

**IMPACT OF TEACHERS' EMPATHY TOWARDS ADULT
LEARNERS' STRUGGLE IN ACQUIRING A SECOND LANGUAGE**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in TESOL

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

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Ethics Statement

I declare that the thesis titled “Impact of teachers’ empathy towards adult learners’ struggle in acquiring a second language” is submitted to BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University, in partial fulfillment of the degree MA in TESOL. That no part of this dissertation copied or plagiarized from published or unpublished copied or unauthorized from other published work of other writers and that all materials, borrowed or reproduced from other published or unpublished sources have either been put under quotation or duly acknowledged with full reference in appropriate place(s). I understand that the program conferred on me may be cancelled/ withdrawn if subsequently it is discovered that this portfolio is not my original work and that it contains materials copied, plagiarized or borrowed without proper acknowledgement.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the role of empathy, one of the vital traits teachers are expected to possess, in the language acquisition process of learners of English as a second language or foreign language. It tried to assess if the presence of empathy in teachers' approach towards the language acquisition process has any significant impact on the pace of language acquisition of the learners. This also highlights if the effect of empathy and associated emotions, such as sympathy, and patience towards the struggle of learners, add positive and substantial speed to the learners' progress. The search of the hypothesis also tried to highlight if the absence of a significant amount of empathy or complete absence of empathy slows down the acquisition process.

In search of finding the scale of the impact of this attribute of teachers, qualitative research was conducted by applying multiple methodologies where the idea was to get the opinion of as many parties of the language development process as possible. To ensure and to accommodate the involvement of all parties in the process of development, face to face interviews, focused group discussions and online response to FGD questions methods were applied. The methodologies gathered information that resulted in a byproduct of how empathy in teachers may or may not enhance the mimicking of the same attribute in learners. Due to strict confidentiality of institutions in getting access to observe classes or conduct FGD with teachers and learners, larger-scale research could not be conducted that could strongly establish the substantial role of empathy in learners' performance; but this small scale research was also able to slant towards the idea that the presence of empathy in teachers reflects positively in the performance of learners.

The research also acknowledges that empathy in teachers may always not be very apparent while observing classes; but can be measured from considering the presence of other aspects that are crucial for effective teaching. The presence of equal opportunities in the design of class plan for all types of learners to learn and perform can also indicate the empathetic mindset of teachers. Understanding the difference between struggle and insincerity is also an indication of teachers' capability to understand the mind of learners that lead to being empathetic towards those who are genuinely struggling. The thesis worked towards finding about the teachers' understanding, intelligence, and effort towards knowing their students and assisting them in acquiring a second language.

Keywords: Motivation; empathy; teacher attributes; teaching English; second language acquisition.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all my teachers from whom I have learned about teaching and because of whom I have become more curious about teaching and learning; your frustration with me inspired me to perform better. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to all my learners who motivated me to become a better teacher.

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List of Acronyms

FGD	Focused Group Discussion
L2	Second language

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Figure 1: Learners performance in response to teachers' empathy in language development
classroom Page 47

Glossary

Adult learners	Learners who have passed undergrad
Group A Teachers	Teachers whose medium of instruction in educational institution was English
Group B Teachers	Teachers whose medium of instruction in educational institution was Bangla

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a new language is difficult for a lot of people and the one process that fits everyone is yet to discover. The number of Individuals suffering to acquire a second language is much bigger than those who find the process easy. As Lenneberg (1967) defines the Critical Learning Period hypothesis which states that it is easier to acquire a language (mother tongue, L1) or second language (L2) if that is introduced by a certain age, it is unfortunate that in the context of our country the need for a language that is globally accepted is realized much later in our life when the opportunity to acquire the global language becomes much slimmer than it was before at a younger age. Again in the context of our country, the need for developing the language skill is not clarified to the learners before they face the result of their limitation. Learners could use the opportunity to relate to the need to learn a second language, a factor which could create motivations in them to acquire the language with better sincerity. When our people leave their educational institutions and enter their professional life, let it be working for someone else with some other countries or their own businesses, they realize how crucial it is to be proficient in a language that is widely accepted, in current context English. By the time the realization comes, the opportunities are not free anymore, the consequences are demotivating, the atmosphere does not support further learning and the process of becoming better with the language requires additional finances which might not be affordable to the majority. So what happens when adults decide to invest in enhancing their ability in improving their language skills? If the process is harder for them then what are the factors that aid in their learning process which might compensate for the lost years of advantages of acquiring language within their critical learning period. Along with other factors like attained ability to relate to the culture of the second language through the experience gathered by the learners, it is needed to find if another factor could be teacher sharing similar struggle while acquiring language or teachers' ability to

understand the struggle of others. It is also to find if teachers' similar experiences with language acquisition or struggle with learning at a later age contributed to the development of empathy in teachers.

It is to be noted that every time the term "adult learner" is mentioned in this thesis it indicates the learners who have passed their critical learning period at least several years back. To go back to the question regarding the influence of traits of teachers on the language acquisition process, the ultimate quest becomes assessing the hierarchy of these factors and also the hierarchy of the traits of teachers considering their influence on the learning process; which means labeling the factors and traits according to the magnitude of importance. It is also to be noted that the search for the influence scale started with the possibility of finding that it is not possible for adult learners to develop the language to the state which could be easily attainable if the language was introduced to the learner and was nurtured at an earlier age. This conjecture was not unlikely as the reality says that despite being a highly populated country we have failed to capture the high end global job market with our existing human resource. Keeping in mind that a massive portion of our expatriates in different countries leave the country without a tertiary level of education and are mostly deprived of the opportunity to invest time and effort in their adult life to enhance their skill level. But those who get the opportunity, it is very difficult for them to put decent amount of attention to the learning process due to the nature of lifestyle in our country; even if they want to. So it is very difficult to identify which factor works for whom because so many factors are there to influence the learning process.

The other missing link in this search is the investigation of attainment of this personality trait, empathy. What is empathy? Empathy plays a critical interpersonal and societal role, enabling the sharing of experiences, needs, and desires between individuals and providing an emotional bridge that promotes prosocial behavior. This capacity enables us to perceive the emotions of others, resonate with them emotionally and cognitively, to take in the perspective of others, and

to distinguish between our own and others' emotions. (Riess.2017). Cambridge dictionary offers a simpler definition which states empathy means the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathy is the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation. Now this empathy could be present in a person through multiple natural processes; from their own struggle of acquiring English as a second language to personal experience, which added to this trait. The reason could be anything but the presence of this feature is taken into consideration as a factor. It was a huge struggle though to select behavior, gesture, and action that represents empathy in a teacher.

All in all, it was to find out if individuals who have crossed their critical learning period but are guided by competent teachers, who have empathy as one of the traits, then should we expect a better performance from those individuals? The aim of the thesis is to find if empathy, one of the crucial qualities expected in teachers, has any impact on the progress achieved by their learners in acquiring L2.

1.2 AREA OF WORK

Teachers attributes

1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

After parents, teachers are usually the first role model of a child. They imitate teachers, they follow their philosophy, and they mimic their teachers which is a form of appreciation. Consciously or subconsciously they pick up the habits from their teachers. Unfortunately in a third-world country like Bangladesh, the best of human beings are not always becoming teachers. It is not a very common scenario where an individual with a competitive portfolio is choosing the profession of teachers only because of their passion. It is an undeniable fact that teachers play an extremely important role in the development of their learners. A good teacher, through motivation, knowledge, and emotional intelligence can significantly contribute in

designing the future of a learner. But this is a tough job. It takes a great amount of hard work and patience to make that contribution. The majority of the effort needs to be invested in motivating learners to be on board with the process of learning and building themselves. And when the development is skill-based i.e. language it becomes further difficult for both the learners and teachers to apprehend. Skill-based development is a critical area where the learning process and assessment of progress are equally difficult. It is also difficult to understand the existing capacity of learners as their performance depend on a number of factors i.e. surroundings, circumstances, support system, etc. Such a complex process itself involves additional effort and understanding from the teachers. Bangla is the first language of the majority of the nation and English can be considered the second or third or fourth language, not according to application but according to comfort of use; the necessity of using English in most of the cases is related to the professional development of individuals. The importance of acquiring English as skill development is usually realized in the latter part of life. The importance of learning geography or science does not always have a strong connection in adult life but English language proficiency has. Also considering the critical period hypothesis it is very crucial to grab a hold of the process of developing this skill as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, not everyone is lucky to have a great English Language teacher at school. So what happens when we miss the opportunity during our critical learning period to learn from a teacher who is native-like or at least very proficient in English language and realize later in our life that it is extremely crucial to be proficient in English to become a part of the global economy? We missed out on the best time to acquire language which partially lead to missing out on our career growth. This need causes us to initiate enrollment in language development courses. So it is a question about what kind of teachers we look for in those courses? a fluent speaking English teacher whose first language is English? Who uses all the trendy words and idioms and phrases? From whom we can also gradually pick words, expressions, body

language, etc.? Or do I go to the teacher who has gone through a similar experience of late acquisition of a second language? Or who struggled because of the inefficiency in communication? Or who struggled in learning something new? Or struggles with the demand of time and effort at jobs that takes away opportunity to learn? Someone who knows what process, what environment, the amount of time, and effort it will require to develop my language skill? Who do I go to in order to acquire a foreign language better? Who understands me? And does the teacher's knowledge of my circumstances help me become proficient in English?

So the question is if one of the traits of teachers – empathy, where the empathy comes from going through a similar experience can add the extra quotient to learners' process of acquiring the language at the time when they have missed the critical period of learning.

1.4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Bangladesh has been globally competing with international markets for decades now. Our manpower as a resource makes our country one of the sources of most potentially competent human resources for businesses globally. A huge percentage of our economy is dependent on the RMG sector which, along with its international counterparts, has domestic businesses with half the organizations in the country. The chain that ties our RMG sector with international houses has the other end tied to the banks, IT industry, raw material suppliers, traveling, and international freight forwarding just to name a few. Unfortunately, the people of our country takes time to realize the importance of being good at a lingua franca that is commonly popular in the world in order to do well in their career in the mentioned job markets. English is currently the most popular Lingua Franca in the global business world and it has become a common requirement to be able to communicate in English to survive and grow in professional life. Now the time wasted by our people in realizing importance of English that has taken away the opportunity to improve that language skills during their educational years, now forces people to invest money, time and effort at a later age by enrolling in different courses. There are at least

thousands of training centers that offer language courses for adult learners who are working in different industries in Bangladesh. Usually, the learners who do not feel confident about their application of a second language get enrolled in these courses. Various organizations also hire trainers and training institutions to develop the language skill of their employees. The organizations invest and the learners join the courses with the high hope of improving their language skill extensively without even considering if this is possible to achieve a certain language level by the adult learners when they have long passed their critical period of learning. The training institutes and their trainers also believe and make the clients (organizations, their employees, or individual learners) believe that it is possible to enhance learners' ability at any stage of their life to develop their language skills. The sincere and capable trainers work towards attending to the need and circumstances of the learners with resources, activities, and methodologies that they feel will cater to the need of these busy professionals and will enhance their hold on the language. It is to see if the trainers' understanding of the learners' circumstances significantly influences the designing, conducting, and assessing sessions that ensure learners' enhanced performance in communicating with stakeholders in English.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE

Two very significant topics in the second language acquisition research are critical learning period and role of teachers. A blend of the two reflects the role of teachers in second language acquisition of learners – learners who have crossed the critical learning period. Since this learning is not a part of compulsory education but usually takes place after their institutional education, the learning is initiated due to necessity realized by learners. Most of the research work is focused on the role of teachers in or before tertiary levels and there is a gap in finding similar impact of teachers' attributes in the struggle and learning of learners when they start the learning process at their adult life. It is important to find the impact of one significant attribute of teachers in influencing learners' pace of

acquiring English as a second language where in the context of Bangladesh this second language plays a crucial role in the career of adult learners.

The thesis focuses on one of the major attributes of teachers, empathy in the process of language acquisition of learners; learners who have passed through at least higher secondary level of education. With the intention of exporting competing manpower and of creating manpower to run the economy, it has become evident that language is also a crucial competence of the manpower. It is crucial to find out what aspects of learning process will speed up the acquisition of language by these individuals and also which aspects are available in the context of our country. It is crucial to find out if quality of teachers adds to the speed and quality of language acquisition of these individuals. The thesis did not focus on any other attributes of teachers but only the empathetic nature of teacher has any impact on the learners of language acquisition and that too in the context of Bangladesh. Findings on this thesis could lead to putting focus on building empathy in teachers of adult language learning courses through tailor-made teachers' training courses, if deemed necessary.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.6.1 GENERAL QUESTION:

The key question that guided the research was:

Does empathy of Teachers have an impact on the adult learners' struggle while they acquire the second language in the context of Bangladesh?

This research tried to monitor the impact of the empathy of teachers on the second language acquisition process of the adult learners.

1.6.2 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

This research attempted to find out answers to the below specific questions:

- 1.2.1.1 Does the empathy of teachers in the classroom setup influence the progress of adult learners in acquiring the second language?

- 1.2.1.2 Does the influence bring significant change in adult learners' progress?
- 1.2.1.3 Does the presence of empathy in teachers also provide an opportunity for adult learners to practice empathy in their life?

1.7 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis comprises the following chapters:

Chapter 1 provides the introduction, area of work, background and context of selecting the topic that is being researched upon. It also states the purpose, significance and scope of the research work. The general question on which the research is based on and specific question that guided the collection of data is also included here.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review on five aspects that were studied to find work of researchers focusing on teachers' attributes and their impact on learners' acquisition of language.

Chapter 3 talks about the design, sample size and methods of data collection for this experimental qualitative research.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings from the data collected through focused group discussions, interviews with teachers and learners and observation of the language development classes of those teachers and learners.

Chapter 5 establishes the correlation between the findings and the topic of research through conclusion and recommends strategies to utilize the research findings in future teacher development programs.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

We all know that second language acquisition is a complex multifaceted phenomenon. It is possible to utter words from a different language by memorizing but language acquisition is more like acquiring the ability to communicate in that language. There is no uniform way to acquire a second language. According to Ellis (1999), performance in SLA depends on the learning ability of the learner and also the learning situation. Now if we focus our concern on the ability of the learners then it is crucial to discuss learners' ability to learn after they have passed their critical period of learning. According to the Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis, there is a learning period when individuals learn the best; this learning period may vary from individual to individual but ranges from 2 to 13. After which the language acquisition process becomes significantly difficult as per Lenneberg (1967). Although focusing on the CPH (Critical period hypothesis) creates confusion in the acquisition process when it is observed that individuals at later age become better with choice of words and at expressing themselves; this confusion could be answered as Dornyei (2009) points out that "in any given situation, there is invariably a multitude of factors involved, and age is often only one of them and not necessarily the most important one. This means that a young child would acquire the language faster than people who crossed CP if they both exist in a foreign country through assimilation in culture. But the older one will be better at learning from a formal learning environment. And this is where one of the major variables lies in this thesis where the concern is on adult learners trying to acquire the language and take their performance in language to a higher level through a formal learning environment where it is to find out if one of the attributes of teachers plays any significant role in achieving a better result.

2.2 TEACHERS' ROLE IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Researchers have noted that students who have caring relationships with their teachers are more motivated and perform better academically than students who do not (Foster, 1995; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 1990). There is no denying of the role that teachers can play in learners' language acquisition process; this includes assessing learners and their needs in order to create a learning environment that may create optimum opportunities for their learners. McAllister, G., & Irvine, J. J. (2002) stated Teachers are better able to modify pedagogy and curricula to fit their students' needs, such as the teacher who changed a classroom ritual to be more comfortable for her Vietnamese students by simply offering her students multiple ways to say goodbye rather than obliging them to hug her before they left the classroom. The same example can be given in the context of Bangladesh where teachers' work includes a time-consuming and lengthy process of converting the context of resources developed worldwide to match the context of the knowledge of their learners.

Although to be able to utilize the potential of their learners and to ensure the finest performance possible for those learners, teachers need to be passionate, dedicated, intelligent, hard-working, or creative, it may not be fair to them to expect to possess all the qualities at the same time. But there can always be a plan to equip teachers with strategies to compensate for their one missing attributes through another. One key component of teachers' training should be to train teachers to utilize the set of attributes that best fit their learners' need individually. Intelligence to understand which set of attributes matches with which set of learners' needs, is also a skill that teachers need to possess to make their role in making the learning process more substantial. Now the question is if any missing attributes can be developed through nurturing or if these are innate, is also a matter of debate.

Major research work has been done in assessing teachers' role in the learning process and the impact of each attribute of teachers' on the performance of learners. One such attribute is empathy, the impact of which in the language acquisition process of learners is a question that the thesis is looking for an answer.

2.3 EMPATHY AND ROLE OF EMPATHY OF TEACHERS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the word "empathy" originated from Greek *empathia* (from *em-* 'in' + *pathos* 'feeling') in the early 20th century translating German *Einfühlung*. Empathy is defined here as "the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in their situation" (3rd edition, 2008). The New Oxford Shorter English Dictionary (1993 edition) defines it as "the power of mentally identifying oneself with (and so, fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation (p808). To find an in-depth understanding of empathy, researchers (Aspy, 1972; 1973; 1973a; Rogers, 1975; Feschbach, 1975; Schantz, 1975; Deutsch and Madle; 1975; Gladstein; 1983) described empathy as a sense of understanding between people, an area of common ground, a sharing of feeling and emotion, an ability to feel and see things through the eyes of others which is too important for human relationships to ignore simply because it is hard to define and measure.

The concept of empathy changed from "states" to "process" over time as in 1959 Rogers called it a 'state', The state of empathy or being empathic is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition. Thus it means to sense the hurt or pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that it is 'as if I were hurt or pleased or so forth. If this 'as if' quality is lost, then the state is one of identification (Rogers, 1975 p3).

Then the shift takes place where Rogers in 1975 addresses empathy as “process”: The way of being with another person, which is termed empathic has several facets. It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment by moment to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It includes communicating your sensing of his/her world as you look with fresh unfrightened eyes at elements of which the individual is fearful. It means frequently checking with him! her as to the accuracy of your sensings and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion to the person in his/her inner world. By pointing to the possible meanings in the flow of his | her experiencing you help the person to focus on this useful type of referent, to experience the meanings more fully, and to move forward in the experiencing. Perhaps this description makes clear that being empathic is a complex, demanding, strong yet subtle way of being (Rogers, 1975, p4)

In a study done by McAllister & Irvin (2002) teachers described how empathy helped them to become more effective teachers with all their students. These teachers believed that empathy was an implicit part of being a caring, supportive, and responsive teacher with their culturally diverse students.

In that same study teachers also reported that empathetic disposition helped increasing more positive interactions with their students and created supportive classroom climates.

2.4 MEASURING THE PRESENCE OF EMPATHY

Researchers note that it is difficult to measure empathy. Noddings (1986) questions:

How can we emphasize the receptivity that is needed for both when we have no way of measuring it? Here we may ultimately decide that some things in life, and in education must be undertaken and sustained by faith and not by objective evaluation (p22).

Cooper (2002) highlights the characteristics of empathy based on climate and context. The study says “Empathy was classified into the two categories each of which has sub-categories— (a) Initial characteristics and (b) Means of communication. Initial characteristicsDue to the fact that empathy is interactive in nature the features nearly always created corresponding features in children and this has been expressed where relevant: Accepting/Open, Giving attention, Listening, Being interested, Positive and Affirmative approach, Enthusiasm (p109).

Even if the presence of empathy can be measured in the classroom and if the answer to the question if empathy impacts learning significantly is answered, it is also important to find out what to do with the teachers who do not show any significant sign of empathy. The question is if it is possible to train teachers to practice empathy in the classroom. And to answer that it is important to find if empathy is an innate quality or can it be developed.

2.5 NATURE VS NURTURE

Copper (2002) suggests that every human being has potential for empathy which can be nurtured or repressed. According to him: Having people around us who model this quality, including teachers, seems to support positive interaction and allows us to be valued and enable us to value others. Learners’ way of adopting empathy in their nature by mimicking the acts of teachers is a common way of developing empathy by students at an early age. Koseki and Berghammer (op. cit.) state “empathy is innate and can also be modelled and nurtured at home and in school: Parents and educators can by means of reinforcements and by giving good

models, conserve, strengthen and increase in quality the child's empathic concern, an innate ability (P203).

It is undeniable that any human qualities take time to develop. If empathy can be developed in students it will require the correct set of conversations, interactions, environment, and other variables. Noddings suggests that time is needed for real caring relationships to develop, not only through the taught curriculum but through the normal conversations and interactions which take place between people (op. cit.).

But what happens to learners who are under teachers for a short period of time and the relationship with empathetic teachers end after a year or so. Do they continue to practice what they have learned or the philosophy they have adopted during their time with those teachers? Along with the same line, it is important to find out if an introduction to empathetic behavior of teachers can be embraced by learners after their personality is already shaped up, will they be open to adopting new traits in them. The other crucial question is related to the relationship between empathy and the age of learners. Will adult learners mimic the qualities they see in their teachers? Is it possible to adopt new qualities at a matured age? And does the teacher feel that empathy influences the learners' behavior and their pace of learning?

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESIGN - STRATEGY:

This was an experimental research where the aim was to find out if the empathy of teachers towards the struggle that the learners face while acquiring a second language helps learners in achieving better results or progress. The context was Bangladesh for this research.

3.2 SAMPLE:

Sample size: For this research, 16 classes of 8 different teachers with learners who belonged to the 21 – 55 age level were observed. Selection included different teachers and institutions from the training industry in Bangladesh. In this selection, there were 2 sessions at the beginning and at the end of courses of each trainer. A more extensive study would allow the opportunity of observing multiple sessions of the same trainer/teacher. At a minuscule level, this was the maximum that I could achieve as I also had to ensure the presence of both teacher and learners after each observation. The maximum numbers of learners were corporate employees and professionals for whom giving additional time after office hours and then classes was a very tough decision they had to take. Most of these learners have completed their education and have been working in industries where communication in English plays a major role.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION – INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

3.3.1 SOURCES:

The sources of my data were both primary and secondary. The research included data from two primary sources:

1. Teachers conducting training for adult learners aging from 21 to 55.
2. Learners of those teachers

The secondary data source was the research work published so far by researchers focusing on the impact of the attitude of the teachers on the motivation of the learners in the language acquisition process.

3.3.2 APPROACH:

I opted for qualitative research. This approach assisted me in drawing a conclusion based on class observation and focused group discussion with learners and teachers. The observation and FGD provided information guiding in assessing the impact of teachers' empathy on the language acquisition process of their learners.

3.3.3 TOOLS/INSTRUMENTS:

The research data was collected through different instruments such as classroom observations, focused group discussions which sometimes involved interview with the trainers due to time and access limitation.

3.3.3.1 FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION:

Data was collected through interviews in focused group discussions with teachers and their learners. Questions were designed in a way that it collected information on teachers' and learners' experience and opinion on the impact teachers' empathy creates in the language acquisition process of their learners. The FGD also included the teachers' opinions regarding their role in the L2 acquisition process. The set of questions is shared in Annex 1 and 2 that guided the interview with teachers and learners. The questions in the FGD generated humungous discussion with the teachers and in some cases informal debate with contradicting opinions which is shared in the finding segment.

3.3.3.2 CLASS OBSERVATION:

The second instrument of collecting data was observing language classes of the teachers who took part in the focused group discussion. An observation rubric used is shared in Annex 3.

3.4 LIMITATION

The crucial factor that hindered the range of the research was time and access. Due to time constraint, the range of the research was limited. Due to time constraint, all the locations of the observed sessions were city-centric. Time and access to diverse conditions of institutes would have given further perspectives resulting in better authenticity.

Chapter 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 WHAT IS EMPATHY?

It was an intriguing task to recognize the presence of empathy as it crucially involved varied opinions on what classifies as empathy. Despite having a guideline on the list of areas of observation which might indicate the presence of empathy, the conclusion quite often acknowledged the chance of misperception at the assessor's part which as a result may produce false representation or absence of empathy in the classroom, be it in teachers or be it in learners.

Bridget Louise Cooper (2002) coined the term shallow or feigned empathy which creates further ambiguity in the process of recognizing empathy or classifying the indicators of empathy. The presence of shallow or feigned empathy creates substantial obscurity as it is a difficult task to come to the conclusion if the evident attribute is the disposition of the teacher or an accidental outcome of any particular ambiance.

Multiple instruments were utilized to ensure the interrelation between the activities of the teachers in the classroom and the recognition of the presence of empathy in them. Attempts to create a 360° evaluation from all parties involved made the findings more authentic. The other crucial factor to align with a hypothesis was to ensure the inclusion of all variables.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNERS' PROFILE AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:

It was found from the brochures of different institutes in Dhaka that there are two types of language development programs; one that purely focuses on language structure and the other one focuses on communication. From personal experience it was observed that different level of courses that focus on language structure development also focuses on communication time to time and there is a well thought out plan that integrates the rules of communication, that is in trend and in practice is covered at the time of the course when learners have become

comparatively comfortable with the language structure. On the other hand, in communication workshops, the levels of language of learners are usually noted down, the areas of further improvement are assessed but the language structures are not usually covered. In communication workshops or short courses, few aspects of language development are usually included such as choice of words, tone of words, common grammar mistakes, etc. The difference lies in the importance that is given to the aspects. Grammar is not a crucial part of a communication workshop, rather covered on a need base. Whereas in language development, grammar especially structure gets maximum attention, mostly in lower-level classes i.e. from pre-beginner to intermediate level.

Learners who choose to join communication workshops are usually those whose language level is slightly on the higher side. This assessment of the levels of the learners is sometimes done informally by the management of their organizations if they are working. Sometimes it is just the idea of the learners about themselves and no formal assessment is done. Higher-level learners usually do not join language development classes but the enthusiastic and sincere ones from the same level will involve themselves in various types of communication workshops as part of their soft skill development. Learners with English medium education are mostly opted out for communication focused workshops or short courses.

Learners with Bangla medium schools can be classified into countless categories depending on their ranking of schools, access to qualified teachers, their informal learning opportunities that are derived from their personal surroundings, the educational level of their parents, the mindset of their parents, their financial comfort, access to resources in their community, to name a few. All these factors, mentioned or not, adds to the infinite number of strategies that are required to enhance the language level of learners in language development programs.

Data from the survey and focused group discussion says that most of the learners in language development-focused courses had Bangla as their medium of education at least till higher secondary level. The same source of data discloses that the need for language development is identified mostly by the authority in their professional life; this brings additional distress in them due to the concern regarding the perception of the organization about their ability. Learners believe that this assumption about their ability outlines their progress in the present organization. Teachers of these learners feel that this added anxiety slows down the possible growth of learners' language development. This anxiety also adds to the attitude of the learner to the whole learning process in a slightly negative way and learners constantly look for loopholes to blame on for the slow progress.

The exact opposite scenario is also witnessed by teachers of these courses. Teachers shared that if learners are confident irrespective of the level of their language skill, they acquire the language faster than most, and their growth is usually noticed by their management. There are records where learners received long waited for promotions after their post-assessment scores were shared with their management. Teachers also shared that some learners who were not selected by their management considering their language level but joined through self-initiation performed much better than those who are selected by management. These learners show a favorable attitude towards learning which results in better performance in the final assessment. So in a nutshell teachers need to apply their quotient of empathetic nature which is required more for the learners with added anxiety and negative attitude towards the development process which is usually caused by their concern about the perception they think their organization has about them.

The attitude of the learners who self-finance their enrolment in the language development programs could not be categorized under any group considering their attitude towards the process of learning. Every individual who sponsors their own admission usually behaves

according to their own personality, individual circumstances, and demands of the situation. The urgent the need, the more sincere they are which sometimes backfire due to the anxiety that gets added. Surprisingly, even the amount they invest cannot guarantee constant sincerity. Teachers have shared frustration with these types of learners because no matter how much teachers try to design additional support for them due to their constraints, very rarely the involvement has improved. The only exceptions that the teacher mentioned are from courses that were not a part of observation for this thesis but from their involvement with other courses where learners enroll before sitting for an international test for language assessment. Learners of those courses are usually more sincere, regular, participative, and enthusiastic about their progress; even though anxiety plays a role in their performance during the actual test, the learning process is met with sincere learners who invest both money and time of their own. The empathy of teachers to surpass their limitations is in most cases acknowledged through appreciation from learners.

When the need of the learners who pay their own fees join a course to develop their language with the intention of better acceptance from their surroundings, which in all intent and purposes is about elevating their perceptive social status, the learners usually confuse their priorities and the identification of their need becomes too ambiguous which in turn makes the learner dissatisfied or not much satisfied with their progress.

Irrelevant to their medium of instruction at their educational institutes, learners who get more opportunity to use English in their surroundings become more comfortable with the language than those who join the program but do not get to use the language much in their surroundings. The need to communicate in English in professional life forces learners to learn new words to best describe their thoughts; this need for communication also helps learners to learn from others through frequent correspondence among colleagues. Professionals who utilize these learning opportunities also become more aware of the gap that they need to fill up through

strengthening their hold on the English language. This awareness assists in speeding up the progress of learners who work. Especially the learners who work in multinational organizations have to communicate in English with their buyers from all over the world, their mother companies are usually situated outside Bangladesh. All the verbal and written correspondence usually creates an opportunity for them to get accustomed to the accent, sentence structures of native users.

It is an important finding that teachers strongly believe that the dynamics of teaching at an adult learners' class is completely different from teaching any class in and below tertiary level; so are the needs for attributes of teachers. The quality of good teachers at both levels does not necessarily have to be similar. For example: being a teacher with strict rules and policies might bring wonders with students at educational institutes which might bring distressing results in adult learners' classes. Sensitivity towards learners' self-esteem should be put at a higher rank than any other aspect in terms of importance.

4.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PROFILE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNERS STRUGGLE

In our part of the world, teachers are usually from two backgrounds. This is to be noted that all the teachers except one are of Bangladeshi origin. Only one trainer's family came from outside Bangladesh but he was born and brought up here. 60% of the teachers are fluent speakers of English and are fluent in Bangla too. The rest of the teachers belong to the intermediate level considering their speaking skills and the upper intermediate level considering their writing skills. All the teachers who are fluent speakers are learners of English medium schools and are addressed here as Group A teachers. Other teachers are from a mixed background where some did their schooling from Bangla medium schools and one came from a Middle Eastern country where English was not the medium of instruction; these teachers are addressed as Group B

teachers in this thesis. All the teachers have extensive experience in teaching English at the tertiary level and to adult learners. Except for two teachers, others also have experience of working with kids at school. For this reason, they were able to discuss the difference between the attributes of teachers that are required at the two levels.

Every teacher mentioned that their extreme passion for teaching was what brought them to this profession and someone mentioned that although this profession does not give them much money, they are in this because of not only their passion but also their intention to help people in achieving their goals. One teacher mentioned that the experience of teaching both school kids and adult learners made her realize that adult learners are in real despair. It takes a lot of time to realize the need to be good at a language that is used for wider communication and the role of it in the growth of a career. The realization comes at a time when most avenues to get help to become unavailable and their faith in themselves to become better at communication becomes dimmer. So that is the most vulnerable group of people who needs help from language courses and it brings the teachers a sense of achievement that comes only from helping people.

Except for one teacher, all the teachers were conducting classes as a part of their part-time job. The classes that were observed were not bringing them their bread and butter but was surely earning them some luxury. The main criteria of their performance evaluation are the progress of the full batch of learners that they have as their class. For every one of them there is no certainty of getting the next batch immediately; also not getting a batch immediately does not always mean that their performance was not up to the mark with the last batch. But getting a second batch even with an interval means that their performance in the last batch was good. According to them, the managements running the courses follow the same principle since there is not much scarcity in getting good English language teachers. This strategy of hiring teachers has some impact on their seriousness and commitment towards the development of learners.

Except for one, all the group B teachers said that they didn't have to struggle much in acquiring the language and except for that one teacher everyone else felt that they are very much capable of teaching the language to learners belonging to all levels. None of them recognized their area that could be improved. Even if only their speaking skill is taken into consideration, some teachers could benefit from initiating a learning process, self or formal, to enhance their language skill further. Only one Group B teacher shared her intention of improving herself further to become better at communicating in English and also shared that she has identified the areas that she feels she needs to improve to communicate like natives.

Both group A and group B teachers claimed that they understand the struggle that their learners go through in acquiring a second language at such a late age where they already have long passed their best time to acquire any new language. They claimed that they design (those who design their own courses) and select resources (those who select their own resources) keeping in mind the background and demographic of learners in addition to other regular factors i.e. diagnosed areas of improvement, the current level of learners, etc. They also realize that not only the learners have passed the critical learning age but also they have taken up so many responsibilities that were mostly absent before. The responsibilities decide the priorities in life and their mind is not as fresh as young learners. So after a long day, at work or at home, they are not joining a class with a fresh mind and ready to learn energy. The teachers think that they understand the circumstances as well and that is usually the reason behind modifying the methodology and becoming more spontaneous in order to make the session more engaging for a group of exhausted, frustrated, tensed individuals.

Older aged teachers are assessed by their learners as hard-working while younger aged (not everyone though) teachers are assessed as creative and spontaneous. Older aged teachers are assessed as empathetic while younger aged teachers were appreciated for giving more freedom

to learners. In very few cases teachers were designing their own plan or creating their own resources so the level of creativity could not be assessed properly in all the classes.

All the teachers seemed to be very passionate about teaching which is evident from the years of teaching they have been doing, but some of them mentioned that teaching is a 24-hours job and sometimes the insincerity of the learners takes away the sense of pride. This was mentioned by one young aged teacher that it takes a lot of effort to earn respect from the adult learners who he finds are more into finding mistakes in young teachers and are continuously trying to dismiss the knowledge of young teachers. But all in all, every one claimed that love teaching and this profession is most rewarding. One teacher mentioned that he feels adult learners show more gratitude towards their teacher if they see a significant improvement in themselves as this creates hope in them about their future growth in their professional life.

An additional concern of teachers in the classroom lies in attending to the ego of the learners which is usually not an excruciating factor while teaching at the school level. Even with a full proof lesson plan, a ban on a list of risky words that has a history of offending others, a blend of personality traits such as empathy, sincerity, respect towards a learner, and being on red alert cannot fuse the time bomb of the chance of hurting the ego of a learner. Being too empathetic, giving too much attention can also provoke an unpleasant response. What is worse than this outcome is when learners shut themselves down as an aftermath of this perception of their egos getting hurt. But as adult learners are better capable at being diplomatic, at hiding their emotions, at reciprocating at a different time and venue, it becomes extremely challenging for teachers to recognize the matter and to arrange a solution. Being respectful does not always secure the boundary of learners' emotions. Each learners' personality is shaped over time through experience that is unique for them as no two experiences can be the same. The human mind is a long chain that could wrap the universe multiple times. The chance of having the same set of incidents with the same set of surroundings is zero. So no two people will have the exact

same personality, exact same mindset or exact same response to any single incident. For the very same reason, it is difficult to assess the sensitivity level of over sensitive individuals. Despite a teacher following the general guideline of being respectful, one learner in one single class may feel offended by genuinely not offensive action. No matter how empathetic the teacher is, it is difficult to be ultra-careful with learners which ultimately takes away the spontaneity of a teacher.

Sometimes it is not in a teacher's hand if peers are getting offended by peers. Sometimes learners hesitate to participate because of the anticipation of peers' response in case of any mistake. Teachers who keenly observed the learners' relationship with each other and their correspondence in the classroom and set ground rules that mentioned the seriousness of respecting each other were able to maintain a safe zone for learners to perform. Teachers who were serious about establishing the habit of respecting others also seemed to have gained the trust of their learners.

Some group A teachers claimed that in most cases they feel that the struggle is less about the capability of acquiring language and more about the limitation of time and span of attention. Whereas group B teachers shared that they feel the main struggle is the age of the learners and that it is difficult to perfect a language at this age; they also feel that it takes longer time and continuous effort to improve the level of a second or foreign language in these cases. Group B teachers shared the opinion that learners expect huge progress without spending adequate time and without giving the required effort in the program.

From the observation sessions, no correlation was found between teachers' educational background and the way their learners were attended by them. In all the sessions where interaction with the learners was praiseworthy, the teachers of those sessions were from both group A and B. Rather this should be noted that teachers whose other attributes, such as

spontaneity and creativity were strongly visible, showed this attribute of being good at making connections too. So this trait could be added to the list of teacher attributes that has a relationship with learners' performance. Learner engagement in the interpersonal skill owned teachers' classes were much higher than the same at teachers who do not possess the skill. The more engaged the learner is, the better the performance they achieve. Considering the enthusiasm of learners in participating in the class activities, comfort the learners have in interacting with teachers and peers, interest in discussing self-learning techniques, and overall attitude towards learning gauges the impact of teachers' interpersonal skill on learners' performance.

The observing sessions also indicated the source of the capacity of interpersonal skills. Teachers who possess interpersonal skills were able to give examples from their experiences which learners were able to relate to because of their personal experience. Teachers who had either experience of teaching learners with similar work backgrounds or experience of working in similar fields were able to draw examples that learners were able to relate to. Sharing examples and experience with learners, promising them that to understand their situation, being considerate about their struggle with time and energy, offering them resources that best fit their situation, conducting activities that they were able to engage in are the strategies that created trust in learners for their teachers and eventually influenced their learning curve.

This trust factor between teachers and learners also can be considered as a paradigm of how teachers' attributes can shape up the learning environment which eventually ensures the rate at which the majority of the learners will enhance their performance. The observations of sessions gave the opportunity to see the reflection of trust through learners' attitudes towards learning. The focused group discussions revealed the opinion the learners have about their teachers based on their level of trust and confidence in their teachers' ability to bring the expected development they have for themselves and sometimes more. A correlation could be established between how

learners see the ability of their teacher based on the speaking skill of their teachers. Considering response from focused group discussion and observation from classrooms it was a surprising reveal that learners are more in awe of Group A English teachers. Group A teachers are in most cases considered as more capable than group B teachers which did not show many relations to the engagement of learners in the classroom. The factor that puzzled most is that some group A teachers received noteworthy praises from their learners despite not being very creative, spontaneous, or attentive during their classes.

When the discussion was around their comfort in the class, engagement in the class, their progress, teachers' support in the class the responses were irrespective of the group the teachers belong to, A or B. Learners opinion towards how their teacher made them feel in the classroom and how they cater to learners' need earned much more positive responses towards the teachers who invested their time, effort, creativity and energy in the classroom. Learners addressed these teachers as dedicated, selfless, and knowledgeable. Learners of group B teachers had a mixed response; as mentioned earlier, their opinion for teachers who were creative, spontaneous, and with good interpersonal skill was much appreciated as dedicated although they were not as vocal as the learners of group A teachers when the discussion came around the ability to improve their language skill at an expected rate. On finding that the Group B teachers are not from an education background with English as the medium of instruction, the learners sometimes questioned the feedback on the correctness of work. This opinion fell in line with observations from their classes. In the observed classes, learners argued with grammar rules and pronunciation patterns when they received feedback from their teachers (Group B). Arguments lied around what they believe they have learned previously. This was not the case in classes of group A teachers. Regardless of their effort, energy, interaction in the classroom, the feedback was not argued; in fact, in some cases, the learners sometimes did not make any further queries despite their confusion on the face. This mild form of intimidation from the teacher was

observed in a class with a group A teacher. Surprisingly in FGD, this observation was not touched by any learner rather learners shared that they feel that the teacher has the capability of bringing progress in them.

A feign difference lies between the approaches of group A and B teachers where group A teachers ignored grammar mistakes during speaking activities whereas group B teachers rephrased the sentences with correct grammar. The differences evaporated when it came to writing activities; both groups gave feedback on grammar mistakes in writing activities and some teachers discussed the rules of common grammar mistakes identified from the writing in the classroom. All group B teachers mentioned that they modify their lesson plan when they see a good majority of the learners are making similar grammar mistakes; they incorporate additional activities, allots more time, and share additional resources on those areas. In case of repetitive mistakes by a few learners in their classes, teachers applied differentiated activities and shared resources with them; all in all teachers from group B are more attentive towards creating opportunities for learners to rectify their mistakes. Some group A teachers were seen to change their approaches when there were repetitive mistakes by the majority of learners while speaking and slight modification was made in their plan for activities and resources; this was not very common in group A teachers neither the modifications applied was extensive when done by a few. It was rather common in the FGD for the group A teachers to share their frustration with learners' progress in grammar and pronunciation which was clearly different from the opinion of teachers from group B. Group B teachers mentioned the areas that the learners most frequently needed help with and discussed the struggle of the learners in using the right grammar and pronunciation but they did not seem to be frustrated or shared anything as such in FGD.

When it came to evaluating their own performance as a teacher it was discovered that group A teachers are more confident about their performance and usually not much concerned about the

feedback of the learners. A very few group A teachers and all group B teachers mentioned that they go through the evaluation filled up by learners in detail and they keep notes for future refinement. A teacher from group B mentioned that she keeps a reflective journal of learners' participation and learner feedback to decide if any adaptation or modification is required.

It is difficult to pinpoint if teachers have empathy towards the learners in particular classrooms that were observed. When the extent of interaction between teachers and learners, patience with learners' insincerity or struggle towards completing assignments, effort that is given in modification of lesson plans, frequency of arranging differentiated activities and resources are recognized in observed lessons, it becomes safe to conclude that teachers consider learners struggle in the language development process and try to support them to the best of their ability in the process. FGD gave the opportunity to discover teachers' ideas of empathy and the necessity of empathy in the classroom. Group A teachers mostly believe that it is not necessary to have to go through a very similar experience of acquiring a second language. Other traits such as interpersonal skill, sincerity, dedication, creativity, and knowledge about learning style and strategy and effort to design and conduct classes according to plans that prioritize learning style, strategy, and learners' background can bring in the same or better result. Group B teachers feel that sharing a similar experience of acquiring language helps them design effective modules and resources in an age-appropriate manner.

Group B also shared that empathy due to understanding their work pressure, level of stress, limitation of time also supplements the pace of acquisition, and development of language. A similar opinion was shared by group A teachers too. Group A and B both groups of teachers mentioned that planning differentiated activities according to learners' needs and circumstances and sharing resources according to the same gives learners the support that they actually need but in a subconscious manner.

4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEHAVIOR, STRATEGIES, AND METHODOLOGIES OF TEACHERS' AND PRESENCE OF EMPATHY IN THE CLASSROOM

4.4.1 BEHAVIORS THAT REFLECT THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF EMPATHY

Majorly through class observation and to a certain degree from FGD set of behaviors could be classified as empathy. Both significant and one time conducts and the learners' responses to these conducts were taken into account in this segment. Absence of certain behaviors that in learners' opinion have affected their attitude towards learning is also included here in order to comprehend the impact the absence of empathy might have in the language acquisition process.

In the FGD learners revealed the actions of the teachers that they think have extensively motivated them in their scuffle with different aspects of language acquisition like obtaining various features of a second language, facing constraints like giving time and energy into the process of acquiring language. Learners excitedly mentioned the gesture that they find most effective is the respect teachers give to the achievements of learners from outside the classroom. For example, they have shared the appreciation they received regarding the number of years they have been working, their latest educational qualification, their designation at a young age, the age they have started working, their experience of working in different industries, balance between their job responsibilities and personal responsibilities such as managing children at home and so on. According to these learners, their teachers' habit of appreciating and showing respect towards them played a substantial role in boosting the latter's motivation that eventually inspired them to perform according to the established expectation of the teachers from them.

During FGD, learners also highlighted their experience of learning from teachers who possess good listening skills and at the same time being patient with the former's struggles. The interesting part is that it took time for the learners to notice the presence of this quality in teachers. And the acknowledgment of the learners of the importance of this quality in teachers

also took time. The feeling of getting heard encouraged them to declare their challenges with the confidence of receiving appropriate guidelines from their teachers. This was also observed in the sessions where teachers who did not interrupt the learners while speaking, despite the inability to express the thoughts in an organized manner by learners, generated an impressive extent of participation by their learners.

Another noteworthy behavior of teachers that learners perceive as a significant stimulator for their enhanced performance was the acceptance of learners' limitation in acquiring a second language and the associated behavior of putting additional effort in attending them through differentiated guidance. The limitations of learners could range from the amount of time that could be given to the course requirements to lack of energy and dedication due to their overwhelming responsibilities in professional and personal life. Mention worthy limitations include added anxiety about performance and the consequences of the inability to enhance their current language skill in their professional life. Notes from discussions with teachers on the topic of their attitude towards the limitation of learners and the importance of this attitude in learners' performance were not always reflected in the notes from class observations. During discussions, most teachers strongly declared that they completely understand the need to understand the limitation in order to offer differentiated strategies but the declaration was not always echoed in the classes. The classes where the declaration was echoed had the proof of it in the additional resources that teacher brought before learning about their reasons for not completing assignments, in extending the time to complete homework, in allowing them time to work on the homework during breaks and similar other allowances. Preparedness to respond to learners' limitations can be considered as the reflection of teachers' attitudes towards the same.

Few gestures also could be classified as part of behaviors that reflect empathy in teachers for the circumstances that their learners deal with while in the process of language acquisition. Gestures such as putting hands on shoulders of the same gender learners, giving time to the

learners who came in late and who looked exhausted to become comfortable first, allowing few extra minutes to nervous learners while they perform in front of everyone, giving additional time to learners who were late for valid reasons, etc indicates that teachers are aware of the situation that the learners face. It was also noticed that teachers can use tone as an instrument to express their acknowledgment of learners' battle with their limitations. As noticed in the sessions teachers tone can go both ways; it can add dullness to the session, show frustration or disappointment and on the contrary can express empathy towards learners, sympathy towards their situation, acknowledgment of their sincerity, faith in their capability, or surprise with their performance if beyond expectation. Stress on words to expressions is also an instrument that some teachers were seen to apply in their classes. It was also noticed that through tone and gestures these teachers were able to communicate their intended emotions to their learners.

Although the habit of teachers being careful with words they choose was not mentioned by any learner, the absence of it and disregard for it was discussed. A few learners from a batch mentioned that the sarcasm teachers used in the classroom did not always work in creating a happy environment as on multiple occasions it has backfired. Sometimes this attitude of teachers has unknowingly offended a few learners who might not have protested loudly at that moment but they did share their uneasiness with the appropriate authority. This in turn created unwanted conflicts among the groups of learners in that batch. Similar opinion and experience, if not as grave, was shared by learners from more than one batch. The number of learners who shared this concern is not huge if considered the batches separately but a weighty one if the total number from all the batches that were observed are counted.

Learners also shared that they feel strongly de-motivated and offended if the teachers show behaviors that express that they do not trust their learners. If teachers accuse them, even if light-heartedly, of negligence in completing assignments even after receiving information on the reasons behind missing the deadline, it evidently portrays the distrust in them. According to the

learners, acquisition of a second language is anyway a very difficult and cumbersome process that already associates anxiety regarding the consequences of not achieving the expected level; so any obstruction such as distrust and accusation are only going to stretch the level of difficulty for them.

4.4.2 STRATEGIES THAT REFLECT THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF EMPATHY

All the sessions that were observed had some similarities in approach, strategies, methodologies, etc. of teachers whereas some major differences were observed too. The similarities as well as the differences are some of the variables behind the variety in the performance outcome of the respective groups of learners. Some strategies might have worked while some might have failed.

FGD brought out the ranking of priority when it comes to giving attention that the teachers consciously or subconsciously give to the learners in their classes. Although the level of learners and the areas where they need help was identified at the beginning of the course, learners' struggle was identified as days went by. Struggles included the pace at which the learners acquire language, their comprehension skill, their attention span, their learning style, their interpersonal skill, and many more. Teachers believe that information on these areas helps them in tailoring their plan and in strategizing their actions. A teacher mentioned keeping reflective journals that included notes on learners helped her carry out strategies that helped learners with their struggle. Few strategies such as changing the medium of instructions so that some learners feel comfortable in asking questions and sharing their own similar experiences while acquiring the second language boosted learners' confidence in acquiring the same level in the future are the ones she felt worked in her favor.

Some teachers in the FGD mentioned that the approach towards addressing mistakes is another strategy that impacts the rate of learning. According to them, learners are usually worried about

making mistakes which stops them from enthusiastically participating in class. The worriedness comes from the anticipation that, along with the teacher, peers will also notice the mistake and will judge them based on their mistakes. And also worried about teachers pointing out their mistakes in front of the class which will affect their image. In FGD it was also discussed that this fear strongly affects the class when there are learners with higher and lower rank joining the same course. Juniors do not want to open up and participate because they feel that their mistakes will be noticed by their superiors and will affect how the superiors see them. The similar concern comes from superiors where they possibly feel that their juniors will get to know about their limitations.

It was observed in the sessions that some teachers (mainly group A) didn't address the mistakes that the learners made while speaking, but some of those teachers corrected grammar in the written homework or classwork. Some teachers preferred rephrasing the segment of sentences so that learners notice the change there and also not feel any negative emotions. All the teachers except one fell under either of the two categories. Surprisingly this one teacher addressed the mistakes of the learners intensely which learners appeared to accept graciously. The relationship between the teacher and his learners seemed to be as such that the way the teacher pointed out the mistake is taken as a favor to them like they have learned something very important from this mistake. This observation is from a session at an early stage after launching the course and the relationship between teacher and learners was already in a very positive state. During a session of the same teacher, closer to the end of the session, the teacher kept on appreciating the learners whose mistakes were rectified and kept on referring to their mistakes from earlier sessions.

Some learners in the FGD mentioned that they feel they remember the rephrased words or sentences more than the teacher explaining rules to them. It helps them to grasp the structure of the sentence or pronunciation of words by trying to replicate the sentences or mimic the

pronunciation. There is usually no embarrassment attached to it. It was observed in the session that some energetic learners questioned the reason behind the correction and were more interested in learning the rule. It was also observed that all learners are attentive when peers are performing and so they missed out on learning through the strategy of rephrasing sentences or uttering the correct pronunciation. In the sessions where the teacher discussed the rule while addressing the mistake of the learners, the rules were noted down by the learners. In those sessions the teacher also created unplanned learning opportunities for the other learners to apply the rules, thus ensuring everyone is noticing and learning from one's mistake.

Teachers shared other simple strategies that they feel help them in creating a relationship of trust, faith, and confidence with their learners which eventually influence the motivation of their learners. Teachers mentioned asking for opinions from learners while selecting resources sometimes i.e. the genre of movie they want to watch as part of writing and speaking activities, their preference of reading hard copies or soft copies (pdf, Ms word, etc), reading news article or book, working in groups or pairs, etc gives the learners a sense of belongingness to the complex process of learning. One or two teachers mentioned sitting with weaker learners to find out about what they like to do in order to design differentiated tasks for them which they will feel intrigued to participate in. Simple strategies that several teachers shared is that sharing expectations from the group enhances the motivational level of learners but this also needs to be done in a very subtle way. If learners speculate that this is a standard strategy applied to everyone then they won't be affected by it. But having one to one discussion at separate times with different learners stimulates learners' motivation. This strategy or its slightly adjusted versions also gives results with insincere or de-motivated learners. Separately sitting with those learners and delicately explaining their potential to reach the expectation worked well in significant numbers of such learners which encourages the teachers to apply this strategy too.

4.4.3 METHODOLOGIES THAT REFLECT THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF EMPATHY

Teachers agreed to the opinion that there is no end to the methodologies applied in their classrooms as the slightest modification in one methodology makes it a different one. They mentioned the presence of differentiated activities to attend different learning styles, using additional resources for learners whose pace are not as per expectation at the beginning of the course, modifying resources and activities to cater to the maximum number of learners, building up habits in learners that will help them create imaginary situations where they will be able to see the application of the language they are acquiring, etc to name a few.

The discussed ideas from the FGD were in line with the observed points from some classes. Some teachers made changes in the plan for the day by using informal learning opportunities. Learners from those classes responded to the idea of creating images in their mind of where they can use the words or statements that they are learning. It was also observed in some sessions where teachers were pairing up weak learners with strong ones where weak and strong means their pace of acquiring the language at that point. In a class it was observed that the teacher has pre-planned the formation of groups in activities where group members were selected according to their level of language in order to create a mixed group; this gives the shy learners to learn from multiple sources in addition to learning from their teacher.

Two of the teachers classified the importance of detailed assessment particularly pre-assessment at the top of the list; more so than the placement test. A detailed map of areas where the learners face difficulty while performing is what they believe can set the outcome of a course far ahead of its completion. These two teachers mentioned the extensive time that they spend in modifying the pre-set pre-assessment paper based on the findings from the placement test. This is also to use the time of the course to its full potential. In their opinion this time well spent in

the findings from pre-assessment also helps them remove or set fewer priorities to topics that the maximum learner is good at; resources on those topics are only given to the learners who need that. This strategy can also be connected with the practice of not addressing the mistakes in the classroom but attended separately.

Other teachers mentioned that while spending additional time on pre-assessment is an excellent practice, the same can be done and should not be forgotten to be done during the course duration. Some teachers mentioned that they regularly create opportunities for formative assessment and modify their course plan when any urgent requirement becomes visible from the work of learners. A considerable number of teachers mentioned that usually at the beginning learners are extra nervous, hesitant while taking part in the assessment. After some time it is easier to assess how they are going to use the second language in their comfort zone. And thus finding the area of struggle becomes easier than before for the teachers.

Observation points that match with the claims of teachers in FGD regarding the use of methodologies in order to ensure the adult learners are given opportunities to learn considering their set of unique challenges reflect the understanding of teachers of their learners' circumstances. The absence of which portrays the absence of empathy in teachers towards learners' situations and the obstacles they face in learning as per their actual potential.

4.5 OPINION OF TEACHERS IF EMPATHY INFLUENCES THE ACQUISITION PROCESS AND HOW

Teachers believe that empathy is undeniably important in the language acquisition process. Although they were divided in their opinion on which empathy has a greater impact than the other, all of them agreed to the fact that empathy is the key to creating connections with their learners.

Group B teachers were able to quickly relate to the areas where learners in their classes struggled; these teachers time to time referred to their common gap in learning from their educational institutions. It was observed in the sessions that group B teachers can discuss the ways that did not work in acquiring language properly in their case. But not all group B teachers were comfortable in referring to any struggle they faced while acquiring the second language. In the FGD too, these teachers did not mention any struggle which was surprisingly inconsistent with their level of speaking in FGD and in the class.

If the points from FGD with teachers and learners, and observations from classes are taken into consideration to assess how much the empathy of going through similar struggle influences the performance of learners, it can be assumed that learners are interested to learn more from teachers who did not have to go through the same struggle because they do not find the projected outcome with these teachers as the last stop that they want to reach.

The same is not applicable for empathy towards the challenges that learners from fast-moving industries face. Teachers' experience of working in similar jobs at some point in the past earns them respect from learners; they feel that the teacher has a better chance of understanding their limitations with time, job responsibilities, stress, etc and will be able to provide them with tools customized according to their need and style of communication. These learners acknowledged their teachers' effort in providing them with multiple mediums of instruction and with platforms that have allowed them to deal with the obstruction of time. To them, these opportunities provided to them and the flexibility offered by teachers play a crucial role in speeding up their language acquisition process.

Teachers in the FGD also mentioned other areas where they feel that they understand the struggle of learners as they have faced similar challenges while acquiring or excelling in their language skills. All group A teachers and some of group B teachers agreed that it is very

unfortunate that learners do not get the opportunity in their workplace and their personal life to practice what they learn from the classes. Rather they sometimes become more concerned about making mistakes because the more classes they attend the more aware they become of their mistakes. This usually makes them hesitant in using the second language until they feel that they won't make any mistakes anymore. It was observed in the classes that teachers try to convince the learners to practice what they learn with their colleagues and also frequently tried the activities like role play and mimicking lines just to make them comfortable with certain statements in the hope that these statements will help them confidently initiate conversations.

Teachers' patience towards the pace learners in enhancing their language skill are often recognized by their learners. Although learners seemed slightly inclined towards group A teachers, they didn't mention this attribute in the case of most group A teachers but the recognition came for most of the group B teachers. Some group B teachers were seen to spend additional time during breaks to help learners with activities that they couldn't compete with others; one group A teacher was seen to be doing the same thing.

A very crucial aspect where teachers' empathy played a role was dealing with adult learners' ego. This is a substantial concern that teachers always needed to be careful about. This empathy was not created from the experience of going through it by themselves rather this was developed based on long experience of teaching by some teachers. Long experienced teachers with adult learners shared that it is very common for adult learners to get overly sensitive with the simplest of issues. Different tones with different learners can upset one, certain tones will upset them, reminding them about assignments more than once can upset them, and countless other issues. Teachers who do not notice the hidden reaction of these sensitive learners do not take any precautions nor try to resolve the associated conflict. All the teachers who do not concentrate much on this do not necessarily suffer. Teachers who have created a connection with their class usually get away without any consequences. But if for any reason the

relationship was not created till that time, then learners are inclined towards informally dealing with it in a not-so-positive way.

To avoid such undesirable responses from learners, visible or not, some teachers follow the general directions of being respectful. In the FGD they shared that they concentrate on the performance of learners; they start the investigation when learners perform poorly or when they are seen to be very reluctant in performing. Teachers' opinion is that it is better to find out if the cause is related to the self-esteem of the learner through assessment and then deal with it than being extra cautious and unspontaneous all the time.

Some teachers prefer being extra cautious and less spontaneous around the learners which they consider as a safe strategy. This ensures avoidance of any negative outcome but only because the focus is on not generating any unwanted emotions. These strategies may not have bred from empathy but possibly from the experience of facing such negative emotions in the past from learners. And teachers acknowledged that this decision of being extra cautious has unfairly taken away the chances from the other learners to enjoy the benefit of having a spontaneous teacher.

4.6 REASONS FOR THE ABSENCE OF EMPATHY IN THE CLASSROOM

Most of the classes had either indication or clear signs of the presence of empathy in the classroom. Unfortunately, some classes didn't; although not necessarily all of those classes were below standard level but didn't show significant signs of empathy in the behavior of teachers, methodologies that were applied, or strategies that were followed by teachers. In one case the absence and the reasons can be tallied based on information from FGD on teachers' profiles. Teachers from group A in some cases lacked a similar background of facing challenges while acquiring English as a second language, neither had any exposure to working in any industry other than educational institutes nor had the experience of working with adult learners. It was

observed in the session that this teacher, maybe due to the age, was not very keen on giving additional time to learners who were weak but were interested to invest more time to come up to the pace of other learners.

But there is also another perspective here. The number of classes observed of each teacher is not that big in number. The scale of the research made it difficult to surely point at a class and decide that the presence of empathy evident from the behavior, methodology, and strategies of the teacher are constant factors in their other classes too. The same could be stated about the absence of empathy in particular classes. There can be multiple reasons for not showing signs of empathy in various aspects. It could be a stressful day for the teacher; the past behavior of the learners might have provoked a nonchalant behavior from the teacher and many other reasons. So it would be risky to consider that empathy was completely absent in that class.

4.7 REFLECTION OF TEACHERS' EMPATHY IN THE CLASSROOM ON LEARNERS' BEHAVIOR

Through this research, it was also intended to find out learners replicate the empathy they consciously or subconsciously observe in their teachers. What could be observed in the limited time frame is that if the learners are vocally guided by the teacher along with instinctive empathetic actions then the learners also consciously try to imitate those actions. Some teachers were seen to explain certain approaches i.e. standing when someone comes to speak to them separately, letting others finish their sentences first, saying thank you for the smallest of favors, etc. Elderly teachers were seen to guide learners to help weaker learners withholding their capability.

It was interesting to see how some group B teachers tried to establish a practice of appreciating each other. Better performers in these teachers' classes receive appreciation but then again are

given responsibilities to assist others so as not to excuse from investing adequate effort in the class. Learners are constantly reminded to help each other in different tasks in these classes.

Few teachers from group A were seen to be a little more informal and friendlier with stronger learners than with the weaker ones. This unsympathetic behavior towards the emotion of other learners created a similar not so respectful attitude from weaker learners towards the stronger ones. It was observed that weak learners were teasing one of the good performers with unassertive connotations.

Learners in the class of one Group A teacher who discussed the mistakes of learners in the classroom were less critical of receiving feedback. The learners from that classroom were from time to time interrupting peers with the right form when the peer was making a mistake. They didn't seem to be much bothered about this action; it was assumed that learners were able to create a safe environment along with their teacher where there were less hesitation and much confidence about the actions of their peers and their teacher.

In most classes with group B teachers learners were having more conversations with peers and were not much bothered about making mistakes; they were also very comfortably teasing each other for their mistakes; interpersonal skill was better in those classes. Classes with group A teachers were comparatively formal as there were hesitations from some weak learners in performing due to their fear of making mistakes. In some classes in this group, the stronger learners are more enthusiastic in performing in activities which allows the weaker learner to get away by not performing. As some teachers from group A seemed unaware of this dynamic between learners, no corrective measures were initiated. The dynamics among learners is possibly a reflection of the dynamics between teachers and weaker learners. The group dynamics were relatively absent in the observed classes of group B teachers.

4.8 TEACHERS' OPINION ON WHETHER TOO MUCH EMPATHY IS BAD FOR THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESS

When asked “if too much empathy is bad for the language acquisition process of learners” during the FGD with teachers as the conversation directed towards that concern, teachers were mostly undecided in their opinion. Most of the teachers agreed to the notion that empathy creates a positive impact on the language acquisition process but the extent of empathy is sometimes not well defined.

Teachers who strongly believe in structured assessment from time to time to gauge the progress of their learners, feel that the results have given them the opportunity to evaluate their own strategies, methodologies, and behavior that they applied towards the weak performers. Based on their evaluations, they at that point can classify the methodologies, strategies, and philosophies that brought results and the ones that did not.

Some teachers shared that they feel the indicator of the extent of empathy required to achieve the expected result from learners lies in knowing the learners and their personality traits. Knowing when to be strict with whom and when to allow time to whom is a teacher trait that helps teachers to set the scale for the extent of empathy they need to administer.

Chapter 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis searched the answer to the question if empathy of Teachers has an impact on learners' struggle while they acquire the second language in the context of Bangladesh; the search focused on three areas to find the answers which were:

- a. if empathy influences the progress of learners,
- b. if progress is significant and
- c. if it instills a positive impact in learners which influences the learning process positively.

It was realized throughout the research at every stage of information and opinion collection that it is difficult to assertively measure the presence of empathy at any setup. And considering the limitation of time and eventually that leading to the sample size it was difficult to observe a substantial number of classes that would assist in investigating every chain reaction of the behaviors, strategies, methodologies, attributes of teachers in their classes. So the attempt was to effectively select certain behaviors, approaches, strategies, methodologies of teachers towards the learners and the learning process, adding the factor such as trainer profile and learners profile and at the end evaluating if the presence of these features of teachers has supported learners to perform better than the learners whose teachers didn't present signs of mentioned features.

When measured the findings from different points of observation, the relationship between the presence of empathy and the impact could be formed from those aspects of findings. When focused on different characteristics noted in teachers, the impact of those on how learners participate in the classroom could be drawn into the equation.

Considering the presence or absence of characteristics that teachers possess, which could have shaped up naturally or through experience, it can be assumed that the characteristics influence

the environment of classes. Behaviors that indicated the presence of empathy created such an environment where learners seemed more comfortable with the learning process and were enjoying a safe relationship with teachers as well as peers. The overall environment in multiple classes that were observed of teachers who displayed empathetic characteristics towards their learners had more enthusiastic learners with comparatively higher participation in individual and team activities. The relationship between teachers and learners were more informal in these classes than the ones where no strongly visible behavior, approach, or strategy erupting from empathy could be noted.

If empathy is influencing the learning environment it could be surely claimed that empathy influences learning pace as learners learn more in an environment where they can practice language without much hesitation and fear of making mistakes. The more opportunity they had to practice language the better they became at using it.

It was evident in the classroom that positive behaviors such as respect towards learners' age, designation, duration of professional life, etc. motivated learner in opening up to their teacher as the realization of respect received from teacher played a role in instilling confidence in learners; this also conveyed a subtle message that the learner won't be disrespected or made fun of by teacher in case of any mistake by the learner. Strategies such as not pointing out mistakes also motivate learners to participate, possibly because of the absence of fear of embarrassment. Also, strategies when teachers were equally alert during group activities then learners also received the opportunity to learn from their peers. Through these group works weak learners could utilize their growing relationship with better performers; all these strategies were conducted to provide learners with numerous opportunities to learn from different sources too.

The comparative study between the presence and absence of features that could be classified as empathy provides the answer to if empathy has an influence on learners' progress in second

language acquisition. Although the opportunity to practice the learning in work or personal life, mainly outside the classroom also plays an influencing role, but this also needs to be kept in mind that the opportunity to learn from assimilation is not present in our context even in multinational organizations.

There is always a question of if empathy is innate or can be nurtured. Due to the limitation of this research this aspect was not included from the planning part of the research. Rather a minuscule study was included to identify if the profile of the teacher has played a role in the presence or absence of empathetic behavior or signs in their classrooms. Though it is extremely risky to draw an assumption from this scale of work if done then it should be mentioned that age and years of experience of conducting courses with learners from diverse industries garner insights into the need and capability of learners which helps teachers to cater to the specific need and this catering also includes understanding their situations; this hold over understanding learners' struggle is reflected in the empathetic behavior of the teacher in their classrooms which also showed better performance of their groups of learners.

The gap between the two observed classes of each teacher, one at the beginning of the course and another closer to the end of the course, gave insights into the behavior of the learner which was covered in the findings segment. These insights also included and were able to create a connection between teachers' empathy and learners' attitude towards class. Attempting to identify this relationship not always provided a transparent response but provided a quadrant of situations that might be the result of the presence and absence of behavior.

Learner attitude	Teacher - empathy	Teacher – no empathy
Learner – Positive	Learners are comfortable with the teacher; generating informal conversation with peers and teachers.	Learners work harder for the teacher's approval.
Learner – Not positive	Learners take the opportunity of the teacher's empathy.	Learners are reluctant to participate, teachers not pursuing much either.

Figure 1: Learners performance in response to teachers' empathy in language development classroom

The table shows that both the presence and absence of empathy may reflect two types of response to each. Positive empathy can extract positive behavior of learner which may include more interactions with teacher and peers eventually creating more opportunity to practice the learned language, enhanced confidence in asking questions eventually clearing confusions and stress-free interaction due to absence of fear of being judged by teacher and peers. In addition to not finding the mentioned behavior from learners, the learners can also misuse the empathy teacher shows for them. It can invoke poor attendance and irregular submission of assignments eventually leading to poor performance. Teachers sharing their experience of struggling with language acquisition can lead to learners becoming judgmental of their progress under that teacher.

Again the absence of many benchmarks considered as a sign of empathy in the classroom can lead to two categories of responses. Negative responses from learners could include reluctance in participating in the class and losing out on opportunities to acquire language as per learner potential, hesitation to ask questions for clarification of confusions, lack of motivation in weaker learners due to teachers' biases towards already superior learners. Again the absence of empathy in the classroom in some cases may bring a positive responses from learners as learners are sometimes more motivated by teachers who they feel treat them as adults and do not try to spoon-feed them. Some learners may work harder to get the approval of teachers who portray themselves as very strict and keep their distance. Learners sometimes try harder to get the approval of those teachers which they consider as hard-earned achievements.

But in general, the findings indicate that the performance of learners is proportionately related to the presence of empathy of teachers in their classrooms. The presence of empathy in most cases, irrespective of teachers' background (group A or B), received praiseworthy participation of learners and consequently, the progress of most of the learners from the 1st session observed

to the 2nd session observed were notable. The absence or lesser signs of teachers' empathetic behavior in some classes resulted in some learners staying at the same level as they were before. More time in hand would allow sitting with these groups of learners to pinpoint the reason behind the lack of motivation in the class. There was another scenario where learners' progress was noticed but not substantial though; this progress could have resulted from the learners' nature of seeking approval from teachers who they look up to.

Now when the opinion of learners and teachers are also taken into consideration, it can be summarized as both parties feel there is a need for empathy in the classroom as learning is extremely difficult and undeniably time-consuming at this stage considering their age and circumstances. And empathy towards the struggle of learners will only aid teachers in designing and conducting classes that will attend learners' needs putting the right effort in the right basket. So according to both learners, teachers, and as a conclusion of the thesis empathy-driven teaching achieves higher progress from adult learners in the Bangladesh context.

CHAPTER 6 LIMITATION

Concrete and assertive conclusions could not be drawn in this thesis due to the constraint of time which led to smaller sample size. Declaring the impact of the personality trait of teachers is a humongous challenge that requires an exhaustive study on identifying the magnitude of influence of each characteristic present in a teacher; in addition to all this, repercussion of the absence of every one of those characteristics also need to be examined to state the absolute influence of those characteristics of teachers on the learning process. Some characteristics could bring positive change but the absence of those characteristics might not bring any substantial damage. In the case of the latter, a conclusion could be drawn that the particular attribute of teachers might not have a substantial influence on the learning process of learners. Given more time a stronger hypothesis along that perspective could be proclaimed. Unfortunately, that couldn't be the context in this thesis.

Other factors that influenced the concreteness of the hypothesis is that in multiple scenarios a gap between the statement of the teachers during FGD and their deeds at the class was noted. Teachers mentioned a great number of theoretical insights that they claimed to practice in their classes which were not seen in practice. A related concern was that teachers are extra cautious when there is an observer and try to display some actions that they didn't seem to be at comfort with. This inconsistency could easily establish the idea that these actions were not followed regularly.

A major concern was also that not all teachers were very open about the strategies and approaches they conduct at their classes. In multiple scenarios, it was observed that their interesting approaches were not shared during FGD despite a detailed and lengthy discussion among them on strategies that influence the performance of learners. Rather most agreed to ideas shared by some of their peers which eventually was not found in their classes.

Other concerns towards the authenticity of findings revolve around the observation that not all the learners seem very comfortable and honest during FGD. There was hesitation in some cases, eye-rolling with peers in some, and suggestive smiling from some. The possible reason for the hesitation could be an unjustified assumption of negative consequences. The opportunity to have one-to-one interviews with learners would produce more honest answers and further dependable assumptions from the discussions.

All in all, more time, access to observe a greater number of classes, opportunity to conduct one-to-one interviews with teachers and learners would afford a more comprehensive hypothesis on the impact of empathy of teachers on adult learners' progress in acquiring a second language in the context of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is observed from the sessions that teachers play a major role in learning; access to resources, learning from peers, and learning from the environment- all the factors are provided and supported by teachers. The role of learners in learning plays a strong role too; at the same time, this could also be said that how much effort and time will be invested by learners can also be influenced by teachers' effort, time, dedication, and empathy. Understanding learners' circumstances can vastly contribute to how a teacher foresees the path to learners' progress. Empathy, a blend of behaviors, strategies, and approaches could help learners in removing the obstacles that they face while acquiring a new language after they have passed their critical learning age.

It would be a risky venture to assume that teachers will be empathetic towards learners' struggle in acquiring language. Rather funds should be utilized, plans should be developed and time should be allowed to train teachers that will equip them to understand not only the needs of the learners but also their circumstances that add to the latter's struggles. Repetitive training can build up this crucial trait of teachers that will ensure the teachers are putting in the right blend of dedication, effort, intelligence, and empathy that best serves the learners' needs in acquiring the second language.

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Appendices

Annex 1: Observation Rubric for Language classrooms to assess the impact of Teachers' Empathy towards learners' Struggle in Acquiring a Second Language

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this small research project. This class will be observed to complete a research project as partial fulfillment of the course TSL 510 Dissertation in MA in TESOL Program at Brac University. The below checklist will assist in observing the areas that will provide information for the research regarding the impact of Teachers' empathy towards learners' struggle in acquiring a second language.

I would like to assure you that your identity will be kept confidential and the observed points will be only used for this Academic research. If you have any concern regarding any point of the checklist, please feel free to discuss with me.

Date and time:	
Trainer Observed:	
Number of learners:	
Class level:	
Course observed:	
Topic:	
Duration:	
Time:	
Language Level of learners:	Pre-beginner/ Beginner/Intermediate
Learning objectives:	

Teacher attributes:	
Was the teacher friendly and approachable?	
Was the trainer empathetic towards learners' struggle?	
What indicated the presence of teachers' empathy?	

What approach did the teacher take to attend to errors and mistakes?	
Did the teacher offer extra tutorial hours for weak learners?	
How was the teacher attending the nervous learners, if any?	

Activities:	
What type of activities the teacher conducted in the classroom?	
Were the learners able to relate to the activities?	
Were the activities catering to the different learning styles?	
Were the activities offering opportunities for weak learners to perform?	
Were the activities challenging enough for high performers?	

Orientation:	
Was this a teacher centered or learner-centric class	
Was the resources teacher centered or learner-centric	
If it was a learner-centric class then to what extent learners were taking a lead	

Learners' attributes:	
Were the learners comfortable during the class?	
Were the learners respectful towards the teachers?	
Were the learners respectful towards other learners, especially the weak ones?	
How was the teamwork among learners?	

Learner performance: (at the 1st observed session)	
Were the learners motivated in the class?	
If yes, then why?	

If no, then why?	
Was any learner nervous during the activities or lecture?	
Were learners trying to copy others' work? If yes, then was the teacher addressing it? If yes, then how?	
Were the learners asking questions freely?	
Were the learners participating enthusiastically?	
Were fellow learners answering their fellows' questions?	

Learner performance: (at the last observed session)	
Were the learners motivated in the class?	
If yes, then why?	
If no, then why?	
Was any learner nervous during the activities or lecture?	
Were learners trying to copy others' work? If yes, then was the teacher addressing it? If yes, then how?	
How much the class have progressed in general	
In which areas the learners have progressed	
Is there any behavioral change in learners	

Materials:	
What materials were used in the classroom?	
Was there a variation in materials considering learners' different abilities?	
Were the materials interesting and innovative?	
Were the materials sensitive towards culture, race, and gender?	
Was there any extra material for the weaker or nervous learners, if there was any?	

Progress of learners	
Was the progress of learners at par with the expectation of teachers?	
Did the learners seem more confident?	

Annex 2: Focused group discussion with learners of Language classrooms to assess the impact of Teachers' Empathy towards learners' Struggle in Acquiring a Second Language

1. Where do you use the English language?
2. Do you like using English?
3. Do you enjoy your language class?
4. Do you feel excited to come to the class?
5. Do you feel your language skill is developing after participating in this class?
6. What do you like about your teacher?
7. Do you feel comfortable doing tasks during the class?
8. How does your teacher address your mistakes during the class?
9. How does your teacher help you in correcting your mistakes?
10. Does your teacher ask you what kind of activities you would like to do today?
11. Do you help other learners who are struggling in the classroom?
12. Does your teacher share ideas to apply outside the classroom in order to develop your language skill
13. Do you tell your teacher when you feel nervous?
14. What do you think you need to do to speed up your language development?
15. Did you share these ideas with your teacher?
16. Do you talk to your classmates about your problems regarding language development?
17. Does your teacher suggest you to help or take help from your classmates?
18. Do you practice speaking in English with your classmates and teacher in English?

19. Do you practice speaking in English with your classmates and teacher in English outside the classroom?

20. Did your teacher mention her expectation regarding your development?

Annex 3: Focused group discussion with teachers of Language classrooms to assess the impact of Teachers' Empathy towards learners' Struggle in Acquiring a Second Language

1. Do you enjoy teaching young learners?
2. Is this a stressful job?
3. Do you enjoy teaching language? Yes or no, why?
4. Why did you come to this profession?
5. Which level of English Language skill do you think you belong to?
6. Do you think it is difficult for learners to acquire language at this class level?
7. What is the main difficulty you face in ensuring progress in learners?
8. How do you decide which resources or activities are suitable for your learners?
9. What are the sources of feedback on your classes?
10. How do you address mistakes?
11. What is the benefit of addressing mistakes in the classroom?
12. What is the problem with addressing mistakes in the classroom?
13. How do you appreciate progress or achievements?
14. Did you face any problems while acquiring the language?
15. What do you think what kind of supports they need in the classroom to develop their skill further?