# PROBLEMATIC AREAS OF ELT AT SECONDARY LEVEL SCHOOLS IN BANGLADESH: ISSUES AND PROSPECTUS

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**ABSTRACT:** *Bangladesh is a South Asian over populated country. In spite of the growing opportunities of economic development offered by English language, Bangladesh as a nation seems to be unaware of the modes of operation of making English language education widely popular. Facts such as low level of learner motivation, inadequate level of public awareness and below average level of teacher competency act as effective factors, even though, currently English has gained an enviable social status in Bengali context. It plays an important role in the administration, mass communication, and the pursuit of knowledge. Further, it is popular in each and every walk of international relations. Drawn data from questionnaire survey among teachers and students, classroom observation and interview with teachers, interview and group interview with students, this paper sketches the areas of problems in teaching and learning English as a foreign language at secondary level schools in Bangladesh. An evaluation has been made for the assessment of the current status of teaching English language in this region and the problems faced by teachers and learners. The main objective of this study is to demonstrate the problematic areas of English language teaching learning at secondary level schools in Bangladesh. This paper attempts to go into some depth, exploring the reasons of the cultural distancing attitude of the common public towards English language and its use.*

**KEYWORDS**: English Language Teaching; Secondary School; Observation; Bangladesh.

## INTRODUCTION

An extensive objective of English Language teaching learning is to develop communication ability to convey and interpret a message via written or spoken modalities to another person. The main purpose of using language is to communicate one's needs, necessities, feelings, thoughts and ideas with others. Basically, English language provides two purposes: firstly, it gives linguistic tools for administrative purposes of the country; secondly, it is a language of wider communication. Bangladesh is an overpopulated country. Most of the students are influenced by local languages. In order to keep homogeny in education, the Government of Bangladesh has taken initiatives by building various government agencies, which guide what to teach, why to teach, how to teach and what level it should be taught (CAMPE, 2006; TQI-SEP, 2007;EIA, 2009a).

Bangladesh is described as a homogeneous nation considering that a large number of its total population speaks Bangla, the national language. In Bangladesh, 98% of the population speak in Bangla (BANBEIS, 2004). This homogeneity is also seen in the religious formation of the population. In Bangladesh, Muslims constitute 89.7% of the total population; Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are 9.2%, 0.7% and 0.3% respectively (BANBEIS, 2004). Bangladesh is often called a monolingual nation because of the dominance of Bangla (Banu, 2002; Choudhury, 2001a). However, 1.2 million (1.13%) are non-Bangla speakers (e.g. Chakmas, Marmas, Tripperas, Tanchangya, Mros, Santals, Khasis, Graos and Khajons) and they belong to several dozen ethnic groups (Mohsin, 2003, p. 83). Bangla, the national language, is a sensitive issue in Bangladesh

(Baldauf et al., 2008). Bangladeshi nationalism is deeply rooted within this issue, which led the nation to its independence from Pakistan in 1971 (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007; Mohsin, 2003; Musa, 1996; Thompson, 2007). The 21st of February is observed as the International Mother Language Day or National Martyrs' Day as some Bangladeshi people sacrificed their lives for their mother tongue.

In Bangladesh, Bangla is the official language, however, English has always occupied a prominent place alongside Bangla in government administration, private offices, education and in law. Khan (2002) asserts, "Currently English in Bangladesh is used for interpersonal, professional, academic, commercial as well as recreational purposes like all other developing countries". In addition, in Bangladesh like some other Asian countries English language plays potential roles for communication for various purposes, for example, social, cultural, economic progress, and prosperity (Banu & Sussex, 2001a). Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, English has been a compulsory subject for students at every level of schooling from primary to tertiary and a teacher-centred Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was introduced for teaching and learning English. Sarwar (2008) states that the previously used GTM method was deductive and students were taught only to perform well in the examinations. Teaching was mainly focused on grammar. In the examinations, questions were designed mainly to test students' writing skills or grammatical knowledge not on listening, speaking or reading skills (2008: 2). In the late 1990s, GTM was replaced with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in secondary English classes given the view that it would help develop students' communicative competence, improve English teaching and learning, and raise English ability at the national level (NCTB, 2002; Hamid, 2010).

Nevertheless, data demonstrate that classroom practice has not changed to any significant level ((EIA 2009b, p2). Several studies suggest that ELT classroom practice still relies on traditional grammar-translation methods (TQI-SEP, 2007; Anwar, 2005; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Hamid, 2010; Hassan, 2011; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008). The Bangladesh government gives priority to address the issues and has been trying to improve the English language teaching situation within its inadequate funds. Nonetheless, Hamid (2010) claims that the funds allocated for the education segment is generally spent on teacher salary and school infrastructure development. In addition, Hassan (2011) asserts that because of financial limitation schools cannot provide sufficient teaching learning aids and library facilities. Teachers mainly use textbooks, blackboards, chalk and duster in the classroom instruction. Research findings suggest that the majority of secondary schools do not have adequate teachers, furniture, classrooms, or a suitable teaching learning environment. Furthermore, teachers are overloaded with many consecutive classes (TQI-SEP, 2007), which most likely raise problems for quality teaching. In addition, Hamid and Baldauf maintain that 'The alarming rate of failure of rural students in English is customarily attributed to English schools teachers and other school factors' (2008: 21). This seems to be a problem for the education system in general, although rural schools are particularly affected. Hamid also claims that 'inadequate infrastructure, limited resources and under qualified teachers result in poor quality of teaching and learning of English' (2010:293).

According to Wedell, English teacher education and training is one of the major concerns of implementing innovation in ELT; however, in several English teaching contexts, for example in South-East Asia, English teacher education and training have not been effective in fully improving ELT practices (Wedell, 2008). Evidence clearly suggests that Bangladesh lacks adequate capacity-resources or academic knowhow-maintain the quantity and quality of teacher education and training (Hamid, 2010). The EIA study reports that teacher qualifications, training and language skills are major problems of teaching English in Bangladesh (EIA, 2009a).

In addition, questions arise about the effectiveness of teacher training and its application in the teaching context. Furthermore, the SEQAEP study accounts that in the secondary school certificate (SSC) examination, a high number of students fail in English and students' fear of English also influences their learning and performance in examinations (SEQAEP, 2010). This situation in which English language teaching has been deemed so important for individual and national development and yet efforts to improve English teaching and learning have continually failed, influenced to undertake this research. This study explores the problematic areas of ELT from both teachers' and students' perspectives at secondary education in Bangladesh.

**Secondary Education in Bangladesh**

The Bangladeshi education system encompasses a number of stages i.e. primary, junior secondary, secondary, higher secondary, tertiary and higher education. Primary education is a five-year compulsory programme from grade one to five. It is followed by secondary education, which is divided into three stages: junior secondary (6th to 8th grade), secondary (9th and 10th grades) and higher secondary (11th and 12th grades). Higher secondary education is followed by tertiary education, which has two divisions: bachelor and master degree. It is a 5-year programme. The bachelor degree is comprised of a 4-year programme, whereas master degree is 1-year. Tertiary education offers degrees in science, science and technology, engineering, medical science, agriculture, social science, arts, and business studies. Tertiary level is followed by higher education.

In Bangladesh, there are three streams of secondary education: the national secondary (secular), the religious stream (Madrasa education), and English-medium education (EME). National secondary education consists of three streams: junior secondary (6th to 8th grade), secondary (9th and 10th grades) and higher secondary (11th and 12th grades). The secondary stream, which was the focus of the present research, accounts for 83% of the total secondary enrolment in Bangladesh (CAMPE, 2006). In Bangladesh, most secondary schools offer education up to the 10th grade. At the end of this grade, students have to appear the first school-leaving examination called SSC. After completing the SSC students have to enroll for higher secondary studies in colleges and can take the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of the 12th grade. These national examinations, SSC, and HSC are conducted by eight education boards, Board of Intermediate Secondary Education (BISE) located in metropolitan areas across the country. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) control the education administration, which is under the administration of the Ministry of Education (BANBEIS 2006). In the secondary level, students are offered two English papers: English for Today (EFT) and English Grammar and Composition, termed as first part and second part respectively. This constitutes approximately 19% of the total curricular load (CAMPE, 2006). In Bangladesh, only 7.6% of its labour force has secondary and higher secondary qualifications which obviously indicates the significance of its secondary education (World Bank, 2000).

The Madrasa secondary education is parallel to secular secondary. This system teaches Bangla, English, sciences, humanities and other secular courses along with the Koran and other Islamic subjects ( Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2008). The religion-based institutions have 16% of the total secondary enrolment in the country (CAMPE, 2006). English Medium Education (EME), the third section of secondary education, is provided by English-medium schools. The government of Bangladesh allows EME to operate, though is not part of the national education system (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 15). These schools are mainly for the elite and the curriculum is designed on the basis of the British education system (Rahman, 2007; Zaman, 2004). EME follows the British curriculum for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and 'A' level examinations and

the British Council office in Dhaka conducts these examinations. The EME constitutes just 1% of the total secondary enrolment in the country (CAMPE, 2006).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the plan of undertaking a research, and it is the way through which research is structured and conducted. Multiple methods are applied to undertake this research. Golafshani (2003) claims, "engaging multiple methods, such as observation, interviews and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities" (p. 44). A multiple method approach proved to be the best way to collect data for this study as this project aims to investigate the problematic areas of ELT.

### Methods used

To undertake this research questionnaire survey, observation and interviews were conducted among secondary teachers and students. A questionnaire survey was conducted in face-to-face among sixty-one (61) IX and X grade English teachers in twenty-seven (27) secondary schools in Duplah upazilla. The questionnaire was in English and it was designed with both open-ended and multiple choice questions which asked about the background information of teachers and schools, and teachers' ideas and opinion on ELT. Some open questions were also designed to explore the problems of practising ELT. In addition, a questionnaire survey was conducted among three hundred (300) IX and X grade students in these two schools. The questionnaire was in Bangla. It was designed to look at their background information, about English language skills learning and problems faced, and teaching aids used in the classroom practices. To undertake this research, an observation study was conducted in two schools randomly selected from these twenty-seven (27) schools. Classroom observation plays an important role in understanding better the difficulties and problems of classroom teaching and the pedagogical inconsistency in classroom practice. Moreover, observation informed the interviews that conducted later on. Observation and interviews were conducted among Grade IX and X English teachers who were responsible for teaching the national textbook 'English For Today' and students in PRN and AKZ High Schools. Class timetable was collected from the head teacher to find out participant teachers' schedules and then observation schedule was finalized talking to them. A semi-open instrument, basically quantitative in nature was used to capture data in the ELT classes. The observation instrument was based on defined codes, which measure classroom interactions (e.g. Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Spada, 1990; TQI-SEP, 2007; EIA, 2011). The focus of the observation was to observe ELT activities that teacher and students engaged in during a lesson and the experiences during the classroom. After finishing the observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and group interviews with students were conducted with the help of the head teacher and assistant head teacher. The interview is a 'basic method of data gathering' and is useful 'to obtain a rich, in-depth experimental account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent' (Fontana and Frey 2005:698)**.** In in-depth interviews, participants have the opportunity to clarify their answers, to explain their opinions and experiences, and to cite instances (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the interview and group interview data. Thematic analysis is a systematic and uniform technique for categorizing qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998:4). In this process, themes emerge from a close scrutiny of the collected data and themes are developed inductively (Aronson, 1994; Barun & Clarke, 2006).

These interviews with teachers and students after each classroom observation played a vital role in informing an understanding about what was seen in the ELT classrooms and around the schools, e.g. teaching methods and techniques, the classroom situation, the school environment, students'

activities and their opinions, their likes and dislikes, and the teacher-student relationship. In reporting, participants' names are anonymised to maintain confidentiality, an issue of research ethics.

## Ethical issues

Ethical issues are often complex in educational contexts when undertaking research with human participants (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009). To undertake this research study, ethical issues such as morality, confidentiality, honesty, culture and relationship were strictly maintained at various phases of the work: gaining access, collecting data and writing up. Appropriate measures were taken to protect human participants and to avoid risks and complexities (Flinders, 1992). Fieldwork permission was obtained directly from the head teachers of the schools where this research was carried out. Personal networks helped gaining this access. Personal networks often create opportunities to select contexts, make access easy into organizations, and also make research activities easy and smooth (Pegg, 2009:73). As part of ethical approach, participants' informed consents were gained before starting this research. Good relations with participants and knowledge of their culture such as faith, beliefs, festival and social activities and being familiar with them in the context is one of the basic principles of collecting rich data in qualitative research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Hence, every single opportunity was made use of to build a good relationship with the participants and they were assured that there would be no harm in participating in this research.

## Data analysis and discussion

Multiple techniques were used to collect data. Collected data were analysed using MS Excel to identify the problematic areas of English language teaching at secondary level.

## Questionnaire data

Teachers, students and school context are considered as three potential aspects of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning needs to provide with proper facilities to ensure its implementation. A questionnaire survey was conducted among secondary English teachers and questions were designed to draw out their background information and their responses regarding facilities they are provided with. Table 1 and table 2 demonstrate participant teachers' background information and the facilities in percentage respectively. A questionnaire survey has also been conducted among 300 students of secondary schools to know the present teaching and learning activities and their problems of English language skills and Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate this situation respectively.

*Participant teachers' background information*

| No | Teacher name | School name | Class load P/W | Teaching experience | Qualification | Training received | Other subjects taught | Position held |
|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| I | Shafiq | PRN | 28 | 28 years | B.A (History) and B.Ed | CPD and TQI-SEP. | Social science | Assistant teacher |
| II | Kader | PRN | 28 | 13 years | B.A, M.A Political science) and B.Ed | CPD | Social science | Assistant teacher |
| III | Belal | PRN | 28 | 21 years | B.A. (History) | CPD | Geography | Assistant teacher |
| IV | Alom | AKZ | 19 | 22 years | B.A. (History) | CPD, TQI-SEP, and ELTIP | Bengali | Acting Head Teacher |
| V | Noyon | AKZ | 29 | 03 years | B.S.S & M.S.S.S | No training | History and Bengali | Assistant teacher |

**Table: 1 Participant teachers' background information** (Source: Questionnaire Survey)

Table 1 explains the participant teachers' background information which includes teachers' name; the school they are teaching, their class load per week, teaching experience, qualification gained, training received, subject taught beyond English, and their professional position in the school. Shafiq, an assistant teacher, PRN High School has been teaching for twenty-eight (28) years. He completed B.A and B.Ed qualification, additionally, received CPD and TQI-SEP training. He taught 28 hours in a week. As an assistant teacher, Kader has been teaching in PRN High School for 13 years. He achieved B.A, M.A. and B.Ed degree. He only attained CPD training. Belal also has been teaching in PRN High School for 21 years. He completed B.A degree and received only CPD training. Alom, acting head teacher AKZ High School has been teaching for 22 years. He obtained several trainings such as, CPD, TQI-SEP, and ELTIP. In addition to teaching English, he taught Bangla. Noyon has been teaching in AKZ High School for three years. He completed B.S.S and M.S.S.S degree but received no training. He taught 29 hours in a week. It is clear that none of the teachers has qualification in English language or English literature.

*Lack of facilities for teachers' practice*

| Serial | Statements | Response% |
|----|------|------|
| 1 | Satisfied with salary paid | 0% |
| 2 | Provided with sufficient teaching aids | 30% |
| 3 | Contented with infrastructural facilities | 40% |
| 4 | Students' English skill is poor | 85% |
| 5 | Happy with working environment | 45% |
| 6 | Has English qualification | 0% |
| 7 | Overloaded with classes | 90% |
| 8 | Other job except teaching (tuition, business, farming etc.) | 72% |

**Table 2: Lack of facilities for teachers' practice**

It is obvious in Table 2 that none of the teachers (0%) are satisfied with salary paid. In response to teaching aids facilities the table shows that 70% teachers are not provided with sufficient teaching aids and 60% teachers are not happy with infrastructural facilities provided in the their schools. One of the significant issues is that 85% teachers consent that students' English skill is poor. It is apparent that 55% teachers are unhappy with working environment. None of the teachers has qualification in English subject. 90% teachers report that they are overloaded with classes. The table also shows that 72% teachers are doing other jobs such as, tuition, business and farming. These issues were clarified in interviews with teachers.

*Categories of ELT classroom practices*

| Serial | Statements | Response in percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------------------|
| 1 | Studying English regularly in the classroom | 52% |
| 2 | Speaking exercise in the classroom | 9% |
| 3 | Reading exercise in the classroom | 25% |
| 4 | Writing exercise in the classroom | 15% |
| 5 | Listening exercise in the classroom | 0% |
| 6 | English is hard | 80% |
| 7 | Interested to learn English | 90% |
| 8 | English teaching is good | 65% |

**Table 3: ELT classroom practices**

Their responses are cited in the table in the form of the percentage. Table 3 shows that 52% students read English regularly, whereas 48% consent that they do not read English regularly. The table demonstrates that 25% teachers make reading exercises in the classroom. Only 15% consent that English teachers make writing exercises in the classroom. It is obvious that 80% students report English is hard, 10% is not interested in learning English. However, 35% of the total students state that English teaching is not good. Only 9% consent that teachers make speaking exercises. Unfortunately, all students report that no English teachers organize listening practices in the classroom.

*Students' problems in English*

| Serial | Statements | Response in percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Weak in English pronunciation | 75% |
| 2 | Weak in vocabulary | 81% |
| 3 | Unable to identify parts of speech | 70% |
| 4 | Use no audio –visual aids in the classroom | 82% |

**Table 4: Problems of English language skills**

Table 4 demonstrates another finding of the research. It is about methods and English language sub skills. Among them 75% of the students in secondary schools agree that they are weak in their pronunciation. The research shows that 81% of the students consent that they are weak in vocabulary. It is also obvious in observation that even the teacher does have problems in pronunciation and directing the learners with wrong concepts. Regarding the identification of the parts of speech, 70% of students are unable to identify the parts of speech. The results prospect that

82% of the learners believe that the Audio-visual aids will help them understand and learn English in a better way. But the teachers are not implementing it according to their need.

**Observation data**

Five teachers were observed in two schools. A summary of the classroom observation data, such as the number of teachers' observations, the total duration of classes, the total exact observation time and the total deficit time is given in Table 5.

*Observed Lessons*

| No | Teacher name | School | Number of classroom observations | Total duration of classes (minutes) | Total exact observation time | Total deficit time | Percentage of lesson time missed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alom | AKZ | 8 | 8x40=320 | 224 | 96 | 30% |
| 2 | Belal | PRN | 7 | 7x40=280 | 210 | 70 | 25% |
| 3 | Kader | PRN | 9 | 9x40=360 | 360 | 00 | 0% |
| 4 | Noyon | AKZ | 12 | 12x40=480 | 400 | 80 | 17% |
| 5 | Shafiq | PRN | 11 | 11x40=440 | 380 | 60 | 14% |
|  |  |  | Total= 47 classes | Total=1880 | Total=1574 | Total=306 | 16% |

**Table 5: Observed lessons**

Table 5: shows that 47 classes were observed. The duration of each class was supposed to be 40 minutes (which would have resulted in a total observation time of 1880 minutes). However, many teachers entered the classroom late and left before the class time finished, so it was only managed to observe a total of 1574 minutes of class time. Consequently this table also presents the deficit time for each of the teacher observed (306 minutes). Table 5 further shows that among five teachers only one teacher, Kader maintains the lesson time, with some teachers missing as much as 30% of lesson time observed. It is clear that teachers are deficient in professionalism that creates problems in teaching English.

*Observation of individual teachers' practices*

To undertake this study five English teachers' lessons were observed in two schools. Additionally, individual teacher classroom practices were observed and notes were taken in words. And then noted issues were clarified in interviews with teachers.

**Teacher 1: Alom**

Alom generally arrived late to class and left early, and only dismissively greeted students with 'Good morning'. Most of the time, he showed little preparation for the lesson. He usually asked students to borrow a textbook for the class. Moreover, he was not fastidious about the lesson and its content. For example, he usually asked students where he finished in the last class. His lesson instructions were generally not clear to students in the class, for example he provided no objectives for the lesson, no guidance for the activities and the ways of doing these activities. He usually did not 'wrap up' the lesson; he simply finished when time was up and did not talk about what they would do in the next class. The three stages of doing an activity pre stage, while stage and post-stage - was not obvious in his practice. This suggested that he made little effort in lesson planning, implementing plan and finally in evaluating the lessons in practice.

In the lessons observed, it appeared that Alom talked for a majority of the time in class. I hardly observed him creating interactive activities like pair work, group work, simulation or role-play. He mainly practised grammar and memorization activities. He spent most of the time reading out the text in English and translating into Bangla, asking students to do the same, writing questions on the blackboard, and asking students to write answers to these questions. He generally assessed students' understanding in the lesson by asking questions, but he involved only the motivated students in this process. Alom tried a little to engage the whole class in doing activities; however, he only involved the interested students. During the observation, he put a little effort into trying new activities and techniques that could make the whole class active and engage the inactive students in class. He only used the textbook and blackboard as teaching materials. This suggested that he lacked knowledge of general classroom pedagogical techniques, e.g. what to teach in the lesson, how to do it and finally how to assess its success.

## Teacher 2: Belal

Belal generally could not manage to tend to his regular classes because of his other activities. He usually entered the class late and left the class before the class time was finished. When he entered the class, most of the time he asked students, 'how are you'? in Bangla and hardly said 'Good morning' in English. He generally did not discuss the objectives of the lessons and did not review the activities practised in the lesson. In the classes observed, it appeared that he gave a few clear instructions to students for doing activities. He usually used the 'guidebook', a teacher's book in which answers are provided for classroom practice. The lessons showed no sign of having a beginning, middle and ending activities. This suggested that most of the time he followed no plans for his lessons. It seemed that he talked most of the lesson time although a few opportunities were created for students to talk. He spent a lot of class time drawing tables on the blackboard and reading out passages from the textbook, providing the Bangla translation, or asking students to do the same. While these activities have some pedagogic potential, they did not seem to have set purposes. Class time was mostly spent on memorization and drilling. He generally asked closed questions or true-false questions. During the observations, he hardly engaged students in interactive activities such as pair work, group work, simulation and role-play. His classes seemed neither interactive nor motivating. He tried a little to involve students from every corner of the classroom; moreover, he made a little effort to engage inactive students in the lesson. However, he generally focused on those in the front benches. During the class time he used English mostly just to read passages from the text. It was apparent that Belal lacked the appropriate pedagogic and linguistic knowledge to teach English language, particularly in grades IX and X.

## Teacher 3: Kader

During the lessons observed, Kader regularly showed up on time for the class. He generally greeted students with 'Good morning' once he entered the classroom. Most of the time, he seemed prepared for the lesson. He usually discussed the objectives of the lesson and reviewed what he had covered in the previous lesson. Most of the time, he tried to involve students from every corner of the classroom, and did not focus solely on those in the front benches. Moving around the classroom, he made an effort to engage the students who seemed disengaged or to be struggling with the lesson. His lessons showed signs of 'pre, while and post' activities. His classes seemed to be participatory. He practised a few communicative activities. For example, he occasionally involved students in pair work and group work, but when doing so, the instructions he gave students were not clear and students did not seem to understand, and during the activities, the students only spoke Bangla. This suggested to us that such activities were not a regular feature of his classes, and perhaps he was trying to do such activities because he was being observed. Apart from these few exceptions, classroom activities mainly focused on memorization through drilling, unscaffolded listening

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comprehension practice and practice of grammatical constructions; it did not, however, focus on communication. Kader created few opportunities for students to ask and answer questions. Although his lessons were far from communicative, Kader was the only teacher who created opportunities in which students talked.

**Teacher 4: Noyon**
Like Kader, he regularly arrived on time for class. But he usually did not greet students with 'Good morning'. In the classes that we observed, most of the time, Noyon did not follow any lesson plan and his instructions for activities were not clear to students. He even skipped the lesson set in the previous class and started teaching what he had finished in the previous class. He usually did not review the previous lesson he had conducted. Moreover, he seemed unfamiliar with English language teaching techniques e.g. what to do it, how to do and finally how to assess the students' learning and understanding in the lesson. He only attempted to involve a few able students in classroom activities. In addition, he provided little support to students who were struggling in the lesson. He generally did not move around the class.

The lessons showed no sign of having pre, while and post stage activities. He spent most of the class time reading out text in English and translating it into Bangla, asking students to read the text aloud or silently. He generally asked students to write answers to questions in the lesson with no pre-discussion and spent a lot of time checking students' answer sheets in the class. While checking, students were talking but he paid no attention to them. During the obervation, he did not not create interactive activities, such as pair work, group work, and role play for students to get involved in talking with each other for problem solving and information exchange in the class. It appeared that he did most of the talking in the lessons. In addition, he seemed unfamiliar with the 'Book map', a teacher guide given in the national EFT textbook that presents the details of lesson contents and the techniques of teaching in the classroom. Most of the time, we found him using the guidebook, a book of questions and answers, which was made to help English lessons. But the Bangladeshi government has prohibited this book, as they expect teachers and students to be creative and to answer the questions in the lesson on their own. Our impression was that Noyon lacked pedagogic knowledge and skills. He only used the textbook, guidebook, and blackboard to deliver his lesson. His classes were mainly lecture based which was non-communicative and non-participatory.

**Teacher 5: Shafiq**
Shafiq's lessons were generally unstructured – for example, he did not tell the students what he was going to do, what they have to do in a lesson and he did not summarise the lesson nor give instructions for the next class. The lessons showed no sign of having a pre, while and post stage activities. Instead of doing the set lesson, sometimes he started with a lesson that he taught in the last classes, perhaps because of his lack of preparation. He only rarely checked students' understanding and what they have learnt in the lesson. He tried to engage the whole class to some extent, but students were talking instead of doing the activities. He generally asked questions to the most motivated students in the class. The students seemed curious and willing to learn English, but he failed to spark their interest. There were only a few interactions noted between teacher-students and students-students in the classroom. Our impression of Shafiq's lessons was that he talked for most of the lesson, whereas students talked only a little. However, he was the only teacher who was friendly and easygoing in the classroom. He generally asked students about their study and personal problems and students also seemed to feel free to ask him questions. He used only the national

textbook and the blackboard as teaching aids. Our final impression of Shafiq's classroom teaching was that it could not be said to represent a student-centred class.

In summary, it came into view that the majority of the teachers apparently did not stick to a lesson plan or the class time, however; a very few maintained the class time. Most of them have taught for many years but they are not well equipped for ELT; in addition, none of the teachers have relevant degrees in English. It appeared that the majority of teachers were overloaded with class which apparently makes them dissatisfied with their jobs. The majority of the teachers focused on memorization in class; they mainly used reading and writing techniques; none of them practised speaking and listening activities in a true sense. It came into view that the majority of teachers seemed not engaged all the students; however, a few of them tried to ensure all students' participation and engagement. Most of the teachers did not use the technique of pre, while and post stage in a lesson. It was evident that most of the teachers did not involve in interactive activities in the lessons like pair work, group work and role-play, although this occurred occasionally. It appeared that the teachers used textbook, blackboard, chalk and duster as their only teaching aids – although some of them did not even bring these. One of the teachers also used a guidebook. It came into view that a very few teachers had good rapport with students in the school. It also came into view that most of the teachers were engaged in private tuition and small business to earn extra money to maintain their family expenditure. Finally, it came into view that almost all the teachers employed a traditional teaching approach.

### Inteview data
Problematic issues of ELT in secondary classroom practice have been identified in questionnaire and observation study. In addition, in interviews with teachers and students they both explained the problems faced in ELT in the classroom. These issues have been categorized under the following themes.

### *Teachers' qualification*
Qualification matters in delivering pedagogic measures in classroom. Most of them have taught for many years but they are not well equipped for ELT. Table 1 shows a clear picture regarding teachers' qualification. The teachers achieved qualification in arts and social science subjects. Most of the teachers received training, however, one of them did not receive any training. It is also obvious that no teachers achieved qualification in English literature or in English language. Lack of qualification in English language or Literature affects in quality English language teaching in the classroom practices. Interviews with teachers revealed that English language qualification created problems in ELT classroom practices. Teachers reported,
We do not have degree in English language or literature. We are from social science or arts subjects. It would be better if we had degrees in English language or literature. For teaching, I think we need to have good subject knowledge (English) . I think it is a problem for good English teaching (Kader).

You see, I did not receive any qualification in English subjects and training, but I am teaching English. For teaching, I follow my teachers' teaching techniques –how they taught in the class. I am learning from my colleagues. I am learning from different sources. I think this is a problem for teaching English (Noyon).

### *Overloaded Class*
 Participant teachers' background information presents many issues relating to English teaching. These issues were clarified in interviews with teachers. Table 1 clearly states that most of the

teachers are overloaded with classes. They not only teach English but also other subjects. Interviews with teachers reported that teachers could not maintain quality teaching because of overloaded classes and multiple subjects to teach at the same time. They also argued that they could concentrate on practices if only taught English. Teachers reported:

You see, we teach English. We teach other subjects, such as, Bangla, social science, geography and history. It is a problem for us. We cannot give time fully in teaching English. We cannot give full attention. I think one subject I can teach better. I can think and maintain good teaching. Besides, we have too many classes to conduct every day. It is no good for us. We are overloaded. We become tired. We cannot get time to think about classes. Unfortunately we cannot think about our students (Kader).

We have to teach many subjects every day. We have consecutive classes. We cannot even take rest. This is a big problem for us. It would be good if we could take only English classes (Belal).

### *Classroom instructions*

In individual teachers' observation, it is seen that the teachers' classroom practice pattern is almost same apart from a few exceptions. It came into view that the majority of the teachers apparently did not stick to a lesson plan or the class time, however; a very few maintained the class time. Teachers were asked about this issue and they clarified it. Interviews with teachers revealed that none of the teachers followed lesson plans and they claimed lack of time and overloaded classes as constraints. The teachers unanimously reported that they did not have enough time for lesson plan and they were overloaded with classes. In addition, it also revealed that teachers' lack of a clear idea about lesson plans impeded their planning. Teachers reported, "We do not get enough time for lesson planning. It takes time and needs to give effort as well. Besides, we are over-loaded with classes, 28 in a week; it is not possible to maintain a lesson plan". In addition, most of the teachers claimed that they lacked a clear idea about the nature of a lesson plan; however, they were intended to finish the syllabus in time. The teacher reported, "To be honest, I do not have a clear idea about the lesson plan. I teach the questions in the lessons. I ask students; they ask me. I practice reading and writing in the class. I give high importance to completing the syllabus in time" (Belal).

In observation, it is evident that none of the teachers used TG and 'Book Map' for classroom instruction. Interviews with teachers and students also revealed their opinions about the TG and the 'Book Map'. The Teachers' Guide (TG) explains what to teach and how to teach it in a lesson; in particular, what skills and sub-skills will have to be practiced and in what ways. In addition, the 'Book Map' of the national textbook, 'English for Today' also presents guidelines for teachers, what skills and sub-skills have to be practised in a lesson (NCTB, 2002). However, interviews with teachers revealed that only one teacher, Kader was provided with the TG and none of them used TG or Book Map for conducting lessons. Teachers reported, "I did not get any TG. To be honest, I have not seen the Book Map yet either. I follow my own way of teaching" (Noyon). And "I got a TG but I maintain a diary of my classroom practice. I do not use the TG and the Book Map. Instructions are not clear enough there and I am not so familiar with them" (Kader).

In observation, it was obvious that the teachers used textbook, blackboard, chalk and duster as their only teaching aids – although some of them did not even bring these. The teachers are expected to be well prepared and equipped before entering the classroom. However, in observation, it is seen that teachers borrowed textbooks from students and asked students to bring chalk and a duster to the class. The teacher claimed that 'It's not good but I sometimes forget to bring this stuff' (Alom). Another teacher further reported:

I borrow a book from my students in the class; I do not see any problem with that. I sometimes ask my students to bring some chalk and a duster. I know they feel good about this (Belal).

Interviews with students revealed the same opinion. They unanimously reported:

Giving the book to our teachers is a problem for our own class work. We do not like it. But our teachers do it. We also do not like to go to the office room for some chalk and duster. It breaks our attention (Group Interview).

Generally, an effective lesson is divided into three parts, the beginning, middle and ending. In observation, it was obvious that most of the teachers did not use the technique of pre, while and post stage in a lesson. In interviews, the teachers claimed that they did not know about this teaching technique, and they were not familiar with this terminology. Teachers claimed:

I start a lesson asking students to read out the passage in the lesson and I then read out the passage myself for their better understanding. When I finish reading I ask students to do the writing activities in the lesson. Once they finish the activities, I ask two or three students to collect their answer scripts. I can check only a few of the answer scripts. I also ask students to do work at home. This is the technique I follow in the class but truly speaking, I do not have any idea about beginning, middle and ending stage of a lesson (Noyon).

To be honest, actually my knowledge about teaching methods is limited. I generally ask students to read in the class. I also read the whole text with the Bangla meaning. I ask them to write in the class. I check their answer scripts. I ask them to study at home (Belal).

However, when observed, it appeared that Kader was not confident and consistent with these stages of a lesson. Interviews with students revealed that the teacher only tried out this technique in the presence of the observer, though students like this way of teaching. The students reported:

Nowadays our teacher is teaching in this way. He did not teach us like this before. This is because of your presence in the school. We like this style. It is easy for us to learn. But we get it very rarely (Group interview).

### *No practice of language skills as it should be*

It was evident that most of the teachers did not involve in interactive activities in the lessons like pair work, group work and role-play, although this occurred occasionally. Interviews with teachers unanimously reported that teachers rarely practiced pair-work and group work activities in the ELT classes as they perceived difficulties of lack of suitable seating arrangements, language barrier, lack of confidence, and students' poor level of understanding. The teachers also faced similar problems to manage their classroom. The teachers reported:

You see, our classroom seating is not suitable for doing pair work and group work. Due to congested space, I cannot move in the class. Students cannot sit properly. Besides, students' level of knowledge and understanding is very poor. Only very few students can understand and participate in the classroom practice. It is difficult to make them work in pair and group. Language problem is a big problem doing these activities (Kader).

Pair and group work activities take most of my class time in a lesson. It is also very difficult to manage the classroom. To be honest, I am not confident to do these activities' (Alom).

The teachers unanimously claimed that doing interactive activities is a problem; however, interviews with students revealed that they liked doing activities in pairs and groups. The students claimed: 'we like to do activities in pair and group, but our teachers rarely do these activities' (Group Interview).

*Poor earnings*

 It also came into view that most of the teachers were engaged in private tuition and small business. It was a crucial question while observing the schools. The teachers answered this question. Because of the need for more income, all the teachers we interviewed were engaged in other jobs to maintain their family expenditure, for example, private tuition, farming and working in small businesses. In many cases, this extra burden resulted to stress and poor health, according to their accounts. Teachers reported:

Our salary is very poor. This is nothing in the present market. I always have to think how to manage my family expenditure within this small amount of money. It is a mental pressure. I am bound to think of alternative ways of earning. How can I offer myself completely to teaching in these circumstances?  (Kader)

You see, we are not in a good condition. I have to think how to survive. We are not paid enough salary to meet my family's basic needs. I have to do private tuition. I cannot give enough time for classroom preparation.  My son is studying in the university, as you know, education is very expensive. I even cannot think of a better life for my children. It is very difficult for me to provide their education expenses. It's a pity for me (Shafiq).

*Syllabus design and materials production*

Teachers reported that lack of opportunities to share and exchange their views and experiences with other colleagues, course designers and materials writers was an obstacle to implementing quality teaching. Teachers wanted to see their opinions in Syllabus design and materials production. They unanimously claimed it was top-down and imposed on them. Teachers reported,

We are working in the schools. It is our duty to practice and implement the new teaching approaches at the grass-root level proposed by the government. But it is a great pity that we do not have the opportunities to talk about the problems and difficulties that we face practically in school and in our personal life. I think, we know better than anybody else about the practicalities; I mean about the school, about our students, their problems, our problems and our limitations. But nobody is ready to hear us. It's kind of imposed on us (Shafiq).

*Teaching aids*

Insufficient teaching aids and funds are a common problem for which they cannot follow an effective teaching learning approach.  In interviews, the teachers reported that there is a lack of government funds in schools and limited use of teaching aids in the classes. It was reported that the funds which were provided spent on salary and infrastructure. The use of teaching aids is deemed to be an integral part of ELT practice, as it helps to create a participatory environment in the classroom. However, it appeared that teachers could not use teaching aids due to a shortage of funding. Teachers reported:

It's true that I find my students interested and active when I use maps, pictures, and posters in class. But most of the time we cannot use these teaching aids. We cannot use audio and video in the classroom. We do not have funds to buy teaching aids. Some students bring aids e.g. drawings, picture of their own. But I think lack of funds and teaching aids is problem for our classroom practices (Kader).

You know, our budget is mainly spent on salary and school infrastructure. It's true; no extra allocation is given for teaching aids and resource materials. It's a pity that we cannot use teaching

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aids when they are needed in the lesson. Students are also suffering for this. I think this a big problem for us to practice ELT in the classroom (Alom).

Students also expressed that use of teaching aids involved and motivated them in classroom activities. It was also reported that some students created their own materials and brought them to class. However, they put this into practice very rarely. Students claimed:
We like using teaching aids in class. We feel interested in them. We can participate actively in the class. Everyone likes it. Sometimes, we draw a picture and bring it in the classroom for practice. Our teachers use teaching aids very rarely in the class (Group interview).

### *Infrastructural Facilities*
The teachers unanimously claim that they have no language lab facilities and students are unable to practice listening skill. Teachers reported, "We should teach our students four skills. But we cannot teach them properly. We have problems. We do not have any language lab for teaching listening skills (Kader)." They also admit that infrastructures such as school building, classroom size, power cut, library and books availability are insufficient. This insufficiency in infrastructure affects the teaching and learning management significantly. In interviews, the teachers additionally report problems being faced in teaching English at secondary level in Bangladesh such as lack of efficient teachers, lack of teacher motivation, problems in proper teaching method, and lack of quality materials. In the above discussion, it is evident that lack of facilities such as, infrastructural, teaching aids and professional training create problems in English teaching.

### CONCLUSION:
Bangladesh is a monolingual country where the mother tongue plays a vital, as well as influential role in national and cultural life of the people. Even though, English has continuously been taught for various communicative purposes such as, personal, global, professional and academic. The government of Bangladesh has been trying to improvise English teaching-learning situation since it independence. Despite some progress in a secondary education, deficiencies still exist. This study identifies problematic areas of English Teaching in secondary level in Bangladesh, for example, no opportunities for teachers to contribute in syllabus design and materials production, lack of professionalism, overloaded classes, poor earnings, lack of facilities, lack of classroom management skills, and no practice of language skills as it should be.

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