

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES AS EFL IN UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL AT JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: *This paper reports on an effectiveness of English Language Courses as EFL at the tertiary level, offered to first year undergraduate students of some departments of Jahangirnagar University. It aims to establish the case for using evaluation as a means for curriculum development. Currently, the EFL course is considered important for Bangladesh in general, and Jahangirnagar University students in particular, since our graduates face problems not only in coping with the demands of their respective academic disciplines (e.g. the majority of academic texts are in English) , but also in finding suitable employment because of their lack of English skills. Since the newly introduced EFL course is still in its developmental phase it is necessary to find out the effectiveness to evaluate it and to see whether it fulfils student needs and course objectives. Datas for this study are collected from undergraduates who are currently studying EFL and some other who have recently completed their courses. This investigation reveals that students are not much benefited in learning English. There are number of limitations, which make these EFL courses ineffective. The investigation concludes with several implications and suggestions for those concerned for EFL learning.*

KEYWORDS: Effectiveness, EFL, Undergraduates, Tertiary Level, Jahangirnagar University

INTRODUCTION

This paper will investigate how effective the EFL courses are administered in some departments of Jahangirnagar University. A number of departments at Jahangirnagar University considered it necessary to introduce English Foundation courses as a compulsory component across the curriculum. The courses are taught for 2 hours a week (about 26 hours per semester). Currently, approximately 550 students are enrolled in different departments. In addition to the English department, students of the following departments take English Foundation Courses.

Table 1. List of Departments Enrolled in the EFL Course

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|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Bangla | 6. Bachelor of Business Administration |
| 2. Geography & Environment | 7. Urban & Rural Planning |
| 3. Drama & Dramatics | 8. Chemistry |
| 4. Economics | 9. Bio-Chemistry& Molecular Biology |
| 5. Public Administration | 10. Computer Science & Engineering |

English Foundation courses syllabus of all departments is essentially skills based and aims to develop the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in addition to grammar, to help the students to master vocabulary that may facilitate undergoing programme, and at the same time developing other study skills, which might be useful for the study of their majors. At the end of the first semester/ first academic year, students have to sit for the EFL exit test. Students are required to pass the EFL course to be promoted to the second year.

BACKGROUND

Importance of English

Learning English is very much important in order to cope with and participate meaningfully in this emerging era of globalization. Students of Bangladesh learn English as a compulsory subject, from the second year of their primary school level. They continue to learn it until the end of their pre-university schooling.

According to Qader, the importance attached to English in the curriculum can be understood from the fact that from the elementary to the pre-university level it compulsorily requires a pass for being allowed to the next class. It also forms a component of the public examinations students have to take at the end of their secondary school, and at the end of their pre-university education. In these examinations, English carries one-fifth to one-sixth of the total marks for these examinations. It can be seen from this that the education system requires students to do well in English if they want to do well in the public examinations, which will determine whether or not they can go for higher studies and better jobs.(Qader, 187).

(Alam,2001) also determined the necessity by mentioning, however, almost 95% of the text and reference books are in English, this resulted in the necessity of giving time, attention and energy to the learning of English.

The problem that exists here is that despite the fact that they study English for 12 years in their schools and colleges, students who reach the tertiary level are behind the level of English necessary for studies. To help such students become more proficient in English, the public universities also started to offer the EFL courses but unfortunately, the courses are not up to the satisfactory level.

In most of the universities of the country, English has been included in the first year or first semester except in the English Department, and the students somehow attend the class and collect necessary suggestions to obtain pass marks in English. After finishing the first year, they usually forget what they have learned. Another problem is with the syllabus and the course contents. Most of the items in the syllabus are based on different grammatical items, which make the students feel bored in learning English. (Iqbal Hosain ,2010,p-181). Khan (2000) evaluated the English Foundation Course at the Arts Faculty at DU. She identified several constraints and problems of the initial course and recommended that a formal needs analysis needs to be carried out on the basis of which the course objectives, content and materials need to be revised and rewritten. Khan, R. & Chaudhury, T. A.(2013) also mentioned the logistical constraints, problems, limitations of students and teachers were never acknowledged or explored. Despite teaching compulsory English for an entire academic year, the general standard of the students' English proficiency is unsatisfactory.

Now it is important to find out why the proficiency level is so low that they do not cope with the rising demands of their academic disciplines. To find out the answer, we need to look back and should know about actual status of English in our country and the teaching-learning strategy in Secondary and Higher Secondary education.

The Status of English in Bangladesh

After Bangladesh became independent in 1971, one of the first domains to be more affected by the government's Bengali effort was the domain of education. The education sector was greatly affected by this policy especially at the primary and secondary levels. All the English medium schools were abolished in 1972. (Banu & Sussex 1999, p 126)

Bangla language was so emotionally significant to the people of the country, that from the very beginning of the development of the educational curriculum, Bangla got way more focus than English. (Farooqui, 2008)

On 19 January 1989, English was introduced as a compulsory language from Class I to class XII with students having to qualify in both English and Bangla in the board examinations. Moreover, at the university level, in addition to the regular courses, English was introduced as a compulsory subject in many disciplines since 90s. Because of faulty language policies since 1972, English was set back and English education suffered tremendously, leaving a vacuum, which is yet to be filled. (Rahman, 2005, p 4)

Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh

Some crucial factors in Secondary and Higher Secondary education responsible for a frustrating ELT scenario in Bangladesh.

In secondary and higher secondary level students participation in classroom learning is minimal. There are hardly any student activities (group work or pair work).

In Bangladesh state schools and colleges class work and homework are basically grammar-oriented, focusing on reading and writing skills. It is unfortunate that even the reading and writing skills are not being taught through any modern techniques such as scanning, skimming, cohesion and coherence. As a result, when students are forced to answer reading comprehension questions in examinations, they do it without any kind of creativity, just by lifting different parts of the text itself and their writing is full of grammatical mistakes and often lacks cohesion, unity and coherence. (Yasmin: 2007)

The qualification of the teachers are not satisfactory at all. (Selim & Mahboob, 2001) have mentioned that generally English teachers at the junior secondary and upper secondary levels need a first degree in any subject (because of shortage of English teachers, even a graduate in Physics is allowed to teach at these levels). Teachers at the higher secondary level need a Master's degree in English in addition to a first degree in English. In contrast, at the junior secondary and upper secondary levels there is no particular teacher-training programme for higher secondary English teachers.

Recently through some in-service teacher training programmes, the English language Teaching Improvement Project has trained 2,119 English teachers to help them to use CLT and the newly published textbooks. However, this number of trained teachers is insufficient as there are 37,000 English teachers who are working in secondary and higher secondary

levels. Currently, the institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, has offered a one year intensive ELT course for English teachers who are teaching at any level, in a recognized school and college. Syllabus of this course covers the current issues of ELT. (Yasmin, 2007)

It is worth to mention that since 1984 the English Department at the University of Dhaka has been offering an MA degree in Applied Linguistics and ELT. At the same time, it is very regretting that Jahangirnagar University has offered MA degree in Applied Linguistics and ELT for students of 2004-2005 session. Thus, broadly speaking, English teachers in Bangladesh teach English with the knowledge of grammatical rules and translation, which are of course two outputs of the grammar-translation method (Rahman,). Therefore, it is a very realistic finding of the British Council that poorly qualified English teachers is one of the main weaknesses of Bangladeshi ELT.(The British council, 1986).

Apart from quality, quantity is another problem in the ELT sector. The total number of English teachers is insufficient to meet the existing demands. Consequently, a language teacher needs to handle a large class size, which affects the learning-teaching environment. Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) feel that it is difficult to control what happens when the number of group passes a certain number. Therefore, the teacher shortage at this stage is alarming. Hoque (1998) has mentioned that at college level that also includes higher secondary education the teacher-student ratio for the English subject is 1:400.

The teacher-student relationship in the state schools and colleges is not very friendly, which hinders learning.

In Bangladeshi society teachers are seen as knowledge sources and students as the receivers of that knowledge. It is assumed that teachers will always know everything. However, because of inadequate training, many teachers are not competent to handle the teaching materials and are not familiar with the current trends of ELT. Consequently, teachers may fail to answer students' queries; and perhaps for this reason, teachers may like to maintain a distant teacher-student relationship. (Yasmin:2007)

All these factors indicates that there are many obstacles in English language teaching/ learning in Bangladeshi state schools and colleges, which are responsible for the poor performance and knowledge of students in English. As a result, after completing 12 years education the learners' knowledge in English does not meet the rising demands.

METHEDODOLOGY

Subjects

The present study is carried out with 110 students who are doing their undergraduate studies at Jahangirnagar University. The respondents ranged from students doing their second semester to those doing their fifth, but the researcher made sure all of them had done the English Language courses fairly recently. The researcher was apprehensive that students who had done Language courses long ago might have forgotten the text, test items, classroom techniques, etc. The students are chosen from BBA, CSE, URP, Economics, Geography, Public Administration, Bangla, English, Drama and Dramatics, Chemistry, and Bio-chemistry departments. The rationale for their selection was their availability and the fact that the

participants had completed the EFL course in undergraduate programme. Forty percent of the participants were male (n=44) and the rest were female (n=66).

Procedures

The following two evaluation procedures were used:

1. Questionnaires

2. Structured Interviews

The main aim of the study was to gather information from different informants and sources, which would feed into future decision-making purposes for the course. The questionnaire included 13 different items, which were used to gather student perceptions and the present learning situation of the EFL course.

During the interviews, the students were asked to feel free and relax first. After a few minutes of casual talks, the researcher asked the respective students to write answers to the questions on the questionnaire frankly and sincerely. They thought over the questions for a while and then gave their own opinions on the issues in question. In the interview sections the researcher took part on lively discussions with the groups of students as well as individual students. The atmosphere was friendly-one of a gossip kind. The purpose of the researcher was to elicit the necessary information out of the sake of the research, and both written and oral responses were collected.

The questionnaire had no time limit. However, the subjects responded to it in 5 to 10 minutes. During the interview, we had 3-5 minutes session with every student depending on the progress of the conversation.

Sample Descriptions and Size

The following participated in the study:

- Students
- Teachers

Students:

- a. Questionnaires were distributed to 110 students enrolled in different departments.
- b. Interviews were conducted with 30 students.

Table 2: List of the number of students who have taken part in the questionnaire:

Departments	F	M	Total	Departments	F	M	Total
Bangla	8	4	12	Chemistry	6	4	10
Drama & Dramatics	4	4	8	Business Administration(BBA)	6	4	10
English	6	4	10	Economics	6	4	10
Bio-chemistry & Molecular Biology	6	4	10	Urban & Regional Planning (U RP)	4	4	8
Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)	6	4	10	Geography & Environment	6	4	10
Public Administration	8	4	12				

Teachers

The interviews were conducted with 4 teachers, among them 3 teachers were from English department who were taking EFL classes in different departments and 1 teacher was from Public Administration department. It needs to be mentioned here that the teachers of English department were taking EFL course in 8 departments and only Economics and Public Administration departments had their own EFL teacher.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Summery of Students Questionnaire Response:

Attendance on the EFL Course

Responses to questionnaires revealed that student attendance in the language course was very good. As attendance was compulsory in every department the attendance of students in EFL course was 90%-95%. Regular attendance can be regarded as a positive feature of the course.

How many classes has the teacher given to complete the course?

There are 60 classes are allotted in one academic year course whereas 26 classes for 1semester (6 months) course. According to students' responses, the teachers have given 15-24 classes in the current semester when the researcher conducted the survey. There were very few teachers who have given only 8 or 9 classes to complete the course. Students' responses reveal that one teacher has taken classes in 5 or 6 days but given 4-5 hours per day. They also stated that it was difficult for them to follow the lectures in those long class hours.

Did Your course instructor complete your syllabus?**Table 3: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 3.****Total respondents-109****Yes-74****No-21****Other-14**

Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No	Other	Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No	Other
Bangla	Female	0	2	5	Chemistry	Female	3	2	0
	Male	0	2	3		Male	3	2	0
Drama & Dramatics	Female	2	2	0	Business Administration(BBA)	Female	6	0	0
	Male	3	1	0		Male	4	0	0
English	Female	5	0	0	Economics	Female	6	0	0
	Male	4	0	0		Male	4	0	0
Bio-chemistry & Molecular Biology	Female	0	3	4	Urban & Regional Planning (URP)	Female	4	0	0
	Male	0	1	2		Male	4	0	0
Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)	Female	4	2	0	Geography & Environment	Female	5	1	0
	Male	2	2	0		Male	3	1	0
Public Administration	Female	8	0	0					
	Male	4	0	0					

In response to this question majority agreed that the course instructor has completed the syllabus. Only in Chemistry, BBA and URP department the teacher gave an outline and they followed this outline.

In Bangla and Bio-chemistry departments the teacher completed 2/3 part of the syllabus which is shown in the table by indicating other.

Was your class work/ home work/ tutorial script corrected and returned by your course instructor?**Table 4: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 4.****Total respondents-106****Yes-18****No-63****Other-25**

Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No	Other	Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No	Other
Bangla	Female	0	5	3	Chemistry	Female	0	6	0
	Male	0	3	1		Male	0	4	0
Drama & Dramatics	Female	1	5	0	Business Administration(BBA)	Female	2	0	3
	Male	1	1	0		Male	2	0	2
English	Female	4	0	2	Economics	Female	0	4	2
	Male	2	0	2		Male	0	1	1
Bio-chemistry & Molecular Biology	Female	0	6	0	Urban & Regional Planning (URP)	Female	0	4	0
	Male	0	4	0		Male	0	2	2
Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)	Female	0	5	1	Geography & Environment	Female	0	5	0
	Male	0	4	0		Male	0	4	0
Public Administration	Female	4	0	4					
	Male	2	0	2					

This table indicates that a large number of students (63) agreed that the course instructors never corrected the home work and class work which didn't include any mark for final exam. They only corrected the tutorial scripts, quizzes/assignments and put the marks on notice board before final exam. The students didn't get any feedback for their assignments, Quizzes and class works. Only 18 students said that the teacher has checked the script and returned to them with marks and very little feedback. The other 25 students responded that they have got 1 or 2 tutorial scripts out of 3 but didn't get any feedback or any class work corrected and returned.

Did your course instructor provide handouts in the class?**Table 5: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 5.****Total respondents-110****Yes-47****No-63**

Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No	Departments	Total respondents	Yes	No
Bangla	Female	0	8	Chemistry	Female	0	6
	Male	0	4		Male	0	4
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	4	Business Administration(BBA)	Female	6	0
	Male	0	4		Male	4	0
English	Female	6	0	Economics	Female	0	6
	Male	4	0		Male	0	4
Bio-chemistry & Molecular Biology	Female	4	2	Urban & Regional Planning (U RP)	Female	3	1
	Male	1	3		Male	1	3
Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)	Female	3	3	Geography & Environment	Female	0	6
	Male	3	1		Male	0	4
Public Administration	Female	8	0				
	Male	4	0				

The above table shows that most of the students (63) responded that their course instructor didn't provide any hand out in the class whereas 47 students responded that their course instructor provided hand out in the class.

Provided handouts study materials were considered very much important to the students. They were more interested to follow the provided materials rather than books. The provided handouts contained the items like how to write a good paragraph, the vocabulary charts, speaking exercises etc, which were easy to follow for them.

What were your study materials?**Table 6: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 6.****Total respondents-106****book -64****Soft copy -4****Provided handout -38**

Departments	Total respondents	book	Soft copy	Provided handout	Departments	Total respondents	book	Soft copy	Provided handout
Bangla	Female	7	1	0	Chemistry	Female	3	0	3
	Male	3	1	0		Male	2	0	1
Drama & Dramatics	Female	2	0	2	BBA	Female	2	0	4
	Male	2	0	0		Male	2	0	2
English	Female	4	0	2	Economics	Female	6	0	0
	Male	1	0	3		Male	4	0	0
Bio-chemistry	Female	5	0	1	URP	Female	1	2	1
	Male	3	0	1		Male	3	0	1
CSE	Female	5	0	1	Geography	Female	3	0	2
	Male	2	0	2		Male	4	0	0
Public Ad	Female	0	0	8					
	Male	0	0	4					

Majority of students (64) followed the book as their study materials. Only 4 students used soft copy with book. The 38 students who got handout from their teacher used both handout and book as their study materials.

Skills Development

Students' perception of the skills revealed that students recognized the importance of 'speaking' as a skill and liked to spend more time to develop their 'speaking' skills. It was interesting to note that 'listening' was not considered worthy of comment at all by students, which probably suggests students' unawareness of how skills are inter-linked e.g. 'speaking', involves 'listening'. Students did not perceive that they had learned a great deal in 'reading', but as they were reading in English medium, very few of them wanted to emphasis on 'reading'. Students perceived 'writing' to be crucial, as they wanted to continue to learn more in this area. Their responses in the following questions (from 8 to 11) focused the real picture of their classroom activities and their skill development.

How frequently did you practice writing in the class?**Table 7: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 7.****Total respondents-11****Regularly (Once a week)- 8****Sometimes (Once a month)-37****Rarely (Once in 3 months)- 42****not at all-23**

Departments	Total respondents	regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Departments	Total respondents	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
Bangla	Female	0	0	3	5	Chemistry	Female	0	1	5	0
	Male	0	0	1	3		Male	0	3	1	0
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	0	1	3	BBA	Female	0	2	4	0
	Male	0	0	1	3		Male	0	3	1	0
English	Female	0	6	0	0	Economics	Female	0	0	4	2
	Male	0	4	0	0		Male	0	0	2	2
Bio-chemistry	Female	0	0	4	2	URP	Female	0	1	3	0
	Male	0	0	1	3		Male	0	1	3	0
CSE	Female	4	2	0	0	Geography	Female	1	3	2	0
	Male	2	2	0	0		Male	1	3	0	0
Public Ad	Female	0	3	5	0						
	Male	0	3	1	0						

The table indicates that 23 students said they were never asked to write on any topic in the classroom. Some times the teachers provided one or two handouts or lectures on how to write a good paragraph or how to write an application etc, but they never checked the students' writing skill in the class. 42 students could recollect that they practiced free hand writing one or two times during the whole course time, which is mentioned as 'rarely' in the table. 37 students were satisfied that they wrote sometimes (once or twice a month) in the class. 8 students were very much satisfied with their writing practice. They practiced different types of writing task in classroom regularly.

How frequently did you practice reading in the class?**Table 8: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 8.****Total respondents-110****Regularly (Once a week)- 22****Sometimes (Once a month)-31****Rarely (Once in 3 months)-25****not at all-32**

	Total respondents	regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Departments	Total respondents	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
Bangla	Female	0	0	3	5	Chemistry	Female	0	5	1	0
	Male	0	0	1	3		Male	0	2	2	0
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	0	0	4	BBA	Female	6	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	4	0	0	0
English	Female	3	2	0	0	Economics	Female	0	0	4	2
	Male	3	2	0	0		Male	0	0	2	2
Bio-chemistry	Female	0	0	0	6	URP	Female	0	0	4	0
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	4	0
CSE	Female	4	2	0	0	Geography	Female	0	2	3	1
	Male	2	2	0	0		Male	0	2	1	1
Public Ad	Female	0	8	0	0						
	Male	0	4	0	0						

A few students (22) responded that they practiced reading regularly. They stated that their teacher gave more emphasis on reading than any other skill. 31 students admitted that they practiced reading sometimes. 25 students told that they practiced reading once in their whole course time. It was very unwanted that a large proportion of students (32) responded that they never practiced reading in classroom.

How frequently did you practice speaking?**Table 9: frequency distribution of answers to question no. 9.****Total respondents-109****Regularly (Once a week)- 31****Sometimes (Once a month)-3****Rarely (Once in 3 months)- 10****not at all-65**

Departments	Total respondents	regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Departments	Total respondents	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
Bangla	Female	0	0	0	8	Chemistry	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	0	4
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	0	0	6	BBA	Female	4	2	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	4	0	0	0
English	Female	4	0	2	0	Economics	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	3	1	0	0		Male	0	0	0	4
Bio-chemistry	Female	0	0	0	6	URP	Female	0	0	4	0
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	4	0
CSE	Female	3	0	0	3	Geography	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	1	0	0	3		Male	0	0	0	4
Public Ad	Female	8	0	0	0						
	Male	4	0	0	0						

The students were very much disappointed that they never practiced speaking in classroom. The students who responded they practiced speaking regularly (31), they considered class lecture of the teacher and some responses of students as speaking practice. They also stated that sometimes the teacher gave his lecture in English and communicated with students in English but very few students responded in English. The teacher asked the students to participate but most of the students became passive. 65 students stated that they never practiced English in the classroom. The teacher never organized any speaking session in the class to check their speaking ability or to improve their speaking. The students were very used to communicate with the teacher in Bengali in EFL class. 10 students said that one or two times in the whole course, their teacher put them into some groups and involved them in some speaking activities.

What equipment did your instructor use for listening in the EFL class?**Table 10: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 10.****Total respondents-110****Tape-recorder - 6****Multimedia -0****Computer - 12****Nothing- 92**

Departments	Total respondents	Tape-recorder	Multimedia	Computer	Nothing	Departments	Total respondents	Tape-recorder	Multimedia	Computer	Nothing
Bangla	Female	0	0	0	8	Chemistry	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	0	4
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	0	0	4	BBA	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	0	4
English	Female	4	0	0	2	Economics	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	2	0	0	2		Male	0	0	0	4
Bio-chemistry	Female	0	0	0	6	URP	Female	0	0	0	4
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	0	4
CSE	Female	0	0	0	6	Geography	Female	0	0	0	6
	Male	0	0	0	4		Male	0	0	0	4
Public Ad	Female	0	0	8	0						
	Male	0	0	4	0						

Most of the students (92) replied that they never listened anything in the class except teacher's lecture. The teacher never used any equipment to teach listening skill in the classroom. The students didn't get any classes on listening skill. Some students (12) of Public Administration answered that their teacher has used his personal laptop one or two times to teach listening skill. The students of English department (6) said that their teacher has taken listening class, but he took one or two lectures with tape-recorder.

Has your skill in English developed after completing the course?**Table 11: frequency distribution of answers to question no . 11.****Total respondents-110****Yes- 30****a little-41****No - 39**

Departments	Total respondents	yes	A little	No	Departments	Total respondents	Yes	A little	No
Bangla	Female	0	4	4	Chemistry	Female	0	2	4
	Male	0	1	3		Male	0	2	2
Drama & Dramatics	Female	0	3	1	BBA	Female	6	0	0
	Male	0	1	3		Male	4	0	0
English	Female	5	1	0	Economics	Female	0	1	5
	Male	4	0	0		Male	0	0	4
Bio-chemistry	Female	0	4	2	URP	Female	0	3	1
	Male	0	3	1		Male	0	2	2
CSE	Female	3	3	0	Geography	Female	0	3	3
	Male	2	1	1		Male	0	1	3
Public Ad	Female	4	4	0					
	Male	2	2	0					

The students' responses about their skill improvement was not much satisfactory. Very few students (30) showed their satisfaction and agreed that their skill has improved after completing the course, but most of the students (41) disagreed that their skills have developed very little only in writing and reading. 39 students replied that their skills didn't improve at all.

Your suggestion about EFL course-

The EFL learners made the following suggestions:

- More speaking activities are needed.
- Course duration should be enhanced.
- Regular class and Homework assignments should be checked and returned to them.
- Grammatical items should be reduced from syllabus.
- More writing activities should be done in classroom.
- The teachers should provide more time to each student and individual attention
- The teachers should involve students in different class activities on different skills.

SUMMERY OF STUDENT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Role and Value of English

All students who participated in interviews realized that English has the status of an international language and believed that there is no alternative to English and that is why the demand for English is increasing all over the world. They were also aware of the importance of English for the future and admitted that a) English is a pre-requisite for getting good jobs b) for being successful in competitive examinations to get reputed public jobs (e.g. BCS - Bangladesh Civil Service) c) for career development and d) for understanding referenced books, journals for their current study and higher study e) and, in general, indispensable for communicating with the outer world.

Student views on the EFL course

The majority of students think that the course is useful only to a certain extent because very few expectations are fulfilled. Students expressed their disappointment in stating that hardly any work on ‘ listening ’ and ‘speaking’ was done in class and, as a result, they have not improved their speaking skills. Two students stated that they improved their grammatical abilities after completing EFL course. Students did not seem to be fully satisfied with their textbooks and they wanted that the duration of the course should be extended. Students told that one-year course would be more appropriate for EFL course. The number of classes should be increased (currently students have two classes every week). Students also pointed out that they need more classes on ‘speaking’ and ‘writing’. However, some students of the English department feel that the course is very useful for them but lack of seriousness and practice they are not developing their skills. Some students of Chemistry department feel that the course was not useful for them and did not help them for study their major.

Use of L1/L2 on the course

The majority of students in the course agree that they requested the teacher to use Bangla with English as a medium of instruction. Only in BBA, and English department teachers use English in classroom.

SUMMERY OF TEACHER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The teacher interview findings highlighted the following areas:

Syllabus

The majority of the teachers agree that syllabus is not much useful. They suggested that the syllabus is too much traditional and needs to be modified and improved with clear specifications. They felt that the syllabus is not structured and over emphasizes less important grammar, speaking and listening skills are given very little emphasis, and there are no guidelines for lessons plan. Some grammatical items like clause, gerund, and articles should be reduced. Mentioning all these points, they agreed that the current syllabus is unable to meet students' need completely. One teacher thinks the syllabus is appropriate but the implementation is not proper.

Duration of the Course

Department of English, Bangla, Public Administration, Economics offer 1 year EFL course, but the rest of 7 departments offer 1 semester (6 months) lengthy course. The majority of the teachers seem to be happy about the length of 1 year course, but they are not happy with the number of classes per week. They said as the EFL courses are half unit course in maximum departments, they get only 1/2 classes per week, which are not enough for teaching a language properly.

Importance of the course

Almost all teachers expressed the view that the course is very important for students because our learners come from different background and most of them are very weak in English language. In this situation EFL courses help them to polish their knowledge of English language and make them able to cope with tertiary level of study. They also perceive that many students become familiar with skills in general with this course. As the students were not exposed to skills development courses earlier in their SSC and HSC years, it is very important to introduce this course in the tertiary level. They also warned that the students will not be properly benefited if the problems are not solved.

Skills Development

All the teachers stated that they had concentrated mostly on teaching 'reading' and 'writing' skills whereas 'speaking' and 'listening' were not emphasized in the class. Although EFL is primarily a skill development course, the teacher responses show that teachers spent a lot of time on 'grammar' lessons in class. They admitted that it is not possible to emphasize all the skills in EFL class. They complained that they don't have any logistical support in classroom. They also mentioned that the course duration, class size, class hour are main problems for not teaching 'speaking' and 'listening' skill effectively in the classroom.

The Attitude of EFL Learners

The most of the teachers appreciated that the attitude of EFL learners is very positive. Their motivation is very high. They have taken this course very seriously. They are curious to know and learn but it is difficult for the teacher to satisfy them as they don't get any logistical support and the time allocation for lecture is not enough for them. One teacher complained that the students are not motivated.

The Limitations of the EFL Course

All the teachers responded that the course is not successful. It does not fulfill the students' need. They stated some problems for not being successful this course. These are:

- **Class Size**

Most of the teachers stated that the Class size is one of the most important barrier in EFL course. In the department of English, Bangla, BBA, Economics, Geography, Chemistry the total number of students are 60-100 which is not manageable by the teachers. They feel that an ideal class size should be between 20-25 students. Sometimes they want to implement interactive classroom activities by making group or pair but unfortunately, for class size and duration they always go back to the traditional teaching.

- **Class Hour**

Class hour is another limitation according to the teachers' responses. The teachers get only 50 minutes in per class and 2 classes in per week. From these 50 minutes, the teachers originally get 40-45 minutes to give his /her lesson, as they need to take attendance. Therefore, it is not possible to include every student in classroom activities in this short time.

- **Classroom Facilities**

Classroom facilities are very poor in all the departments. The teachers complain that they do not get any logistical support like multimedia, cd player etc which are very important for an EFL class. For the lack of logistical support, they are unable to conduct any lecture on the listening skill. One teacher uses his personal laptop to teach 'listening' skill in the classroom.

- **Assessment/ Examination**

Teachers' responses to the kinds of assessment done for the course show that very little assessment is taking place: teachers say they 'never' give class tests or quick quizzes. They just take 2/3 tutorials which are compulsory, but they never assess student's 'speaking' and 'listening' ability. They think it is not possible because they can't check every student's 'speaking' ability and in that case class hour and class size is main obstacle. It is very difficult for them to test 60-100 student's 'speaking' ability within 50 minutes. Sometimes they ask the students to write dialogue, but they agree that dialogue should not be in written because it is not an appropriate way to measure student's speaking skill. They can not test learner's 'listening' ability for the lack of audio equipments.

Suggestions for the EFL Courses.

Teachers made the following suggestions:

- Class size should be reduced.
- Duration of the course should be 1 academic year.
- Students should be grouped according to their ability.
- Syllabus should be modified.
- All skills should be tested.
- Classroom facilities should be increased.
- Testing system should be according to different demands of different departments.

CONCLUSION

One of the main aims of conducting this exploratory and descriptive evaluation study was to gather information to see how effective the EFL courses are that would help shape future

EFL courses. The findings of the evaluation have to be analyzed within the context from which they have been drawn. As the EFL course is only in its first year of implementation and operating under constraints, the findings reveal that overall the EFL course is not successful. In general, students have welcomed the course but they are very much depressed because it does not improve their skills. Also teachers have indicated that the course is not successful. Both students and teachers admit that the course is very necessary for the learners in the tertiary level. Acceptance of the course may be seen as one of its positive strengths, but actually, the course is not effective for the students. However, a number of matters require attention. The questionnaire and interview results show that the EFL programme has not yet arrived at a point where principles and methodology can be regarded as stable. The course objectives also need to be more clearly articulated. In addition, certain areas (syllabus, textbook, classroom facilities, examination and assessment) should be looked at as a matter of urgency.

Although the study did not use a large sample and few lessons were observed (due to time and resource constraints) it is hoped that the study has presented a fairly clear picture of the EFL course. This study has an awareness-raising objective as it has provided information to teachers and administrators about what is happening during the course. This paper has thus identified issues, which are most salient to decisions pertaining to the improvement and continuation of the EFL course. Information provided in this report is important for decision makers and all others involved e.g. students, administrators, teachers, parents. The findings have implications both for teacher self-development and curriculum development.

This study has implications for the future EFL courses and may serve as a useful springboard for discussion of major areas highlighted in the study e.g. EFL course content, methodology, course assessment and marking procedure and ongoing evaluation. It is also hoped that this initial study will also serve as a useful background against which future evaluations can be more readily understood.

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