

The Impacts of Students' Socio-Economic Background on English Language Learning: A Study of Challenges in Rural Bangladesh

By

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the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

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Ethics Statement

This study has followed all the ethical guidelines of the Department of English and Humanities. Although various journal articles and book chapters has been used in this paper, all of them has been cited properly. However, the findings of this study solely belongs to the author. All the data was collected with the consent of the participants. They were properly informed about the usage of the information provided by them. Also, their privacy has been preserved by using pseudo names. Formal approval was taken from the headmaster of the school before conducting the interviews of the students. All the students, teachers and guardians were interviewed with their consent and they were aware of the anonymity of their identity.

Abstract

This qualitative study explored how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influence their English language learning and the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings. Fifteen secondary school students, three guardians and three teachers were chosen for semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study. The collected data from the participants were analyzed through coding, categorizing and finding prominent themes. The major findings of this study includes the influences of socio-economic background in English language learning which are availability of resources, access to private tutoring, scaffolding by parents, self-confidence and anxiety and proper food supply. It also includes the student's, teacher's, guardian's perception on the challenges and opportunities of English language learning. The findings of this study can be beneficial for the guardians, educators and policymakers to reform the English language teaching procedure of the rural secondary level students in a more effective way irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. Overall, this study is applicable to all the ESOL contexts where the non-native English language learners have to face different problems because of their lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Keywords: English language learning; Socio-economic background; rural context; challenges and opportunities.

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List of Acronyms

CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
NCTB:	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
ELT:	English Language Teaching
ESOL:	English Speakers of Other Languages

Chapter 1

Introduction

In Bangladesh, English being a foreign language and also a gatekeeper to higher education, good employment and a commendable social position, creates a necessity of learning it properly. Learning English requires appropriate support, investment and motivation. Apart from that, the learning process is influenced by several other factors. Therefore, the factors affecting English language learning is an important subject of research. Students socio-economic background is considered to be an important parameter that influences the learning outcome of the students in any subject. However, the rural students who mostly come from the economically disadvantaged families, face various influences of their socio-economic backgrounds in their overall education. Since English is a foreign language and the learners do not get enough exposure of it from their surroundings, it becomes more difficult for them to acquire this language. Therefore, this research aims to find out the impacts of students' socio-economic background in English language learning on the secondary level students in the rural areas of Bangladesh.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning English has no alternative in this modern world. Because of the hegemonic power of English, it is recognized and practiced globally in various levels of education (Roshid & Sultana, 2024). Nowadays, parents are very concerned about their children's education and improving their English skills. For this reason, there are many platforms for teaching and learning English. Private tutoring has become a popular way of learning English beyond formal institutional education (Hamid & Islam, 2017). These are vastly available in the urban areas. However, this is not the case in the rural areas. Most of the modern English learning facilities are not available there. In the rural areas, many parents are not educated or financially capable

enough to aid their children's education properly. According to Merieme et al., students coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to struggle more with their English learning than the ones having higher socio-economic status, in the same school having the same academic facilities (2022). Those students do not usually get any help with their studies from their parents. Also, they do not have any modern devices for aiding their English learning. They cannot afford the extra tuition or coaching center for improving their English as well. In the classroom, they feel less confident and sometimes anxious about their lower status in the society (Zahid & Ashfaq, 2022). Moreover, the schools in the rural areas also lack modern facilities and qualified teachers. Altogether, the rural students who are coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds find it more challenging to learn English properly.

Several researches have been conducted across the world regarding the influence of socio-economic background in education and learning. Akol (2024) conducted his study on the influence of socioeconomic status on language development on the preschool children of Sudan and revealed that the children from higher socioeconomic status possess better linguistic abilities whereas the children from lower socioeconomic background have poor language skills. Moreover, a research directed by Elanthiraiyan & Priyanath on the Sri Lankan rural school teachers found a positive impact of higher socioeconomic status on the language proficiency of the teachers as well (2023). In the same way, Hannan et al. (2024) in their quantitative study on the tertiary level students of Bangladesh drew a connection between the students' English pronunciation ability and socioeconomic status. However, this particular study will focus on the rural secondary level students' English language learning. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influences their English language learning and the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings.

1.2 English Language Learning History in Bangladesh

English has been introduced to the people of the Indian subcontinent through the British colonization. Back then only the elite and highly educated people used this language. Therefore, using English was an indicator of social class. However, after the British colonization, this land has been divided twice. Firstly, when the subcontinent was parted as India and Pakistan in 1947, Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan. During that time, English was declared to be the second language. However, people of East Pakistan had to fight for their first language, Bangla. Eventually, the language demands turned into a bloody war which devastated the whole country along with the education. Finally, in 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent country. This new country created their own language policy. Though English was not declared as a second language, it was incorporated as a compulsory subject in institutional education from the primary level because of its global value. However, there was a lack of qualified teachers who could teach the students properly. With time, everything has changed a lot, new methods have been introduced but there are still many challenges in teaching and learning English. For instance, CLT which is a globally admired and effective method of teaching English has been imported to Bangladesh as well. However, the amount of trained teachers, the resources and classroom setting required for applying this method are not available in most of the educational institutions.

1.3 English Language Learning in Urban and Rural Areas

The educational institutions which are located in the urban areas have more facilities than the ones located in the rural areas. In urban areas, there are many English medium and English version schools which specially emphasize on English. These schools are very costly which only the higher class families can afford. The Bangla medium schools are also better in the urban areas because they have better facilities and more qualified teachers. On the other hand,

rural areas mostly have the Bangla medium government schools which have less facilities and less qualified teachers, as the more qualified ones do not want to stay in the rural areas. Moreover, the curriculum designers and policymakers usually are not accustomed to the real English teaching scenario in our country. According to Makando (2017), there is a gap between the intentions of the policy makers and the perspectives of the teachers in terms of the new curriculum. As a consequence, they only impose new curriculum and policies inspired from the other countries. However, the teachers who have to implement those policies in the real classrooms face various problems. Moreover, all the teachers are not trained enough to teach with the new methods. Actually, the proper implementation occurs when the curriculum matches with the personality of the teachers, teaching resources and the teaching atmosphere interrelating the learners (Molapo, 2016). Again, the students are sometimes not comfortable with the new teaching pattern. Therefore, English language learning in Bangladesh still requires many improvements, especially in the rural areas.

1.4 Socio-Economic Background

The word ‘Socio-economic’ consists of two terms- society and economy. Socio-economic background refers to a person’s position in the society based on his occupation, education, income, family resources etc. (Munir et al., 2023). According to American Psychological Association (2018), “socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group”. A family’s socio-economic status influences their way of living, status in the society and facilities they enjoy. It is a commonly used a conceptual factor of measuring family background (Broer et al., 2019). In the same way, socioeconomic status ensures educational facilities like affording better schools, private tuitions, coaching, modern technological devices etc. Therefore, English language learning can also be facilitated more with higher socio-economic status. However, most of the rural people belong to the lower socio-economic status

because of their occupation, income and educational background. In the rural areas, the people mostly do farming and small business. Those who get a better job do not usually stay or keep their families in the village. Therefore, people living in the rural areas are not financially strong which also impacts their children's education. Moreover, another important parameter of socioeconomic status, education, is also absent in most of the rural families. Most of the parents are illiterate or semi-literate. Very few parents are educated enough to do a better job or help their children in their education. As a result, most of the rural students come from families of lower socio-economic status.

1.5. English in Secondary Education System of Bangladesh

English is taught as a mandatory subject in the secondary education system of Bangladesh. Textbooks are provided by NCTB which follows the CLT method focusing on all the four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, discrepancy can be observed in the classroom application of this method. This method aims to focus on both the receptive and productive skills equally through different activities in and outside the classroom. In most of the schools, only reading and writing are focused because these two skills are tested in the exams. Although the books contain materials and directions of the speaking and listening skills, those are often overlooked by both teachers and students. The teachers are often not qualified enough to practice those skills in the classrooms which is more evident in the rural schools. Qualified teachers do not want to stay in the rural areas and eventually it affects the English learning experience of the students of those areas. In the urban areas, the secondary schools are of various types based on their curriculum, books and classroom practice. There are Bangla medium, English medium and English version schools. The students enrolled in the English medium and English version schools get more exposure to English, as all the other subjects are also taught in English in those schools. However, in the rural areas, the secondary schools are

Bangla medium and their English classes are often conducted in Bangla. Therefore, it minimizes English exposure even inside the school. Again, the rural schools fail to provide qualified English teachers, modern equipment and resources which are required for successful English language learning (Faisal & Ali, 2021). Overall, the English teaching and learning is also affected by the large class size, time constraint and lack of facilities.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study sheds light on the influence of socio-economic factors on the English language learning of the secondary level students. It reveals the real scenario of the rural students which will help the policymakers, curriculum designers and concerned higher authorities to take appropriate measures to improve the English learning experience of the students irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. Notably, it shows how some students face disparity in their educational institutions because of their socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, through this study, the teachers and guardians will be knowing about the needs and challenges commonly faced by the rural students. As the main stakeholders related to English teaching and learning which are students, guardians and teachers have been interviewed in this study, it contains multiple perspectives of the same issue. Therefore, it will provide a holistic view on both the socioeconomic influence and the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning. Hence, this study will add some new information to the existing literature of this research area and also pave the way for new related research.

1.7 Purpose of the study

English is considered as a global language which can be used to communicate in most parts of the world. As it is not the mother tongue in most of the countries, people have to put extra effort into learning this language. Consequently, the factors that influence students' English language learning have been a subject of research for a long time, especially in the Asian context where

English plays a significant role in people's education and career. Therefore, all the students need to emphasize on improving their English language skills to keep up with the modern world. However, successful English language learning depends on several factors. Socioeconomic background is one of the important factors which is directly linked with the educational facilities.

Moreover, using English is often linked to social prestige and marked as a symbol of aristocracy. People who want to improve their English skills and spend extra money on the English coaching centers and private tuitions. As a consequence, teaching and learning English has become a huge business industry. However, it is not affordable for all. Especially in the rural areas, most of the families are not affluent enough to invest a handsome amount of money on their children's education. Many parents are completely ignorant of the importance of their children's education, more particularly, English language learning. Therefore, in these areas, English language learners have to face several challenges in terms of facilities, familial support and other resources. This study aims to explore how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influence their English language learning and the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings.

Chapter 2

Methodology

This chapter will give an overview of how this study has been planned and executed from the beginning to the end. To be more specific, it includes the research design, research questions, selection of participants, their profile, settings, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure and ethical consideration. The aim of this study is to explore how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influences their English language learning and the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings. Through this chapter, the researcher has revealed the methodological aspects that are adopted for conducting this study.

2.1 Research Design

This study has adopted qualitative research design and case study approach considering the research questions and other literature. Qualitative design is used for having an in-depth analysis of the participant's thoughts on the research topic. The main goal of this study is to show the influence of socio-economic background on secondary level student's English language learning experience. It requires analysis of people's viewpoints on socio-economic aspects and English language learning which can be done only through a qualitative research design. Since a quantitative study only works with numerical data sets, it would not be appropriate for this study. However, a few numerical data have been used in the findings section of this study which will aid the qualitative findings. It does not make the study quantitative or mixed method research. Also, the numeric data is explained in a qualitative way. Therefore, this study has completely followed a qualitative research design.

Moreover, this study uses a case study approach. This approach helps to get an in-depth understanding of the subject matter of the study which is not possible to analyze without the actual context (Maiorescu, 2020). Also, it allows the researcher to explore underlying phenomena of a situation. Moreover, the case study method is useful to understand the patterns of behavior of certain groups of people and uncover new themes out of them. As this study works with particularly the rural context and aims to get a holistic view on how the socio-economic background influences the English language learning of a particular group of people, a case study approach is appropriate for this study.

2.2 Research Questions

This study aims to explore the influence of socioeconomic background of the students in English language learning in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Therefore, it has tried to answer the following questions:

- a. How does the socio-economic background of the students influence their access to and performance in English language learning?
- b. What are the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings?

2.3 Participants

The participants for this study are from three different groups of people who are important stakeholders in teaching and learning English. Firstly, fifteen students from the secondary level Bangla medium school have been interviewed for this study. Moreover, three English teachers of the same school and three guardians from the interviewed students have also been interviewed. As it is a girls' school, all the students are female. However, two teachers are male and one is female. Again, among the guardians, two are female and one is male. The reason

behind taking interviews of three different groups of people is that it has given the opportunity to look through different perspectives on the same issue. It has provided versatile information which has helped to conduct the research successfully. All the participants are committed to stick to the study till the end and help the researcher with required information whenever needed. Participant's profiles are given in three different tables below:

Student's Profile:

Serial no.	Student's Name	Favourite Subject	Average marks in English in the Half-yearly Exam (out of 100)	Father's Information		Mother's Information		Monthly Household Income (approximately)
				Occupation	Education Level	Occupation	Education Level	
1.	Faiza	Science	51	Carpenter	Uneducated	Housewife	Uneducated	15000
2.	Ratri	Religion	39	Shopkeeper	S.S.C.	Housewife	Uneducated	10000
3.	Sadia	Bangla	66	Businessman	H.S.C.	Housewife	Class 5	30000
4.	Ayesh a	Science	47	Electrician	Class 8	Housewife	Uneducated	15000
5.	Lamia	English	71	Worker in abroad	H.S.C.	Housewife	S.S.C.	25000
6.	Ruma	Bangla	50	Farmer	Uneducated	Housewife	Uneducated	10000
7.	Sumai ya	Science	75	Tailor	S.S.C.	Clark	H.S.C.	35000

8.	Suzana	Religion	43	Plumber	Class 5	Housewife	Uneducated	10000
9.	Nisa	English	77	Businessman	Bachelors.	School teacher	Bachelors	45000
10.	Ramisha	Math	80	School teacher	Masters	Housewife	S.S.C.	30000
11.	Setu	Bangla	34	Farmer	Uneducated	Garments worker	Class 5	15000
12.	Tiha	Science	46	Businessman	H.S.C.	Housewife	Uneducated	20000
13.	Oishi	Bangla	60	Dead	-	Housewife	Uneducated	5000
14.	Ahana	Religion	51	Van puller	Uneducated	Housewife	Class 5	10000
15.	Ria	Bangla	38	Farmer	Uneducated	Housewife	Uneducated	15000

Table 1: Student's Profile

Teacher's Profile:

Serial no.	Teacher's Name	Teaching Experience	Previously Taught in	Does provide private tuition
1.	Shoriful Islam	6 years	Urban area	Yes
2.	Muina Haque	5 years	Rural area	No
3.	Rezaul Karim	8 years	Rural area	Yes

Table 2: Teacher's Profile

Guardian's Profile:

Serial no.	Guardian's Name	Occupation	Education Level	Number of Children
1.	Fatema Khatun	Housewife	Class 5	4
2.	Umme Salma	Housewife	Uneducated	2
3.	Rabeya Begum	Teacher	Bachelors	2

Table 3: Guardian's Profile

2.4 Settings

The setting of the study is in Rajbari District which is located in Dhaka division. However, there are not many modern facilities in the schools of this area. The participants of this study are from Rajbari Government Girls' High School. It is considered a rural government school. Students from different economic backgrounds come to this school. All the interviewed students, teachers are from the mentioned school and guardians are of the interviewed students. As the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of socioeconomic background of the students in English language learning in the rural areas of Bangladesh, this school is convenient for selecting the participants for the study.

2.5. Data Collection Procedure

Interview is a popular and reliable tool for qualitative data collection. There are mainly three types of interview- structured, semi-structured and narrative interview (Stuckey, 2013). Among those, this study has used the semi-structured interview procedure for collecting data from the participants because it allows the participants to talk more openly in a friendly atmosphere. It has facilitated the researcher to understand the experience of the interviewee properly and extract all the required data for the research. According to Maiorescu, in semi-structured

interviews, there is less control of the interviewer on the participant's answers (2020). Therefore, the instrument used for this research is the interview.

Visiting the targeted school, permission was taken from the Headmaster of the school for interviewing the students and teachers. Then, he asked one of the teachers to take the interviewer to the intended classrooms and introduce her to the students. After explaining the topic and motive of the research, the students who were interested to participate were taken to an empty classroom with the permission of the teacher. The participants were again being assured that their personal information would not be shared with anybody else and would only be used in the research work maintaining their privacy. As they had to share many of their personal information like family income, parental education and score in the exam, it was really important to assure them about privacy and anonymousness. Then, the interviews of the students were conducted one by one.

The interviews of the teachers were conducted in the teacher's room during the tiffin period. Again, the guardians were also interviewed in the school premises. All the interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted in Bangla so that each participant can express their opinions without any language barrier.

2.6 Data Analysis Procedure

In this qualitative study, the researcher adapted the thematic data analysis process. In thematic analysis of data, a researcher arranges the data into distinctive themes. Firstly, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed and translated into English manually. Then, the prominent quotes from all the participants were put inside a table to generate themes. Finally, those main themes were used to answer the research questions of this study. As this study followed the case study approach and data was collected through semi-structured interviews, therefore various themes were found from the analysis.

Example of Data Analysis:

Interview Data	Initial Codes	Categories	Theme
“I requested my parents to buy a desktop for me and my sister but they could not afford that. Also, if I want to watch English news or movies on TV to improve my English, my mother yells at me.”	*Not being able to buy a desktop for English language learning	*Inadequate English learning resource	*Availability of resources
	*Improving English through TV	*Language learning tool	*Parental help
	*Being yelled by parents for watching English TV shows	*Parent’s lack of knowledge	

Table 4: Example of Data Analysis

2.7 Ethical Consideration

The data collection for this research had been done considering the ethical issues. Before taking the interviews, the participants were informed about the researcher’s expectations from them during this whole study. They were also informed about the act of recording the interview sessions for the purpose of analyzing further and maintaining transparency in the research. Moreover, they were assured that their confidentiality would be maintained in this study and pseudo names would be used instead of their real names.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This research aims to find out the impacts of students' socio-economic background in English language learning on the secondary level students in the rural areas of Bangladesh. In this section, the researcher has explored several relevant literature and projected different findings and theoretical frameworks which will establish the foundation of this research. There are several sections like Socio-Economic Background and Education, Socio-Economic Background and English Language Learning, English Language Learning in Rural Areas, Theoretical Framework for clarity and proper organization of the topics.

3.1 Socio-Economic Background and Education

Education is a basic human right. However, this right comes to the very end among the other basic rights and often gets neglected by many people in our society. The ratio of negligence is very much proportionate to the economic and social background of the student. To be more particular, the more economically solvent and urbanized background a student gets, the more educational opportunity he has. On the contrary, if a student comes from a lower socioeconomic background, he will struggle more to get proper educational facilities. Even within the rural context, children coming from affluent families tend to have better language abilities. Akol (2024) conducted his study on the influence of socioeconomic status on language development on the preschool children of Sudan and revealed that the children from higher socioeconomic status possess better linguistic abilities whereas the children from lower socioeconomic background have poor language skills. In fact, there is a strong correlation between students' socioeconomic positions and their overall academic performance if the other factors like quality of teaching and institutional facilities are constant for every student (Munir

et al., 2023). The institutional facilities include counseling from the teachers, one to one feedback, using libraries etc. However, inferior socioeconomic status often lowers the student's self-esteem which consequently do not let them take full advantage of the institutional facilities to improve their academic performance (Razzaq et al., 2024). Moreover, those students find the productive skills of language- reading and writing more challenging because of inadequate input and practice at their home. In this regard, Buckingham et al. highlighted that students from lower economic backgrounds are most likely to be poor readers due to their late introduction to the reading skill and sometimes for having malnutrition affecting their cognitive abilities (2014). Again, Dölek & Hamzadayi (2018) found significant differences regarding word choice, grammar and organization of the writing between the students from high and lower socioeconomic positions. Therefore, socioeconomic background clearly influences the education of a student irrespective of the language they speak and geographical location.

3.2 Socio-Economic Background and English Language Learning Outcomes

In spite of being a foreign language, English possesses an important role in both educational and job sectors because of its global acceptance. Therefore, it is being taught with great importance from the primary level of education in Bangladesh. As mentioned by Merieme et al. (2022), the English language learning outcome depends on various parameters like, level of interaction, access to modern facilities, parents' level of education, family income etc. According to Bipasha & Islam (2025), students coming from the upper class of the society can secure better marks in the English exams than the students belonging in the lower class and also possess better communication skills in English. Through this mixed method research which took both urban and rural higher secondary schools of Bangladesh under consideration, it pointed out that successful English language learning depends not only on the quality of

education in the schools but also on the household language. Again, Uddin & Jahan (2023) highlighted that lower socioeconomic background leads to poor English proficiency because of less social, economic and cultural capital investment (has been discussed in the theoretical framework part- Bourdieu's theory) in English language learning. Hannan et al. (2024) in their quantitative study on the tertiary level students drew a connection between the students' English pronunciation ability and socioeconomic status. This particular linguistic skill clearly shows the distinction between students coming from higher socioeconomic status and the students coming from lower socioeconomic status. As the higher class people can invest in their children's education from a very early age and also have a tendency to make their children fluent in a foreign language which they find as a remark of aristocracy, those children can acquire native like pronunciation ability (Hannan et al., 2024). On the other hand, students who belong from economically disadvantaged families, do not get access to modern educational materials, extra tuition or exposure to English language outside the classroom which results in their lower proficiency in English (Dsouza, 2025). Moreover, lower performance in English also makes them stressed and hinders their writing and speaking skill in English (Khan et al., 2024). To sum up, socioeconomic status of a child determines a student's level of proficiency in English which is a non-native language for Bangladeshi students.

3.3 English Language Learning in Rural Areas

Although the basic education can be provided in all the educational institutions, it is very difficult to provide the students with proper English language learning facilities particularly in the rural settings. The students from the urban areas get enough opportunities and resources to learn English. However, students from the rural areas encounter various challenges to have a good command over English. Due to their parent's lack of knowledge and lower economic positions, those students get less academic facilities (Merieme et al., 2022). In the rural areas,

most of the parents are ignorant of the necessity of English education and also they are not solvent enough to invest money and resources for aiding their children's English learning. According to Hossain (2016), parents' expectation is an influential factor in the students' academic performance. Rural parents are mostly uneducated and do not have much expectations from their children's foreign language learning outcome. Therefore, the students do not feel the inner drive to put more effort into learning English. Again, the rural schools fail to provide qualified English teachers, modern equipment and resources which are required for successful English language learning (Faisal & Ali, 2021). The English teachers of the rural areas often lack communicative skills and they prefer to teach English with old methods like Grammar Translation which seems more convenient for them. A research directed by Elanthiraiyan & Priyanath on the Sri Lankan rural school teachers found a positive impact of higher socioeconomic status on the language proficiency of the teachers as well (2023). This article also revealed that the teachers coming from a lower socioeconomic background cannot gain the required proficiency even after having several training sessions (Elanthiraiyan & Priyanath, 2023). Therefore, the rural students get deprived of the modern and more effective ways of learning English in their schools (Faisal & Ali, 2021). The rural students cannot even afford the private coaching for English which is a common practice among the wealthier and urban students. Altogether, the rural students are deprived of both familial and institutional support which results in their poor English proficiency.

3.4 Parental Education and Income in English Language Learning

Home is the first and most crucial learning institution for a child. Children imitate their caregivers for learning linguistic behaviors at their early age (Behaviorist's perspective). Therefore, parents' input influences a lot in molding a child's language (both first and second). In Bangladesh, most of the families are monolingual Bangla speaking and English is taught as

foreign language. The educational background of the parents also has an impact on the child's language development (Akol, 2024). If the parents are well educated, they tend to use English with their children. It is because English is an inevitable part of higher studies and a well-educated parent will certainly have English language skills. As a result, children from educated families get enough English language exposure in their home environment from a very early age (Uddin & Jahan, 2023). Moreover, educated parents are more concerned about their children's education. They want their children to excel in every sphere of education. Therefore, they put extra effort on their children's English language development beyond institutional support. They often admit their children in English coaching centers and buy modern devices to aid the learning which make those children more proficient in English (Bipasha & Islam, 2025). It makes them stand out from other students in the school whose parents are less educated or illiterate.

Again, parent's income is another important factor affecting children's English language learning. Lower income families cannot afford the extra tuition or expensive devices to help their children's education. On the other hand, a high income family can arrange all these facilities for their children. According to Uddin & Jahan (2023), wealthy families tend to emphasize more on English learning, as they use English to show their higher class and aristocracy. Also, they often emphasize their children to talk in native accents of English. Those children usually get enough exposure to English from an early age. Therefore, it becomes easier for them to achieve fluency and nativelike accent. It makes them more confident in the school. Other students often do not feel confident to talk in English in front of the fluent students. Zahid & Ashfaq (2022) highlighted in their study that learners from low income families tend to be more stressed and they significantly lack confidence. Therefore, parents' education and income both influence their children's English proficiency at a large scale.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

Through the lens of different theories, the influence of socioeconomic background in students' English language learning can be understood. Relevant theories include Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Cummins' Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis.

3.5.1 Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has talked about different types of capitals in his theory of Capitals. Usually, we are familiar with the economic capital which indicates how much wealth a person possesses (Hung, 2019). However, Bourdieu has talked about other three types of capital including cultural capital which also affects a person's social position, education and many other things. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is a person's skills and attributes which are achieved through their initial learning, and is unconsciously influenced by the surroundings (Bourdieu, 2000). It is a non-financial social asset. If a student comes from a social background where there is scope of practicing English and also the family has the mindset of investing in English learning, that child will definitely be a more successful English learner compared to the learner who has an English non-practicing and non-investitive familial background, if proper institutional support is provided (Hung, 2019). Therefore, according to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, the child whose family has more cultural capital, like English language proficiency, will be facilitated in institutional English language learning. Also, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds will have access to more educational capital, as he has more economic capital. Karki & Karki, in their study, revealed that the students possessing more cultural capital tend to get more advantage and comfort in learning the English language within the school (2025). The students from higher socioeconomic positions usually have the privilege to get cultural capital (linguistic skill) from their family

which facilitates them even more in the educational institutions. Besides, they can take private tuitions to improve their language skills outside the school. Consequently, they are being noticed by the teachers in the classroom as more proficient learners which boosts up their self-confidence (Karki & Karki,2025). However, the students who do not have the cultural capital usually have lower self-esteem and find it challenging to learn English in the educational institutions.

3.5.2. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

According to Lev Vygotsky, learning is a social process and learning a language vastly depends on social interaction (Yusof, 2021). He emphasized on the social and cultural aspects of learning. Most of the interaction of a child occurs within the family and surroundings. Therefore, family and societal environment is an important parameter in successful language learning. If the family can provide guidance and support, the child can easily learn a language through interaction and scaffolding. The development of language is a gradual process that takes place differently in children depending upon who they are interacting with. Therefore, social background influences children's cognitive development and their linguistic performance even if it is the second language learning situation (Pathan et al., 2018). If a student is getting enough chances of interaction within his family, it accelerates his language learning. However, in Bangladeshi English language learning context, the students usually do not get enough scope of social interaction. It is because most of the Bangladeshi families are monolingual Bangla speaking families. Especially in the rural areas, caregivers cannot communicate in English at all. Therefore, the social interaction and scaffolding never take place in English language learning which makes the learning process more difficult. However, if the student comes from a higher socioeconomic background (usually in the urban areas) and his

parents are highly educated, he gets to interact in English within his family and surroundings. Consequently, it becomes easier for him to do well in English in the academic setting as well.

Chapter 4

Findings

The main objective of this study is to explore how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influence their English language learning. As this research has adopted a multiple case study approach where each of the participants has been considered as an individual case, the findings will include the insights of the three groups of participants- students, teachers and guardians regarding the impacts of socioeconomic backgrounds in English language learning. Therefore, this chapter has been divided into two broad sections based on the two research questions of this study which are: a) how does the socio-economic background of the students influence their access to and performance in English language learning, b) the perceptions of students, guardians, and teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning in the rural settings. These two sections have been further divided into some sub-sections based on the insights of the participants.

4.1 The Influences of Socio-economic Background in English Language Learning

This section is going to give an overview of the influences of socio-economic background in English language learning of the rural secondary level students. The main points include the availability of resources, scope of private tutoring, scaffolding by parents, self-confidence and anxiety and proper food supply.

4.1.1 Availability of Resources

English language learning can be aided and accelerated with the help of different resources like English supplementary books, newspapers and magazines, internet connection, laptop or

desktop, mobile apps and websites etc. Most of these gadgets and subscriptions are quite expensive which the wealthy families in the society can easily afford but the economically disadvantaged families cannot. One of the interviewees, Suzana asserted,

“I requested my parents to buy a desktop for me and my sister but they could not afford that. Also, if I want to watch English news or movies on TV to improve my English, my mother yells at me.”

Similarly, Ratri said,

“We have only one android phone in our home which also does not work properly. My father keeps it with him. Whenever I need to search for vocabulary or a YouTube video, I cannot get the phone most of the time.”

It shows that the students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not get the required resources for their English learning. Some students are entirely deprived of the modern facilities whereas, others get insufficient facilities at their home. Moreover, the rural schools in Bangladesh are not properly equipped with modern facilities. Consequently, the children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds fail to avail the modern language learning facilities both in their home and educational institution. In this regard, Ayesha reported,

“My father is an electrician. He told me that cannot provide me with any internet connection or mobile phone. He also told me to learn everything from the school. But the school does not have any facilities without classes. Even the library is locked most of the time”

Another student, Ruma said, “A few years ago, two projectors were installed in our school. Everyday we had one class in that room. The teachers could not use the projector properly. And now the projectors are dead”. Sumaiya added,

“There is so much electricity disruption in our school that the internet or the projectors cannot be operated for a long time. Also, in the summer, it is very difficult to concentrate in the classes without fans, when the electricity is gone.”

The statements of the students indicate the unavailability of the resources in both their home and school which is caused by their socio-economic positions in the society. Within the rural area, only affluent families can afford devices like mobile phones, computers and internet connection for their children. However, the lower class families cannot afford those. Even some families cannot provide the basic necessities for study like books and stationary items. The schools also demonstrate poor infrastructure in terms of resources like electricity, internet, projector and proper library setup. It is caused by the overall economic condition of this area. As most of the people here belong to the lower economic positions, they cannot provide much for the school. Altogether, the rural students from lower socioeconomic status are deprived of the necessary resources.

4.1.2 Access to Private Tutoring

In Bangladesh, it has become a norm in the government schools that students will not learn everything from the schools. Rather, they will take private tutoring at home or in the coaching centers usually from the same teachers of their school. Therefore, the teachers are often indifferent to completing the entire lessons in the schools which encourage the students to go for private lessons. However, only the wealthy parents can afford the cost of extra tuition. Sadia, whose father is a businessman, denoted that, “I go to an English coaching center after school... our school’s English teacher teaches there. Sir provides us his notes on grammar and writing sections which are helpful.” Another student, Sumaiya reported, “I have an English tutor at home, who helps me completing my English syllabus early and also teaches me some extra vocabulary”. Here, the first student’s father is quite a wealthy businessman and the second

student's both parents are working. Therefore, these families can bear the cost of extra tutoring. On the contrary, students whose parents are not solvent enough, cannot provide these extra expenses. Ayesha's father told her to learn everything from the schools. Similarly, Ruma stated, "The students who take private tuition do better in the class. I am often afraid to ask any questions or give my answers thinking what if they laugh at me."

Ria also expressed the same concern, saying,

"Students who take extra tuitions talk more in the class and the teacher praises them and likes them more. I also asked my father to admit me to the coaching but he told me that we cannot afford the fees of a coaching."

A teacher also mentioned,

"The students who take tuitions do better in the class. Also, they are more serious and attentive in their studies. Actually, it is not possible for a teacher to pay attention to each of the students in a large classroom like ours, if the students themselves are not serious."

The propositions of the participants imply that most of the students are eager to have private lessons for English. However, everyone cannot afford the extra cost. It eventually creates a disparity among students inside the classroom. The students having private tutoring show better performance in the classroom while the others cannot. As a result, these students feel a lack of self-assurance and are more anxious to display their English skills in the classroom. They feel that the teachers even pay more attention to the students who have private tuitions and the others remain unattended. Therefore, the students from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not get the opportunity of private tuitions which they think to be a necessity for not only learning English but also creating a good impression within the classroom.

4.1.3 Scaffolding by Parents

For successful English language acquisition, exposure beyond the classroom is very important. However, most of the students do not get the opportunity to practice English outside their classroom because their family members and acquaintances cannot speak English or are not willing to use it. Parents who are educated can help their children in their studies. Therefore, students with educated parents get the chance to be scaffolded by their parents when they need to. Also, they can practice speaking English with their parents. Nisa, whose mother is a school teacher reported,

“My mother monitors my studies every evening. She also brought me some extra English story books and grammar books so that I can improve my English. Though she is not an English teacher, she helps me in pronouncing a new word, understanding a vocabulary and sometimes tries to speak with me in English.”

Another student, Sadia, whose both parents are educated mentioned,

“I practice the model questions at home and my mother matches them with the solution and gives me feedback. My father also encourages me to talk in English with him and to watch English talk shows in my free time.”

However, most of the participants admitted that their parents are not educated enough to help them with English language learning. Many of their parents were completely illiterate and they do not even understand the necessity of English learning for their children. Consequently, those students never get the opportunity to practice English in their home. Suzana denoted, “Our English teacher sometimes tells us to practice English at home but none of my parents can speak or write English. They cannot help me with any of my subjects.” Some students are even

criticized and yelled at by their parents for the activities they do for learning English. Setu stated,

“If I want to watch English movies or cartoons on our TV to improve my English, my mother yells at me for wasting time. Also, nobody else in my house understands English and so they are not willing to watch anything in English.”

One of the guardians who were interviewed admitted, “I don’t know English. So, I cannot help my child with her English. I cannot even monitor whether my children are studying or just sitting with the books.” Another guardian said,

“I can read English words but cannot talk in English. However, I do not get enough time to help my children with their studies after doing the household chores all day. I have to take care of my mother in law who is very ill.”

The above statements of the students and guardians reveal that educated parents are more concerned about their children’s English language skills. Besides, they can scaffold their children when it is required. These parents themselves are educated and earn more than the uneducated parents. As a result, their children get both financial and educational help from parents which helps them stand out from the others in their academic performance. Conversely, most of the students reported their parents to be uneducated. These students are sometimes being misunderstood by their parents while practicing English, let alone getting academic help. This is because their parents are not aware of the importance of English and the ways of improving it. Therefore, the students from lower socio-economic backgrounds mostly have uneducated or less educated parents who cannot guide their children in their English learning process.

4.1.4 Self-confidence and Anxiety

Because of lower socioeconomic position, many students lack self-confidence. On the other hand, students coming from affluent families seem more confident in the classroom. Even during the interview, one student seemed very nervous and she was hesitating to share her father's occupation because he is a van puller. Moreover, some students feel anxious and afraid of being judged by other students because of their lower socioeconomic status. Ruma regretted that, "In our class, students who go to coaching centers make a friend group. They do not mix with other students. They also dominate in the English class, as they do better than us." Another student Oishi whose father is dead stated,

"I am anxious about my future studies. Currently my uncle is helping me with the expenses at the school level. I do not know whether he will help me study at the college and university level. My mother often talks about marrying me off."

One of the teacher asserted, "Many poor students study in our school. They do not even have proper meals at home. How can we expect their families to be concerned about their studies? They struggle with their basic needs."

Students' statements indicate that they feel anxious and stressed for several reasons which eventually affect their English performance in the class. Some students become insecure to ask any questions, or convey any answer in front of the class. They think that they would be made fun of by the more capable students, if their answers or pronunciation is wrong. Eventually, they demonstrate less engagement in the class. These students often feel left alone by the students who take private tuitions outside the classroom and display a better performance in the classroom. Therefore, this stress is indirectly caused by lower socio-economic positions, as the parents cannot provide private tuition to these students. Some other students are distressed by their academic expenses which is also caused by their socio-economic conditions. Moreover, the teacher expressed his concern about some students who have to worry about

their basic human needs like food, clothes, treatment etc. These students lack self-confidence in the classroom.

4.1.5 Proper Food Supply

Many children suffer from malnutrition in our country, especially the poor ones. It impacts their brain development and physical wellbeing which are prerequisite for getting proper education. In the interview, two students have stated that they cannot concentrate in the English class because they feel hungry at that time. Their English class is scheduled just before the tiffin period. They do not have their breakfast from home and only take the tiffin provided in the school which are very unhealthy and small in quantity (usually a piece of puri, shingara or bun). One student Oishi, whose father is dead and she stays at her uncle's house reported,

“I do not eat breakfast, as I do not want to bother my aunt in the early morning. But I feel hungry after one or two classes and English class is in the third period. So, I wait for the tiffin to start.”

Another student, Setu, whose mother is a garment worker, also stated something similar. She said,

“My mother goes to work very early in the morning. So, she does not have the time for cooking. My grandmother cooks a bit later. Therefore, I cannot eat breakfast at home and become hungry at school. I am not good at English and because of hunger it feels more difficult.”

The statements of the participants imply that many families cannot provide enough nutritious food for their children which eventually leads to lack of attention in the class and hampers their English learning. Some parents go to work in the early morning and cannot provide breakfast to their children. Again, some students stay in their relative's homes and do not want to bother

them. These children come to the school with empty stomachs and feel hungrier as time passes. Since their English class is held in the third period, they cannot concentrate properly because of hunger. The students who reported this circumstance come from very lower class families. Therefore, the lack of proper food supply is also created by socio-economic insolvency. Even the rural government school does not provide healthy and fulfilling food to these students in the tiffin because rural parents cannot provide extra money for the tiffin.

4.2 Participant's Perception on the Challenges and Opportunities of English Language Learning

This section includes the perception of the three major stakeholders of English learning- students, teachers, guardians on the challenges and opportunities of English language learning in the rural context. Therefore, it will give an overview of the challenges faced by these stakeholders in the English language learning process and also the opportunities they think would improve the current condition.

4.2.1 Student's Perception on Challenges and Opportunities

Students of our country, especially those who reside in the rural areas have to face various challenges in their English language learning journey. Although English is being taught as a compulsory subject from the beginning of institutional education, qualified teachers and required facilities are not available in most of the rural schools. Tiha mentioned, "Our English teacher herself cannot talk in English fluently. She uses Bangla to teach English...She follows Chowdhury and Hussain's grammar book and makes us memorize the rules." Similarly, Ria said, "I cannot memorize the grammatical rules and tough vocabulary. For this reason, I do not like the English subject at all." Moreover, most of the students complained that the school does not have all the facilities required for their study. Sumaiya stated,

“There is so much electricity disruption in the school that the internet or the projectors cannot be operated for a long time. Also, in the summer, it is very difficult to concentrate in the classes without fans, when the electricity is gone.”

Another challenge that many students face is the fear of getting insulted in their English class. Learning any language consists of trial and error. Therefore, the learners will make mistakes and errors which is very natural. However, the learning environment has to be secure so that the learner does not hesitate using the language. Ramisha asserted, “One day I tried to ask a question in English and made a mistake and everybody in the class started laughing. I felt so embarrassed.” When the students were asked about the opportunities they think they should get for learning English properly, they mentioned some points. Faiza remarked, “Our school should be equipped with modern facilities like projector, internet connection, computer and there should be technicians to maintain those so that they do not stop functioning like before.” Another student Oishi, who is afraid that her higher study might stop as nobody is there to fund her, stated, “The government should provide some scholarships so that students like me can continue their studies... the amount of money we get from ‘Upobritti’ is not enough for anyone to maintain the study expenditure.”

Ruma denoted,

“My parents cannot help me in my studies, as both of them are illiterate. If there are people in the school who will help us with our English subject outside the classroom like during the tiffin period or after school, it would be very helpful.”

The above statements reflect the students' views regarding the challenges and opportunities of English education. The challenges mentioned by the students are inadequacy of qualified teachers, lack of required facilities and fear of getting insulted in the class. Usually the less qualified teachers continue their teaching career in the rural areas. They themselves struggle

with their English skills and consequently cannot teach the students appropriately in the class. Moreover, the facilities which can aid English learning are very limited for rural students. Frequent load shedding and unstable internet connection makes it harder for both teacher and students to conduct the class as planned. Another challenge many students face is the fear of getting insulted by the teacher, if they make any mistake in the class. Again, the opportunities they mentioned are modern technological facilities in the classroom, enough financial aid for the needy students and allocated English teaching assistance in the school. If all the learning facilities are available in the school, it will help the rural students immensely, as most of them cannot have these facilities in their home. Also, some students who are financially so constrained that cannot afford the basic educational expenses, should be aided by the government. The stipend money some of them get is insufficient for them. Another opportunity mentioned by some students is the availability of English teaching assistants in the school who can help them individually with their specific problems outside the classroom. This opportunity can surely help many rural students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to improve their English skills without feeling incompetent among other students.

4.2.2 Teacher's Perception on Challenges and Opportunities

Not only the students, the rural teachers also face various challenges while teaching English. All the teachers mentioned above lack the required facilities for teaching in the class. Shoriful Islam denoted,

“We struggle a lot in the classroom. One day there is electricity disruption, another day the projector does not work, another day there are some other problems and it continues like this. The village schools actually need more facilities because most of these children do not have the facilities at their home like the urban students”

The teachers do not get proper training on the new methods of teaching English. However, they are given the syllabus of the curriculum to teach. Therefore, they have to struggle a lot. Rezaul Karim stated,

“I have been teaching in this school for 8 long years. The system of teaching English has changed a lot from our time. Now there are new methods and techniques which we do not know properly. But we get teacher training maybe once in a year which is very inadequate.”

Moreover, practicing new teaching techniques requires time and equipment which are not available to the teachers. Munia Haque mentioned,

“Our class time is 45minutes and the number of students is around 60. If I want to do some speaking or reading activities, it is not possible to make all my students participate within this class time. Also, the class becomes very chaotic and unmanageable. So, even if we want, we cannot teach properly because of many limitations.”

Again, two male teachers admitted that they provide home tutoring and run coaching centers. Their low wages in the school and the demand of the students and guardians makes them do this. Rezaul Karim said,

“To be honest, the salary I get is not enough to provide my family a good life. One of my children goes to a private university which is very costly. So, I have to think about earning beyond the school salary.”

Shoriful Islam asserted,

“Many students and guardians request me to tutor them at their home. It is not possible to go to everyone's home. So, I run this English coaching center where many students can be taught at a time. They get benefitted which is seen in their result.”

The teachers also mentioned some opportunities that would make English teaching and learning both more effective. Those include proper teacher training on the modern techniques of ELT, providing proper logistic support, ensuring adequate salary and incentives to the teacher, making the guardians aware of the necessity of learning English, providing scholarships to the female students so that they can continue their study etc. Munia Haque remarked,

“As I am a female teacher, many of my students share their personal issues with me. Most of them mention their financial conditions which eventually creates many problems. Therefore, if these poor students get all the modern language facilities in the school, it can improve their English a lot.”

The statements above reflect the perceptions of the teachers regarding English teaching and learning challenges and opportunities in the rural context. The challenges mentioned by them include lack of required facilities, insufficient teacher training on the curriculum changes and having short class time with a large number of students. With inadequate facilities in the classroom, the teachers fail to conduct the class as planned. Moreover, they do not get adequate training on the new teaching methods and techniques aligned with the curriculum. As a result, these teachers often follow the traditional teaching techniques they were taught through. The most challenging task for the teachers is to manage the large classroom and conduct all the planned classroom activities within the stipulated time. Also, the male teachers admitted that they find it difficult to manage their expenses with their salary. Therefore, they run coaching centers and provide private tuition for extra income. The teachers also demanded some opportunities which are proper teacher training on the modern techniques of ELT, providing proper logistic support, ensuring adequate salary and incentives to the teacher, making the guardians aware of the necessity of learning English, and providing scholarships to the female students. If the rural teachers are trained enough and provided enough logistic support, they

can contribute more in improving English language skills of their students. Moreover, if they get enough salary from the school, they will not seek ways of extra income through private tutoring and invest all their efforts in the classroom. It will enhance the quality of teaching in the classroom and lessen the burden of English coaching cost from the guardians.

4.2.3 Guardian's Perception on Challenges and Opportunities

All the interviewed guardians were willing to improve their children's English skills. However, they cannot provide all the facilities to their children because of their economic conditions. Fatema Khatun regretted,

“My daughter told me to admit her to an English coaching but we could not. I have two other children. Providing the school fees and buying the books and stationary items for all of them become a burden for us. How can I think about coaching?”

Umme Salma asserted,

“I want to educate both of my children but my husband talks about stopping the study of my daughter after class 10, as we cannot afford the educational expenses of both children... I cannot help them in their studies as I am illiterate.”

Rabeya Begum stated,

“As I myself am a school teacher, I help my children in their studies, though I always get the time. I teach Bangla in primary school. I help my daughter with the reading and writing of English but I cannot speak in English, which I think is very important in today's world.”

Regarding the opportunities, Umme Salma denoted, “If the government provides financial help for the poor students, they can also do something good in the future.”

The statements mentioned above reflect the perception of the guardians on the challenges and opportunities of English language learning in the rural context. The guardians pointed out the challenges of not being able to provide English learning facilities to their children and not having enough time and English proficiency to help their children. Some guardians admitted their inability to provide required facilities for English learning to their children. Moreover, most of the guardians, especially mothers, are not educated enough to help their children. Even if they want, they cannot help in practicing or guiding their children with English. Although some mothers are educated and capable of helping their children with learning English, they do not get adequate time after doing household chores and taking care of all the family members. However, the interviewed parents also claimed the opportunity of having financial support from the government so that their children can have enough learning facilities both in the school and in their home.

4.2 Numerical Data Analysis

This section includes the numeric data found from the participants regarding their favorite subject. Family income, parent's education and English results. Two correlations have been shown here; one is between family income and student's English score and another is between parent's education level and student's English score.

4.3.1 Student's Favorite Subject

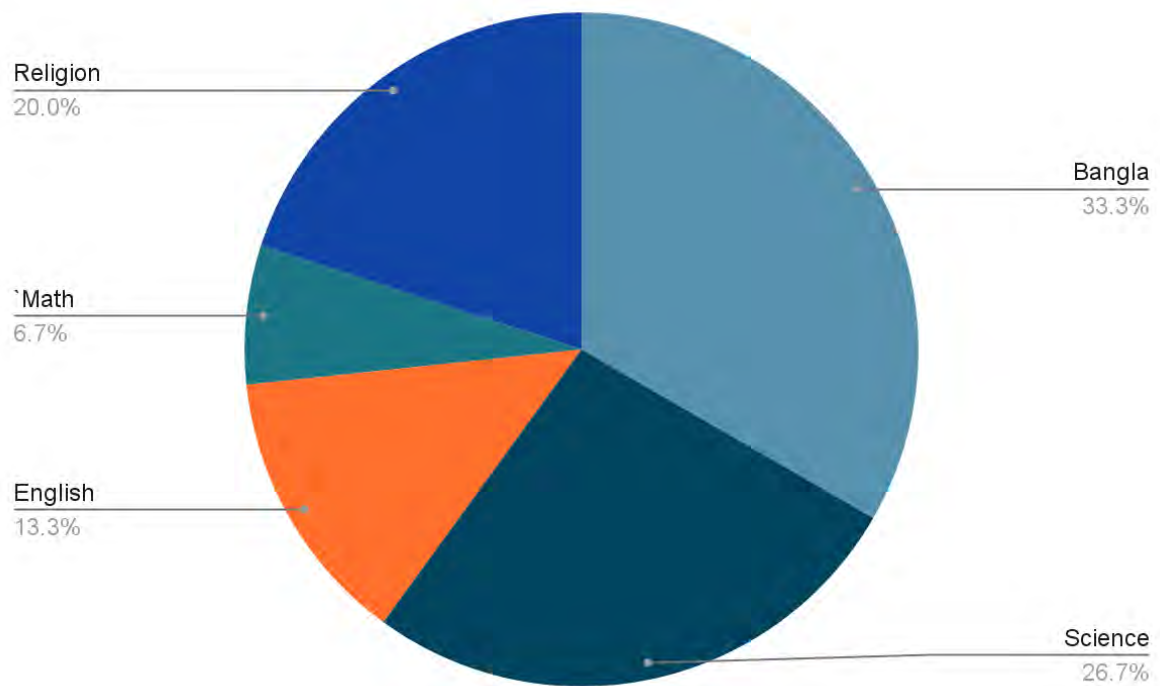


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the percentage of student's favorite subject

All the students were asked about their favorite subject for study. The above pie chart shows their preferences in percentage. The highest number of students (around 33%) mentioned Bangla as their favorite subject because they understand it on their own. Around 26% students like Science and 20% students like Religion. The least number of students showed their fondness to study English and Mathematics which are 13 and 6 in percentage respectively.

4.3.2 Correlation between Family Income and Student's English Result

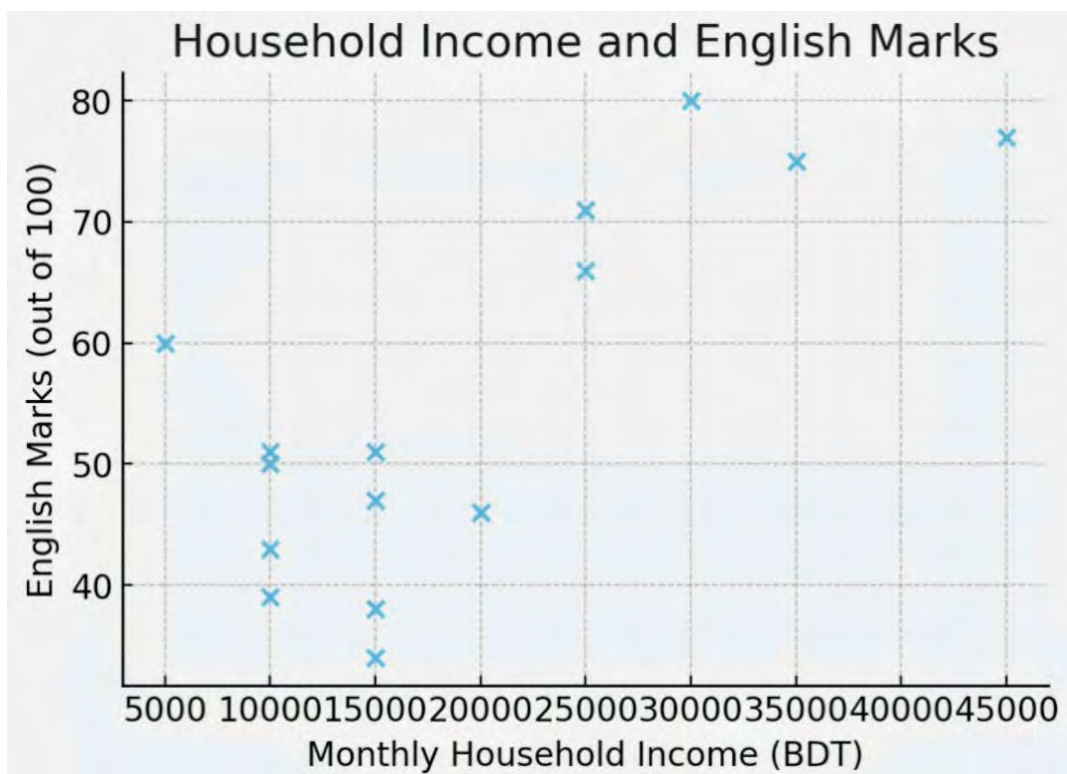


Figure 2: Correlation between household income and English marks

The graph above shows a positive correlation between total household income and the student's obtained English score in their half-yearly examination. It illustrates that the students whose family income is comparatively higher, got better marks in English. To be more particular, students whose family income ranges from 25000 bdt to 45000 bdt, got marks between 66 to 80 out of 100. On the other hand, students who got marks between 40 to 60, have a family income of 5000 to 2000. Based on this result, it can be stated that high income families can provide the necessary facilities to aid their children's language learning. In contrast, the low income families have to struggle with their basic needs. Therefore, they cannot invest the money required for their children's English language learning.

4.3.3 Correlation between Parent's Education and Student's English Result

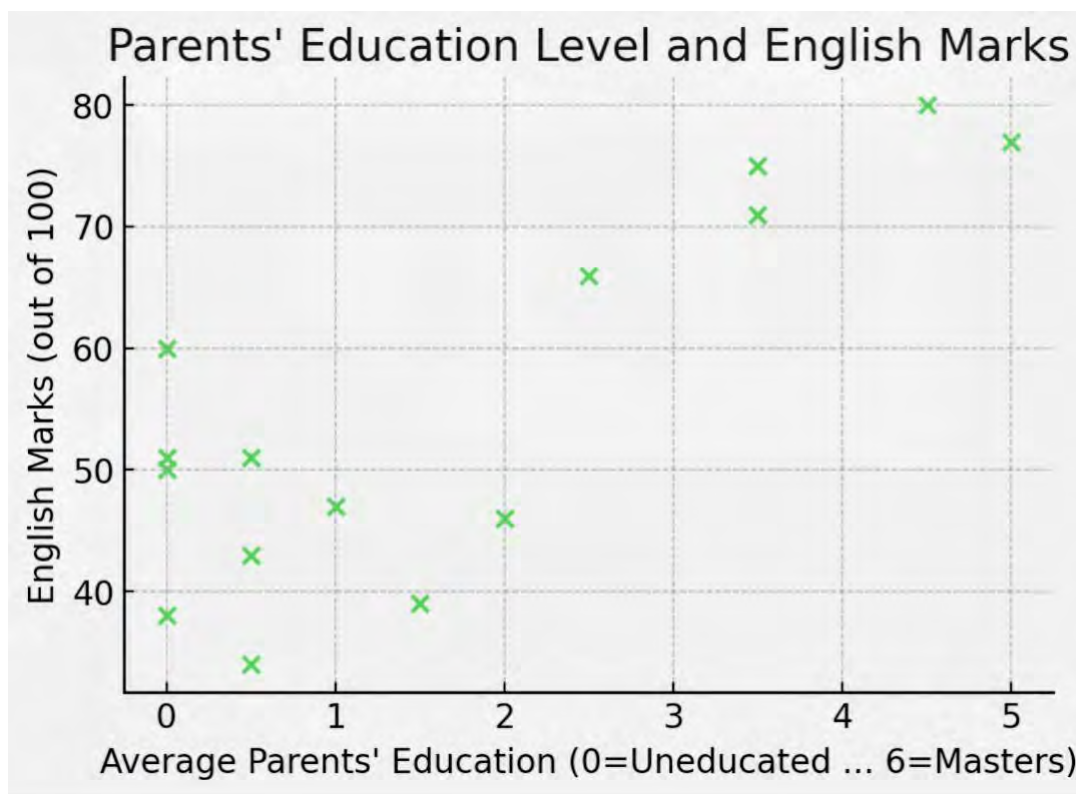


Figure 3: Correlation between parent's education level and English marks

This graph demonstrates a positive correlation between parent's education level and the students obtained English marks in the half-yearly examination. Here, the education level has been portrayed in numbers where 0=Uneducated, 1=Primary level, 2=Secondary level, 3=Higher secondary level, 4=Bachelors level and 6=Masters level. Students whose parents have a higher level of education (Level 4-6), tend to get better marks. Their English marks range between 65 to 80. On the contrary, students having parental education from level 0 to 3, have got less marks in their English exam. Their marks range between 30 to 60. Therefore, it can be assumed from this graph that educated parents can help their children in English language learning which makes those students stand out from the rest. Moreover, an educated parent can monitor and scaffold their child when needed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter will analyze the findings of this research through the lens of different literature and theoretical frameworks related to this study. Previously, different literary articles and theoretical frameworks have been discussed in the literature review section. Also, the viewpoints of the participants have been presented both thematically and numerically in the findings section. The discussion chapter will combine the literature review and finding section. Moreover, it will include some insights of the researcher based on the observation of the interviews.

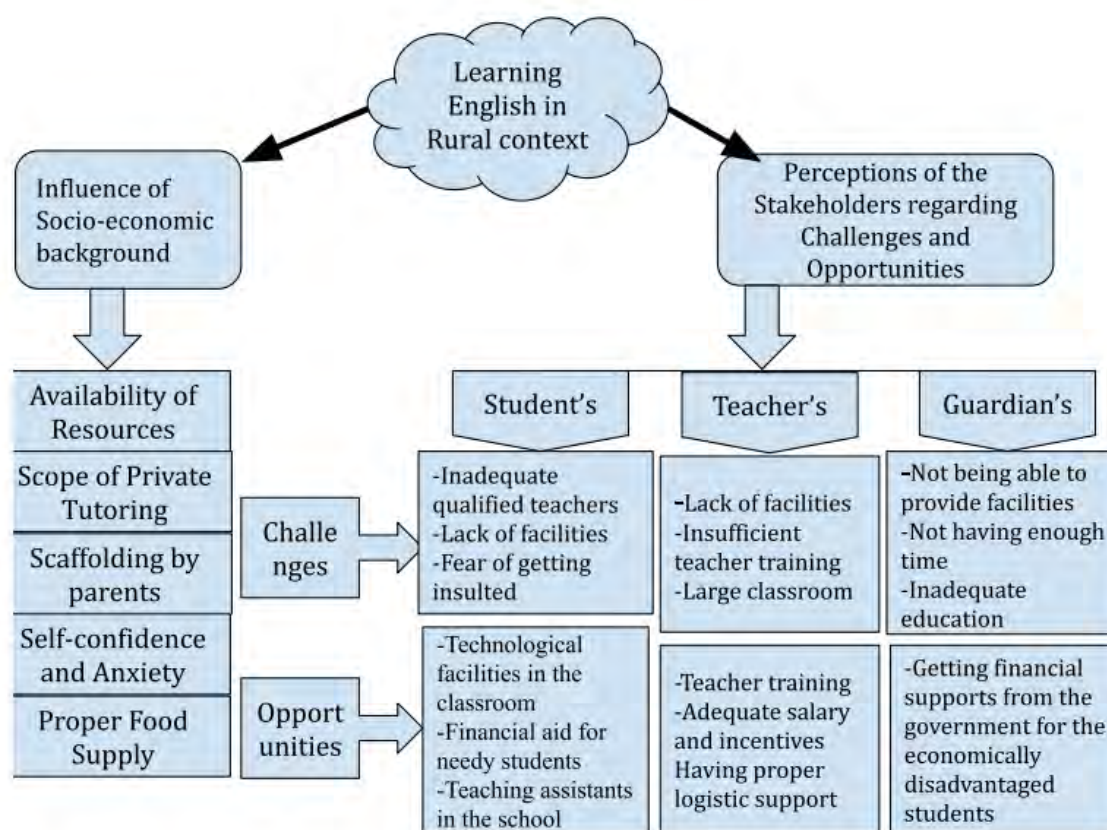


Figure 4: The influence of socio-economic background on English learning and participant perceptions on the challenges and opportunities

The findings of this study have been presented in a summarized manner in the figure given above. Firstly, the interview of the participants revealed that the main socio-economic influence on a secondary level student's English language learning is the availability of resources. Successful English language learning requires resources like technological devices, internet connection etc. The finding shows that most of the students who have lower socio-economic background do not have access to these resources in their home. Merieme et al., also mentioned in their study that due to the parent's lower economic positions, students get less academic facilities (2022). Moreover, Razzaq et al. (2024) showed in their study that inferior socioeconomic status often lowers the student's self-esteem which consequently do not let them take full advantage of the institutional facilities to improve their academic performance. Therefore, the facilities a student obtains in both their home and school are dependent on his socio-economic position.

Secondly, socio-economic background also influences the scope of getting private tutoring of the rural secondary level students. The parents with lower socio-economic positions are incapable and sometimes indifferent to providing private tuitions to their children. A similar scenario has been observed by Bipasha & Islam in their research that parents with higher economic status admit their children in English coaching centers and buy modern devices to aid the learning which make those children more proficient in English (2025). Although Hamid et al. (2017) revealed in their study that private tuitions are more popular among the students with the lower socioeconomic positions, this study has found that the lower income families in the rural areas mostly cannot afford the cost of private tutors. As a consequence, their performance in the class is not as good as the ones who take private tuitions of English. Therefore, they often feel overlooked by their teacher in the classroom.

Thirdly, the chances of being scaffolded by the parents are also influenced by the socio-economic positions of the family. The upper class families are mostly educated. Therefore,

students with educated parents get the chance to be scaffolded by their parents when they need to. It accelerates their English learning which has been observed in their English score of the half yearly exam. The students with educated parents obtained better marks than the students whose parents are less educated or uneducated. Akol (2024) also showed that the educational background of the parents has an impact on the child's language development. Moreover, Uddin & Jahan mentioned in their study that children from educated families get enough English language exposure in their home environment from a very early age which helps them have a better command in English (2023). Therefore, it is evident that students from higher economic background get educated parents who can scaffold them which has a very positive impact on their English language learning,

Fourthly, another influence of student's socio-economic positions on their English learning is their self-confidence and anxiety. The students from higher socioeconomic positions usually have the privilege to get linguistic skills from their family which facilitates them even more in the educational institutions. Consequently, they are being noticed by the teachers in the classroom as more proficient learners which boosts up their self-confidence (Karki & Karki, 2025). On the contrary, students with lower socio-economic positions hesitate and doubt their own linguistic ability in front of the more capable students. It makes them more stressed and anxious which eventually hinders their language learning. Similar phenomena has been demonstrated by Zahid & Ashfaq (2022) in their study. They highlighted that learners from low income families tend to be more stressed and they significantly lack confidence.

Finally, the socio-economic background of the student influences the opportunity of getting proper food supply which is a prerequisite for studying any subject attentively. It has been found in this study that students from low income families and students who stay at relative's places do not get enough nutritious food. As a result, they remain hungry during the class and cannot fully concentrate on the lessons. Therefore, it indirectly causes their poor English skills

and lower marks in the exams. However, as the low income families cannot provide nutritious food to their children, at least the schools should provide some nutritious and fulfilling food during the tiffin time. It will eventually make the students more attentive in their classes.

The next part of the findings contains the perceptions of the three major stakeholders- students, teachers and guardians regarding the challenges and opportunities of English language learning in rural areas of Bangladesh. The challenges mentioned by the students are inadequacy of qualified teachers, lack of required facilities and fear of getting insulted in the class. Sayeda (2020) also found similar challenges in her research which included insufficient number of qualified teachers, limited class time, large class size, lack of government monitoring and poorly equipped classrooms and laboratories. The students also mentioned some opportunities which they think would improve their English learning experience. Those opportunities are modern technological facilities in the classroom, enough financial aid for the needy students and allocated English teaching assistance in the school. If these opportunities are provided in the educational institution, all the students irrespective of their socio-economic positions will be benefited.

Moreover, the interviewed teachers also shared their insights regarding the challenges and opportunities of English language learning in their context. The challenges mentioned by the teachers include lack of required facilities, insufficient teacher training on the curriculum changes and having short class time with a large number of students. Similarly, Molapo (2016) mentioned in his study that there is inadequate training on the new teaching techniques and methods for the teachers, shortage of textbooks and other teaching materials and overload of work which create challenges for the teachers. Again, a news article published on BD News 24 resonates with this finding which states that there is a lack of resources in the schools which ultimately creates pressure among the teachers in handling the classes (Rahman, 2022). The teachers also demanded some opportunities which are proper teacher training on the modern

techniques of ELT, providing proper logistic support, ensuring adequate salary and incentives to the teacher, making the guardians aware of the necessity of learning English, and providing scholarships to the female students. According to a recent study, Bangladeshi secondary level teachers sometimes fail to identify the different cognitive abilities of their students which makes the implementation of communication based lessons more difficult; also there is lack of government support regarding the necessity elements of the classroom and teaching material (Shah et al., 2022). Therefore, the teachers should be provided with all the teaching facilities to get the expected outcome of English language learning.

Lastly, the guardians pointed out the challenges of not being able to provide English learning facilities to their children, not having enough time and English proficiency to help their children. Most of the rural parents are not affluent and educated enough to assist their children's English learning. Although some of the parents are educated, they do not get enough time to monitor the children's education. It indicates that children's scope of getting English learning facilities vastly depends on their parent's economic and educational qualifications. This finding also resonates with the research of Uddin & Jahan (2023) which highlights that lower socioeconomic background leads to poor English proficiency because of less social, economic and cultural capital investment. Moreover, the guardians also claimed the opportunity of having financial support from the government so that their children can have enough learning facilities. Some parents are completely incapable of bearing their children's educational expenses which hinders their overall education. Therefore, the government should provide these children with financial aid so that they can continue their education.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

To sum up, this study tried to explore how the socioeconomic background of secondary level students influence their English language learning and illustrate the perception of the students, teachers and guardians regarding the challenges and opportunities they think would improve the English language learning in the rural context. The findings of this study reveals the influences of socio-economic background in English language learning which are availability of resources, scope of private tutoring, scaffolding by parents, self-confidence and anxiety and proper food supply. English language learning of students from economically disadvantaged families are obstructed through the aforementioned ways. The findings also include the student's, teacher's, guardian's perception on the challenges and opportunities of English language learning. The challenges mentioned by the students are inadequacy of qualified teachers, lack of required facilities and fear of getting insulted in the class and the opportunities they mentioned are modern technological facilities in the classroom, enough financial aid for the needy students and allocated English teaching assistance in the school. Moreover, the challenges mentioned by the teachers include lack of required facilities, insufficient teacher training on the curriculum changes and having short class time with a large number of students. They also demanded some opportunities which are proper teacher training on the modern techniques of ELT, providing proper logistic support, ensuring adequate salary and incentives to the teacher, making the guardians aware of the necessity of learning English, and providing scholarships to the female students. Lastly, the guardians pointed out the challenges of not being able to provide English learning facilities to their children, not having enough time and English proficiency to help their children. Moreover, they also claimed the opportunity of

having financial support from the government so that their children can have enough learning facilities.

6.1 Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to understanding the influence of socio-economic factors on the English language learning of the secondary level students. It reveals the real scenario of the rural students which will help the policymakers, curriculum designers and concerned higher authorities to take appropriate measures to improve the English learning experience of the students irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. Notably, it shows how some students face disparity in their educational institutions because of their socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, through this study, the teachers and guardians will be knowing about the needs and challenges commonly faced by the rural students. As the main stakeholders related to English teaching and learning which are students, guardians and teachers have been interviewed in this study, it contains multiple perspectives of the same issue. Therefore, it will provide a holistic view on both the socioeconomic influence and the challenges and opportunities related to English language learning. Hence, this study will add some new information to the existing literature of this research area and also pave the way for new related research.

6.2 Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, some recommendations can be provided for the improvement of English language learning of the secondary level rural students. Firstly, the resources of the rural schools should be enhanced by the authority so that all the students can achieve the expertise in English skills irrespective of their socio-economic background. Moreover, as most of the rural parents are uneducated, they are not aware of the importance of English for their children and also the ways of improving English skills. The school authority can arrange seminars and workshops for making these parents aware. Again, the teachers

should be trained frequently to ensure effective classroom teaching with the new methods and techniques. Also, the salary and other benefits of the rural teachers should be increased so that they invest all their efforts in the classroom rather than running for private tutoring and coaching centers. Furthermore, educators and policymakers should rethink the disparity between the curriculum and classroom implications and take proper measures to minimize the disparity. Overall, the improvement of the English language learning experience of the rural students requires involvement of all the stakeholders. If each of them can perform their responsibilities properly, it is possible for the rural schools to provide better English education.

6.3 Further Research

Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that students' language learning outcome vastly depends on their socio-economic positions. However, there are many limitations of this study which creates paths for further research. This study has been conducted in a particular area with a small number of participants. Therefore, the results of this study might not be applicable in a different area where the variables like attitude towards learning English, overall socio-economic situation and educational facilities are completely different. Moreover, it is a qualitative research which analyzes the views of a particular group of people that might contain contextual biases. Therefore, further research can be conducted more extensively with both qualitative and quantitative data from a large group of people. Moreover, socio-economic disparity in the urban context or the comparison between the rural and urban context would be another sort of related research. Again, research can be conducted on the reasons why some teachers are not willing to teach properly in the schools and the same teachers are providing better teaching in their coaching centers. Rural student's attitude and motivation towards learning English would be a relevant area of further research which will unfold further information on the English learning experience of the rural students.

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Appendix A.

Interview Questions

For Students:

1. Do you like English as a subject? Why?
2. How many English classes do you have at your school per week?
3. Which skills of English are mostly practiced in the class?
4. Is it compulsory to talk in English during the English classes?
5. Do you take private tuitions for learning English?
6. How does private tuitions help you in learning English?
7. Which materials do you use for learning English? (Textbook, newspaper, internet, TV)
8. How much did you get in English in your half-yearly examination?
9. Do you get any chance to practice English at your home? How do you do it?
10. Does anyone from your family inspire or help you to learn English? If yes, how?
11. What do your parents do for a living?
12. What is their educational background?
13. How much is the total income of your family?
14. Do you think that a student's economic background affects his English learning? How?
15. Do you get all the facilities you require for learning English?
16. Which challenges do you face in learning English? Explain.
17. What do you think will help you to improve your English skills?

For Guardians:

1. What is your educational background?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Do you think that learning English is necessary for your child?
4. Can you help your child in practicing English?

5. Can you provide the modern facilities like internet, computer, smartphone to support your child's learning?
6. Do you provide extra tuition to your child for learning English?
7. Do you think that investing money on your child's English learning is useful? How much money do you spend on it?
8. Which difficulties do you face to help your child with English learning?
9. Do you think your financial situation affects your child's English learning? How?
10. What kind of help or support would make it easier for you to assist your child in learning English?

For Teachers:

1. What are the difficulties you encounter while teaching English in a rural setting?
2. Do you get enough resources for teaching English in your school?
3. Do you think that the socioeconomic background of the students affects their language learning? How does it affect?
4. Why do the students from lower income families struggle more with English?
5. What are the major challenges students face based on your experience?
6. Have you noticed any negligence of the parents from lower socioeconomic status in their children's English language learning?
7. Do you find any significant differences in the performance between students who take private tuitions and those who do not?
8. How do you deal with the students from unprivileged backgrounds? Do you help them beyond the class time?
9. Which teaching methods would you use to support these students?
10. What kind of institutional or community support do you think would improve English education in rural areas?

Appendix B.

Bangla Translation of the Interview Questions:

শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য প্রশ্ন:

1. তুমি কি ইংরেজি বিষয়টি পছন্দ করো? কেন?
2. তোমাদের স্কুলে প্রতি সপ্তাহে কয়টি ইংরেজি ক্লাস হয়?
3. ক্লাসে ইংরেজির কোন দক্ষতাগুলো সবচেয়ে বেশি অনুশীলন করা হয়?
4. ইংরেজি ক্লাসে কি ইংরেজিতে কথা বলা বাধ্যতামূলক?
5. তুমি কি ইংরেজি শেখার জন্য প্রাইভেট টিউশন নাও?
6. ইংরেজি শেখায় প্রাইভেট টিউশন কীভাবে তোমাকে সাহায্য করে?
7. তুমি ইংরেজি শেখার জন্য কোন উপকরণ ব্যবহার করো? (পাঠ্যবই, গাইড, সংবাদপত্র, ইন্টারনেট, টিভি)
8. অর্ধ-বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় তুমি ইংরেজিতে কত নম্বর পেয়েছিলে?
9. তুমি কি বাসায় ইংরেজি অনুশীলনের সুযোগ পাও? কীভাবে করো?
10. তোমার পরিবারের কেউ কি তোমাকে ইংরেজি শেখার জন্য উৎসাহিত বা সাহায্য করে? করলে কীভাবে করে?
11. তোমার বাবা-মা কী কাজ করেন?
12. তাদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা কী?
13. তোমাদের পরিবারের মোট মাসিক আয় কত?
14. তুমি কি মনে করো, শিক্ষার্থীর আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থা তার ইংরেজি শেখায় প্রভাব ফেলে? কীভাবে?
15. ইংরেজি শেখার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সব সুযোগ-সুবিধা কি তুমি পাও?
16. ইংরেজি শেখার ক্ষেত্রে তুমি কী ধরনের সমস্যার মুখোমুখি হও? ব্যাখ্যা করো।
17. তোমার মতে, কোন জিনিসগুলো তোমার ইংরেজি দক্ষতা বাড়াতে সাহায্য করতে পারে?

অভিভাবকদের জন্য প্রশ্ন:

1. আপনার শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা কী?
2. আপনি কী কাজ করেন?
3. আপনি কি মনে করেন, আপনার সন্তানের জন্য ইংরেজি শেখা জরুরি?
4. আপনি কি সন্তানের ইংরেজি অনুশীলনে সাহায্য করতে পারেন?

5. আপনি কি সন্তানের শেখার জন্য ইন্টারনেট, কম্পিউটার, স্মার্টফোনের মতো আধুনিক সুবিধা দিতে পারেন?
6. আপনি কি সন্তানের জন্য ইংরেজি শেখার অতিরিক্ত টিউশন দেন?
7. আপনি কি মনে করেন, সন্তানের ইংরেজি শেখার পেছনে অর্থ ব্যয় করা উপকারী? আপনি এর জন্য কত টাকা ব্যয় করেন?
8. সন্তানের ইংরেজি শেখায় সাহায্য করতে গিয়ে আপনি কী ধরনের অসুবিধার মুখোমুখি হন?
9. আপনি কি মনে করেন, আপনার আর্থিক অবস্থা সন্তানের ইংরেজি শেখায় প্রভাব ফেলে? কীভাবে?
10. কোন ধরনের সহায়তা বা সাহায্য পেলে আপনি সন্তানের ইংরেজি শেখায় আরও ভালোভাবে সাহায্য করতে পারবেন বলে মনে করেন?

শিক্ষকদের জন্য প্রশ্ন:

1. গ্রামীণ পরিবেশে ইংরেজি শেখাতে গিয়ে আপনি কী ধরনের সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হন?
2. আপনার স্কুলে ইংরেজি শেখানোর জন্য পর্যাপ্ত উপকরণ কি পাওয়া যায়?
3. আপনি কি মনে করেন, শিক্ষার্থীদের আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থা তাদের ইংরেজি শেখায় প্রভাব ফেলে? কীভাবে ফেলে?
4. নিম্ন আয়ের পরিবারের শিক্ষার্থীরা কেন ইংরেজিতে বেশি সমস্যায় পড়ে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
5. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতায় শিক্ষার্থীরা ইংরেজি শেখায় কী কী বড় চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হয়?
6. নিম্ন আর্থ-সামাজিক পরিবারের অভিভাবকদের মধ্যে কি আপনি সন্তানের ইংরেজি শিক্ষার প্রতি উদাসীনতা লক্ষ্য করেছেন?
7. যারা প্রাইভেট টিউশন নেয় এবং যারা নেয় না — তাদের পারফরম্যান্সে কি আপনি উল্লেখযোগ্য পার্থক্য দেখেন?
8. বঞ্চিত পরিবারের শিক্ষার্থীদের সাথে আপনি কীভাবে আচরণ করেন? আপনি কি ক্লাসের বাইরে তাদের সাহায্য করেন?
9. এই শিক্ষার্থীদের সহায়তায় আপনি কোন ধরনের শিক্ষণ পদ্ধতি ব্যবহার করতে চান?
10. আপনার মতে, গ্রামীণ এলাকায় ইংরেজি শিক্ষার মান উন্নয়নের জন্য কী ধরনের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক বা সামাজিক সহায়তা প্রয়োজন?