



Complexities in Learning English as Foreign Language in Bangladesh

Md. Golam Shahariar¹, Shaheen Uddin², Aftab Ur Rahaman Zahin^{3*}

^{1,3*}Lecturer, Department of English, Bangladesh Army University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh.

²Lecturer, Department of English, Bangladesh Civil Service (Education), Bangladesh.

Corresponding Email: ^{3*}aftabjahin3@gmail.com

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Abstract: This research brings out the problems and challenges in learning English as foreign language. In Bangladesh, students are taught English as a mandatory subject from the beginning of primary level. Grammar translation method and product oriented writing are applied in the class. But after 10 years of schooling, 93% students can neither write English accurately nor speak fluently. Students receive English as a subject to be passed with good grade, not as a language to learn. As a result, the four language skills remain damaged and the objective of teaching English remain unfulfilled. There are some traditionally rooted problems in learning English which are method oriented, teacher oriented and learner oriented. To identify those problems, this research collects primary data through survey. It is a quantitative research applying survey method using questionnaires as tool. The sampling procedure covered 20 teachers and 120 students. Through analyzing the surveyed data, this research exposes the complexities faced by the students of Bangladesh in learning English.

Keywords: *Gtm, Clt, Communicative Skills, Product Oriented Writing, Efl.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, the teachers are guided to follow grammar translation method to teach learners English language so that the learners can cope with the ongoing learning system of English. In the entire country, it is hardly possible to execute any creative method to assure the four skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking. Through GTM, the curriculum is set with a broad objective which the learners cannot achieve. In all the schools and colleges, GTM is solely favorite to the teachers, though it does not go with communicative English. In the classroom, the instructor picks up a reader, translates the paragraph, writes the meanings of difficult words on the blackboard and assigns some homework and that is all. No attention is ever paid to pronunciation practice, listening and speaking. Students are practiced dialogues, paragraphs,



essays and letters to deliver in the exam script. They are ordered to follow the product oriented writing pattern, and do not get any scope of process oriented writing. As a result, they pass out, and remain ignorant. The strength of GTM is in developing only the writing skill, but the cognitive faculty of creative writing and speaking remain absent. This research brings out a survey conducted by the researchers which proves the inadequacy of teaching methods and approaches from both learner’s and teacher’s perspective by which the objectives of learning English being failed.

2. DISCUSSION

The assessment procedure of English encourages the students to memorize the dialogues, paragraphs and essays so that they can make an exact delivery in the exam script. The language skills are not tested to any appreciable degree. Speech skills are totally neglected. Teachers also find it very difficult to motivate the students in the class because the students always aim at memorizing the notes from low-standard guides and reproducing them in the examination.

The research exposes primary data to prove the problems of learning English. The researchers surveyed through questionnaires among 20 teachers, 120 students. The sampling institute and location are kept hidden so that they do not face any administrative pressure because of their statements in this survey.

Problem - 1	Group of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of Agreed Participants	Agreed Percentage (%)
The policy of learning English language is not accurate.	Teachers	20	15	75%
	Students	120	41	34.2%
Total (Teachers + Students)		140	56	40%

Table – 1: Problem 1

In table – 1, it is identified that 75% teachers agree that the policy of learning English is not accurate. The policy includes GTM and product oriented writing practices. 34.2% students agree that they do not cope with this system. In total, 56 participants out of 140 states that this learning policy is not accurate. In the trap of product oriented writing and GTM, the learners cannot learn English and cannot get out of the fear of complexity of grammatical rules. Since there is no implication of CLT, students can not improve communicative English.

Problem - 2	Group of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of Agreed Participants	Agreed Percentage (%)
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Teacher centered class and no creative role of the students	Teachers	20	8	40%
	Students	120	45	37%
Total (Teachers + Students)		140	53	38%

Table-2: Problem 2

The classes of learning English are completely teacher centered. Learners do not get any opportunity to perform creative role. As a result, they do not learn English for real life situations. 8 out of 20 teachers agree with this problem. And 45 out of 120 students agree as well. In total 38% of participants agree that students do not learn practical English since the classrooms are teacher centered.

Problem - 3	Group of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of Agreed Participants	Agreed Percentage (%)
Learning English requires extra tuitions, extra investments and teachers commercially set it as a mode of business.	Teachers	20	8	40%
	Students	120	112	93%
Total (Teachers + Students)		140	120	86%

Table-3: Problem 3

Table – 3 exposes the most severe problem that English has become a mode of business of the teachers. 40% teachers and 93% students are facing this problem as a big hindrance in learning English. The teachers of English takes teaching the language commercially. The input the fear of English in the mind of students that they won't be able to lean English without coaching. The main reason of students getting afraid at English is the GTM. They assume that if they do not learn grammatical rules from an expert tutor, they will not pass in the exams. From that fear, they do not hesitate to take tuition investing high amount of money in learning English grammar, though the maximum number of students are from poor family in Bangladesh.

However, it would be beneficial for them if they learn English from their tutors. The horrible scenario is that the purpose of learning English gets faded even after investing extra for English. A student cannot write a simple paragraph correctly even after learning English for 8-10 years of schooling. In Bangladesh, 93% students take extra tuitions for learning English after schools



and colleges' regular classes. 86% of the participants of the research claim that students cannot grow up their creative faculty because teachers are business minded inputting the fear of grammatical rules in the mind of the learners.

In addition, the teachers blame the students as the don't eager to hear about the importance of learning this international language. Students often pass exams memorizing paragraph, essay, dialogues, and letters. In fact, they just take it as a subject to be passed not as a language which should be acquired. Secondary school teachers often blame the primary teachers saying they make the learners much more memorizing oriented as they emphasis on rote learning.

Findings

Generally, the methodology of teaching is fashioned on the type of evaluation, though it should be happening the other way. Our examinations of English encourage the students for rote memory because many times the questions are based on summarizing. The language skills are not tested to any appreciable degree. Speech skills are totally neglected. Teachers also find it very difficult to motivate the students in the class because the students always aim at memorizing the notes from low-standard guides and reproducing them in the examination.

Table 4: Identified Problems in Teaching and Learning English language in Bangladesh

Title	Problems
Textbook & Teaching Method Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only Grammar Translation Method • Product oriented writing practice and product based traditional syllabus. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applying CLT • Lack of variety of communicational skills of listening and speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No language lab
Learner Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private tutor dependency; Requires extra tuition and extra investments • Less effective classes at schools and colleges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mother tongue in English classroom • Taking English as subject not as language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No use of real life communication • Memorizing paragraph, essay, dialogues, and letters
Teacher Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient skilled teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No creative training • From other discipline

As students do not find any immediate need for English, their interest naturally slackens. Similarly, as there is no immediate reward for their achievement, the interest decreases. The poverty and the insecure sociological conditions also force them to neglect the language. In

addition, learning a foreign language is not an easy task and the much needed exposure and practice are not available to achieve fluency in the use of the language.

Figure-1 shows the reasons behind the complexities learning English.

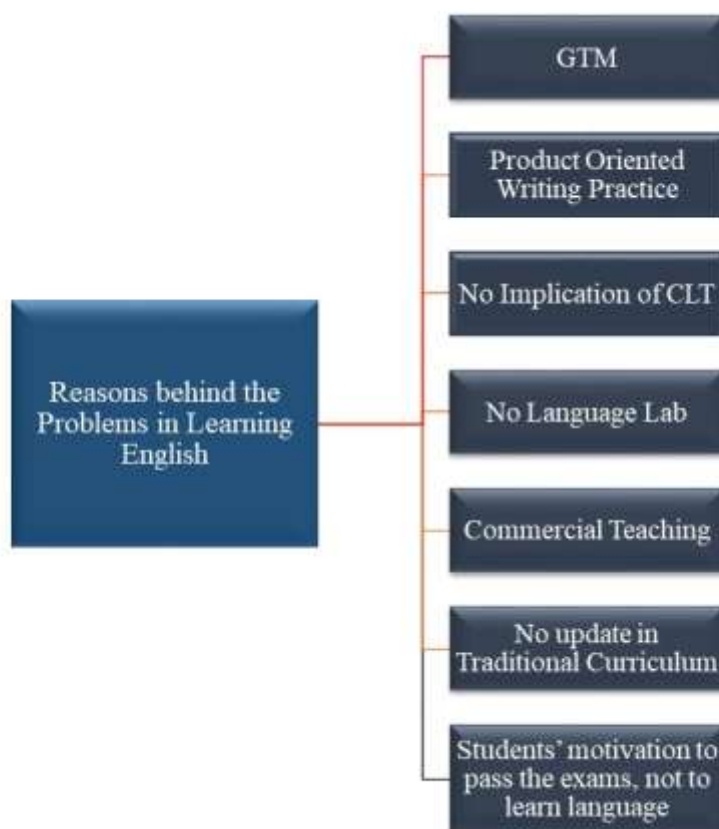


Figure-1: Reasons behind the Complexities

The problem of ‘the policy to learn English language is not sufficient. The school/college administration does not emphasize English language. Active attendance of the students in classes is not sufficient. The syllabus is traditionally product based. Product oriented writing in English learning does not bring any fruitful result. Because of not having any advanced policy the four skills of listening, writing, reading and speaking, the faults and insufficiency seemed to be the main reason of the inability to learn English.

3. CONCLUSION

The biggest problem is that the entire country is run by one curriculum. The schools and colleges are in the competitions of better results than one another. The students are in preparation to pass the board exams as well. As a result, the teachers can not imply any creative method in teaching English and the students cannot adopt any new pattern.



The teacher while teaching English might use the different methods which would make learning effective. Some have fallen into relative obscurity and others are widely used; still others have a small following, but offer useful insights. The teacher could also make use of the Language Lab. Unfortunately, students do not know what language lab is. A well update of the curriculum, methods, approaches, syllabus construction, course books, teaching training will enrich the phenomena of teaching and learning English in Bangladesh.

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