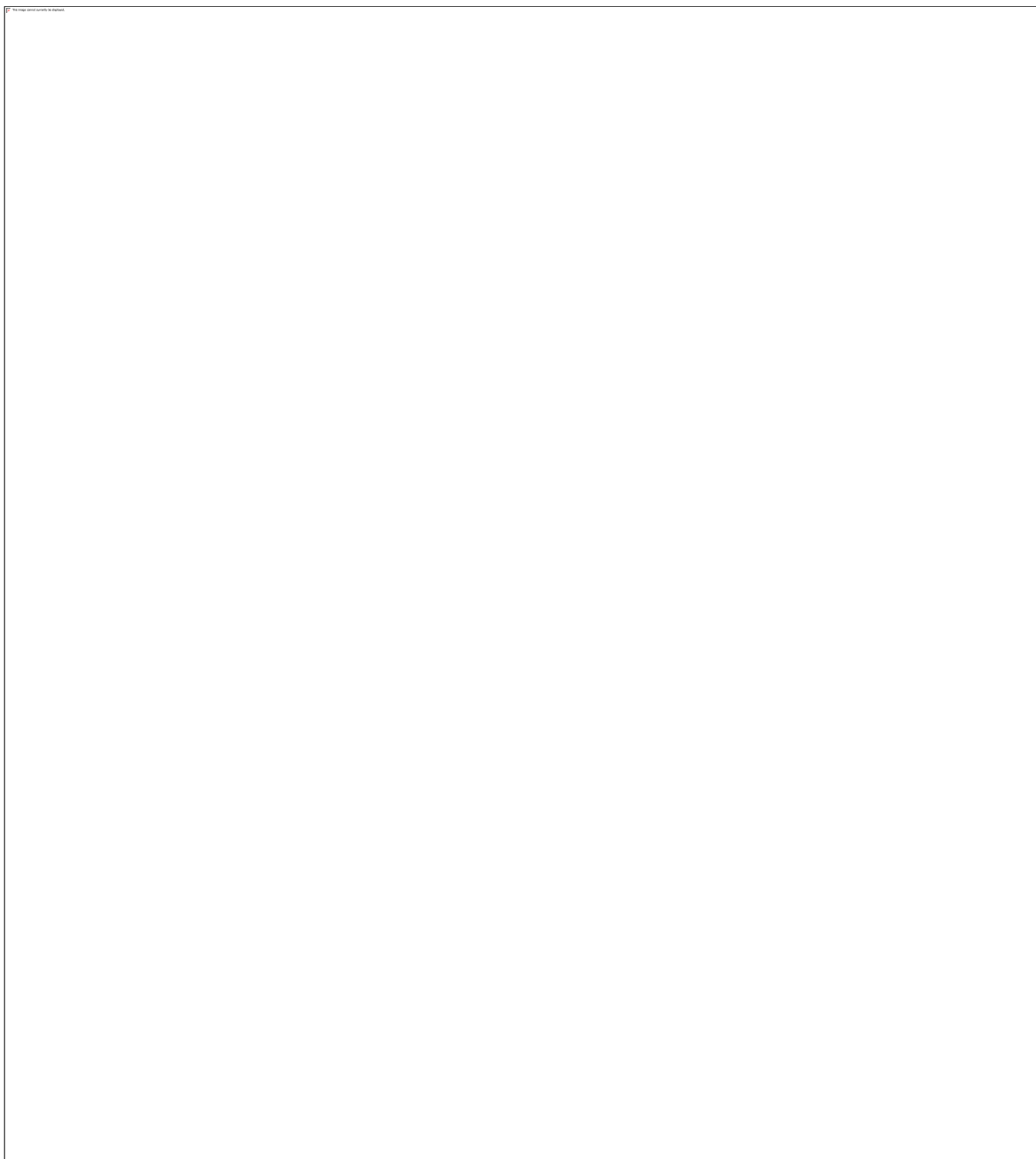


Figure 25: A Sample Question of HSC Exam

Need of Attractive Classroom

Most of the classrooms of Upazila level institutions are unattractive and over-crowded. In summer, it is difficult for the students to stay at classroom because most of the classrooms have no proper cooling system. So most of the students do not go to classes regularly and they become little bit detached from their study. On the contrary, most of the classrooms of urban level institutions are well-decorated and attractive. Many learners of upazilas don't get

multimedia project learning in the area of teaching organization. So, the concerned specialist should take necessary steps to establish multimedia projector in all courses to progress the strategy of education. Instructors should get training course on the practice of multimedia project in the teaching space.



Figure26: Picture of a Classroom of an Urban

Recruitment of Skilled Teachers

The Government of Bangladesh should take proper steps in recruitment process of teachers, especially for Science, Math and English. Managing Committee and the local leaders should be strict enough not to take any money as bribe while instructors, teachers are employed. The local leaders and Managing Committee should possess the sensibility of recruiting good English teachers at educational institutions so that the juvenile students can be able to attain the fundamental knowledge of English Language and also juvenile learners can compete with the age.

Development of Road Communication System-

The local authorities should take necessary steps to change the street communication arrangement. They have to think that it will help their own progenies, kids. If they notify the matter to the local government, it will be possible to develop the road communication system. Educational organizations

should be built near the high-tech communication so that learners will be able to retain communication with educational institutions and instructors easily. To change the system of street communication, all's involvement is a necessity.

Encouragement of Online Education System

Now-a-days many institutions and enthusiastic persons create online educational contents. Government should provide internet facility in cheap rate for the students. So, students will be able to watch those contents. We should provide audio/video resources for pronunciation, speaking and listening.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion-

After Higher Secondary Certificate Examination learners go to different universities to acquire knowledge. Students of honours' or degree pass read single paper of compulsory English consisting of 100 marks, under the National University. The root objectives of this course are to strengthen the skills which learners have already gained through remedial coaching. In Bangladesh, some universities teach some foreign languages like French, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Japanese and German etc. In 1992, The Private University Act was passed. This act assisted to build English-medium private universities in Bangladesh. It helped to establish 80 universities. These universities put special importance on English because this language is a demandable language. This study paper has given some recommendations for Upazila level institutions to alleviate the students weakness in English language.

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Appendix

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development

BRAC University

Master of Arts in Governance and Development

a. Survey Questionnaire:

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b. Questions for Interviews:

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c. Questions for Focus Group Discussion:

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