

Perception of English language teachers regarding curriculum changes in Bangladesh

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English

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English and Humanities
BRAC University
February, 2025

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing my 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 that 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

The thesis/project titled “Perceptions of English language teachers regarding curriculum changes in Bangladesh” submitted by Jannatul Ferdous (20303027) of Spring, 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 27/02/2025.

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Ethics Statement

In this thesis paper, the data and information I have used are not directly taken from any sources. I have paraphrased all the information taken from other sources. Also, I have used academic sources and cited the references properly. Ethical issues are very important when conducting a study, so this study also ensured many ethical aspects, such as keeping the participants' names and their institution names from being revealed. Before the interviews, the thesis topic was properly explained, and no participants were forced to give interviews. Proper privacy was maintained, and no sensitive issues were presented in the study. Most importantly, participants' permissions were taken before recording Zoom meetings and in-person meeting

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the perceptions of English language teachers regarding curriculum changes in Bangladesh. The popularity of the English language has changed much since 1971, when Bangladesh got its freedom. During the last forty years, different governments in Bangladesh have started different English language programs. In 2023, a new program called assessment-based learning was put in place to try to change the way schools work again. The 2023 curriculum brought many changes to the education system of Bangladesh, such as reducing the memorization system, no more traditional examination system, a new marking system, teaching students real-world education rather than being bounded by textbooks, and so on. This study aimed to bring out the challenges faced by teachers and students, their reaction to the 2023 curriculum along with their suggestions to improve the curriculum, and also their perspective about going back to the old curriculum by collecting data from both teachers and students using a semi-structured interview of a qualitative method. Regarding the 2023 curriculum and the issues they encountered, teachers and students expressed both positive and negative opinions, such as a lack of resources and training and issues in large classrooms, elimination of the traditional exam system, and they also expressed their opinion regarding reduction of the memorization method. Additionally, this study presents suggestions for improving the curriculum and teachers' attitudes toward returning to the previous curriculum. It can help the government and schools make better plans for teaching and training.

Keywords:

Assessment, Competency-based Education, Assessment-Based Learning, Memorization method, Teachers' Training, English Language Teaching.

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List of Acronyms

NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DFID	Department of International Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CIDA	Canadian International and Development Agency
SIMS	Second International Mathematics Study
GET	General Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
GTM	Grammar Translation Method

Glossary

Srijonshil Method: Creative Education

Madrasa: Islamic educational institution in Bangladesh

Assessment Learning: A system of evaluating students by projects or classroom participation rather than exams

Quota Reform: A movement in Bangladesh demanding changes to the government job quota system for the merit-based recruitment process.

Washback: The impact of tests on teachers' instructional methods and students' learning processes, and it can be both positive and negative.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The term curriculum is used in the educational aspects, and it is difficult to define when the question arises, "What is meant by curriculum?" There is no specific definition of curriculum because different authors have given different definitions. The word curriculum stems from the Latin verb *currere*, which means "to run". The Latin noun curriculum refers to a 'course' and a 'vehicle.' In the context of education, the most obvious interpretation of the word is to view it as a course for 'learning.' The very short definition of curriculum as a 'plan for learning', used by the American Hilda Taba in 1962, therefore, seems quite adequate. This simple definition does not easily or unnecessarily narrow the perspective but permits all sorts of elaboration for specific curricular levels, contexts, and representations. Such specifications will prove quite helpful in interpreting, understanding, and communicating about curriculum issues (Hassan, 2013).

Learning and teaching English is difficult for Bangladeshi students, teachers, and policymakers. Students face various challenges in terms of using the English language and skills in their regular lives and communicating with people from English-speaking countries. These difficulties are common among the students of both Bangla and English medium schools and the students of Madrasas. Moreover, students who complete higher school certificates also have to take help in using English properly. Students from remote areas face more difficulties or do not learn English properly because most of the teachers of remote area schools are not well-trained. The government has applied different methods or curricula in education to improve the educational system of Bangladesh, but those methods did not work

out (Ahmed,2023). So, the government introduced a new curriculum in 2023 to bring changes to the education system in Bangladesh.

Before the 2023 curriculum, the old curriculum was introduced with the “Srijonshil Method (Creative Method), in which creative learning was encouraged rather than memorizing tendencies by testing students' knowledge, understanding, application, and efficiency levels. However, the 2023 curriculum is different from the older curriculum. It focused on real-world skills and holistic learning. Students had to do classroom-based assessments, and 50% of the assessments were counted for exams. However, when the 2023 curriculum was introduced, it was seen that parents, different students, and teachers gave different statements and opinions about the curriculum and had different debates on this matter, and the curriculum was also changed due to political and policy changes. Under these circumstances, this research explored whether the 2023 curriculum was better than the previous one. In addition, this paper looked into whether this curriculum helped students to get rid of memorization methods in English grammar and skills. It also focused on the challenges they faced with the new method of learning. It can also be said that there was a great change for the teachers to implement the 2023 curriculum, such as changes in teaching approach, creating a student-centered classroom, focusing on communicative teaching rather than the memorization process, and so on. In this regard, this paper was intended to find perceptions of the necessary curriculum changes. As the 2023 curriculum claimed that this would help students to gain real-life skills and explore the real world, this paper would show how that method could help students to achieve them. Additionally, this paper analyzed the challenges faced by teachers in coping with the new method of teaching and the outcome of that curriculum in English classes.

1.1 Background

Because it is a foreign language, the people of Bangladesh face difficulties most of the time in learning the English language. This has become more crucial because of being an EFL country. The NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook) develops all the ELT curricula of primary, secondary, and higher levels of education in Bangladesh. Although English has been taught as a compulsory subject in schools from the primary to the secondary level, the performance of students in English is commonly still found to be inadequate (Chowdhury & Kamal, 2014). To lessen this problem, the government brought a method of English learning in 1996, which is called CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) for the students of class 6; then it was expanded up to class 12. To apply the CLT method properly and make teachers trained enough to utilize CLT, the government introduced many projects such as the English Language Teaching Improvement Project funded by the Department of International Development (DFID, UK), the Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Teaching Quality Improvement Project in Secondary Education (TQI-SEP 2006-2016, Phases I & II) funded by ADB and the Canadian International and Development Agency (CIDA).

However, the expected results have yet to be achieved. Students need to be more skilled in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They tend not to communicate effectively, which causes them to lag in competing with the globalized world. For that reason, in 2023, the Bangladesh government came up with a new curriculum in which English was taught so that students could achieve real-world skills and use English in the real world.

However, Bangladesh went through a quota reform movement for job recruitment in the public sector in June of 2024. Students from all over the country joined the movement, and the movement turned ugly, with deadly clashes between the students and the security personnel. Throughout this movement, all the educational institutions were closed to ensure students' safety, which had a bad impact on the secondary-level students. Because of the movement, all the secondary level exams were canceled, and summative assessments and students' progression were affected. After the movement, the 2023 curriculum was canceled due to political issues. The new government had decided to go back to the old curriculum because many concerns had been raised regarding the new curriculum. Implementing the 2023 curriculum started with facing many challenges, such as a lack of resources, teachers' preparation to cope with that, and an unsuitable classroom environment for the curriculum. In this regard, the new government decided in December 2024 to return to the old curriculum in January 2025. The government decided to distribute the new textbooks with the old curriculum in 2025 to ensure an effective educational system (Karim, 2024).

1.2 Overview of the 2023 Curriculum

Improving the educational system in Bangladesh has brought many changes; among those, teaching-learning and assessment-based learning were the focused ones. The 2023 curriculum claimed to bring competency-based education, and to build that, the government had taken several initiatives. For example, there would be no final examination up to class three and no public examination before SSC. Students' performance would be evaluated by giving assessments; they would go through the skill-based learning process. At the beginning of

2023, the curriculum was applied to classes 1, 6, and 7, and then in the year 2024, this was also applied to class 9.

This 2023 curriculum was designed in such a way that students had to be involved in practical activities, such as giving presentations in class and learning regular life activities like how to cook, how to do household chores, and so on, which enabled students to achieve practical life skills as well as experience. Moreover, while doing those practical activities, they had to think critically so they could be prepared to face the challenges of the demand for global education in the future. Besides, students did those activities with fun and excitement as they learned new things. By doing those real-world activities, they could get rid of memorizing knowledge and also learn how they could do the activities by using theoretical knowledge (Billah, 2024).

1.3 Reasons for Introducing the 2023 Curriculum

The 2023 curriculum was introduced to bring many changes to the education system in Bangladesh, and there were many reasons behind this.

This was a competency-based curriculum, and the main reason was to prepare students to face challenges creatively by using their creative and critical thinking. To improve students' critical thinking power, the curriculum focused on skill-based learning instead of memorization. Another important reason was to provide students with a comprehensive and holistic education, and in this regard, skill-based learning had been applied in that curriculum. Moreover, ensuring equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls was another reason for introducing the 2023 curriculum. This curriculum was designed in such a way that

students from all stages could get opportunities to learn because this system was not dependent on traditional bookish knowledge. So, to gain knowledge, students had to use their knowledge, and they also had to use their theoretical knowledge to solve real-life difficulties. In this way, both girls and boys would have a chance to build their skills to get good jobs and also do well in the future (Jahan, 2023).

Another reason was to develop students' communication skills. In the 21st century, effective communication is the most important thing. In this regard, the curriculum was designed so that students could communicate with others. The English textbook also changed because it included activities for all four skills. This way, students could pursue higher studies, communicate with English-speaking people, and communicate effectively at their workplace.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Education is crucial for determining a nation's future as it facilitates knowledge acquisition, skill enhancement, and social cohesion. In Bangladesh, similar to numerous other developing nations, achieving national growth objectives relies on implementing an effective curriculum. To have a practical learning system, Bangladesh introduced a competency-based curriculum in 2023. As stated by Arpa (2024), the curriculum carried the comprehensive framework for the entire educational system. It included the subjects, educational objectives, and pedagogical approaches to be implemented in schools and classrooms nationwide. A great change happened in the education system of 2023, such that there would be no question format as 'answer any three of the following five questions.' There would be no bells signaling the start of an exam, and students did not have to attend lengthy three-hour examinations to achieve passing grades (Abbas, 2024). In 2023, the primary objective of

revising the curriculum was to enhance creativity by reducing the memorization system within the educational system and to prepare students for real-world challenges rather than merely acquiring knowledge from textbooks. Despite significant improvements in education, both teachers and students found it challenging to adhere to the curriculum effectively.

The lack of training for teachers was a big problem when they tried to use the 2023 curriculum in classrooms. As the educational system went through big changes in 2023, neither teachers nor students knew how to use the new system of teaching and learning. Most teachers were unhappy with their training programs because they weren't helping them understand the new ways of teaching in the 2023 curriculum. Only 25% of teachers had the skills to use the 2023 program. Moreover, Large classrooms were also a big problem for teachers in both rural and urban schools. On average, there were 80 to 90 students in an urban area school's classroom, and 60 to 70 students were in rural area schools. It was very difficult for the teachers to focus on every student in a class, and it was one of the barriers of the 2023 curriculum (Rahman, 2024). Moreover, Bangladesh, a developing country, didn't have sufficient resources for the 2023 curriculum. The lack of technology, like the internet, computers, and projectors, made it much harder to apply the 2023 curriculum effectively. Educators and learners also faced challenges with the new marking system, which utilized geometric shapes—squares, circles, and triangles—instead of the traditional numeric grading system (Chowdhuri, 2024). However, the 2023 curriculum was canceled in December 2024 because of too many problems, and the old curriculum was used in January 2025 because of concerns about whether competency-based education will work in Bangladesh.

Despite bringing a practical education system rather than relying on a memorization system, both teachers and students had to face a lot of difficulties. Lack of training, lack of resources, and too much difficulty to adopt the new materials were the main reasons to implement the curriculum of 2023 for both teachers and students. Moreover, there has not been enough research focusing on how a competency-based curriculum implementation can affect rural area schools' students and teachers. They have also not focused on the reasons for which a curriculum can be cancelled and go back to the previous curriculum. As a result, it is important to examine the perceptions of English language teachers toward the significant change in the education system of 2023, their experience of the challenges they faced, their suggestions for implementing a curriculum successfully in the future, and their perspective on returning to the old curriculum. By resolving these issues, this study can help Bangladesh make better policy choices and develop its curricula more successfully.

1.5 Research Objectives:

1. To find out the perspective of students and teachers about new activities added in the English book of the 2023 curriculum.
2. Find out the major challenges students and teachers faced in coping with the 2023 curriculum.
3. Identify the improvements teachers suggest to overcome the difficulties with the 2023 curriculum.
4. To explore students' and teachers' views on the possibility of revising the curriculum.

1.6 Research Questions:

1. How did teachers and students feel regarding the additional lessons that have been included in the English textbook as part of the 2023 curriculum?
2. What were the main challenges that teachers and students had to overcome to adjust to the 2023 curriculum?
3. What changes would teachers recommend to face the challenges they had with the new curriculum?
4. What do teachers and students think about the possibilities for curriculum revision to improve the English language learning experience?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This section provides a review of the relevant literature regarding curriculum implementation, curriculum reformation in different countries, creative education in English language learning, assessment, and skill-based learning. The findings of the works of literature are shown in this section.

2.1 Curriculum Implementation

Putting together a curriculum means following the officially planned course content and process, using new ideas and methods to teach facts, skills, ideas, and meanings, and doing activities with students and teachers every day to make things less different. According to Arpa (2024), during implementation, people and groups learn to understand and adopt changes in their attitudes and actions. For implementation to work, there needs to be a safe space where trying new things is encouraged and teachers and school leaders can share ideas and trust each other. The curriculum is the structure and organization of a course or training program. It includes all the exercises, classes, materials, and tests designed to help students learn and improve in a particular subject. The curriculum is a guide for teachers to help them teach and for students to improve their skills and knowledge. Curriculum implementation is the process of putting a planned set of learning goals into action in schools, colleges, and other educational places. It means turning the curriculum's goals and content into real teaching and learning activities that happen in a classroom or similar environment. Curriculum application is when students take part in planned learning activities. Implementing courses is an ongoing and complicated process that requires teamwork from

many people, including parents, students, school leaders, lawmakers, and teachers. Curriculum implementation includes lesson planning, teaching methods, learning tools, testing and evaluation, adapting to different student needs, managing time and the classroom, professional growth, giving feedback, and ongoing improvement (Afangideh, 2009).

The implementation of the curriculum is a crucial, challenging, and unavoidable stage. This is because it is impossible to identify a curriculum's strengths and flaws, accomplishments, shortcomings, and inadequacies without putting them into practice. Finding a curriculum's flaws and shortcomings gives teachers the idea to restructure and examine the program. Generally speaking, every curriculum provides lesson plans, texts, teaching ideas, and assessment choices. To convert the curriculum into classroom activities, the instructor must apply it appropriately. The purpose of these curriculum exercises is to monitor and assess pupils' progress. However, issues may arise for educators, implementers, instructors, and school administration during all of these procedures. These issues may have to do with implementation. It is important to apply the curriculum. If not, students lose interest in that course, teachers become discouraged, and families become disappointed (Karakuş, 2021).

2.2 Creative Education and English Language Learning

Creative education is a teaching method that helps students develop their morals and create valuable things by maximizing their human potential. Since the goal of education is to help people reach their full potential, it naturally encourages creativity in a wide range of areas. So, imagination is what education is all about, and the point of creative education is to help people be more creative (Yong 2013).

The most recent education policy in Bangladesh made big changes to the test system, and the creative education system is one of the results. The students are graded on how well they can analyze things and understand themselves. It helps teachers connect with kids in ways that help them learn and grow, improve their social skills, promote learning through play, create fun learning spaces, and make the connection between the family and the school stronger. According to Beghetto and Karwowski (2018), people who study creativity are worried that schools might stop people from being creative and encourage everyone to be the same. Some reasons for the rise of creative learning in Bangladesh are that students are used to memorization (Shawkat, 2014), they use reference materials and tutoring, and they can only practice memorization of answers and getting good grades in a system that focuses on tests (Khan, 2012). Students would be taught how to think critically and solve problems in a variety of situations while working on this kind of system. Programs that encourage creativity in the classroom have become important in many countries around the world. Since 2001, China has seen creativity as an important part of education. Since World War II, Japan has included it in the curriculum, and as part of creative education, Singapore's Ministry of Education started the "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" program. Bangladesh's school system is not keeping up with the rest of the world's in terms of creativity. This is a problem because today's students will be the creative workers of tomorrow. In 2009, the creative education system was created as an attempt to move away from a traditional way of learning and towards a new, creative approach that can help kids learn how to explore. It was important to use an invention-based curriculum to help students develop their skills, but the program was very hard for both teachers and students to use (Tanny, 2020).

In the past, students continued their schooling and took tests with standard question papers. Now, students have to take tests in English worth 200 points. The first part concerns writing,

and the second part concerns language. Creative teaching methods can improve the first part of English, and the students might learn it better.

2.3 Assessment and Skilled-based Learning

Assessment is the process of judging how well a student did on a certain task (Harlan, 1994). According to Gipps, C. V. (1994), there are many ways to judge a student's work and performance, including formal exams and tests, direct and practical evaluations, assessments led by the teacher in the classroom, and portfolios. These meanings say that "educational assessment" can mean many different ways to collect information about how well students are doing and how they are learning. The rapid progress in science and technology has changed what is needed in school programs. Today's education system requires teachers to help students develop the skills they need to face current challenges. These skills, which include thinking critically, fixing problems, being creative and innovative, working in teams, and communicating, are called 21st-century skills (Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe, & Terry, 2013).

The process of evaluating a student's performance on a particular assignment is called an assessment (Harlan, 1994). There are numerous methods to evaluate a student's work and performance, including portfolios, teacher-led assessments in the classroom, direct and practical evaluations, and formal exams and tests (Gipps, C. V., 1994). According to these definitions, "educational assessment" can refer to a wide range of methods used to gather data regarding students' performance and learning. Formative and summative evaluations are two well-known methods of assessment. A growing concept used in many nations to evaluate their students is continuous or formative evaluation. Summative assessments at various educational levels are being gradually phased out in many industrialized nations. In New

Zealand, Developing Students' Assessment Capabilities (DANZ) was produced in 2009 as a consequence of a Ministry of Education-commissioned evaluation of assessment practices in the country (Absolum, Flockton, Hattie, Hipkins, and Reid, 2009). DANZ's focus is purposefully based on current AfL methods. "All young people should be educated in ways that develop their capacity to assess their learning" was the fundamental tenet of DANZ. Students need to become "assessment-capable" learners, according to a Position Paper on Assessment (Ministry of Education, 2010a), which was informed by the DANZ report. In contrast to other international assessment systems, where the student's assessment skills may not be viewed as central to the assessment process, New Zealand places a strong premium on pupils who are competent in taking assessments. Dixon, H., Hill, M., and Booth, B. (2016). The Chinese government has explicitly called for assessment reforms that shift evaluation systems toward more formative, authentic, and humanistic approaches to assessment, moving away from the transmission and memorization of "bookish" knowledge for purely ranking or selection purposes (Chen and Brown 2013; OECD 2011).

2.4 Global Perspectives on Curriculum Reform

Changes in education and social growth go hand in hand. Social growth is the material base of curricular reform, and it also sets the course of the reform. Basic education in China has changed eight times since the founding of the People's Republic of China (Yin, 2013; Zhong, 2006), and the ninth change is currently happening. According to the most recent round of curriculum changes, the goal of required education is to give young people principles, skills, and a strong sense of responsibility. The Curriculum Program and Curriculum Standards 2022 deal with the important issues of "why to teach," "how to teach," and "how to support

teaching" in a full and organized way. Since the start of the People's Republic of China, educational reform has grown along with the country's social and economic progress, making big changes all the time. Curriculum reform has slowly taken on the spirit of innovation and individual needs while still respecting what the country wants, from improving the level of education to strengthening basic skills. It is necessary to build a great curriculum system, reach the main goals of developing ability and virtue, and bring the curriculum and people up to date (Luo, 2023).

Curriculum changes seem to happen in New Zealand, too. The fact that math skills are getting worse over time in New Zealand is a sign of a bigger problem (Mullis et al., 2020; OECD, 2019). The country has had trouble with low math achievement for forty years. The problem was first found in the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) results in 1981. The third-form (year 9) students in New Zealand did the worst compared to students from other countries who took part (Hunter, 1998). The 1994–1995 Third International Mathematics and Science Study found that New Zealanders were not as good at math as the averages of fifty other countries in measurement, algebra, and numbers (place value, fractions, and computation) at the age levels that were tested (Holton, 2005; Hughes & Peterson, 2003; Thomas & Tagg, 2005). After coming to these conclusions, the government decided to spend \$75 million to fix what they saw as the problem with math teachers: they didn't know enough about the subject. The Ministry of Education started the Numeracy Development Project (NDP) in 2000 because of this (YoungLoveridge, 2010). The NDP was part of a full review of New Zealand's curriculum that began in the 1990s and ended with the 2007 National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). It has a statement of values and vision, as well as general education principles and key competencies. It is up to the teachers and schools to decide what to teach. The Achievement Objectives, which can be found at the

back of the national curriculum book, list what students will be able to do, or their skills and knowledge. The knowledge itself is not needed. There was a change from content to competencies between the early 1990s and the end of the text in 2007. Achievement objectives were added to the 1992 edition of the math program. The New Zealand Curriculum takes away students' mathematical and other subject knowledge by changing the focus from "knowledge-that" (subject ideas and related information) to "know-how-to" (skills and abilities). New Zealand's "learnification" of education covered up the fact that people didn't know how to do things during the switch to the outcomes-based education's "know-how-to." The teacher's job could also change a lot from being an expert in the field to helping students learn. The changes in New Zealand's education that happened when "knowledge-that" (subject ideas and related material) was taken out of the national curriculum in the decades after the 1990s have been strengthened by the learning method and outcomes-based education (Morrow, Rata, & Evans, 2022).

South Africa has made several efforts to change the curriculum. South Africa's first attempt at reform was progressivism. It focused on learner-centered changes that aimed to get rid of the old, politically tainted curriculum and replace it with a new one that fit the needs of the new society. This was like a lot of other systems that were just becoming more democratic and popular. It also changed the template from a list of requirements to a design for the curriculum that is based on results. Everyone knows this by now. Not as often talked about were two reforms going on at the same time: one for the General Education and Training (GET) band of education and another for the Further Education and Training (FET) band, which included grades 10–12, the last three years of school. Even though student performance and the overall state of South African education have gotten a little better over time (Van der Berg and Gustafsson 2017), most people still think the country's education

system is in trouble, even though there have been many changes to the curriculum. A recent study says that some subjects have too much "breadth of content," and there are also too many assessment activities (DPME/Department of Basic Education 2017). The Department of Education agrees that the CAPS needs to "focus on depth" instead of "content," and they suggest that some of the material be marked as "optional" or "for further study (Muller & Hoadley, 2022).

2.5 Negative and Positive aspects of implementing the 2023 curriculum

In 2012, NCTB made a new secondary curriculum in line with the National Education Policy 2010 as part of the process of developing the curriculum. The old curriculum's goal was to grow students as whole people so that they would become knowledgeable, skilled, logical, creative, patriotic workers who knew moral, social, and human values.

Chowdhury (2024) talks about the positive and negative impacts of the 2023 curriculum. He says that when the new program started in 2023, it was a big change for Bangladesh's school system. This change aimed to bring education up to date and improve its quality by putting more emphasis on competency-based learning over traditional memorization. The implementation of that new program had both pros and cons. A big part of the 2023 curriculum was helping students improve their skills and abilities so that they could be ready for the difficulties they would face in the real world. It stressed being creative, fixing problems, thinking critically, and communicating clearly. There were not as many public tests at that time. There were no longer any tests for the Junior School Certificate (JSC) or the Primary Education Completion (PEC). It stressed continuous assessment through projects,

homework, and tasks in the classroom. Subjects had been mixed up to encourage learning across disciplines. For example, STEM topics like math, science, technology, engineering, and art are combined to make learning more useful and integrated.

Bangladesh's 2023 curriculum had some problems and limits, as with any change in how schools work. It was very hard to come up with and standardize those new ways of testing. The new curriculum included information in a language that was not the students' first language, so it was very hard for them to learn. It was also very hard to make sure that all students, no matter their socioeconomic position, had the same chances to benefit from the new curriculum. It could make the differences in the quality of schooling between cities and rural areas even bigger. Both teachers and students needed time to get used to those new lessons. When everyone was getting used to the new system, performance might go down. Moreover, new curricula often needed the help and participation of parents to work. If parents do not get enough support and communication, it might be hard for them to help their kids with the new information. It's important to keep evaluating how well the program is working and taking input into account. However, this process could be difficult and take a long time, which would delay needed changes and improvements (Chowdhury, 2024). The old curriculum, on the other hand, relied too much on pressure, reference books, memorization, and tests. There was too much reliance on study tools and tutoring services, on top of the stress of textbooks and tests. In addition, this education plan from 2010 called for basic education up to Class 8 and secondary education up to Class 12. Neither of these things was done. Instead, things like board tests for students in 5th and 8th grades that weren't in the policy were put in place. Because there were so many more tests, the teaching centers and guidebook businesses grew (Muhammad, 2024).

2.6 Suitable curriculum for English-language learning

English language instruction has a long history in Bangladesh, which was part of the Indian subcontinent (now South Asia) under British authority. Although English was once considered the language of the elite, people from practically every level of Bangladeshi society now appreciate its value. Due to new advances in economic development, globalization, and labor market dynamics, English has become the lingua franca (Rouf & Mohamed, 2018).

According to Rouf & Mohamed (2018), to facilitate teaching and learning, teachers must use a learner-centered approach in class. Students can take an active role in their education by participating in cooperative activities, including debate, role-playing, and group projects. To engage pupils in the lessons, teachers should assign a range of tasks. Because each learner has a distinct learning style, teachers must address each student's obstacles to ensure learning for everyone. To encourage and sustain learning, teachers must connect new content to their students' past knowledge and experiences. Classes can be more engaging by including a range of educational resources.

Kapurani (2016) says in her study that linguists have attempted to improve language teaching methods throughout history, stressing oral proficiency over general language understanding in response to learners' demands. Before the nineteenth century, textbooks containing vocabulary, grammatical rules, and translation were used in language training. The emphasis was on the language's grammatical structure rather than its practical use in speaking and communicating. Beginning in the nineteenth century, improvements in foreign language training spread into the twentieth century. As a result, new approaches were developed to improve on previous ones. The introduction of new methods and approaches as the sole

solution, combined with a failure to overcome problems in foreign language acquisition, resulted in the rejection of previous systems such as the Grammar Translation Method and the Audio-lingual Method (Rodgers and Richards, 2001).

Regarding the 2023 curriculum of Bangladesh, it has not worked so much, but there are various studies on curriculum implementation. Some researchers worked on curriculum reformation and how it works to develop a nation's educational system. Some worked on which curriculum can be applied. In the aspect of Bangladesh, there has been talking about the competency-based learning method and how it can help students get rid of memorization and also how it works to make them able to connect to real-life situations. However, there has not been any study on how an underdeveloped nation like Bangladesh can be affected by implementing a competency-based curriculum, particularly in rural and marginalized areas. This study aims to fill this gap by examining English language teachers' perceptions of the 2023 curriculum in Bangladesh and will also explore the challenges faced by both teachers and students while implementing the curriculum in the classroom, especially in rural areas schools. This study will highlight important issues and provide helpful information for policymakers, teachers, and those who develop curriculums. The goal is to be suitable for Bangladesh, considering the economic and social condition of the people of Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative research method has been used in this research. A descriptive and exploratory study has been chosen to do qualitative research, as qualitative research is concerned with feelings, real-life experiences, and ideas (U.S. U. Eze, 2023). This research went for interviews with some participants to get information from their real-life experiences. For this reason, this research is conducted by qualitative method to get in-depth information from the participants' answers. Moreover, the research has focused on the detailed answers from the participants rather than taking yes/no answers to get proper information.

3.2 Participants

There were 10 participants in total for this research. As the curriculum of 2023 was applied in different classes, among the 10 participants, there were 5 students from classes 7 and 8, and the other 5 participants were English teachers from different schools. The students are named S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5. Teachers were named T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5. All the students and teachers were from Bangla medium schools because the new curriculum was introduced mainly for the Bangla medium schools. Moreover, the participants were selected based on some criteria, such as that both the teachers and students should be from Bangla medium schools, and also they must be Bangladeshi.

3.3 Sampling

The study used meaningful maximal variation sampling, and both male and female teachers from different Bangla-medium schools were requested to interact. Moreover, male and female students from different Bangla-medium schools were approached. Interested teachers and students were selected to collect the data. The questions were relevant to the research objectives and questions.

3.4 Data collection method

The study required appropriate data gathering to analyze the complete research. As the study is on the new curriculum in 2023, there has not been much work on it. Both the teachers and students were the main focus of this study. Since some people refused to participate in in-person interviews, both online and offline interviews were conducted. One teacher and two students attended a Zoom meeting, and the meetings were recorded while giving the interviews. Others attended in-person interviews, and their voices were recorded. But before interviewing them, they were explained about the topic of the study and also what would be the purpose of this study. Moreover, they had also confirmed that strict privacy would be maintained regarding their identity and information, and when they were ready for the interview, it started.

The study used a semi-structured interview and was conducted to interview the participants. In a semi-structured interview, there is the opportunity to ask more questions related to the given interview questions to explore depth-based information from the interviews. Due to its flexibility in obtaining in-depth information, this method was chosen for this study.

Some participants consented to recording their voices with a mobile recorder, but some were not comfortable with it. Those who were not comfortable recording their answers were noted. Because of their shyness, some participants preferred to write down their perspectives, and printed questionnaires were provided to make them comfortable.

3.5 Data analysis method

After the interview, the study analyzed the data based on the answers of the participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data to understand the perspective of the study. To get accurate results, all of the interview data was first transcribed and then read carefully to identify the themes and meanings. Bringing attention to the most relevant aspects of the data, codes were assigned. Following a connection check, the codes were organized into topics. Then, the data was evaluated, and themes were extracted from the interviews using thematic analysis. This made it easier to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

As a foreign language, English is not spoken widely by the Bangladeshi people. Most of the Bangla medium schools do not have any mandatory rules for the students to speak in English with each other in their English classrooms. Teachers also prefer to speak in their mother

tongue with the students in classrooms and outside of classrooms. As a result, students in our country do not have a vast knowledge of the English language, and they focus on memorizing English grammar and other things to do well in exams. In this regard, a revised curriculum was introduced in 2023 for classes 7 and 8 that had the goals of developing students' ability to communicate in English with each other and also acquiring all 4 skills of the English language. Both teachers and students had gone through a lot of changes and challenges, and after analyzing collected data from some students and teachers, it is known that they had different perspectives about the 2023 curriculum. The study will discuss the findings from the interviews of both teachers and students. There will be discussion about teachers' and students' reactions to the 2023 curriculum, challenges faced by both teachers and students during the implementation of the new curriculum, their suggestions about improving the curriculum, and also teachers' perspectives about going back to the previous curriculum.

4.1 Teachers' and students' reactions to the 2023 curriculum

Because the 2023 curriculum was completely new, teachers and students discussed different topics throughout the interviews, and also, there were many significant changes in that curriculum, such as reducing the memorization system, eliminating the traditional exam system as well as the marking system, and moving to practical learning. Both teachers and students showed positive and negative attitudes toward the new classroom engagement, and they also expressed their concern about not having a properly structured exam and marking system. This chapter looks at how teachers and students reacted to the changes in the 2023 curriculum. It explains the good sides and the problems they faced while using the new system.

4.1.1 Reduction of memorization system

The 2023 curriculum was a great opportunity to reduce the memorization system in Bangladesh. Students of our country rely on memorization rather than acquiring actual knowledge. Before the 2023 curriculum, Creative (Srijonshil) education was introduced in 2008 to make a creative education system. For now, creative education has failed to make students creative and critical thinkers. T1 said, *“In creative education, students used to read many guidebooks that had different questions and answers on a story, poem, or topic. As a result, our students used to memorize them, and they could get questions similar to the guidebooks in exams”*. According to a teacher, creative (Srijonshil) education was not a perfect education system for Bangladesh, and also, teachers were not properly trained to apply that curriculum in the right way. Muhammad (2024) talks about the old curriculum, or the Srijonshil method in his research. The old curriculum relied too much on pressure, reference books, and memorization, and there were so many more tests that the teaching centers and guidebook businesses grew.

Another teacher (T2) had a positive attitude towards the 2023 curriculum by mentioning, *“In the previous curriculum in our school, I used to make notes for the students so that they could memorize them, but in the new curriculum I focused on their participation; for example, I discussed a lesson in the classroom and asked them to make questions and answers on their own, and then in the next class, I used to check them. In that way, they could show their creativity because different students made different questions on a specific lesson”*. T5 also showed a positive attitude by saying, *“When I heard about the 2023 curriculum for the very first time, I did not take it negatively because I used to think that there must be some changes in education”*. She also said that, *“The previous curriculum or the creative education was*

applied to every subject except the English subject because students had to read passages and then had to answer fill-in-the-gaps, multiple choices and others. Moreover, students had to memorize the writing part. But in this 2023 curriculum, students were not bound to memorize anything because they had to focus on real-world learning". It can be said that the 2023 curriculum could change education to reduce memorization.

Moreover, in that curriculum, there was no fixed syllabus or time. One of the goals of the curriculum was to finish the contents in the classroom so that students did not have to be under any pressure at home. As a result, the classroom period used to be longer than usual class time, and sincere teachers followed these things so that they could finish the contents and discuss them with students to keep them from memorization.

S1 expressed, *"The changes in our education system were important because the new curriculum focused on practical aspects rather than just memorization which could be helpful for us to prepare for real-world situations"*. Another student (S3) also expressed, *"In the previous curriculum, we had a lot of pressure in the study because we had to memorize the writing parts of English but in the 2023 curriculum we did not have to memorize anything because there was nothing in the textbook to memorize. It was a good thing for me"*. *"In the previous curriculum, I used to memorize a lot of paragraphs, stories, compositions, and also grammatical structures from many guidebooks or grammar books to do well in exams, but it was not easy for me. So, I liked the system of the 2023 curriculum because there was no memorization system, which decreased my mental pressure before the exam"*, said a student S5.

In the previous curriculum of creative education, students still had to memorize the writing parts of English subjects, and also they had to memorize grammatical rules. Moreover, they

barely used to read textbooks, and they focused more on guidebooks. However, in the 2023 curriculum, there were attachments in textbooks so that students could practice reading them. Both students and teachers expressed a positive attitude in this matter because they got the chance to read textbooks rather than guidebooks.

4.1.2 No exam, no marking

Before the 2023 curriculum, there were PSC exams for class five, JSC exams for class eight, SSC exams for class 10, and HSC exams for class 12. PSC and JSC were introduced in Bangladesh in 2009 and 2010. Both students and parents used to be under great pressure from primary school because of those exams. They seemed to be afraid of exams and used to be very pressured to solve questions. Lessening their pressure, the 2023 curriculum followed a no-exam and was assessment-based.

“In the new curriculum, we did not have any pressure in exams as before. I felt very relaxed because I did not have to get tense to finish my syllabus and also did not have to think about getting 80/90 marks. I liked the curriculum because it was based on assessments, group work, and role play.” S5 expressed that she was very satisfied with the 2023 curriculum because there were no exams and no pressure to get good marks. They had to sit for only 2 exams a year, and in the exams, they had to sit in groups and discuss with one another so they could complete their exams.

On the other hand, other students were fed up with the new marking system and not having a traditional examination system. S1 said, *“There was no traditional examination system in the 2023 curriculum, and I mostly was about to go away from education. I think the examination*

system is very necessary for the students of Bangladesh”. S3 also expressed, “I preferred an exam system like the old curriculum because, in the old curriculum, I had a feeling of competition to do well in exams than others. But when we had no proper exam system in the 2023 curriculum and also no marking system like before, I lost concentration from studying. I would also mention that me and my classmate used to get questions before exams and there were a lot of chances to cheat in the exam room because the exam time was 5-6 hours and teachers did not focus on us most of the time”.

Students who were very concerned about their studies showed a negative attitude towards the no-examination system because they did not understand their progress in their study, and they did not know where they should improve themselves. As a result, they preferred to get back the examination system of the old curriculum. This reaction to getting back to the old traditional examination system rather than the no-examination system of the 2023 curriculum refers to a negative washback. Washback refers to the impact of tests on teachers' instructional methods and students' learning processes, and it can be both positive and negative. The new examination system had a positive washback in the learning system as it reduced pressure from students and gave them chances to acquire real-world knowledge rather than memorizing bookish knowledge for only doing well in exams. But Students' negative reaction towards the examination system of 2023 and preferring a well-designed exam system shows the negative washback.

In terms of marking, teachers showed a negative attitude. According to the teachers, marking students as circles, triangles, and squares was not a perfect evaluation. They had to use a triangle” to express “very good performance, ” a square” for “bad performance,” and a circle” for “satisfied performance,” by which students did not understand how much effort they

should give. T1 expresses *“We teachers were very confused about the marking system and most of the time we used to give the same marks to all the students which was not an actual evaluation”*. T2 also said, *“The marking system was very hard for me because marking them as circle, triangle, and square was quite difficult to understand and still I do not understand the process of marking system”*. Similarly, T5 gave her opinion by saying *“Students who were engaged in more activities in the classroom, I used to mark them properly, and those who were not engaged in class activities used to get average marks. I prefer the old marking system because by this students can evaluate themselves for example, if one gets 40/100, he/she can understand she/he needs to do better in the future. But they could not understand their progress and regress in education by the new marking system”*. T4 also expressed the same thing by saying, *“Actually I couldn't evaluate every student in every task. Most of the time, we teachers used to evaluate them by their class performance”*.

Proper evaluation of students is an important part of an education system because if students are evaluated very carefully, they can know their failings as well as their progress in their studies. The making system of the 2023 curriculum had a positive washback in the education system because the goal of the marking system was to encourage students to continue their studies rather than lose interest from studies getting poor marks in examinations. But the 2023 curriculum could not bring this opportunity to students and teachers, and there is a negative washback in terms of the teachers' reaction to the marking system. They mentioned that the 2023 marking system was very confusing to them and that students did not understand their progress in education. Additionally, teachers prefer to return to the old marking system rather than the new marking system of 2023.

4.2 Challenges of the New Curriculum

The new curriculum was introduced in 2023 for all Bangla medium schools in both rural and urban areas. Numerous changes were made in the education system, such as the teaching approach, techniques, learning approach, and so on. New books were given to all the students to adjust to the changes in the new curriculum. In the process of the curriculum, both teachers and students had to face a lot of challenges.

4.2.1 Lack of training

At the beginning of the 2023 curriculum, teachers were very confused about the teaching approaches, and they did not even know what their role should be in the classroom, as the new classrooms were instructed to be student-centric rather than teacher-centric. Moreover, one of the teachers (T3) expressed, *“In our school, we got training about the 2023 curriculum lately, and the training was not practical. As a teacher, it was a new teaching system, and because I did not get proper practical training, I found it very difficult to understand. If I got proper training, it would be easier to understand the new teaching system”*. T5 also expressed something about not getting practical training by saying, *“Though we teachers of our school got training for the 2023 curriculum, the training was not practical as the education system was practical or teaching students real-world activities. Rather than that, we were informed about some areas which we had to adapt to teach students but we did not get training practically in classrooms with students”*. *“I think the training I got was proper training but it was a 7-day training which was not enough to understand the whole 2023 curriculum. Most importantly, our trainer was also facing many problems with the new*

curriculum”, expressed T1. T2 said, “In our school, we trained only for 2 days. First, 1 day we got training to be motivated to go into a new curriculum, and the next day we got to know the rules and techniques”.

Getting proper training was an important part of the 2023 curriculum because there was a huge change in the education system. For both teachers and students, the curriculum was new, and they were very confused. If the teachers had gotten proper and practical training, it would have been beneficial for them and the students because well-trained teachers could deal with students properly without any confusion.

4.2.2 Lack of resources

The curriculum was about to be implemented with a lot of expectations to change the education system of Bangladesh. However, there were various challenges for teachers and students, and there was also a lack of resources in large classrooms. The lack of technological resources was also a barrier to the 2023 curriculum.

T1 and T5 expressed the same feeling about the resources of Bangladesh to implement a different curriculum like the 2023 Assessment-based curriculum. One of them said, *“I think there were no proper resources to implement the curriculum. Although there were some resources available in urban schools, there was a lack of resources in rural area schools. As a teacher in a rural area, I have dealt with a lack of technology and modern teaching aids like computers, projectors, and internet facilities. It was very difficult to implement the 2023 curriculum because it was a technology-based curriculum”.* Another teacher (T4) also said, *“That curriculum was about to be implemented in small classrooms with 20/25 students. We*

had the opposite scenario in our classrooms. Bangladesh does not have enough schools with enough resources or numbers of classrooms where classrooms can be for 20/25 students". T2 expressed her feelings about the resources of Bangladesh to implement the 2023 curriculum differently by saying "To implement the 2023 curriculum there needed to be a natural environment which was available in rural schools and not available in urban schools. On the other hand, some modern opportunities in urban schools were not available in rural schools. It was not possible to get both things from specific areas' schools".

4.2.3 Too difficult to adopt

The 2023 curriculum was a great change in Bangladesh's education system because most of the teaching-learning system was very new for both teachers and students. The curriculum was an assessment-based curriculum whose main goal was to make students creative and critical thinkers and also reduce the memorization systems. Adopting the curriculum was difficult for both teachers and students. *"At the very beginning of the curriculum and also till now, I was very demotivated to adopt such a new curriculum because I found it very tough to understand, and it took a long time for me to understand the question pattern"*, expressed a teacher (T3).

There was no specific syllabus for the 2023 curriculum, and the contents were designed so that teachers had to describe them to the students, and then students had to do group work to discuss them with others. In this way, they finished the chapters of their textbooks. For this reason, the question pattern was quite different from the previous curriculum, which was not very easy for the teachers to understand. According to Chowdhury (2024), the new

curriculum included information in a language that was not the students' first language, so it was very hard for them to learn.

T2 also expressed, *“There were various topics in English which were not easy for me. As a result, I had to prepare myself before taking the class. I used to read many books and also search many topics on the internet to get the information because there was not enough information in the new English textbook. For example, there were some topics that we teachers had to discuss in class and explain. It was not easy to explain them without preparation as they were new to us,”*. T4 said, *“Some topics in the English textbook were very tough to me because there were many high standard vocabularies and there were also some ELT terms like metaphor, simile which were sometimes tough to understand for me. As a teacher, I found them tough. Now, think how tough they should be for the students!”* The same thing was said by T5: *“The textbooks for class 6/7 students were quite easy and understandable for me to teach students, but 8/9 class textbooks were written in higher standard language. Things we got in our honors or masters were in the textbooks of class 8/9. As a result, students were very demotivated to learn those kinds of tough teaching materials. Moreover, being a teacher, I learned those things almost 8/9 years ago, and I had to get the idea of those contents from the internet or any other sources. It was a challenge for me”*.

There were mixed opinions among students. S1 showed a mixed attitude by saying, *“I would say, the book was written in a high style, and there were many tough words or structures which were not suitable for our level. But still, I would say the book was meaningful. Moreover, there were many new topics like dialogues, and practical activities like poster making, public speaking, and so on to improve our confidence. Besides, there were many*

more things in textbooks that were quite helpful in learning the English language and these were not available in the old curriculum". S2 also had mixed opinions because she said, "For me, the topics were quite understandable but I must say those who were weak in English had to face a lot of problems in the new English curriculum". S3 and S4 expressed, "There were few things in the English textbook like some vocabularies were very tough for me but when my teachers explained them to me, I could understand".

4.2.4 Problems in Large Classrooms

"We teachers had to deal with a large classroom of 80-90 students, it was very tough to focus on every student while doing group work or other activities in the classroom. Moreover, students mostly used to talk to each other rather than working together. Most of the time, only one student from each group used to work, and out of 80-90 students, there were only 10-15 students who were interested in learning English. As a result, I couldn't concentrate on all of the students", expressed T5. T4 also said, "It was very tough to implement the curriculum because of large classrooms with 120-180 students in my school". On the other hand, T2 and T4 expressed, "I am a teacher of a private school, and most of the classrooms of my school are quite small with 20-30 students but I saw many teachers of public schools who had to face a lot of difficulties managing classrooms with 70-80 students. It was very easy for us to evaluate every student properly while doing group work, pair work, presentations, and so on. Moreover, we could do marking properly as there were few students in our classrooms. But these were very difficult to manage for the teachers of public schools".

Students also expressed their opinions on large classroom situations. S1 said, *“In my school, there were 70 students in a classroom. For this reason, it was very tough for the teachers to make students engage in an activity. There were a few activities in which I was able to participate”*. Another student named S3 and S4 expressed, *“Because of a large number of students, my teacher could not concentrate on all the students while doing group work or pair work. As a result, I never got proper feedback from my teacher”*.

According to the interviews with teachers, large classrooms were a great barrier to the 2023 curriculum. It is known to all that most of the government schools of Bangladesh contain large classrooms with 70-80 students, and they are from different cultures and backgrounds and have different attitudes. According to Hasan (2018), a classroom is considered well-disciplined when students are physically and mentally involved and feel at ease. But a teacher can't create a peaceful environment in a classroom with 70-80 students. In such classrooms, teachers are not able to communicate with all the students other than the more attentive students, and inattentive students do not pay attention to acquiring knowledge. This was not considered a big issue in the previous curriculum, but in this 2023 curriculum, teachers have to evaluate students according to their performance in the classroom and also their communication skills. One of the teachers expressed that she had to face a lot of problems while checking 60-70 students' scripts, and she couldn't evaluate them properly. She also mentioned that she used to give triangles to all the students, which was a complaint from students because they said that it was possible to get the same result for all of them. The consequence is that students lose their motivation to study, and inattentive students get more chances to get away from studying. Moreover, this created less engagement of students in creative tasks and critical thinking.

4.3 Suggestions for Curriculum Change

All the teachers showed a negative attitude toward the 2023 curriculum when they were asked whether the 2023 curriculum was aligned with global English education standards. For example, T2 said, *“Bangladesh has two educational systems: Bangla medium and English medium. Only the English medium education system can be aligned with global English education standards. In the context of Bangla versions, it needs more time to align with global English education standards”*. To improve the education system, she expressed, *“The authorities who came up with several curriculums till now are academics from the higher education sectors, and they can easily understand the goals of every curriculum. On the other hand, all the teachers in our country are not capable of adopting curriculum changes, and most of them do not properly understand them”*. She also added, *“if the government could assign teachers with proper training and skills, it could make the curriculum successful. Moreover, to implement a curriculum in Bangladesh, the economic status of Bangladesh should be focused on first, and then international standards should be emphasized. If we do not think about the economic status of Bangladesh and think about bringing huge changes in education focusing on the International education system, then it is not possible to implement a curriculum like 2023 in Bangladesh. Besides, a committee should be formed with the teachers of primary, secondary, and madrasa levels. Another thing is, that students from the Bangladesh Institute of Education and Research should come forward to improve the education system of Bangladesh”*. According to T1, *“curriculum development is an important issue today. Some aspects can be developed according to the goals and needs of education. For example, there should be a Balance in the acquisition of knowledge and skills by developing practical skills and problem-solving skills rather than just memorizing books and including activities that help students develop critical thinking and creativity. Moreover,*

incorporating programming, digital literacy, and online learning platforms into the curriculum makes students experts in technology and provides access to virtual labs and e-learning materials”.

T5 also expressed her opinion by saying, *“I think students did not learn anything in English that was aligned with the International English language standards because they had to learn contents like class 3-4 levels. For example, what is a noun? What is an adjective? Etc. They learned very basic things. Moreover, the 2023 curriculum claimed that it would help students to improve their speaking skills but the real scenario was they used to engage in gossiping with each other rather than doing tasks and one teacher couldn't control 80-90 students”.* For this reason, she suggested, *“I think that children from primary level should be introduced with translating Bangla to English by which when they will go to the upper level of education they will understand English language and also English grammar from their very early age”.* *“If the government can provide economic opportunities to the schools of urban and rural areas so that both teachers and students can use proper technological resources, a curriculum like 2023 can be implemented successfully”,* said T3.

Various shortcomings have been mentioned by the teachers about English language learning, and the suggestions they mentioned are very important for implementing a curriculum. Students also gave their opinions about improving the curriculum.

S1 gave his suggestion to improve the English curriculum by saying, *“I would suggest that the textbook of English should be more knowledgeable to make us able to be critical thinkers and the textbook should focus on the English language like tone, pronunciation, words, and*

so on” as he mentioned before in the interview, *“I think I was able to improve 3 of my English language skills and I would say it is not possible to improve all 4 skills only by reading a textbook. But there were very few activities for listening skills”*. S2 also suggested that an ideal curriculum should be balanced in every section along with proper grammar, vocabulary, and real-life communication activities and should also include some interesting activities to encourage students to learn English. S3 also gave the same suggestion because she also said that there were no proper reading and listening activities in the English textbook.

4.4 Perspectives on Returning to the Previous Curriculum

The new government of 2024 had decided to go back to the old curriculum because many concerns had been raised regarding the 2023 curriculum. Implementing the 2023 curriculum started with facing many challenges, such as a lack of resources, teachers' preparation to cope with that, and an unsuitable classroom environment for the curriculum. In this regard, different perspectives came up from the teachers throughout the interviews.

About going back to the old curriculum, T1 showed a positive attitude by saying, *“It is good to go to the old curriculum because teachers and students from rural areas did not follow all the new changes. Moreover, students from rural areas had to do activities like bringing food from home, making crafted things, and so on because they were not economically able to buy things to do those activities. Going to the old curriculum would be helpful for them in this case”*. T2 expresses, *“I think that creative education is better than the 2023 curriculum and it will be more successful to implement if teachers get enough training about creative education. I would like to add that the combination of the curriculum before creative*

education and creative education can be a good curriculum rather than going back to creative education". T4 said, "I would say that rather than going back to the old curriculum, we should combine the old and 2023 curriculum because 2023 curriculum could improve students real-life learning skills and also make them able to go with the modern world where the old curriculum had some organized education system like exam system, marking system and so on".

4.5 Recommendations

It is already known that the 2023 curriculum has been canceled in 2024 due to a political issue that happened in July 2024. Within the short period of the new education system of 2023, students and teachers were pleased with some aspects, and some were unsatisfying to them. After getting the data from both teachers' and students' experiences, it was understood that all the students and teachers were not able to cope with the 2023 curriculum, though they also mentioned some positive attitudes towards the 2023 curriculum.

The idea of the 2023 curriculum was taken from other developed countries' education systems, where students are more self-dependent and more capable of doing real-world activities, whereas Bangladeshi students are stuck in the typical memorization system. Many teachers have mentioned that this curriculum is not for a country like Bangladesh because there are no proper resources to implement this curriculum. To implement a curriculum like 2023, where students can come out from the traditional education system, Bangladesh has to go forward to develop first. Without being a developed country, there cannot be any

educational system like the 2023 curriculum. Moreover, teachers and students should also come out of the traditional education system and be focused on being more advanced and going into the modern world rather than exam-based learning.

In this study, it can be understood how a curriculum can be implemented and for what reasons a curriculum can be canceled. It also can be understood who is the most affected by a changing curriculum. The goal of the 2023 curriculum was to make both students and teachers creative and advanced in communicating with the real world, by which a country can have a positive impact politically and economically. But it is a sad fact that there are not enough resources in our country to implement this curriculum, and also people of our country are used to the old traditional education system. Due to a lack of resources like the internet, technological support, and large classrooms with huge numbers of students, the 2023 curriculum was mostly unpleasant and demotivating for most of the teachers and students. So to say, before implementing a new curriculum, a country like Bangladesh must be developed enough with proper resources and environment.

The examination system should have been included in the curriculum because students become more motivated when they have to sit in examinations also there should be marking systems like A+, A, A-, and B rather than triangles, circles, and rectangles because students do not understand their progress by getting triangle or circle or rectangle. Marking in numbers was also demotivating for them in the old curriculum because students who got less than 33% were considered failures, which had negative effects on them. Moreover, many studies showed that several curricula had been implemented to improve English language learning, but those were not successful in focusing on the four skills of English equally; even the 2023 curriculum could not improve students' four skills of the English language. There

should be a curriculum where all four skills will be focused in the same way to prepare students for the modern world.

Chapter 5

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study because there is no research on how the new curriculum affected rural area students and teachers as the 2023 curriculum was implemented for all the secondary school students of Bangladesh. Throughout this study, there had been a focus on the teachers' and students' perceptions of the implementation of the 2023 curriculum. Moreover, different researchers' studies on implementing new curricula in different countries were also shown in this study. However, there remains a question about how a new curriculum can be implemented in rural schools because there is a lack of resources in rural areas, and teachers from these areas are not well-trained. Moreover, this study did not focus on the importance of the fact that the government of a country like Bangladesh should keep in mind that there should be some special opportunities for rural school students and teachers to overcome the barriers. Besides, what a country should do to make a new curriculum successful and what initiatives should be taken if a new curriculum fails to be implemented, both students and teachers have to face a lot of challenges when a new curriculum is canceled and the country goes back to the old curriculum.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The 2023 curriculum was introduced in Bangladesh with many goals to bring fruitful changes to the education system, where authority and policymakers were also expecting to go into a new learning atmosphere. One of the most important goals of this curriculum was to reduce the memorization system and create a pressureless education environment. Moreover, the intention was to make students more creative by providing them with real-life activities and critical thinking tasks. In the old curriculum system, students were loaded with a lot of examination pressures and memorization-based learning systems. For this reason, students barely focused on being creative. To convert the education system into a creative educational system, the government introduced a new curriculum in 2023.

The findings of this study revealed that both students and teachers had gone through a lot of changes in the classroom and education systems. In the old curriculums of Bangladesh, classrooms used to be teacher-based rather than student-based, but in the new curriculum, the classrooms were mostly student-based because students were given many tasks like role-play, group work, presentations, and so on to communicate with others while doing these tasks, which developed their communication skills. A great change happened in the English textbook with pictures, and students had to describe the pictures. There are many dialogues to role-play, many problem-solving tasks, project-based learning, and so on. All these tasks and activities were designed in such a way that students could do them in the classroom, and teachers had to give them feedback and instruct what to do and what not to do. There was no traditional examination system or marking system. Students had to sit for 5 hours on the exam, where they were given assessments and then marked them as squares, triangles, and

circles. In this regard, according to the students, they did not get enough feedback, and also, all the students in the classroom used to get triangles, which was not appropriate for them. Teachers, on the other hand, expressed that they received short training, which made them confused about the curriculum, and the large classroom was the main reason for not being able to evaluate the students properly.

However, through the 2023 curriculum, the authorities and policymakers wanted to bring a change to the education system of Bangladesh. According to the teachers, the curriculum could make students creative and critical thinkers and also could make them able to communicate with others to go with the modern world. Insufficient training, resources, environment, time, and political situation made the policy of the new curriculum more critical for both teachers and students. As a result, most of the teachers and students prefer the old curriculum as they are used to the traditional education system.

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Appendix A.

Instruments

Teachers' Perception:

1. Since when have you been in this teaching profession?
2. Can you share your experience as an English teacher?
3. Are you familiar with curriculum changes in the past? If so, please explain.
4. What was your first reaction when you heard about the curriculum 2023 and what instructions did you receive for it?
5. Did you receive proper training for the 2023 new curriculum and was it helpful to implement?
6. In Bangladesh, are there enough resources available to implement this curriculum effectively? Please explain.
7. What were the main goals of this curriculum?
8. Do you feel the 2023 curriculum aligned with global English language education standards? Why or why not?
9. How had the 2023 curriculum changed your teaching approach?
10. Did you have to make any changes to arrange the class?
11. What aspects of the current curriculum do you think should be revised or improved to make it more effective?
12. In your opinion, what type of curriculum changes would be better to support student learning and engagement?

13. What specific changes would you suggest for the curriculum to better suit the needs of students and teachers in the current educational context?
14. How do you think the curriculum can be improved to overcome the challenges you have faced while implementing it?

Students Perceptions:

1. Are you familiar with the new curriculum of 2023? If so, did you notice any changes in your English class? What were they?
2. How did your teachers explain the curriculum to you?
3. How did you feel about the new English textbook in 2023? Did you find it interesting or boring?
4. Did you find the contents of the English book easy and understandable? If so, how?
5. Did you find any new activity added in the 2023 textbook? Did you find them interesting?
6. Do you think the new curriculum helped you to improve your four skills Listening, speaking, Reading, and writing? How?
7. Were there more opportunities for classroom participation? If so, please explain.
8. How did you improve your communication skills in the 2023 curriculum?
9. What is your opinion about assessment-based learning?
10. Did your teacher give more feedback than the previous curriculum? Give me an example.
11. What do you think about multiple changes in curriculum and do you think it is important to change? Explain.

12. From your perspective, what an ideal English language curriculum should be like?

Data Transcription

Teachers' Perception

1. Since when have you been in this teaching profession?

T1: I have been employed as a teacher since 2022, though I have 9 years of teaching experience.

T2: I have been in the teaching profession since 2020

T3: I have been in the teaching profession since 2011.

T4: I have been in the teaching profession since 2004.

T5: I have been in the teaching profession since 2016.

2. Can you share your experience as an English teacher?

T1: As an English teacher, I find teaching my subject very enjoyable and it helps me recognize my mistakes and learn new things.

T2: I have mixed experience as an English teacher. I have to deal with students with different mentalities, backgrounds, and knowledge.

T3: I have different experiences as an English teacher. Sometimes I enjoy it and sometimes it is challenging. I have to deal with different categories of students because some students can learn easily whereas some students do not understand easily. It is a matter of happiness when I can teach them the English language and they successfully learn it.

T4: I enjoy my teaching profession as an English teacher.

T5: I have both positive and negative experiences as an English teacher. There are different students with different knowledge levels and I have to deal with them.

3. Are you familiar with curriculum changes in the past? If so, please explain.

T1: Yes, I am familiar with curriculum changes. There was creative education, another curriculum before the creative education, and then came the 2023 curriculum.

T2: Yes, I am familiar with curriculum changes in Bangladesh, such as the 2023 curriculum, the creative curriculum, and the curriculum before creative education. So, I have different experiences with different curriculums. In creative education, memorization was a practice, though the goal was to reduce the memorization system and make students creative. However, students ultimately memorized even the creative questions from guidebooks. After creative education, the 2023 curriculum was introduced with different goals, like reducing memorization, making creative education, and so on.

T3: Yes I am familiar with curriculum changes. Before the 2023 curriculum, there was creative education in which students had to answer creative questions rather than copying from textbooks. Then the 2023 curriculum was introduced where students had to do group work and I saw that all the students did not work in groups but they all got the same result.

T4: Yes, I am familiar with different curriculum changes in Bangladesh. Before 2012, there was a curriculum which was based on memorization. Then creative education was introduced to make students creative rather than focusing on memorization. But the creative education could not achieve its goal and then the 2023 curriculum was introduced which was called assessment-based learning.

T5: yes, I have experienced curriculum change two times in my teaching career and they were creative education and then the 2023 curriculum. The previous curriculum or creative

education was applied to every subject except the English subject because students had to read passages and then answer fill-in-the-gaps, multiple choices, and others. Moreover, students had to memorize the writing part. But in this 2023 curriculum, students were not bound to memorize anything because they had to focus on real-world learning.

4. What was your first reaction when you heard about the new curriculum 2023 and what instructions did you receive for it?

T1: I was excited and thrilled to learn about the new curriculum. I liked it. When I taught the students, I did not receive any official guidelines directly, but the following year when I underwent training, I learned a lot about this curriculum, and each teacher was given a helper book on specific subjects.

T2: When I first learned about the 2023 curriculum, it was normal for Bengalis not to accept a new idea. The first thing that came to mind was that it was not a good curriculum. However, when I understood its goal, I realized that it could not be a bad curriculum.

T3: I was very confused about the new curriculum before training.

T4: As I did not have proper knowledge about the new curriculum, I was confused but when I got training there was one thing on my mind that would be appropriate in our country.

T5: When I heard about the 2023 curriculum for the very first time, I did not take it negatively because I used to think that there must be some changes in education.

5. Did you receive proper training for the new curriculum and was it helpful to implement?

T1: I received proper training, but a 7-day training was not sufficient for us and our trainer also faced many challenges.

T2: No, I did not get proper training because I got 2 days training. The first day of the training was motivational so that we could accept the new curriculum and after that day I became very motivated to accept the curriculum because I got to know the goals that could have a great effect on our education system. However, we did not have enough training about the method of applying the curriculum in the classroom.

T3: I received short, theoretical training of 2-3 days. As everything was new for us, it would have been better if we had received practical training.

T4: The training was enough to know about the curriculum. The training was 7 days, which was not enough.

T5: Though we teachers of our school got training for the 2023 curriculum, the training was not practical as the education system was practical or teaching students real-world activities. Rather than that, we were informed about some areas which we had to adapt to teach students but we did not get training practically in classrooms with students.

6. In Bangladesh, are there enough resources available to implement this curriculum effectively? Please explain.

T1: I think there were no proper resources to implement the curriculum. Although there were some resources available in urban schools there was a lack of resources in rural area schools. As a teacher in a rural area, I have experienced a lack of technology and modern teaching aids like computers, projectors, and internet facilities. It was very difficult to implement the 2023 curriculum because it was a technology-based curriculum.

T2: To implement the 2023 curriculum there needed to be a natural environment that was available in rural schools and not available in urban schools. On the other hand, some modern

opportunities in urban schools were not available in rural schools. It was not possible to get both things from specific areas' schools.

T3: If we think about rural schools, there were not enough resources because in rural areas there was a lack of electricity production.

T4: No. The curriculum was not appropriate for a country like Bangladesh because Bangladesh does not have the economic conditions to implement that kind of curriculum.

T5: No. I would like to say that schools in urban areas might have proper resources to implement that curriculum but rural area schools did not have those resources.

7. What were the main goals of this curriculum?

T1: The new curriculum's goal was to introduce a modern, skill-based, and effective education system for students, moving them away from solely exam-based education and toward acquiring real-life skills.

T2: We were told that job sectors, such as IT, agriculture, and freelancing, would undergo a huge change in the next 40 years. One of the goals of the 2023 curriculum was to help students acquire the knowledge they need to work in these sectors. Another goal was to turn our education system into an international one and teach our children so that they could enter it

T3: There were some goals of that curriculum like students will learn by speaking, hearing, or writing. But because of not getting proper training, we could not teach them properly.

T4: The main goal of that curriculum was reducing the memorization system from the learning method of our students and making students critical thinkers and self-dependent.

T5: The main goal was to teach students real-life education. Students had to compare everything they learned to real-life situations.

8. Do you feel the 2023 curriculum is aligned with global English language education standards? Why or why not?

T1: It was partially aligned with global English language learning.

T2: Bangladesh has two educational systems Bangla medium and English medium. Only the English medium education system can be aligned with global English education standards. In the context of Bangla versions, it needs more time to align with global English education standards.

T3: Compared to the previous curriculum, there was a chance to practice English practically in the 2023 curriculum which was close to aligning with global English language learning because by learning English from real-life experience students could go forward to cope with international education. But in the 2023 curriculum, there were no details on grammar to teach which was lacking.

T4: I do not think that the 2023 curriculum was aligned with global English education standards. The world is advancing so fast but there were not enough things in the English learning process of the 2023 curriculum to make the students go through the modern world.

T5: I think students did not learn anything in English that was aligned with the International English language standards because they had to learn contents like class 3-4 levels. For example, what is a noun? What is an adjective? Etc. They learned very basic things.

9. How has the new curriculum changed your teaching approach?

T1: In the marking system, there was a huge change. We teachers were very confused about the marking system and most of the time we used to give the same marks to all the students which was not an actual evaluation.

T2: In our school's previous curriculum, I made notes for the students so that they could memorize them, but in the new curriculum, I focused on their participation. For example, I discussed a lesson in the classroom and asked them to create questions and answers on their own. Then, in the next class, I checked them. That way, they could show their creativity because different students asked different questions in a specific lesson.

T3: In the 2023 curriculum, Group work was a new thing that added to my teaching approach and also I had to give feedback on that.

T4: Besides teaching them contents from textbooks we had to engage them in various activities such as groupworks, pair works, debates, and so on which was a huge change in our teaching approach compared to the previous curriculum.

T5: The textbooks for class 6/7 students were quite easy and understandable for me to teach students but 8/9 class textbooks were written in a high educational system. Things we got in our honors or masters, were in the textbooks of class 8/9. As a result, students were very demotivated to learn those kinds of tough teaching materials. Moreover, As a teacher, I learned those things almost 8/9 years ago and I had to get the idea of those contents from the internet or any other sources. It was a challenge for me.

10. Did you have to make any changes to arrange the class?

T1: We had to create an interesting environment in the classroom, had to manage students to do group work, and so on.

T2: I tried to increase students' participation in the classroom by giving creative tasks in which they had to relate the topic to real-world situations. Another thing was increasing group work to engage them in the classroom. Moreover, I used to tell interesting stories

before starting the class and also used to take crafted things to make students curious about the class.

T3: I had to make the classroom environment interesting so that students got interested in new activities to do. Moreover, I had to be more focused on students and explain the topics in the classroom as they had nothing to study at home.

T4: Yes, I had to make a huge change to arrange the class. We used to focus on the weakest student in the class.

T5: In the previous curriculum, We had to give them tasks to memorize but in the 2023 curriculum we had to teach and explain many topics to them in the classroom so that they did not have to study at home.

11. What aspects of the current curriculum do you think should be revised or improved to make it more effective?

T1: There should be a proper examination system, and marking system and also there should be proper space in classrooms to do different real-world activities.

T2: The authorities who came up with several curriculums till now are from very high education, and they can easily understand the goals of every curriculum. On the other hand, all the teachers in our country are not capable of adopting curriculum changes, and most of them do not properly understand them”. Moreover, If the government could assign teachers with proper training and skills, it could make the curriculum successful. Moreover, to implement a curriculum in Bangladesh, the economic status of Bangladesh should be focused first and then international standards should be emphasized. If we do not think about the economic status of Bangladesh and think about bringing huge changes in education focusing on the International education system, then it is not possible to implement a curriculum like

2023 in Bangladesh. Besides, a committee should be formed with the teachers of primary, secondary, and madrasa levels. Another thing is, that students from the Bangladesh Institute of Education and Research should come forward to improve the education system of Bangladesh.

T3: If the government could provide economic support to the schools then there would be more facilities to implement the curriculum.

T4: Implementing the curriculum was very tough because of the large classrooms, with 120-180 students in my school. It would have been better if there had been some changes or improvements in class sizes. Moreover, there was no traditional exam system, which demotivated students to continue their education, so this could be revised.

T5: There was a huge change in the marking system of the 2023 curriculum. Students who were engaged in more activities in the classroom, I used to mark them properly, and those who were not engaged in class activities used to get average marks. I prefer the old marking system because by this students can evaluate themselves for example, if one gets 40/100, he/she can understand she/he needs to do better in the future. However, they could not understand their progress and regress in education by the new marking system. So, there should be a change in the marking system to improve the curriculum. Moreover, the exam system could also be improved because the examinations were 5-6 hours long, students used to take exams for 1 hour and the rest of the time they used to gossip with each other which should not be an educational environment.

12. In your opinion, what type of curriculum changes would be better to support student learning and engagement?

T1: In the 80's we used to have memorization-based learning. I prefer that curriculum in the education system. Moreover, I am happy to know that the education system is going back to the old curriculum or creative education and I think there should be added some sides of 80's curriculum because in creative education teachers did not evaluate students properly.

T2: If creative education could have some changes then that could be a good curriculum.

T3: If the government can provide economic opportunities to the schools of urban and rural areas so that both teachers and students can use proper technological resources, a curriculum like 2023 can be implemented successfully.

T4: The 2023 curriculum, with its many engaging activities, was suitable for supporting student learning and engagement.

T5: The 2023 curriculum was not suitable for a country like Bangladesh because we teachers have to deal with a huge number of students like 80-90 in a classroom. It was very tough to focus on every student while doing group work or other activities in the classroom. Moreover, students mostly used to talk to each other rather than working together. Most of the time only one student from each group used to work and out of 80-90 students, there were only 10-15 students who were interested in learning English. As a result, I couldn't concentrate on all of the students.

13. What specific changes would you suggest for the curriculum to better suit the needs of students and teachers in the current educational context?

T1: curriculum development is an important issue today. Some aspects can be developed according to the goals and needs of education. For example, there should be a Balance in acquiring knowledge and skills by developing practical skills and problem-solving skills rather than just memorizing books and including activities that help students develop critical

thinking and creativity—moreover, Incorporating programming, digital literacy, and online learning platforms into the curriculum to make students experts in technology and Provide access to virtual labs and e-learning materials.

T2: There should be a learning environment, and there should be a friendly relationship between students and students. Moreover, there should be a classroom situation where students can easily ask questions to teachers, and also teachers should evaluate them properly. Most importantly, there should be a laboratory and library in every school and also there should be some extracurricular outside the bookish knowledge. Besides, education should not be exam-centric.

T3: I think creative education was not so bad. If some changes were made, it could be a good curriculum because it has a proper exam, marking, and study system.

T4: I would say that rather than going back to the old curriculum, we should combine the old and 2023 curriculum because the 2023 curriculum could improve students' real-life learning skills and also make them able to go with the modern world where the old curriculum had some organized education system life exam system, marking system and so on.

T5: I think that children from the primary level should be introduced to translating Bangla to English so that when they reach the upper level of education they will understand the English language and also English grammar from a very early age.

14. How do you think the curriculum can be improved to overcome the challenges you have faced while implementing it?

T1: As I mentioned before, there should be a Balance in the acquisition of knowledge and skills by developing practical skills and problem-solving skills rather than just memorizing books and including activities that help students develop critical thinking and creativity.

T2: Various topics in English were not easy for me. As a result, I had to prepare myself before taking the class. I used to read many books and also search many topics on the internet to get the information because there was not enough information in the new English textbook. For example, there were some topics that we teachers had to discuss in class and explain them. It was not easy to explain them without preparation as they were new to us.

T3: As I mentioned before I did not get proper training, for this reason, I used to watch relevant YouTube videos to manage the class properly.

T4: Some topics in the English textbook were very tough for me because there were many high-standard vocabularies and there were also some ELT terms like metaphor, and simile which were sometimes tough to understand for me. As a teacher I found them tough, now think how tough they should be for the students! Moreover, That curriculum was about to be implemented in small classrooms with 20/25 students. We had the opposite scenario in our classrooms. Bangladesh does not have enough schools with enough resources or numbers of classrooms where classrooms can be for 20/25 students. So these things should be revised to improve the curriculum.

T5: There were a lot of challenges I faced like large classrooms, changes in the marking system, changes in the exam system, and so on. We did not have enough time to take extra initiative that could improve the curriculum.

Students Perceptions

1. Are you familiar with the new curriculum of 2023? If so, did you notice any changes in your English class? What were they?

S1: I am familiar with that curriculum very well. I noticed a huge change in my English classroom. For example, in the previous curriculum, we were taught English as a basic grammar but the 2023 curriculum focused on English language learning.

S2: Yes, I am familiar with the 2023 curriculum, and I have noticed many changes in my English classroom. First, teachers were more focused on communicating in English. They were also more focused on different interactive activities, such as group work, pair work, presentations, etc. So, these were new things in the 2023 curriculum compared to the previous one.

S3: Yes, I am familiar with the 2023 curriculum, and I have noticed many changes in my English classroom. For example, in the old curriculum, teachers taught us passages from textbooks and then asked us to answer questions, write summaries, and so on. But in the 2023 curriculum, teachers gave us group work, assignments, communicative activities, and presentations.

S4: Yes, I am familiar with the 2023 curriculum. I have experienced many changes in my English class. Our English textbook has changed, and the pattern of its contents has changed. The 2023 curriculum also changed the way of teaching.

S5: Yes, I am familiar with the 2023 curriculum. There were many changes in our classroom at that time.

2. How did your teachers explain the curriculum to you?

S1: As it was a new curriculum, our teachers and I were both very confused. However, our teachers tried to explain the curriculum to us so that we could understand its positive and negative sides. They also instructed us on how to understand its goals and how to follow them.

S2: My teacher introduced the curriculum by explaining the objectives of the new curriculum and how it would help the students learn real-life activities. Also, they gave us some examples of the lesson structure which was changed in the classroom. But I think that our teachers were not perfectly able to teach us following the new curriculum because they were used to teaching us in the old curriculum for many years.

S3: When we were in class, teachers told us that there would be no memorization system and there would be real-life activities like group work, pair work, presentations, and also feedback sessions.

S4: Our teacher told us that our curriculum had changed and there would be no creative education; everything would be practical and we students would have to do group work and presentations. Also, there would be less homework for us and there would be minimal individual work. Also, the examination system would be changed which will be for 4-6 hours, and would be based on groups.

S5: our teacher explained that the new curriculum was completely creative and results would be given based on class performance, extracurricular activities, class tests, etc. There would be group work, home tasks, etc.

3. How did you feel about the new English textbook? Did you find it interesting or boring?

S1: I liked the new English book because there were many thoughtful poems and articles and there were many things to learn the actual English language because the poems, stories, and articles were relevant to learning the English language.

S2: I found the new English textbook interesting because it carried many new stories, poems, and pictures which were very engaging. For example, we had to explain pictures from the textbook in our own words, and the role play and group work were very interesting.

S3: I found it very interesting because the new English textbook was very colorful, and there were many interesting pictures and stories.

S4: I had mixed feelings about the new books. For example, there were many pictures in the book and we had to summarize them which was very interesting to me. The thing I didn't like was there was no grammar part in the 2023 curriculum. For not learning grammar we had to face many problems while writing those summaries.

S5: Some topics were very boring because there was a lot of vocabulary which was very tough and also there were many topics that I could not understand unless my teacher explained them.

4. Did you find the contents of the English book easy and understandable? If so, how?

S1: I would say, the book was written in a high style and there were many tough words or structures which were not suitable for our level. But still, I would say the book was meaningful. Moreover, there were many new topics like dialogues, and practical activities like poster making, public speaking, and so on to improve our confidence. Besides, there were many more things in textbooks that were quite helpful in learning the English language and these were not available in the old curriculum.

S2: For me the topics of the new English book were quite understandable but I would like to say that students who had weak vocabulary faced a lot of problems with the new English book.

S3: Yes, I understood the contents of the book, and those that we did not understand became understandable if teachers explained them to us. There were many vocabularies that I found tough.

S4: I didn't find everything easy. There were many tasks in the book which we couldn't understand what should be done. Sometimes teachers also could not explain them properly to us as they weren't properly trained.

S5: As I mentioned there were many vocabularies in the English textbook which were very tough to understand. Others were quite understandable.

5. What were the new activities added in the new textbook? Did you find them interesting?

S1: Yes, I found the new activities very interesting as there were group works, pair works, presentations, and many more.

S2: Yes, There were a lot of new activities and they were role-play, debates, group projects, creative writing, and so on.

S3: Group work, pair work, debates, presentations, etc were the new activities added in the new English textbook and these were very interesting to me and some were very tough.

S4: There were group task activities, pictures to explain, new vocabulary, stories, dialogues, and so on.

S5: There were group works, pair works, projects, assignments, and so on. Those activities were very interesting to me because there was a chance to explore our creativity and be critical thinkers.

6. Do you think the new curriculum helped you to improve your four skills: Listening, speaking, Reading, and writing? How?

S1: I think I was able to improve 3 of my English language skills and I would say it is not possible to improve all 4 skills only by reading a textbook. But there were very few activities for listening skills.

S2: It improved my listening skills because when we had to do debates in class, I used to listen to the opponents carefully as we had to talk in English while doing debates and it improved my speaking and listening skills. There was not enough activity for reading and writing skills.

S3: I could not improve my reading skills because most of the time our teachers used to read the things from the textbook to explain to us. As there were many groupworks, and presentations, I was able to improve my writing and speaking skills.

S4: I think I could not improve any English language skills properly because while doing group work, only group leaders used to participate and the group leaders could only improve their speaking skills by talking in the classroom. Moreover, there were not enough reading and writing activities for us. However, I was able to improve my listening skills by listening to others' conversations during debate time.

S5: The 2023 curriculum only improved my listening skills with the new activities added in new textbooks but the other 3 skills were not improved.

7. Were there more opportunities for classroom participation? If so, please explain.

S1: In my school, there were 70 students in a classroom. So it was very tough for the teachers to make students engaged in an activity. There were a few activities in which I was able to participate.

S2: Compared to the old curriculum, there were more opportunities to participate in the classroom by doing group work, role-play, debates, and so on. However, all the students in my class were not comfortable with participating in all those interactive activities. As a result, one used to push others, especially in presentations.

S3: Yes there were more opportunities for classroom participation as there were many engaging activities in the 2023 curriculum.

S4: No, because there were a lot of students in the classroom and this was not suitable for giving good feedback and participation for all the students.

S5: Yes there was more opportunity to participate in the classroom. Since the new curriculum had a lot of group work, everyone needed to come to class, but the group work was not very useful.

8. How have you improved your communication skills in this new curriculum?

S1: Of course, my communication skills developed because we had to communicate in English while doing group work, pair work, and others.

S2: I would say It improved my communication skills but not that much because we did not get enough time to do all the communicative activities as there were huge students in the classroom.

S3: Yes, while doing group work we had to communicate with each other by which I was able to improve my communication skills.

S4: Yes. While doing group work, and presentations we had to communicate with each other. Even those who were introverted had to communicate.

S5: As the study was based on group work, it was necessary to maintain communication with everyone. In that way, I was able to improve my communication skills.

9. What is your opinion about assessment-based learning?

S1: As a new curriculum as well as assessment-based learning, the process of the curriculum was mostly unorganized and there were many things to be changed. For me, it was very tough and I did not like it.

S2: It carries mixed opinions for me. Assessment-based learning is effective because it helps me to understand my progress as well as the areas where I need to improve. On the other hand, I would like to give an example- In group work, one of my group mates was very lazy and too shy to do her part of the work and she pushed another groupmate to do the work. This was very discouraging for me.

S3: I did not like assessment-based learning because there was mostly group work and all the work of group work was done by only the group leader if the group leader did well, other group members got good marks, and if the group leader did not work well others also got bad marks. This was very disappointing because teachers did not focus on other group members' work. Moreover, there was no traditional examination system. When there was a proper exam system in the old curriculum, I had the feeling of doing better in exams than others but in 2023 we lost our concentration from study because of no traditional exam and also no traditional marking system. Moreover, in the 2023 curriculum, we had a lot of opportunities to cheat during exam time because we used to get questions before exams and teachers also did not focus on us during exam time.

S4: In an assessment-based curriculum, we had to do group work and presentations, and based on the group leader's participation all used to get results rather than evaluating other group members' work and it was disappointing to me.

S5: Assessment-based learning was not found to be very beneficial. Children were completely turned off by books because there were group works, projects, and assignments. I hardly read books for this reason.

10. Did your teacher give more feedback than the previous curriculum? Give me an example.

S1: Yes, I got proper feedback because every task was new to us, and teachers had to explain it to us. For example, I had to do a pair of work in English class, and then my teacher checked it and told me that some areas needed improvement.

S2: From my experience, my teachers did not give enough feedback. They were kind of fed up with the new curriculum system, preferred the old curriculum more, and were also very confused.

S3: No, they were also very confused about the curriculum and as there were a lot of students in the classroom, they couldn't give feedback to all of us.

S4: No, as there were a huge number of students, the teachers couldn't give feedback to each student. Even many group works were not understood by the teachers and for this reason, they could not give us proper feedback.

S5: No. The teachers couldn't focus on so many students within a short period and give feedback to each of them.

11. What do you think about multiple changes in curriculum and do you think it is important to change? Explain.

S1: Bangladesh's educational environment is unsuitable for this kind of curriculum change. Moreover, there was no traditional examination system in the 2023 curriculum and I mostly were about to go away from education. I think the examination system is very necessary for the students of Bangladesh. But as the world advances and becomes modern, we should have a new curriculum that will prepare us to cope with it.

S2: I think curriculum changes are important because they focus on practical education rather than memorizing. It also helped us to prepare for real-life situations which could help us to cope with the modern world. However, changes in question patterns and exam system were not encouraging for me.

S3: Curriculum changes are important because, in the old curriculum, we had to study a lot to do well in exams because there were a lot of things to memorize. In the 2023 curriculum, there was nothing to memorize which was a good thing.

S4: I think there should be some changes. In the previous curriculum, there was one thing which was memorization. We had to memorize the previous curriculum. These things could be changed rather than changing the whole system of education.

S5: Changes in curriculums are important because it is necessary to teach students in such a way that they can cope with the modern world. But, the 2023 curriculum change is essential because it had become an education system where there was no competition, students were completely disengaged from studies and education had become internet-based for which everyone had become addicted to mobile.

12. From your perspective, what an ideal English language curriculum should be like?

S1: I would suggest that the textbook of English should be morally knowledgeable to make us able to be critical thinkers and the textbook should focus on the English language like tone, pronunciation, words, and so on.

S2: I would like to say that an ideal English curriculum should be balanced in every section of the English language, including grammar, vocabulary, real-life communication activities, and so on.

S3: An ideal English curriculum should have grammar, equal focus on the four skills of the English language, and also should have a proper examination system rather than the 2023 examination system.

S4: In an ideal English curriculum there should be a strict focus on improving students' four English language skills. Both the creative education and 2023 curriculum failed in this sector.

S5: Of course, there is a need for an English education system that is contemporary and creative where the students develop their talents and keep pace with the present world as the present world is completely dependent on English.