

Primary Graduate's Challenges for Accruing Four Skills of English
Language: The Scenario of Rural Primary School of Chattogram,
Bangladesh

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

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BRAC University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work completed during my degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not include content already published or authored by a third party, except when it is properly cited with complete and exact references.
3. The thesis does not include content that has been approved or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or similar institution...
4. I have acknowledged all core sources of help during doing the study.

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Ethics Statement

I hereby declare that, the study exhibited in this paper is my own work. The Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, given the guidelines for the data collection method from the participants. The participants' consent for their participation was taken in advance, and privacy is preserved all through the paper. The data collection process and the results of this research were not influenced by any of my internal biases. Throughout the duration of this study, no living entities were endangered.

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Abstract

I have done this study to find the difficulties rural primary school students' in the Chattogram region of Bangladesh, in the process of learning the fundamental English language competencies that are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Mainly in light of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which had introduced since late 1990s within the curriculum of Bangladesh. Students in rural areas still struggle with English competency, particularly in speaking and listening abilities, despite government initiatives to encourage English as a secondary language. To gain insights into the issues faced by learners and educators, I utilized a qualitative research strategy. I conducted focus group discussions (FGD) with primary learners and in-depth interviews with the primary schools' teachers and education experts. The results showed that there are a lot of obstacles, such as not enough CLT training for teachers, huge class numbers, lack of resources, and the impact of regional dialects on students' ability to understand communicative English that as a result creating fear of speaking the language, inactive participation and rote-based learning among the students. Poverty, inconsistent school attendance, and absent or unsupportive parents are other socioeconomic variables that impede students' ability to learn English following a communicative way. In my study, I suggested initiatives, such as better training for teachers, taking CLT approaches in the classrooms, and creating more resources for practicing communicative English for students from low-income backgrounds, for bringing the improvement in learners' acquisition capacity of learning English. I have also provided important recommendations for educators and policymakers who are working on the policy reformation of English language learning method by shedding light on the systemic problems that affect this field.

Dedication

I am dedicating my thesis to my dear mother, father and sisters especially, Nusrat Lubna for their love and encouragement.

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I want to show my gratitude to my advisor, Ms. Nafisa Anwar, for the kind support she has provided during this study. It would have been challenging for me to finish this thesis without her guidance. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the head teachers and assistant teachers for their kind assistance in collecting data in the field. Additionally, I am very appreciative of my manager, Mrinmoy Sarker, who has provided me with utmost support during my thesis writing period. I want to show my gratitude to my peer Samantha Shahrin's constant encouragement. I am also grateful for the moral support that my peer Sameah Absar has given me. And lastly, I want to thank all the participants who have participated with great enthusiasm and shared valuable insights.

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
MOE	Ministry of Education
MopMe	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

Chapter-1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction: English language is widely used for communication on both local and global scales. The primary education curriculum has been redefined and redesigned to meet the requirements of the new century.

The Government of Bangladesh has realized that English is an important element in all parts of life and has made it the Second language. The latest and broadly validated National Education Policy 2010 incorporated competency number nine into the primary level curriculum for English language acquisition. The competency stated that, acquiring the primary components of English, where this language taught in an environment, where it is learnt as a foreign language. In the policy, it was mentioned, “To achieve this ability, 31 specific terminal competencies associated to the English topic have been precisely created. The terminal competencies are allocated into 181 class-specific attainable competencies and 235 learning outcomes for whole primary level of education.” (National Education Policy, 2010).

Hossain M. R., (2019). Rahman & Sarker (2019), Sultana (2010 and Milon et al. (2018) studies have shown the struggle of teachers, barely equipped classrooms, lack of teacher development facilities, and disparities in the curriculum and school level assessment remained challenging for educators to implement CLT for students as envisioned. In this paper I will focus on finding the challenges of rural learners face in learning English in the primary stage to understand the learners’ perspective and bring necessary suggestions for the issues.

1.2 Research Topic: I have chosen primary schools learners' challenges in learning English at the Government Primary School as the research topic. Similar to many countries around the world, English is compulsory as a subject in primary education of Bangladesh. Globalization and the worldwide increase in acceptance of the language have led to the introduction of English in the initial years of schooling so that children get introduced to communicative competence, allowing them to confront the global economy for both individual and nationwide evolution (Hamid & Erling, 2016; Rahman et al., 2019). Primary curriculum in Bangladesh is underpinned by the CLT approach to conduct English learning procedure, which concentrates on nurturing the communicative competences among students who are learning English as a Foreign Language (Ahmed, 2016; Kabir, 2015). To serve this purpose, Bangladesh introduced in the primary level, a competency-based curriculum on 1992 (Roy, 2016). Aligning with this curriculum, the NCTB has developed all textbooks, teacher directors, and additional resources for teaching-learning. They have also created students' evaluation systems that are aligned with competency-based guidelines (Hena & Uddin, 2019).

Despite these efforts, the country remains far from achieving its goals. Policies are often formulated in a top-down manner, and ground-level problems frequently go unnoticed (Hamid, 2010; Rahman & Sarker, 2019). I wanted to reveal the underneath difficulties of English language learners in Chattogram, Bangladesh through my study. By focusing on the rural context, I sought to uncover the gaps between policy intentions and actual classroom practices, particularly in the implementation of CLT and the progress of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills of English (Sultana, 2010; Das et al., 2015).

1.3 Problem Statement: The GOB has chosen English as a second language after the significance of the language on a global scale (Ministry of Education, n.d.). To encourage learning of English at all levels GOB has taken numerous measures in recent years (NAPE, June, 2019). The curriculum 2012, has been transformed into total competency-based, and itemized twenty-nine competencies by GOB, and it was expected that the students will attain all those competencies after completion of primary education.(Ministry of Education, n.d.; Hena & Uddin, 2019). Starting from 2018, all the questions at primary level were replaced with 100% competency-based (NAPE, June, 2019). MoPME revealed that Chattogram learners received the top grades in mathematics, around 87% marks, and the lowest mark was approximately 75.7% in the English subject after reviewing the answer scripts of PECE (NAPE, June, 2019). In reality, it is seen that even after passing out grade five learners struggle in English Communicative Competencies.

Many studies have considered teachers minimal English teaching skill to be a major problem in implementing CLT in Bangladesh. Hamid (2010) endorsed that besides a lack of quality teachers, there is also a lack of pedagogical ideas. The pragmatism of the intention of the CLT curriculum with the assessment has also faced criticism and been questioned. The two highly emphasized domains of CLT listening and speaking have been completely ignored in the primary assessment (Das et al., 2015).

Many research has been conducted to find the teaching struggles in a typical government primary school. Along with the mentioned difficulties, my two years of teaching at a rural public elementary school have shown that there are large discrepancies between what is expected in the curriculum and what students really learn. Students who cannot even spell their names or articulate the most fundamental English terms correctly have been promoted to fifth grade, in my experience.

It was also visible among the learners that they are unable to connect the learning of the language to real life, as they don't use it any part of daily lives. This is contrary to the curriculum's purpose of teaching English as a language rather than a subject, many students rely significantly on the memorization of one or two themes to pass exams. Students' confidence is lowered, and their ability to build communicative competence in English is hindered by this method of memorization, which also prevents them from reaching their maximum potential in learning the language. Scholars such as Sultana (2010) and Das et al. (2015) have also found that there is a discrepancy among policy goals and classroom practices, especially in rural Bangladesh, and their findings are in line with those findings. This study will find out about the struggles in English Learning outcomes of students of rural schools of Chattogram district through analyzing the perceptions of, those who passed grade 5, to know their gap in achieving the terminal competencies and the issues they faced in their learning process.

1.4 Research Questions:

1. What challenges do rural students face in learning the four English language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking?
2. Why are the four skills of English (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) Learning Process difficult for the Learners?

1.5 Purpose of the Study: I wanted to have a better understanding of the obstacles, rural primary school learners face in their pursuit of fluency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in order to improve their communicative abilities in English in this study. Through my research I sought to understand the kind of obstacles that prevent students in effective English language

learning in rural primary schools, I also dived deep to find the core reasons for which learners face the challenges in meeting these competencies.

Lastly I wanted to gain a profound perspectives of education experts, students, and teachers. Additionally, I wanted to gain a thorough grasp of the systemic problems. that require addressing. Das et al. (2015), Hena and Uddin (2019), and Sultana (2010) all stated that English language method need improvements especially in the rural part of the country.

1.6 Significance of the Study: The objective of including English in Grade 1- 5 is to prepare students mastering English naturally and spontaneously for communication (MOE). The GOB included CLT in the late 90s and the NCTB (Kabir, 2015) clearly emphasized on building the required competencies for learning communicative English. The MOE decided to implement Communicative Language at Primary level (Kabir, 2015). Since 2018, the assessment system has been fully competency-based, aiming to evaluate learners based on their capability to relate language skills in everyday situations. However, despite these efforts, there is a significant discrepancy among objective of curriculum with actual English proficiency levels of students, particularly in rural areas.

This study is important because I aimed to reveal the actual situation of English learning process among the students of rural primary schools of Chattogram and make way of creating a ultimate pathway to illuminate the difficulties they encounter in meeting the curriculum's specified abilities. I delved into the challenges faced by learners as well as the systemic obstacles they confront, aiming to uncover the reasons behind students' frequent inability to achieve the anticipated standards in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is important to evaluate the existing conditions of English learning in rural schools is crucial for pinpointing the underlying issues

contributing to these challenges, including insufficient teacher training, limited resources, socioeconomic factors, and the impact of regional dialects.

The results of my study is important for decision-makers, educators, and involved parties, as they will illuminate the gaps between policy objectives and actual conditions. I aimed to outline in this study the challenges encountered by rural learners so that focused interventions and data-driven policies can be implemented to gain the intended objective of English language education ensuring that students attain the needed English language skills, needed to get ahead in a globalized environment.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

I provided data from numerous books, reports, journal and papers that I studied in order to realize my research topic besides identify the challenges regarding the topic here. From the larger pool of data set, I have categorized the literature review section into the following segment 1) English Teaching and Learning practices in Bangladesh, 2) Communicative language teaching Practices in Bangladesh, 3) National Curriculum and Policy for ELT, 4) English Assessment policy of Primary Level, 5) Primary Teachers' Practices for CLT, 6) The Objective of Teaching English in Primary Level, 7) The rural scenario in Learning English.

2.1 English Teaching and Learning Practices in Bangladesh: Bangla is the official language for administration, education, media, literature, and cultural activities across the country as it is a monolingual country. (Chowdhury & Khaled, 2017). MOE wrote on their primary education blog named Competency-based English Curriculum that by acknowledging the global value of English, the GOB included English in the curriculum as a mandatory subject (Ministry of Education, n.d.) from the beginning of the Primary level. (Ministry of Education ; PANDIAN, September 2018). In the World Bank report published in 2016 mentioned that, our country is recognized as a lower middle-income country and wants its population to communicate more with the outside the country and make English mandatory from primary level (Rahman et al, 2018,p 46). The five year Primary level education is the beginnig of formal education of our country and and English was included in the late 1990s in the National Curriculum (Tasnim, 2019). The worldwide growing demand of English, has made the language a major concerned subject, must adapt to the speedily escalating global economy and train a qualified work force from the starting level of education (Rahman et al.,2019, p. 9:9). Hamid & Erling,(2016) said that various national,

international, and subnational factors have formed English learning policies in Bangladesh. These acknowledge national significances besides historical ground as well as educational NGO's and international development organizations' projects. This multifaceted issues, it's hard to come up with easy explanations why English is needed to keep up with economic growth. On top of that, a variety of school systems. and their curricula created a learning gap among the learners of same grade level (ALI & WALKER, 2014, p. 33)

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching Practices in Bangladesh: CLT is a popular method to teach English by establishing strong interaction between learners in a natural way. The set of communication used to teach the language centered on daily use, social necessities, official requirements and classroom scenario and these interactive activity has been designed and implemented to make the learners engaged with others in the language naturally (Ahmed, 2016, p 97). It is expected that communicative language teaching and learning should happen in a manner like coversation, peer learning, role play, singing, dancing, etc., expressing expressive utilization of language to make the lessons fascinating, collaborative and enjoyable (Hoque et al., 2018,p 166). At present there is visible policy-practice gap of CLT faraway form its intention (Hamid & Honan, 2012). The fruitful implementation of CLT is hindered because of numerous factors even after GOB's multiple initiatives (Roy S., 2016,p 18)

Rahman et al. (2018) showed that several factors, including the necessities of educators, mismatch between the teaching syllabus and assessment materials, bare equipped school infrastructure, and the poor quality teaching skill development policies, have hampered teachers from executing CLT as intended in the curriculum (Rahman et al., 2018, p 1105). Mr. Kawsar said that this procedure, has met and is still meeting many challenges from beginning that need to be dealt with sincerity and operative strategy (Ahmed,2016)

2.3 National Curriculum and Policy for CLT: GOB in association with NCTB brought the English language policy at the primary levels to introduce the CLT for teaching English in an effective way (Bhattacharya, 2015). Kabir (2015) said that NCTB introduced various strategies to establish the curriculum for primary level in such way for introducing the CLT for building the English communicative competencies easily among the students however, undesirably, the curriculum has not yet been instigated successfully. In his paper, Kabir (2015) also underlined that the large portion of primary school students are unprepared in the English language because there aren't enough trained teachers in CLT. He added further that NCTB also designed English textbooks for implementing CLT approach in building the necessary expertise for the language among the learners. Pandian (2018) said that along with the textbook formation GOB set the objectives, terminal competencies and class-wise attainable competencies of Primary education from class I-V to build a groundwork in mastering the four fundamental language skills. Nevertheless, even after all these, it is observed that the core part of CLT are not practiced in classroom specially in the rural areas. Hamid (2010) shed the light here by saying that this poor quality practices for teaching English resulted from the unclear language policy and planning.

2.4 English Assessment Policy of Primary Level: To serve the purpose of CLT practice, the assessment has also seen reformation make the whole language teaching process relatable (Fullan, 2007). Hamid and Baldauf, (2008) said that since beginning of CLT in Bangladesh, NCTB took the initiative to modify the English textbooks by incorporating dialogues, pictures, diagrams, individual and group activities for practicing four basic skills in the classroom. Though Bangladesh implemented a competency-based curriculum and textbooks in 1992, any official and visible competency-based assessment was missing prior to 2000, as assessment is essential for ensuring quality in teaching and learning, as well as for assessing the mastery of learners' competencies.

(Hena & Uddin 2019). In the same paper, it is said that the currently curriculum has three types of competencies- terminal competencies, class-wise attainable competencies and learning outcomes (Hena & Uddin 2019). It was found in the Report Published by NAPE (2018) to assess the primary students. PECE was first introduced in 2009, and from 2012, Competency-based Test Items. (CBTIs) were introduced in PECE and from 2018 it became 100% competency-based. Hossain et al. (2015), said the curriculum is not getting implemented properly, and besides "a discrepancy between the objectives of the curriculum and the assessment take place during the end of each educational period in the country." (Ansarey, 2012, p. 68). It is also seen that the two significant criteria of CLT, listening and speaking, stayed un-evaluated, but highly emphasized in the curriculum (Das et al., 2015). Sultana (2019) agreed with this by stating that this existing mismatch between curriculum's goal and assessment module, creating obstacle in implementing CLT approach heavily in Bangladesh, that leads to insufficiency in students' communicative competence in English. (P: 14).

2.5 Primary Teachers' Practices for CLT: The primary features of CLT include using topic related to real life, which give learners the opportunities to concentrate on the learning process beside achieving mastery in the language and a vital role in this process and educators have a crucial role to conduct the process in the classroom (Milon et al., 2018). They (Milon et al., 2018) said that CLT centers on various enagaging activity in classroom such as working in large group, engage in pair and role play etc. Sultana (2010) brought up that CLT needs reciprocal classroom activities that includes English reading, writing, listening and speaking to create necessary collaboration in classrooms. Pandian et al (2018) said that any kind of shift in curriculum time and again have not been able to implement in actual as plocicymakers fail to understand the actual need of the teachers in different part of the country as a result teachers in our country deal

with different types of challenges in times of teaching English following the CLT approach. Another significant challenge of communicative language teaching approach is the large size of the classrooms with a huge number of students (Sultan,2010). In our country, majority of GPS classes are centered around the teacher, resulting in minimal student participation in the teaching and learning process beside this,most of the classrooms are not well organized in terms of involving the students in communicative activities (Hossain M. R., 2019). (Rahman M. M., 2018) & (PANDIAN, September 2018) seen that this lecture-based method occurred often times due to “Overloaded classrooms (most of the time exceeding 1:70 teacher-student ratios) left teachers with no choice but to carry out lecture-based methods, avoiding the student-centred philosophy of CLT”. Rahman & Sarker (2019) also found complications in teaching the English at Bangladeshi primary schools face challenges arised from insufficient teacher training, restricted teaching-learning hours, barely equipped classrooms, large classroom, limited English teaching skills, and a lack of teacher motivation.. The researcher witnessed of using Bangla in times of giving instructions for teaching that does not helpful for students mastering the competencies also obstructs the proper implementation of CLT our contry’s classroom. (Rahman & Sarker 2019).

2.6 The Objective of Teaching English at the Primary Level: The British colonial ruled Bangladesh as a part of Indian sub-continent almost for 200 years (1757–1947) and this long British ruling period has left profound scars in the fabric of our educational history (Chowdhury&Sarkar,2018). Apart from Bangla we use English across the country as we do not have any official second language (Ara, 2020). The researcher Ara (2020) also stated that at now English has a strong presence in our context despite having an unsettled past as an impact of globalization. English has become an integral part since Macaulay Minutes of 1835 and the language has ultimately become the lingua franca at present (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). In

continuation of this the policy makers has also chose to include English language learning beginning from the primary level as a mandatory subject (Chowdhury, 2017). The researcher pointed out that without thinking about the ultimate impact on learners, the compulsory incorporation of English into the education system beside Bangla, from the primary level education ultimately leads to suffering of the learners and resists them achieving mastery in either of the languages (Chowdhury, 2017). It is also a regular scenario that many graduates do not speak English at all and face difficulty in getting better jobs and standing better chances of getting foreign scholarships for higher studies (SRAMON, 2016). Currently, Bangladesh is suffering from a policy and practice gap in ELT with CLT approach (Hamid; Hasan, 2010) as the intention of curriculum for English learning at primary education lacks clarity among all the parts of the country that leads complications among learners (Hamid M. , 2010)

2.7 The rural scenario in Learning English: Since English is accepted as the international language and one of the most common tool of world communication the policy for implementing language progressed in fast pace but the implementation faced severe challenge in mastering the language in our country (Uddin, 2018).The researcher also stated that learning procedures of English in educational institutes in Bangladesh, starting from primary level have failed to achieve objectives, either in general or in specific (Uddin, 2018). Researchers have observed teachers are mostly using traditional method in teaching English in the classroom and a major part of communicative language that are listening and speaking are majorly excluded in classroom specially in the rural area (Kabir U. S., 2014).

An key finding is that dependency on Bangla even in the English class hamper the in English learning process (Md. Mridha & Sheikh, 2020). A natural setup of classroom that is best required for children to learn a language is not available in our country especially in our rural areas (Khan

et al., 2020). According to the study (Khan et al., 2020), this led to disinterest among the learners, and it is seen among the rural learners that they enjoy other subjects like social science, religion or even Math but lack the interest to learn English. This made the learners particularly in rural areas, shy in the classroom, since English language components (vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling pattern) seem alien to the learners (Sharmin, 2019). Sultana (2010) states that a significant number of students in rural Bangladesh face challenges in learning English., especially in listening and speaking. Beside (Ahmed, 2016) said that it is important to understand the learners’ perspective when they involve in learning a second language. Therefore, I conducted the study to fulfil the purpose of investigating learners’ challenges.

2.8 Conceptual Framework:

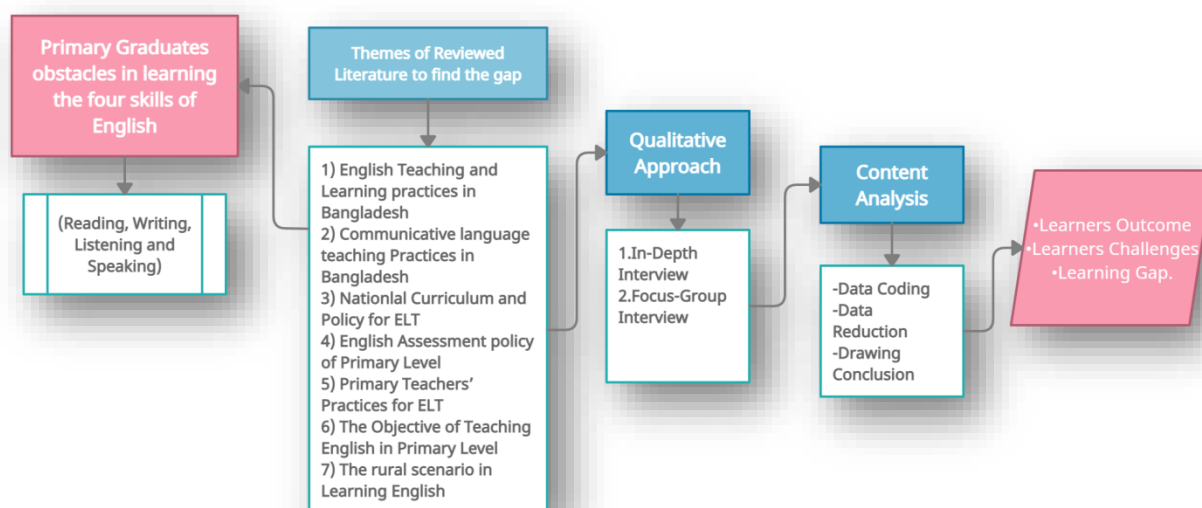


Table 1: Conceptual Framework

With an aim to improve students' fluency in English, CLT approach, serves as the foundation for the conceptual framework of this study. Nonetheless, even with its implementation, numerous

students continue to face challenges in achieving fluency in English in spite of twelve years of academics learning of English, as emphasized in the existing literature (Hamid, 2010; Rahman et al., 2018). This framework highlights the disparity between the desired results of CLT and the real proficiency levels of students, especially in rural regions. Building upon the insights of Hamid (2010), who highlighted that insufficient teacher training and limited resources impede the successful application of CLT, resulting in an emphasis on rote learning over communicative competence, as well as the findings of Rahman et al. (2018), who pinpointed systemic obstacles like misaligned curricula, poorly equipped classrooms, and inadequate teacher development initiatives as impediments to realizing CLT objectives, this study explored the challenges face by the primary school students. The objective was to figure out the biggest problems, primary students have when they try to learn English, such as how local dialects affect learning, socioeconomic constraints, and inadequate exposure to communicative practices. After collecting the data from all of the participants, they were categorized through thematic analysis and it showed a systematic comprehension of the gap between policy objectives and actual classroom experiences. This framework, following existing literature, provides evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing English learning in rural Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach: I shed light over the rural area's learners' challenges for learning English through this study, and for my research I have chosen the Qualitative Approach. Qualitative research is a suitable approach for knowing participants' perspective towards any events, beliefs or practices (Gay & Arisian, 2003). The objective of my study is to find rural primary graduates' struggles in achieving mastery in English, especially in the curriculum stated competencies for reading, writing, listening and speaking. In this study I intended to discover learners' point of view over the issues they faced in the learning process. This purpose matches with the characteristics of Qualitative research that Gay & Arisian (2003) have written in their book that Qualitative research is exceptionally suited for exploration and to understand a phenomenon and a specific group, and such exploration can create new theories. This characteristic of the Qualitative approach justifies my research topic and helps me to explore it, so this is the reason for choosing the Qualitative research approach in my study

3.2 Research site: In this study, I selected schools in the Chattogram district at Panchlaish education thana. The selection was decided due to my prior experience working in the area, which facilitated accessible research, and these schools also exemplified the English education landscape of a rural school of our country. The schools demonstrated the normal circumstances of rural educational institutions, and the obstacles faced by students were prominently evident during my teaching tenure. That is why I have chosen the Government Primary schools as the research site at Panchlaish Thana.

3.3 Research Participants: For my study, I had three different participant groups Primary school graduates, English teachers of GPS, and Education Experts. The students were participants, aged twelve to fifteen years, who included both male and female learners who had completed their primary education at a government primary school in Chattogram District. The students were chosen based on teachers' recommendations, prioritizing those who encountered substantial challenges in learning English and had received lower scores in their preceding annual assessments. The teachers were both male and female and who had more than five years of teaching experience, particularly in English, at the primary level. The long experience helped to deep dive into the problem and bring out the trend of English learning challenges. The participated teachers, in my study were all long-term residents of the Chattogram District, which allowed them to offer contextually grounded insights into the linguistic barriers specific to the region and the local educational challenges. Furthermore, Education experts were also chosen based on their considerable expertise and understanding of the rural Bangladesh's landscape especially in primary level. Also, they had understanding of primary education in Bangladesh, with experience in teaching English or understanding primary-level curricula, and were well-acquainted with the challenges faced by rural schools. Their ideas offered a comprehensive view of systemic issues in English language instruction and acquisition.

3.4 Sampling Procedure: In order to identify participants from a rural primary school in Chattogram, Bangladesh that was representative, I used purposive sampling in this study. The chosen schools were selected due to its representative features of rural schools in the region and the accessibility of research, adhering to established qualitative research methodology (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). This purposive sampling method facilitated the inclusion of information-rich cases

appropriate to the examination of English language learning challenges within rural primary education settings. The study's chosen sample highlighted a number of significant features that reflected the difficulties faced by Bangladesh's rural elementary schools. The school encountered significant resource limitations, characterized by a scarcity of essential learning materials and technological tools necessary for effective English language instruction. Overcrowding in the classroom resulted in an unfavorable teacher-to-student ratio that made it difficult to provide individualized attention. Socioeconomic factors posed considerable obstacles, with poverty-related issues among students resulting in inconsistent attendance and insufficient learning support at home. The linguistic context presented significant challenges, as local dialects heavily influenced English language acquisition, thereby complicating students' development of accurate pronunciation and comprehension. The school exemplified a typical rural setting, reflecting the prevalent educational challenges encountered in comparable regions of Bangladesh. The institution's characteristics concentrate it an exemplary case study for analyzing systemic obstacles to English language acquisition in under-resourced GPS in the rural part of the country. Through these schools' selection I aimed to create a picture that represent the broader rural primary education landscape of Bangladesh.

I involved in this research, primary graduate students, both male and female, aged 12 to 15 years, who had finished their primary education at the chosen institution. Participants were selected based on teacher recommendations, specifically targeting students who exhibited considerable challenges in English language acquisition and received lower scores in their annual examinations.

I included assistant teachers who had more than five years of teaching experience and regularly involved in English teaching. These teachers were selected because of their firsthand experience with the learners and encounter the English teaching learning obstacles in rural area.

In addition to students and teachers, the study included education experts who have comprehensive understanding of the primary education landscape in Bangladesh. These experts were also selected using the purposive sampling technique. They also possessed a profound understanding of primary education in Bangladesh, with experience in train up the teachers at primary level and involved in primary-level curricula implementation strategy, and were well-acquainted with the challenges faced by rural schools in Chattogram. This approach ensured that the nominated people gave detailed insight of the challenges of learners of rural primary schools in Bangladesh.

3.5 Data Collection Methods: In my study to know the learners' perspectives about their struggle in the learning process of English, I have Collected Data by Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews.

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussion: A focus group discussion is a sensibly designed dialogue with a purpose to gather insights on a specific topic within a supportive, non-threatening atmosphere. (Morgan, 1997). Among the different types of group interviews, FGD is distinguished by the presence of group interaction (Gibson, 2007). Focus groups were first utilized in business study, but they have since been broadly used in social science and applied research as well. (Marshall & Gretchen, 1999). Gibson (2007) also said that FGD provides an effective and flexible method for engaging with children and young people. So collecting data from students of young age I used this method to hold two Focus Group discussions. Each group composed of 7 primary graduate students. All the students are chosen based on the teachers' recommendations from their past experience. FGD usually take place with the group under the supervision of a moderator (Kingry et al. 1990). I played the part of a moderator, to conduct the discussion in a impartial way by using the pre determined openended questions. I took several essential steps to assure successful focus group discussion. First, I carefully prepared my questions and scheduled enough time for each

session. I explained to participants why they were invited and our goals at the outset of both FGD. I informed everyone of the discussion length so they could participate comfortably. I organised discussions to ensure everyone was heard and stay focused on our research goals. With permission, I have recorded each session and quickly summarised our findings and thanked everyone for their time and ideas. Finally, to maintain data accuracy while the exchanges were fresh in my mind, I prioritised transcribing the recordings immediately or going back to the recording at times of transcribing.

3.5.2: In-Depth Interview: The interview was one of the major instruments that I used to collect data as it also considered a crucial tool for qualitative research (Gibson, 2007). The interviewer and interviewee conduct one to one meeting under this method in order to have a in depth discussion to understand the perspective of the participants. In-depth interviews are an important tool for qualitative research as they bring a detail picture of the participants' perspective.(Marshall & Gretchen, 1999). The authors (Marshall & Gretchen, 1999) said in their book that in-depth interviews for qualitative reaserach are similar to discussions than structured procedures with predefined response categories. I interviewed three assistant teachers in person and two experts virtually. I stored the interviews using my mobile phone recorder, which I used later in times transcription. These interview questions were semi-structured, and asked particiapnts followup questions during the Interview time to understand the perspective in detail.

3.6 Role as a researcher: Starting in 2019, I involved in a two-year-long Fellowship with the motive of supporting students in eradicating education poverty. To serve this cause, I worked for two years in a GPS as an assistant teacher. In those two years, I have observed mismatch between the education policy and the real scenario of the school. The topic of this paper is one of the major issues I have come across and I wanted to shed more light upon this matter. As a researcher, I have

also done this thesis paper as a part of fulfilling the requirement of my Master's in Education. I stayed mindful in the time of data collection to build a safe space by ensuring that the data have been used for solely academic purposes.

3.7 Data analysis process: Data analysis is an essential procedure for comprehending the viewpoints and experiences of participants, arranging the data into logical conclusions, and answering the research questions for qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2014). To preserve confidentiality and clarity, I meticulously transcribed the data word for word before analysis, translated the transcripts as needed, and eliminated any identifying information (Denscombe, 2014; Bloomberg & Vlope, 2018). I categorized and evaluate the data using a methodical methodology in order to perform theme analysis. I started by sorting related information into broad categories like "challenges teachers encounter" and "issues students face." I found specific patterns within these broad categories and then broke them down into more focused sub-themes. I then sorted the data into specific categories and gave them codes. I put together these codes into main themes to organize the findings. This method helped me look at the data closely, spot important patterns, and come up with conclusions.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns: Prior to initiating data collection, The Med. Research Ethics Committee at BRAC University, gave me their ethical permission. Subsequent to this approval, informed consent was obtained from all participants, with confidentiality rigorously upheld during the research process. My previous experience as a teacher in the school may affect data interpretation; however, I actively upheld my position as a neutral researcher through reflexive practices to accurately represent participants' authentic perspectives. This method adheres to recognized qualitative research protocols that prioritize ethical rigor and the positionality of the researcher (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

3.9 Credibility and Rigor: The primary objective for me in writing this paper is to identify an education problem and the underlying reasons for this. My two years of fellowship experience, where I was involved in teaching in a rural government primary school, helped me to design this study. Additionally, I enhanced my research skills by completing two comprehensive courses on research methodology under the M.Ed. of BRAC IED which provided me with the necessary theoretical and technical knowledge required for this investigation.

During the research process, I upheld the highest standards of academic integrity and methodological rigor. I adhered to all established research protocols, including obtaining ethical approvals, ensuring informed consent, maintaining participant confidentiality, and implementing appropriate data assembly and study procedures. This enhanced the credibility of my study as Cresswell mentioned (Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. 2018).

According to (Maher, 2018) to enhance my studies credibility and rigor I have involved with the participants in detail conversation to deep dive in finding the root cause. All the collected data has been recorded and rigorously observed in time of transcription so that the key messages remained intake.

3.10 Limitation of the study: This study, like any other, also has its limitations. The key limitation of my study is the longer completion time. I have started working on this study almost four years back. During this long time frame, the education scenario might change. During this time covid 19 made long school closure restricted classroom observation. After that transferring from the research site as the fellowship was completed made the travel time longer and made the communication medium complex for holding the interviews. During the study period, curriculum

implementation processes were in progress. Lastly, this process is now in pause therefore the longer completion time and these changes over time is the key limitations of my study.

Chapter 4

Results

I conducted thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from comprehensive teacher interviews, focus group talks with students, and in-depth interviews with educational experts. My purpose of this analysis was to investigate the challenges and identify possible solutions concerning to English language acquisition at GPS, emphasizing on the experiences of learners and educators in rural and under resourced Community. The data reveals a multifaceted relationship of socioeconomic, linguistic, and pedagogical aspects that impact English learning outcomes. By identifying recurring themes and patterns, I aimed to provide in this chapter a refined picture of the barriers students faces, the challenges teachers encounter, and the systemic issues that hinder effective English language instruction, especially in rural Bangladesh. I structured seven key themes that emerged from the data and those are stated below-

- Struggle of Teachers
- Struggle of Students
- Language and Dialect Challenges
- Curriculum and Assessment Issues
- Challenges of CLT in Under-Resourced Classrooms
- Socio-Economic Factors

4.1 Struggle of Teachers: From my analysis, I found that teachers are struggling with adequate training, and they have limited scope for professional development. In my study, I discovered that most teachers required adequate training in Communicative English teaching methods, particularly in phonics and English language instruction. They have not received any

formal training in teaching phonics and pronunciation, nor communicative English. As a result of this gap, they struggle to instruct reading, listening and speaking skills effectively. Ms. Shefali said "I myself haven't received any specific training on phonics. This makes it difficult for me to effectively deliver phonics lessons to my students." (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). The teacher explicitly states that they lack specific training in phonics instruction, which is crucial for early literacy development and English pronunciation. This gap in their own knowledge directly impacts their ability to effectively teach these foundational skills to students. It has also come from them that phonics instruction wasn't a major focus in the training programs the teachers have attended. This highlights a bigger issue of inadequate professional development opportunities for teachers of English language teaching. Education expert Ms. Papia said, "Teachers should have the opportunity to share whether the training they are receiving is effective or not. Many teachers lack training in phonics and modern teaching methods." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024) Without any structured training programs for teachers, the exposure received by teachers is mostly to outdated teaching practices, which leads to inconsistencies in pronunciation and delivery. Students with this lack of phonics knowledge build difficulty pronouncing words correctly and show a lack of fluency while reading them. This was also validated by Ms. Tisha "If we had workshops on how to teach pronunciation and listening, I think our students would improve significantly." (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023).

The lack of adequate training hinders the professional development of Teachers. It came many times in the Interviews with teachers and experts that teachers have limited opportunities to attend workshops or receive continuous training in communicative English teaching methods. Those who do receive training reported that it mostly focuses on traditional grammar instruction rather than communicative English. Mr. Utshob highlighted "The training programs I have attended did not

focus on pronunciation or phonics. If we had more specialized training, our students would improve." (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023). and this was also validated by the experts and Ms. Papia, and she said "Teachers may lack the confidence or training to create a speaking-rich environment." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024). Both the experts also emphasized how important it is to make a supportive space for teachers' skill development so that they can express their need for training and give opinions that are not working for them. Here also it was found that there is a lack of proper guidance of teachers' lesson implementation in the classroom, and even if it happens, it happens only to make the teacher accountable, which leads to the creation of fear. Ms. Papia validated this in her opinion, "Teachers should have the opportunity to share openly, without the fear of being judged or penalized for not implementing something they were taught. (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024) and also one of the teachers said also "I try to improve my teaching, but there is no one to guide me or observe my lessons." (Ms. Tisha, Interview # 2, 21-12-2023)

Hence, one common scene in the classroom is that it is always a teacher-centered or lecture-based approach, where students listen and take notes rather than engage in discussions or speaking activities. The experts' interview also highlighted the disconnection between learning and practical application, and students struggle to apply learned concepts to real-life situations.

Another key issues I also observed from the conversation was the prevalence of inappropriate teaching practices. There was a major focus was placed on rote learning of grammar and vocabulary, which often hindered deeper understanding and application of language. This was evident in Ms. Shefali's statement (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023), "Even if I translate the words into Bengali and explain everything clearly, the students do not retain the information." She also added that "Students often rely on memorizing the Bengali meanings of words rather than trying to understand the context" (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). One of the students Abir validated this

practice and mentioned, "I can read from our textbooks because we practice them in class, but new texts with unfamiliar words are difficult for me." (FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). This rote learning approach often resulted in a passive learning environment where students were primarily passive recipients of information, with limited opportunities for active engagement in learning activities such as pair work, group discussions, and listening exercises.

Mr. Utshob (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023) also highlighted this issue, stating that "students often develop a sense of inertia. It becomes extremely challenging for a single teacher to address the individual speaking needs of each child." This lack of focus on communicative activities, particularly speaking and listening skills, further limited students' opportunities to develop oral language skills and hindered their overall fluency and confidence in using English. As Ms. Papia (Expert Interview) pointed out, "There's a common practice where teachers simply ask students to repeat what they say. This is often the extent of listening activities in a year. Students might listen and repeat, but there's rarely any deeper engagement with the language." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024).

Above mentioned insufficient emphasis on communicative activities, such as pair work, group discussions, and listening exercises, can lead to neglect of crucial language skills. Limited opportunities for student interaction, participation, and active engagement in learning activities can make the learning process less engaging and effective.

4.2 Struggle of Students: From my analysis, students-related factors like economic, social and cultural factors arose as considerable barriers to English language acquisition. From my observation, the data indicates a insufficiency in confidence and enthusiasm among numerous students. For example, several students in the FGDs expressed feeling "embarrassed to speak English in class." One student also shared "Sometimes I don't enjoy learning English because I

have difficulty understanding it." (Abir, FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). This fear of making mistakes, coupled with a lack of self-belief in their English abilities, hindered their willingness to actively participate in class. This was evident in statements in both the FGD which can be seen from the statement of Maisha, "I can understand a little bit when I hear a word, but when I try to say or write it, I can't because I don't know how to spell it or what it means in Bengali" (FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). Also, Rifat expressed that "'I feel embarrassed to speak in class because I don't want to make mistakes.'" (FGD # 2, 2-02-2025). These statements reflect a sense of self-doubt and apparent shortage of language expertise. Furthermore, lack of relevance and value of English in their daily lives led to limited motivation and disengagement.

Learning difficulties presented another significant obstacle. Pronunciation challenges were prevalent, with students struggling to pronounce words due to the influence of regional dialects accurately. This was particularly evident in the observations of the Teacher Interview, where it was noted that "The students often write words phonetically based on their local dialect, and this creates a significant barrier to learning English." (Ms. Shefali, Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). Ms. Papia also validated this conception, "While the 'English for Today' textbook has undergone many changes since my time, I still see several challenges students face today. One major issue is pronunciation. Many students, especially those in Chittagong, tend to follow the teacher's pronunciation, often leading to inconsistencies." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024)

Reading comprehension issues were also observed, as students often focused on memorization rather than a deeper understanding of the text. As one student noted, "I can understand things better if I study at home or pay attention to my friends when they study. But if the teacher introduces a new word without explaining it first, I get confused." (Rudro, FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). Writing difficulties were evident in various aspects, including sentence formation, grammar, and creative

writing. As Ms. Papia (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024) mentioned, "The biggest challenge I see with students' writing, especially creative writing, is their over-reliance on memorization. It seems like the focus is often on preparing students for exams rather than developing their ability to think critically and express their ideas." This underscores the focus on rote learning and the insufficient attention given to critical thinking and creative expression in writing. A limited English vocabulary significantly hindered students' ability to understand and express themselves effectively in all four language skills.

4.3 Language and Dialect Challenges: One of the most major barriers to English language learning for the rural students identified in the data is the influence of regional dialects on students' pronunciation and comprehension. In Bangladesh, where regional dialects vary widely, students often struggle to adapt to the standard pronunciation of English words. This challenge is particularly pronounced in areas like Chittagong, where the local dialect differs significantly from Standard Bengali, the medium of instruction in schools. Teachers reported that students frequently write and pronounce English words based on their local dialect, which creates a disconnect between how words are taught and how students perceive them. In this regard teacher, Ms. Shefali highlighted that students in Chittagong often pronounce English words phonetically according to their regional dialect. She explained, "The regional dialect causes pronunciation difficulties. Students often write words phonetically based on their local dialect, and this creates a significant barrier to learning English." (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). This phonetic approach to writing and speaking English leads to errors in pronunciation and spelling, this complicates students' understanding of the language's standard form. The influence of regional dialects is not limited to pronunciation; it also affects students' ability to understand and produce standard Bengali, which is often a prerequisite for learning English. Ms. Tisha explained that many students in rural areas

are more familiar with their local dialect than with Standard Bengali. She said, "Children first have to be taught standard Bengali before they can learn English, as they often speak the Chittagong dialect." (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023). This dual challenge of mastering both standard Bengali and English places an additional cognitive burden on students, making it harder for them to achieve proficiency in either language.

4.4 Curriculum and Assessment Issues: One of the recurring issues highlighted in the data is that the English curriculum in government primary schools does not complement the kind of assessment that takes place in the GPS. Besides, the textbooks of grades 4 and 5 are too advanced for students, particularly in rural areas. This was pointed out by Mr. Utshob "Many of our students struggle with the vocabulary and grammar in the grade 4 and 5 textbooks because they hardly hear or use English outside of school" (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023). Mrs. Shefali expressed her concerns about the difficulty level of the English textbooks, especially for fifth-grade students. She noted, "The English textbooks for fifth grade are quite challenging for students. The topics are often too advanced, and the vocabulary is too difficult." (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). Ms. Tisha underlined this point even more: "Even basic activities in the textbook become challenging when pupils lack fundamental abilities" (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023). Before diving into the prescribed content, we have to spend more time outlining fundamental ideas. This misalignment between the curriculum, textbooks and students' proficiency levels results in disengagement and frustration among students, as they struggle to comprehend the material. Mrs. Shefali further explained that students often resort to memorization rather than understanding, as they are unable to grasp the meaning of complex words and sentences. And the students also agreed here that memorizing the part of the textbook will be helpful for the exam, but face difficulties in terms of understanding the new or unknown words. Ms. Papia pointed out that, "The curriculum

outlines various listening activities, but in reality, teachers often focus on students copying from the board rather than actively engaging with the material.” (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024) This suggests that the curriculum's design does not always translate into effective classroom practices, as teachers are forced to simplify or skip over challenging content to accommodate students' limited proficiency. This emphasized that the focus on exam-oriented topics discourages creative and critical thinking. Ms. Papia explained, "Many teachers, especially in rural areas, prioritize exam-oriented topics and encourage students to memorize answers rather than focusing on the writing process." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024) This approach not only limits students' ability to express themselves but also reinforces a culture of rote learning, which is detrimental to language acquisition. It has been reflected by one of the students named Abir, "I find writing challenging. The more I practice, the better I get. I also struggle with speaking English. I can read from our textbooks because we practice them in class, but new texts with unfamiliar words are difficult for me." (FGD # 1, 4-01-2024)

Another critical issue identified in the data is the negligence of assessing English listening and speaking competencies of learners in terminal assessment. Although the curriculum stresses acquiring all four language skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, the assessment focus mainly on writing. This imbalance undermines students' overall language proficiency and discourages the development of communicative skills. Mr. Utshob noted that assessments rarely evaluate students' speaking or listening abilities. Instead, they focus on written tasks that do not reflect students' language skills. She said, "Assessments often focus on writing, neglecting listening and speaking skills. This creates a situation where students are more comfortable reproducing memorized texts than generating original content." (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023). The Education Expert Interview (Mr. Rahman) provided further insight into this issue. He also

criticized the current assessment practices for their overemphasis on writing and their failure to align with the curriculum's goals. She stated, "While the curriculum emphasizes all four competencies, assessments often focus heavily on writing and somewhat reading. This creates a situation where teachers prioritize writing skills and neglect other important language skills like listening." (Interview # 5, 6-02-2025) This misalignment between curriculum and assessment not only limits students' opportunities to progress in listening and speaking but also sends a message that these skills are less important. Besides this, the lack of speaking assessments discourages students from practicing spoken English. Without formal evaluation of speaking and listening skills, students have little incentive to improve in these areas, leading to a skills gap that persists throughout their education.

Another thing came from the experts, the textbooks are designed to develop students' competencies in all four domains, but teachers often fail to fully implement these activities due to various constraints. Ms. Papia explained, "The textbook is not randomly designed but is created to develop the competencies necessary for students in a class. Therefore, following the textbook religiously is important for reading and for developing other competencies as well." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024). Many teachers do not fully implement these activities due to time constraints, lack of training, or pressure to focus on exam preparation which results in a narrow focus on writing, that is also mostly not creative writing whether a fixed passage that results in undermining the holistic development of students' language skills. Overall, The Curriculum and Assessment Issues highlight a major disparity among the objectives of the English learning with the real classroom practices. The curriculum, imbalanced assessments, and failure to fully implement textbook activities create barriers to effective language learning.

4.5 Challenges of CLT in Under-Resourced Classroom: The School-Related Factors, particularly resource limitations and large class sizes, create significant challenges for CLT practices in GPSs. The lack of access to learning materials and inadequate infrastructure hinder teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction, while overcrowded classrooms limit students' opportunities for individualized attention and practice. Ms. Tisha explained, "Given the limitations of short class time and a large student numbers it is challenging to provide sufficient individual attention." (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023). Mr. Utshob also echoed this sentiment, stating, "In large classrooms with 80-90 students, it becomes extremely challenging for a single teacher to address the individual speaking needs of each child." (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023). In overcrowded classrooms, the lack of multimedia resources hinders the effectiveness of communicative English learning. Even when a school has a multimedia device, having only one makes it challenging to utilize and improve its effectiveness. Mr. Utshob mentioned, "We have multimedia resources at our school, but we can't use them consistently due to limited access and lack of training." (Interview # 3, 27-12-2023). The lack of adequate resources, including learning materials, phonics materials, visual aids and libraries limits students' exposure to effective language learning tools. Besides, rarely do teachers make an effort to create their learning materials to teach the language. Education expert Mr. Rahman Mentioned "Teachers often focus on students copying from the board rather than actively engaging with the material", (Interview # 5, 6-02-2025). He also mentioned that "There's a common practice where teachers simply ask students to repeat what they say". As a result, these practices make the classroom activities focus on textbook content that will be assessed in the examination rather than real-life communication which has been reflected from the data of the experts and Ms. Papia expressed, "Many teachers, especially in rural areas, prioritize

exam-oriented topics and encourage students to memorize answers rather than focusing on the communicative language learning process." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024)

4.6 Socioeconomic factors: Students' English language learning outcomes are considerably influenced by socioeconomic factors, including poverty, irregular attendance, lack of parental involvement, and disparities in resource access. These factors create significant barriers for students, especially who from low economic background. Since many students come from low-income families, where parents cannot assist with English homework due to their limited educational backgrounds. Ms. Tushi said "Students from families that prioritize education and provide additional support at home tend to do better." (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023). Parents, mainly in rural and low-income areas, are incapable to support their children's in study due to work commitments or lack of significance of education was blurry to them or not having the necessary knowledge. They are often preoccupied with work or household chores and could not make time to support their kids' studies. Ms. Tisha pointed out, "Students who can afford private tutors at home often progress more quickly, while those who cannot afford tutors continue to struggle. (Interview # 2, 21-12-2023). Since the parents are preoccupied with supporting their livelihood, they are unable to guide their children. Even if they have managed to have a private tutor, they often fail to monitor whether the tutors are effective or their children can learn. private tutor, they often fail to monitor whether the tutors are effective or their children can learn. This lack of parental involvement or any additional support from tutor, contributes to a widening learning gap between students from privileged and less privileged backgrounds. Mr. Rahman validated this in his opinion ""Students from more affluent backgrounds often have better access to resources that can support their language learning. On the other hand, students from less privileged backgrounds do not have the same opportunities. They lack access to computers, the internet, or even basic

learning materials.". Besides this, Ms. Shefali noted, "Many parents, especially mothers, are garment factory workers. They leave for work early in the morning, and there's no one to ensure whether their children attend school or not." (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). It is also found that Students often miss school due to economic hardships, and even when they attend, they may be hungry and unable to concentrate. Ms. Shefali also observed, "Students often come to school without eating properly, which affects their concentration." (Interview # 1, 21-12-2023). Many parents are unaware of how to support their children's English learning and rarely communicate with teachers about their child's progress. It was also visible in students' opinion "If I don't study at home, I can't speak well, but there is no one to help me." Maisha added (FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). These economic hardships, along with the lack of parental supervision, infuse irregularity in attendance. Teachers in their interviews reflected that students who miss classes often fall behind, as they miss key lessons and struggle to catch up.

Many students lack books, dictionaries, and other materials, which limits their ability to practice English at home. In the FGD Ruby said "I don't have any English books at home, so I only practice in class." (FGD # 2, 2-02-2025). Consequently, many students do not have the chance to engage in English practice beyond the classroom, which makes it difficult to remember what they have learned. Abir said in one of the FGDs, "We don't get to use English outside school, so we forget what we learn." (FGD # 1, 4-01-2024). Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform better in English due to access to additional resources and support, while those from lower-income families struggle to keep up. Ms. Papia highlighted, "Students from more affluent backgrounds often have better access to resources like computers, the internet, and English language books, which support their learning outside the classroom." (Interview # 4, 19-01-2024)

In contrast, students from less privileged backgrounds often lack these resources, limiting their exposure to English and hindering their language development.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

I presented a thorough analysis from the collected data in this chapter, conclusions, and recommendations. The complications the learners face at times of learning English in Bangladeshi rural primary schools, I presented in detail in the first part. Here, I've looked at the study's findings in light of the data discussed in the former chapter. The discussion shared important insights from the data analysis, pointing out patterns noticed during the research. I made the conclusions based on the combined results and what the findings meant theoretically. I put practical recommendations at the last part to tackle the challenges found in English language teaching and to mitigate learners' difficulty in acquiring the communicative English.

5.1 Discussion: I've looked at My study's findings, directing a number of problems prevent rural primary school pupils in Chattogram, Bangladesh, from mastering the four English language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These difficulties derive from a variety of factors, including socioeconomic limitations, curricular and assessment inconsistencies, teacher and student's Struggle in practicing communicative English, challenges of under resource classroom and linguistic and dialectal effects. In line with the larger body of research on Learners' challenges on communicative English in rural Bangladesh, these topics are interrelated and constitute a systemic obstacle to successful CLT. I highlighted in this study that the rural GPS teachers face significant challenges due to inadequate training in CLT methods, particularly in phonics and pronunciation. They have very limited scope for professional growth and training even though the CLT approach was part of the curriculum of the country, instructors reported employing traditional grammar-translation strategies since they were not trained in phonics, pronunciation, or student-

centered instruction. This finding is correlated with research showing that the introduction of CLT in Bangladesh's primary level education system has been hindered by insufficient professional development of teachers (Hamid, 2010). In the study Rahman & Sarker, (2019) indicated that, teachers usually use the traditional, teacher-centered techniques like rote memorization, hinders students' ability to actively participate and practice communication. Sultana (2010) asserts that instructors' lack of training in CLT approaches typically results in a misalignment between curriculum objectives and classroom practices.

Additionally, the study discovered that teachers frequently lack confidence in their ability to create a speaking-rich environment, which is a crucial part of CLT. This is validated by Ahmed (2016), who contended that inadequate resources and teacher training causes educators in Bangladesh to frequently struggle to execute interactive and communicative activities. Teachers' inability to advance their knowledge and adjust to contemporary teaching methods is made worse by the absence of ongoing skill development training. One of the teachers who was questioned, made it clear that she had no phonics training, which had a direct effect on her capacity to instruct pronunciation. As emphasized by Kabir (2015), who mentioned that many Bangladeshi teachers are not sufficiently trained to adopt CLT in their classrooms, this gap in teacher training is a recurrent problem in the literature. This problem is also brought to light in the research; Das et al. (2015) note that most CPD programs in Bangladesh do not have structured follow-ups, which makes it difficult for instructors to successfully adopt new techniques. Expert interviews suggest that ongoing mentoring and classroom-based coaching could help bridge this gap. Additionally, in my study from the experts' interviews I found that teachers are often motivated to focus on exam preparation, which leads to a limited concentration on writing skills at the cost of speaking and listening. This is also highlighted by the conclusions of Das et al. (2015), who opposed that a major

objective of the CLT approach is to measure students' capacity of communication, that has not done by the current assessment system in our primary education system.

In my study I have identified several struggles of students to English language learning, including lack of confidence, motivation, and perceived relevance of English in their daily lives. A common theme was students' absence of inspiration and involvement in English learning. Many students perceived English as a difficult and irrelevant subject, leading to disengagement in classroom activities. This is aligned with Coleman (2011), who found that students in Low-English-exposure environments struggle to see the practical benefits of learning English. In Bangladesh, especially in rural areas, where English is not commonly spoken outside academic settings, this lack of exposure further hinders student motivation.

Many students expressed humiliation when speaking English. They feel fear of making mistakes and getting mocked by their friends, which is relevant with the analysis of Kabir (2014), he noted that learners in rural areas often feel shy and hesitant to use English due to fear of making mistakes. This fear is also compounded by the influence of regional dialects, which affect students' pronunciation and comprehension of English words. For example, students in Chattogram often pronounce English words phonetically based on their local dialect, leading to inaccuracies in pronunciation and spelling. This finding aligns with the observations of Md. Mridha and Sheikh (2020), argued that mother tongue interference is a major obstacle in learning English language in Bangladesh. I also discovered in this study that students struggle with reading comprehension and creative writing, frequently relying on memorization rather than critical or creative thinking, which is consistent with Krashen's (1982) that fluency and engagement are negatively impacted by high anxiety levels in language learning settings. This is also consistent with the findings of Hena and

Uddin (2019), who opposed that Bangladesh's excessive focus on exam-oriented learning prevents students from honing their critical thinking and creative expression abilities. As an example of the drawbacks of rote learning, one student, Abir, stated that he could read from textbooks but found it difficult to understand new texts and words.

I found a substantial discrepancy in my study between the English curriculum's stated objectives and real-world teaching methods. Assessments place an extreme level of focus on writing while ignoring speaking besides listening abilities, although the curriculum emphasizes the improvement of all four language competencies in English. This inconsistency matches with the discoveries of (Das et al., 2015), that Bangladesh's evaluation system fails to assess students' communication competence, an essential objective of the Communicative Language Teaching approach. One instructor who participated in this study's interview, Mr. Utshob pointed out that tests hardly ever examine students' speaking or listening skills, which prevents them from honing these abilities.

Additionally, my study discovered that students in rural areas find the English textbooks for grades 4 and 5 to be overly demanding, which causes dissatisfaction and disengagement. Bhattacharya (2015) supports this by pointing out that in Bangladesh, a significant obstacle in CLT is the gap among the objective of curriculum and students' competency levels. This problem is made worse by the overemphasis on exam preparation, which puts pressure on educators to emphasize memorization over the development of communication skills. For example, education specialist Ms. Papia noted that teachers frequently omit difficult material to make accommodations for pupils' low proficiency, which compromises the overall development of language abilities. The study identified several school-related obstacles, including outsized classrooms, inadequate resources, and poor infrastructure. These factors hinder teachers' ability to deliver effective

instruction and limit students' opportunities for individualized attention and practice. For example, Ms. Tisha, a teacher interviewed in the study, noted that with 80-90 students in a classroom, it is challenging to provide sufficient individual attention. This outcome is constant with reviewed research, indicating that overloaded schoolrooms considerably hinder the use of CLT approach in our country. (Sultana, 2010). Additionally, another study indicated that big class sizes and low resources further exaggerate the difficulties faced by educators, limiting their scopes to offer personalized attention to students. (Hossain, 2019). Das et al. (2015), who mentioned that crowded classrooms obstruct student interaction and engagement, especially in CLT-based instruction, support this finding. Furthermore, students' access to efficient language learning resources is further restricted by the dearth of multimedia resources and instructional materials. Mr. Utshob, for example, stated that although his school possessed multimedia resources, regular utilization was impossible because of restricted access and inadequate instruction. This supports the findings of Rahman and Sarker (2019), who pointed out that a significant obstacle in Bangladeshi rural schools is a lack of resources.

My study further highlighted the effect of socioeconomic issues in defining students' English language learning experience. Students from low-income families often lack access to essential learning materials let alone additional resources, such as books and dictionaries, and also they receive limited support from their parents as well as they are mostly busy providing the bread and butter of their family. This lack of parental support was another significant obstacle. This limits the learners' exposure to the language, many students from lower-income households said that they do not have access to books, tutors, or an atmosphere where English is spoken. This finding matched with the literature, that suggests socioeconomic disparities significantly impact students' academic performance in Bangladesh (Sharmin, 2019). For example, Ms. Shefali noted that many

parents in rural areas are garment factory workers who are unable to monitor their children's study due to their prolonged work schedule. This lack of parental involvement and irregular attendance further hinder students' ability to retain what they learn in school.

According to my findings, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds usually perform better in English because They have more support of abundant resources, including English language books, Support of private tutors, and parental support and supervision. This supports the findings of Hena and Uddin (2019), who contended that socioeconomic differences cause the gap between students from affluent and less affluent households to expand.

The effect of regional dialects on students' pronunciation and grasp of English was a frequent theme in my study. This finding aligns with the observations of Md. Mridha and Sheikh (2020), who argued that the phonetic differences between regional dialects and Standard Bengali create significant barriers to English language learning. My study also discovered that students in rural areas frequently face challenges in mastering Standard Bangla, which is a prerequisite for learning English. This double challenge places an additional mental burden on students, making it harder for them to achieve proficiency in either language. For example, Ms. Tisha noted that students in Chittagong often speak the local dialect, makes it complicated to learn Standard Bengali and English simultaneously.

5.2 Conclusion: Overall, my research has identified the complications faced by students in rural Bangladesh during the primary phase of English language acquisition, specifically in building mastery in the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This study's findings, along with the broader research on CLT in Bangladesh, indicated that these challenges arise from structural, pedagogical, and socioeconomic factors. This study added to a better knowledge of the

challenges to successful Communicative English language learning in rural areas by identifying and evaluating these barriers. It also provided insightful information for stakeholders, educators, and policymakers.

This study explored how important it is to have comprehensive teacher training programs that emphasize Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques, especially in phonics and pronunciations, and creative writing. Instructors must possess the abilities and self-assurance necessary to provide a speaking-rich environment and carry out interactive and communicative exercises in the classroom. Teachers who lacked proper training turn to teacher-centered, traditional methods like rote memorization, which restrict students' options for active participation and impede the growth of their communicative ability. A central approach of assessing the four segments of language is also necessary to achieve the learning purpose of communicative English. Students experienced a scarcity in motivation for learning English. They had dependency on the rote learning and had not been introduced to the creative writing approach. Furthermore, the unfriendly environment in the classroom for speaking and making mistakes made them detached from English language learning. Since the classrooms and schools lacked regular usage of English. To avoid this situation, the schools must create an environment where students can practice it and learn with enjoyment. It was also visible in my study that there is a significant discrepancy among the aim of the curriculum for learning English and the real practice in classroom, and also with the assessment procedure for checking the learners' progress. The current focus of the assessment is heavily on writing and rote learning, which deprioritizes practicing listening and speaking English. Restructuring the assessment system and informing the teachers through training and the integration of all four language capabilities is essential for encouraging comprehensive English language development. Among this English learning procedure, the socioeconomic factors played

a crucial part in the learners' lives. According to Coleman (2011), "Often, students from lower-income houses do not use English outside of the classroom, limiting their ability to perceive the language's practical utility" The students who have the guidance of parents, the scope of English language exposure through additional books, and getting support from the private tutors are ahead in learning the language than the students from low-income families who lack access to learning resources, such as books and dictionaries, and received limited support from their parents. According to Rahman's (2015) findings "Household income directly correlates with access to private tutoring, English-language media, and supplemental learning materials—resources critical for proficiency development". Rural students' dependence on overburdened educational systems was one way that these inequities are evident in the current study. Mr. Utshob also validated that "Most parents cannot afford extra books or tutoring, so students depend entirely on our overcrowded classrooms" (Interview #3, 27-12-2023).

A recurring theme in my research was the impact of regional dialects on English pronunciation and understanding. A region like Chattogram, it has its own dialect, which dominates their standard Bangla language learning. Expertise in standard Bangla is a requirement for studying English, and this challenge made difficulties in pursuing proficiency in both languages. Besides this, large classroom size and lack of proper learning materials and inspiring teaching-learning methods made the learners' experience difficult in the rural Bangladesh.

5.3 Recommendations: I am putting the following suggestions in light of my study's findings and also from the participants' insights to improve English language learning results in Bangladeshi rural primary schools. I have given most of the recommendations feasible to implement and few for the reformation in the long run:

- Teachers should follow the curriculum's guidelines on how language learning is intended to be taught through the textbook. They should implement the instructions provided in the textbook during class. For example, for reading, instructions like shared reading, paired reading, or having students repeat after the teacher, or in some cases, the teacher reading aloud, should be practiced as prescribed in the textbook. The textbook is not randomly designed; it is created to develop the competencies necessary for students in a class. Therefore, following the textbook religiously is important for reading and for developing other competencies as well.
- Teachers should clear their concept about communicative English teaching. If they are not getting training on it, each school can take initiative to take lessons from the authentic online platforms.
- To improve the writing teachers are required to practice the elements of creative writing. They need to enhance the students' vocabulary for better implementation of their creativity in writing. The teachers should avoid putting the same topic in the terminal assessment. Writing should focus more on creative exercises to ensure it doesn't become a daunting or fear-inducing task for students. Instead, writing should be presented as a fun, creative, and engaging activity through ideation, drawing and putting it as writing
- Since listening and speaking receive the least exposure in current teaching practices, they require equal attention in the classroom. To create a speaking-friendly environment, teachers can arrange role plays, stage dramas, and poster presentations.
- Besides introducing strategies for creative writing, incorporate multiple methods of reading to enhance reading competency in the classroom through different teaching strategies. To assist weaker students, promote group activities, read aloud and peer

support. To strengthen learning, give students frequent practice chances at home and in the classroom.

- The common factor among students I have found in this study is embarrassment and fear of making mistakes. This also came from the difficulty of understanding the English teachers should focus on building the necessity of learning English. Make the classroom more learning-oriented rather than passing in the exam by including appropriate reading materials in schools for phonics. Introduce games, establish a library where students get to read other books, Follow the role-play in the textbooks, make one day in a month to stage play or hold real scenarios class.
- Introduce a reward system by giving stars to a particular student or group a group of students to get them out of embarrassment and encourage them in learning the language. This will also encourage students to involve in speaking and listening, beside reading and writing, to enrich their communicative competencies in English.
- Increase the use of multimedia resources, storytelling, role-playing, and games to make English learning more engaging. Encourage and introduce group learning and peer learning to support comparatively weaker students.
- Besides the term exams, evaluations should be taken place at the end of each lesson to measure if the learning outcomes were achieved. This can involve small assessments at the end of a lesson, monthly evaluations so that teachers can also plan the lesson accordingly to support the students.
- Increase the support for the students from low-income families, such as books, dictionaries, and multimedia tools available in the schools. Parental involvement is very important in creating a supportive learning environment. Include parents and inspire the

community to help more in their children's learning, particularly in rural areas, to enhance the learning environment. Even if they might not have the necessary information or knowledge to exactly guide or support with extra tuition, they should check that their children are practicing the daily tasks and encourage their effort.

- Teacher training and monitoring, along with the implementation of the training in the classroom, should be improved to fulfill the necessities of the learners. Train educators with essential and practical competencies in phonics, pronunciation, and the CLT methodology for their classrooms. Beside this ensuring monitoring to measure the progress in implementing the learning in the classroom, and supporting their growth is crucial to enhance the whole teaching and learning process in primary school.
- Another important aspect is the assessment process. While assessments can sometimes be stressful, they can also be a valuable tool for learning. Evaluations must cover all four linguistic competencies: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This will encourage students to practice all aspects of the language.

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Appendices

Appendix A Consent Letters

In-Depth Interview

Consent Letter

Title : **Primary graduate's challenges at four skills of English Language: The scenario of rural primary school of Chattogram, Bangladesh.**

Dear Respondent,

Greetings!

I am now with you for the purpose of my thesis and I want your cooperation. The topic of my thesis is "Primary graduate's challenges at four skills of English Language: The scenario of rural primary school of Chattogram, Bangladesh". I am a Master's (M.Ed.) student at BRAC University. To partially fulfill the requirements for my Master's degree, it is obligatory to compose a research paper. I am conducting this above-mentioned study project for this purpose.

I request your kind cooperation in answering this questionnaire. Be advised that all information you provide will remain absolutely confidential, and your responses will not be published under any circumstances. Your considerate response will solely be utilized for this academic research, and this report will not be disseminated in the future. If you feel uneasy about answering any question, you may leave them unanswered. However, you are asked to provide the response you believe to be right.

I would really appreciate if I could take 45-60 minutes of your valuable time.

Thanks in advance
Tajnin Noor Hanna
M.Ed. Student,
BRAC University

Do you agree? (Put tick)

1. Yes
2. No

Appendix B. Interview Questionnaire

In-Depth Interview Questionnaire for Teachers

1. How long are you teaching?
2. What kind of difficulties you are facing in Teaching English?
3. Do you think students face difficulties in learning English? If yes, then
4. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English reading?
5. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English writing?
6. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English listening?
7. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English speaking?
8. How do you usually include English reading exercises to improve your students' English reading skills?
9. How do you usually include English writing exercises to improve your students' English writing skills?
10. How do you usually include English listening exercises to improve your students' English listening skills?
11. How do you usually include English speaking exercises to improve your students' English speaking skills?
12. How can you, as a teacher, motivate and enthuse your pupils to overcome these obstacles and improve their English proficiency?
13. Do you think the school is well equipped (with a sound box, projector, learning materials, etc.) for English language learning?
14. From your experience, what suggestions would you make to improve your English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)) at Bangladesh's government

In-depth Interview Questionnaire for Education Expert

1. How was your experience learning English in your school days?
2. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English reading?
3. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English writing?
4. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English listening?
5. Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English speaking?
6. Other than these, do you see GPS teachers and students face any challenges for English Subjects?
7. In the rural area, Does the socio-economic condition impact the English learning experience for the students? If yes, How?
8. From your experience, what suggestions would you make to improve the English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) at Bangladesh's government primary schools

FGD Questionnaire:

FGD Questionnaire:

1. How many classes are there in a week?
2. How do you feel in your class?
3. Is there any difficulty you face in your classes?
4. Which part of the English class you enjoy most, reading, writing, listening or speaking, why?
5. What is the most challenging aspect of reading English (stories, poems, conversation, etc.) in class? Why?
6. What is the most challenging aspect of writing English (stories, poems, conversation, etc.) in class? Why?
7. What is the most challenging aspect of speaking English (stories, poems, conversation, etc.) in class? Why?
8. What is the most challenging aspect of listening or following English (stories, poems, conversation, etc.) in class? Why?
9. What, could your school do better to improve your English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)?

Appendix C. Transcription: In-depth interview of education expert Ms. Papia

Interviewer: How was your experience learning English in your school days?

Participant: My experience learning English during my school days was quite stressful. We used a grammar book called 'Chowdhury and Hossein' along with other textbooks for the NCTB curriculum. While 'English for Today' was relatively easier, the 'Advanced Learner' book required a lot of grammar memorization. I was constantly worried about forgetting the rules.

I remember a particular incident in class seven where we had to write a paragraph. I was so scared because I couldn't understand the questions. I could only write three or four lines and ended up with a very low score.

My English learning journey was mostly about memorization. I would memorize essays and paragraphs for exams. Listening and speaking were completely neglected. I didn't have any foundation or interest in these areas.

Interviewer: Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English reading?

Participant: While the 'English for Today' textbook has undergone many changes since my time, I still see several challenges students face today. One major issue is pronunciation. Many students, especially those in Chittagong, tend to follow the teacher's pronunciation, often leading to inconsistencies. This affects both reading fluency and comprehension. Students may be able to read the words but struggle to understand the meaning, particularly when encountering unfamiliar words. They often rely on memorizing the Bengali meanings of words rather than trying to understand the context. This over-reliance on memorization hinders their overall comprehension and fluency.

Another significant challenge is with reading comprehension. While students might be able to read a paragraph fluently, they may not grasp its meaning. They often focus on memorizing specific words within a chapter rather than trying to understand the overall context. This hinders their ability to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words based on the surrounding context.

In essence, these factors make reading quite challenging for students."

Interviewer: Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English writing?

Participant: The biggest challenge I see with students' writing, especially creative writing, is their over-reliance on memorization. It seems like the focus is often on preparing students for exams, rather than developing their ability to think critically and express their own ideas.

Many teachers, especially in rural areas, prioritize exam-oriented topics and encourage students to memorize answers rather than focusing on the writing process. This creates a situation where students are more comfortable reproducing memorized texts than generating original content.

There's also a lack of emphasis on the writing process itself. Students often don't understand how to brainstorm ideas, organize their thoughts, or use language effectively to convey their meaning. They're more focused on memorizing model essays or paragraphs.

Additionally, there's a perception that English is a difficult subject, and students may lack confidence in their ability to write in English. This can lead to a fear of making mistakes and a reluctance to take risks.

To improve the situation, we need to shift the focus from memorization to understanding. Teachers should encourage students to think critically, express their own ideas, and use the language in meaningful ways. By providing ample opportunities for creative writing and offering constructive feedback, we can help students develop their writing skills.

Interviewer: Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English listening?

Participant: There's a common practice where teachers simply ask students to repeat what they say. This is often the extent of listening activities in a year. Students might listen and repeat, but there's rarely any deeper engagement with the language.

While the curriculum outlines various listening activities, in reality, teachers often focus on students copying from the board rather than actively engaging with the material. This is because they believe these activities won't be tested.

There's also a mismatch between the textbooks and assessments. While the textbooks often include various listening activities, the assessments primarily focus on writing. This creates a situation where teachers prioritize writing skills and neglect other important language skills like listening.

Furthermore, there's a lack of alignment between the curriculum's four competencies (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and the actual teaching and assessment practices. For instance, while the curriculum emphasizes all four competencies, assessments often focus heavily on writing.

Finally, there's a perception that English is a difficult subject, especially in rural areas. This can lead to a lack of confidence among both teachers and students. Teachers may not feel equipped to teach listening effectively, and students may not expect to succeed in this area.

Interviewer: Which difficulties do students most frequently face when learning English speaking?

Participant: In areas like Chittagong, local dialects significantly influence students' English speaking abilities. I've observed that students from these regions have a distinct accent and pronunciation. While speaking is primarily about conveying thoughts, many students, especially in rural areas, prioritize their native language over English.

Similar to listening, exposure to spoken English is limited. The focus in classrooms is often on writing, leading to a neglect of speaking skills. Even teachers may lack the confidence or training to create a speaking-rich environment.

There's also a perception that English is a difficult subject, and students may feel intimidated to speak. Teachers may prioritize other subjects or focus on exam preparation, leaving less time for speaking practice.

Furthermore, teachers in rural areas may have limited English proficiency themselves, which can hinder their ability to effectively teach speaking.

It's essential to shift the perception of English as just a subject to be passed, but rather as a tool for communication. By creating a positive and supportive learning environment, students can develop their speaking skills and become more confident in using English.

Interviewer: Other than these, do you see any GPS challenges that teachers and students usually face for English Subjects?

Participant: I've already mentioned the problems within the four domains, the inconsistencies between textbooks and assessments, and the issues with the four competencies.

Another challenge is more perspective-based. English is often perceived as a higher-level subject, especially in rural areas. It's seen as something foreign or difficult, unlike Bengali. If you ask students, many will say they prefer Bengali because they find it more relatable and enjoyable.

Teachers in rural areas may also have limited English proficiency themselves. Some may have studied in the same schools where they now teach, and their own English language skills may not be as strong.

There's also a lack of coordination between the curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments. The national curriculum outlines competencies, but the classroom practices and assessments don't always align with these.

Moreover, there's a perception that English is more for students from privileged backgrounds. This can create a negative attitude towards English among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Interviewer: In the rural area, Does the socio-economic condition impact the English learning experience for the students? If yes, How?

Participant: I believe that socioeconomic status has a significant impact on English language learning. Students from more affluent backgrounds often have better access to resources that can support their language learning. For instance, they may have access to computers, the internet, and a variety of English language books. These resources allow them to practice English outside of the classroom and improve their skills.

On the other hand, students from less privileged backgrounds may not have the same opportunities. They may lack access to computers, the internet, or even basic learning materials. This can limit their exposure to English and hinder their language development.

Additionally, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have access to better quality education and tutoring, which can provide them with additional support and guidance. This can create a significant gap in English proficiency between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

There's also a perception that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less capable of learning English. This belief can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as students may internalize these negative expectations and underperform as a result.

Interviewer: From your experience, what suggestions would you make to improve the English language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) at Bangladesh's government primary schools

Participant: If I talk about the current curriculum, there are several areas where work can be done. Let me start with the teachers. Teachers should follow the curriculum's guidelines on how language learning is intended to be taught through the textbook. They should implement the instructions provided in the textbook during class. For example, for reading, instructions like shared reading, paired reading, or having students repeat after the teacher, or in some cases, the teacher reading aloud, should be practiced as prescribed in the textbook. The textbook is not randomly designed; it is created to develop the competencies necessary for students in a class. Therefore, following the textbook religiously is important for reading and for developing other competencies as well.

These instructions are crucial for reading, but listening and speaking need to be given equal attention. Those responsible for accountability, such as individuals who visit schools to check on teachers' quality or progress, need to ensure that teachers touch upon all four domains during the five working days of the week. It is also their responsibility to ensure that community growth and the development of the four domains are being achieved. As I mentioned earlier, students get very little exposure to listening and speaking. However, these aspects are included in the curriculum, meaning that following the instructions properly in class will suffice.

The first step is to practice these skills in the classroom, and the second step is to include these elements in assessments. This includes formative assessments mentioned in the textbooks and evaluations in periodic exams such as first-term, second-term, and annual exams. The assessment instructions and questions should prioritize these four domains, including speaking, by allocating a portion of the marks—be it 100 or 50—towards these skills.

For teaching writing, it is important to ensure that the exact writing practice done in class does not appear in assessments. By assessment, I mean not just the terminal exams but also the evaluations conducted at the end of each class to determine if the learning outcomes were achieved. This can involve small assessments at the end of a lesson, monthly evaluations, or even term exams where writing is tested in a creative and unfamiliar context. If something completely new is introduced in terminal exams without prior practice, students naturally become anxious.

Beyond these responsibilities for teachers, let me discuss training. Based on my secondary observations, I believe it is important to gather feedback from teachers on their needs. Teachers should have the opportunity to share whether the training they are receiving is effective or not, or if the training provided by URCs (Upazila Resource Centers) is truly beneficial. If a training program is not effective, it is essential to identify the reasons behind it. When collecting feedback, it is important to create an environment where teachers feel they can share openly, without the fear of being judged or penalized for not implementing something they were taught. If a teacher faces challenges applying their training in the classroom, they should feel comfortable discussing those difficulties. This will ultimately help the teaching group become more effective and better equipped to foster communicative English skills among students.

I may have forgotten to elaborate on writing. Writing should focus more on creative exercises to ensure it doesn't become a daunting or fear-inducing task for students. Instead, writing should be presented as a fun, creative, and engaging activity.

In terms of reading practice, there is often a lack of appropriate reading materials in schools. If we consider rural Bangladesh, many students in government primary schools don't have access to sufficient English reading materials at home. To compensate, the classroom environment must be made more conducive to learning, with reading materials and visuals that students can interact with. Efforts are already being made to improve classrooms, but it is still uncommon to see teachers consistently preparing and using learning aids for reading.

even in areas like Chattogram. If teachers lack this training, students will continue to face learning gaps in primary education. Preparing teachers through adequate training on English reading and phonics, monitoring how they implement this in the classroom, and supporting their growth is crucial for improving the overall education system at the primary level.