

Breaking the Silence: Experimenting with Creative Approaches to ESL Classrooms in a Rural Bangladesh Context

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Disclaimer

This work has not been previously submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my son
Morteza Mohammed Aayan Al Rasheed (Aayan),
for being with us at the middle of the journey and changing everything.
You are the inspiration for completing this expedition.

And

To my beloved wife, Nasima Khatun.
For being with me all the time, believing, supporting and encouraging me to be
confident to finish this enormous work,
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Abstract

This study reports an interventive project in the ESL (English as a second language) programme of a rural junior secondary school in Bangladesh. The aim of the project was to introduce an interactive pedagogy and so make classes more relevant and enjoyable. This project explored a way to change from the existing teaching practice, which is transmissional and examination oriented (Podder, 2013; Mazumder, 2013).

As a result of global approaches to English language teaching the Government of Bangladesh has committed to encourage the use of interactive exercises in ESL teaching through various teacher training programmes. Studies, such as those by Abdullah and Shah, (2015) and Abedin (2012) show that there are many contextual challenges that hinder the initiatives, such as large classes, lack of opportunities to practice language, short class times, an extensive curriculum, an incoherent examination system and the use of traditional top down pedagogy. As a result, teachers often cite the various local and national challenges to justify continued use of traditional teaching methods in English sessions (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Ansarey, 2012).

This study began with the development of a teaching resource based on content from the Government supplied mandatory textbook but including a range of student-centred and group activities, including the use of role. As well as seeking to make classes more interactive, the resource suggested ways to implement a blended language strategy (Hamid, Jahan & Islam, 2014; Sultana, 2014), in order to reduce students' fear of English, and consequent silence during classes, and to allow them to be creative and critical in making meaning through the target language.

The thesis reports a workshop in which the resource was trialled with teachers and then a series of classes in which the teachers applied the resource in classwork with students. The workshop and classes are reported as a series of narratives.

The methodological design is one of case study, with the case being the trialling of the interactive exercises in the project within the normal class of a rural junior secondary school. The approach is qualitative, seeking to capture aspects of the lived experience and the ways these experiences impacted on students', teachers' and my own learning. I drew on data from classroom observations, photographs of the lessons in progress, interviews with students and teachers and my own reflective field journal. In analysing the process and in presenting findings I selected four thematic elements: engagement, creativity, enjoyment and criticality. The chapters are organised accordingly.

Through this account of how one project navigated the challenges that challenges that exist in ESL teaching in rural schools, this thesis offers an example of how ESL sessions can become interactive in Bangladesh context. This study argues that although there is still much to do in improving education in Bangladesh, it is not always needed to look for models of effective practice from outside sources but rather that models can be developed within the Bangladesh context.

While actions in a single classroom cannot in themselves make a large impact on a country's education as a whole, this case offers an example that change is possible and so may inspire future steps. This investigation, therefore, offers suggestions for educational policy and practice, indicating ways to break the student silence which often occurs in ESL sessions in rural Bangladesh.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research reports the process and findings of a project that sought to make the teaching and learning of English language more interactive and enjoyable in Bangladesh. In this study, I developed a participatory teaching programme to implement in a rural Bangladesh secondary school classroom that included interactive exercises to break the silence in the regular English sessions. In this way, the students experienced greater enjoyment of English language learning, and by becoming more engaged, they got opportunities to be more creative and critical in practising the targeted language.

In recent years, rapid changes have occurred in the secondary education in Bangladesh aiming to prepare students with the expertise and values to cope with the upcoming local and global challenges (Ali & Walker, 2014; Salahuddin, 2016; UNESCO, 2011). The Government of Bangladesh has been trying to motivate the teachers through various teacher-training programs to introduce interactive exercises in the regular English sessions for nearly two decades; however, studies such as those by Abdullah & Shah (2015), Abedin (2012) and Hamid & Baldauf (2008) show that there are many contextual challenges, which frequently hinder these initiatives. These are detailed in Chapters 2 and 3. Similarly, the teachers often mention numerous local and national challenges, and most often become discouraged and disengaged by saying that it is not possible to practice interactive activities in the regular English sessions (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Ansarey, 2012). Bangladesh also lacks evidenced-based examples of what is effective practice (Das et. al., 2014; Salahuddin, 2016) which would assist in navigating through these challenges, as most of the earlier studies focused on the challenges only. This study attempted to demonstrate that within these challenges, interactive approaches are possible in the Bangladesh ESL classrooms and could result in students' greater engagement and learning, which could be enjoyable and useful outside the classroom. Accordingly, the guiding research

question was: Is it possible to use interactive language learning activities within the existing practices in a rural Bangladesh secondary school classroom?

The Context

A detailed discussion of the context is offered in Chapter 2. Here, I attempt to present briefly the most noteworthy features and facts of learning English language in the Bangladesh education system as well as the socio-economic background in which this system is located.

Following a colonial era, learning the English language became a part and parcel of the Bangladesh education system (Rahman et. al., 2010). Although not mandatory in tertiary education, from primary to higher secondary level, English is a compulsory academic subject to be taught and learnt in mainstream regular classrooms. Considering the future global language perspectives, the Government presently is trying to improve the English language learning by allocating major portions of the education budget through different education projects (Begum, 2015; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014) to make the learners competent in the use of English language outside of the classroom.

However, it is still a matter of argument, whether the status of English should be a foreign language or a second language in Bangladesh. In my view, it is always a second language in Bangladesh as no other language is officially taught or learnt besides Bangla, the national language, and so, in this study I consider English as a second language. Although people may not use English language in regular conversations, everywhere in Bangladesh people often use English words in regular Bangla sentences. Consequently, in Bangladesh, English language is a dominant use in academic and commercial contexts. English is seldom used in the homes, however. In popular context media broadcast in Bangla and in Indian satellite TV channels bring Hindi language. Thus, many Bangladeshi (rural and urban) develop some level of communicative competency in Hindi, whereas very few rural people would have similar exposure to English. Nevertheless, English is the recognised second language in Bangladesh.

As a developing country with a long history of successive colonisation, a huge difference is seen in the socio-cultural and economic features when comparing the rural and urban areas. The rural areas are far behind the urban areas in infrastructures, education and the economic conditions. Both of these areas have their own challenges in English language learning; however, both of these areas have the same curriculum despite different contextual challenges. Although parents rate English academic achievement as crucial for entering a competitive job market, because of the hardship in rural areas it is not always possible to support children's schooling. The rural schools are also forced to focus on only preparing the students for passing the examinations rather than on pedagogical changes that could better create opportunities to learn. An influential UNECSO report (2011) has emphatically stated that the examinations are not learning oriented but result oriented.

As a result, in a top-down examination-oriented educational system, the teachers have little scope to go beyond the traditional practices to introduce alternatives. It is a dominating examination system that particularly privileges rote learning and in case of ESL learning supports written English only. Generally, the students need to sit for three examinations (first term, second term and final) in a year, as the annual promotion to the next grade is determined through these examination results. Moreover, among many causes, as the job market always looks for the educational qualifications to recruit the workforce, in most cases students, teachers and even parents like to apply the teaching and learning strategies, which easily maximise students' educational qualifications to secure a job only (UNESCO, 2011). As a result, this process ignores the learning. The Bangladesh education system is further discussed in the chapter 2.

In Chapter 2, I describe past and the current English language usage in Bangladesh and how it has different vocabulary and grammar patterns from the British English that originally gave rise to it. Consequently, although influenced by the British English as a part of the long colonial era, a form of new English evolved in Bangladesh. It is a modified-indigenised English and often called Bangla-English or *Banglish* (Begum, 2015).

Although some learners are learning to communicate through this traditional system, this learning often overlooks the development of critical thinking skills in language usage. Even though the English textbooks include interactive exercises, the emphasis is always on content memorisation, not acquiring various language skills. Furthermore, while the mandated English curriculum emphasises and encourages the use of the language, these textbook practices are not supporting the students to develop an adequate level of criticality skills (Shaila & Trudell, 2010) that include making choices in selecting answers, taking decisions and looking into the context from different perspectives.

Although the findings in second language learning research (behavioural, cognitive, socio-cognitive) are varied and sometimes contradictory, it is believed that learning, especially language learning needs to focus on developing critical thinking skills (Bloom, 1956; Mahmoud & Marwa, 2016; Shaw, 2008). Traditionally, while literacy is concerned with coding, decoding or encoding of words in order to reproduce the meaning of text, Gee (2012) argues that literacy explores the ways of talking, interacting, thinking, valuing and believing. He explains that it is a psycholinguistic process and a social practice; in the course of which people become socialised following the customs and morals of their own communities. As a result, languages as well as literacy learning necessitates a focus on creating opportunities to develop learners' critical thinking skills (Giroux, 2011; Muspratt, Luke & Freebody, 1997). The recent developments of language-learning theories that align with this study are further explored in chapter 3.

In Bangladesh, the textbooks are written in Standard English; whereas, commerce and media are using an evolving new form of English language. This means, the teacher is faced with challenges of aligning the spoken language, even when it is heard in the TV or anywhere else, with the textbook English. As a result, the set of rules in the textbooks can become rather arbitrary. In this study, I did not explore the causes behind this or try to resolve this. I see this as a potential study in the future.

My Positionality: Rationale and Significance of the Study

My working experience and the observation of the recent state of English education in Bangladesh led me to investigate existing classroom practices with the aim of helping students, teachers and parents to understand possible ways to make learning English as a second language more successful. My earlier research in this area (Rasheed, 2011) showed that there are many contextual and national challenges behind this failure. Most important among these causes are large classes, lack of language practice spaces, short session times, wide curriculum, an incoherent examination system that rewards written and replicated works only, the use of traditional top down pedagogy and the teachers who do not know how to break through these situations.

These are the challenges that the teachers and students often face when teaching and learning English as a second language in Bangladesh secondary school classrooms. Although most of the teachers and students are facing the above challenges, schools in rural Bangladesh have their own contextual challenges. The school where this study took place is situated in a rural area of the most southern divisions in Bangladesh. The socio-economic status of this society is very low and most of the students come from low-income families. While most of the challenges seemed common, some of the challenges that I discovered were unique for that context only. Looking into the rich historical and cultural heritage, in chapter 2, I try to draw a vivid picture of this rural setting and its ups and downs.

This study is based on the assumption that in Bangladesh English language learning can be enjoyed rather than perceived as difficult and tedious. However, most secondary school students comprehend the learning of English as a second language as challenging in Bangladesh because of the traditional classroom practice that is the grammar-translation method (Ali & Walker, 2014; Chowdhury & Phan, 2008). As a result, often the English sessions seem the most difficult ones for both teachers and students with both of them being largely apprehensive about those sessions as well. To try to minimise these challenges and to reduce the apprehension I choose to focus on the regular English sessions. We know a large number of schools are in the rural areas of Bangladesh and that they are

quite different and deferred from the urban or city schools in terms of teaching staff, resources and facilities and even students' characteristics, my focus is on one of the remotest areas in Bangladesh and at a rural school in this context. Therefore, I believe if in this school, the teachers can introduce interactive teaching programmes effectively then this could be applied in other areas in Bangladesh as well.

In addition, as a working teacher educator in Bangladesh for more than a decade, I become conscious that there are better ways of making sessions interactive when students are learning English language in the Bangladesh secondary school classrooms. The respondents of my earlier study (Rasheed, 2011) mentioned that English sessions were deemed boring, full of difficulties, and provided few opportunities for learning. The English teachers mostly followed a traditional grammar-translation method with oral readings of the texts. It was also evident that most of the students were apprehensive about learning English and expressed nervousness and boredom when attending compulsory English classes. Consequently, they did not enjoy the sessions. They explained these attitudes in the following statements:

There is nothing new...it is like home...as we do ourselves at home...nothing interesting...and the English session is in the boring time ... Sometimes English class is boring...no attention...although teacher try to give important points, but not possible to capture due to lack of attention...very little activity. (Student 1, p. 53)

It is like same... teacher comes, give some lectures, translations... sometimes teachers only come and give lectures... boring... I don't like. (Student 4, p. 54).

The students disliked the traditional style of teaching methods used in most of the Bangladesh secondary school English sessions. However, they pointed out that when some teachers tried to apply some activity related to participatory learning they enjoyed those sessions very much, as they mentioned:

It's a very interesting class and the way teachers present it...activity... I like it. (Student 1, p. 54).

Yes...I enjoy it. Because, we can share our learnings through this. We can also understand and do our own work without less help from teachers which is

different from memorisation learning. We can have real experiences about using English. (Student 4, p. 54)

Following those voices, I planned a classroom project, in which the teachers and I could create a learning situation where the students could enjoy learning English without fearing it. To achieve this, we carried out a range of different interactive techniques in the regular English sessions that included drama techniques such as role play and mini-drama (chapter 6, 7, 8, 9). So, each of the particular sessions that will be discussed in later chapters was a part of a series of lessons were introduced through a resource package (chapter 5). Every session was carefully modified focusing on creative language learning aspects, although in some sessions a particular form of language usage was especially focused on as well.

Currently, the Government is advocating interactive or participatory exercises and so these pedagogical approaches are not new concepts to the teachers (chapter 3). The questions 'what makes this resource different' and 'how is it done' also arise. A brief description of this study process may help us to answer these questions. In this study, the learning programme was created using a resource package that I developed before entering the field. Later, I refined the resource according to the context and the session's needs before actively introducing it in the English sessions with the help of the school's English teachers. So, the first stage of this project has been to develop a resource package with a sequence of lessons based on specific chapters of the respective Government issued textbook (chapter 5). The sessions were modified according to the stated time frame so that the activities could be finished on time but also hopefully retaining its effectiveness. These sessions created opportunities for the students to talk to each other and not just write answers on papers, role play as well as practise the sentence structures and vocabulary in fictitious but momentarily real contexts. The aim was to *play with* and *use* the language rather than repeat it and memorise it purely for written examinations.

Primarily I tried to follow and adopt some drama techniques to make sessions interactive. I examined and observed various resources and practices in different New Zealand school classrooms in various parts of the country. The New Zealand curriculum emphasises the importance of interactive exercises in making the

learning enjoyable so that the learners can be engaged in the learning and to help the development of creativity and criticality skills [MoE (Ministry of Education) New Zealand, 2007]. I also attended a series of professional development workshops exploring drama strategies that encourage critical thinking skills. After carefully examining these practices, I developed a classroom learning resource package that could be implemented in the Bangladesh context.

In the second stage of the project, the English teachers of the participating school were invited to attend an intensive workshop of five days where I introduced the resource package (chapter 5.1). I purposefully structured the workshop in a way that the teachers could practice those interactive exercises before introducing them in the classroom project. This workshop also encouraged the opportunity to rethink and restructure the resource package to make it more suitable for the context. The teachers and I examined and discussed the resource contents, the strategies and application of these strategies and made some modifications according to that rural context. So, in a sense, in this workshop the resource package was modified, refined and got its practical shape. In this way, the teachers felt that they had some ownership of this resource before the implementation of it in the regular English sessions. I did this deliberately to avoid the common complaint from the teachers that every pedagogical change was conveyed from the national policy level but was often difficult to apply in their own context. Doing this also meant that teachers lost their position to say 'impractical' when applying this resource in their regular English sessions.

In the last stage of the project, the teachers introduced the resource package in the regular English sessions by teaching lessons with the new interactive strategies (chapter 6, 7, 8, 9). I, as a researcher, observed those sessions and critically reflected on those exercises and the teachers' and students' responses. At the same time, I as a teacher educator and facilitator was actively involved into the session supporting teachers to deal with the challenges that surfaced unexpectedly so that the teachers could be motivated to continue those activities. Therefore, in those sessions, as a teacher educator who was actively involved, I needed to assist the teachers to become more confident in overcoming various

challenges. While in the New Zealand context, the term *teacher educator* frequently refers to those who work in a pre-service context with professional development often organised by the school itself, in the Bangladeshi context Government appointed teacher educators facilitate the teachers in both pre-service and in-service professional development.

This study investigates how teachers, students and a teacher educator could work together to create more interactive English language sessions in a Bangladeshi rural context. The workshop and sessions are described in chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In this study, I focus on the activities of students, teachers and also myself as a facilitator. The learning of students, teachers and a teacher educator (myself) was recorded and critically analysed to get data for this study report.

I am already a teacher in this field. I am an insider in this study. Therefore, I am extending my normal work in order to explore possibilities of greater interaction. From my experience, I have found that the students in Bangladesh want to learn English language interactively, but the teachers are not equally motivated to use different approaches in the ESL classrooms. As a teacher educator and researcher of English language in Bangladesh context, I believe that the development of both communicative competency and critical thinking could make the Bangladesh ESL learners more skilful to use the targeted language outside the classroom.

Methodology

As this study was to create a learning situation with interactive exercises in a rural Bangladesh context, to study the process I adopted a qualitative approach. More specifically, this is a case study of a reflective practice. I used data collection tools that included interviews, observations, photo talks, journals, and my own reflections as a teacher educator for collecting the data. I involved in the project as an insider-outsider and facilitated the teachers as required. So, my reflection as a teacher educator overarches the whole description.

In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing process and this analysis continues until the end of the research (Lindon, 2012). I started collecting and analysing data at the initial stage of the study, however the formal data analysis

started after the finishing of collecting data. I began analysing the data from interview transcripts, field notes, research journals, photos and observation documents. I used an interpretative analysis to process my data and I have presented it in a narrative story telling style (Chase, 2011). Many themes evolved, but I selected four major themes to discuss in detail. The themes are enjoyment, engagement, creativity and criticality. In chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, these themes will be critically discussed analysing the sessions' activities.

The learning programme that the teachers and I tried to create for the regular English sessions in Bangladeshi context was an attempt to break the classroom silence fostering interactive communicativeness in learning a second language. In the upcoming chapters, I explain the whole process in some detail.

Organisation of Chapters

Chapter 1 has introduced the study, detailing the reasons for undertaking the study and briefly talked about the study context and the processes used to do the study.

In Chapter 2, the context of this study is vividly outlined focusing especially on the contextual socio-economic-cultural aspects required to understand the study. This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, more general and historical aspects are discussed to familiarise the reader with the present local context and its challenges. In the second part, the education system of Bangladesh is discussed, especially educational features that were critically explored to focus on the required changes.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature, which determines the theoretical framework of this study and the position of this study in Bangladesh and beyond. It starts with the discussion of the Bangladesh ESL context, pedagogical challenges in current practices and the Government's initiatives so far. The developments of learning theories, especially the second language learning theories, are examined looking forward to the use of more interactive approaches in the local context. Finally, the current global position of the English language is discussed and critiqued to

explore its effect on the Bangladesh socio-economical-cultural and especially on the educational context.

In chapter 4, I describe the methodology that was used in this study to collect, analyse and present data. It identifies the overarching lens used in this study: the reflective practice of a teacher educator. This is a case study focused on a rural secondary school English classroom. As this study involved the development of an interactive teaching programme, I especially explore, reflect on and analyse the classroom activities. Moreover, I reflect on my own activities to assist a group of teachers to be more confident and professionally competent in using interactive techniques. As data collecting tools, I use observation of sessions, interviews, my reflective journal and photo records to determine the reported themes.

Chapter 5 details the resource package and the workshop with the teachers. In addition, the features of the resource and the workshop activities are analytically presented.

Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 examine the themes that accordingly emerged from the study data: engagement, creativity, enjoyment and criticality. In these chapters, I reflected on and critically analysed the session activities in order to explore particular teaching moments that align with these themes.

Chapter 10 concludes this report with review of the learnings from this study and also explores the implications for policy and practice and identifies future steps for research.

Chapter 2: The Context

In order to understand the background, challenges and achievements of the project described in this study, it is necessary to consider the context. The context also helps to develop the conceptual framework for this study in relation to the local challenges and complexities as well as determining possible pedagogical shifts that are able to be accommodated within the current constraints.

In support of a detailed description of the context, Greenwood and Wilson (2006) argue that the people who live in a particular context have previous and current experiences that are profoundly interconnected through many stories. As the stories remain alive within the community through constant telling and re-telling, context knowledge can provide a deeper understanding of a study. In a similar voice Greenwood, Alam and Kabir (2014) argued for the need to de-westernize the education system in Bangladesh, and the need to ensure an education system that fitted the context. In a previous study (Rasheed, 2012) I also argued that according to the context a priority, among many other options, is to develop students' critical thinking skills when learning the English language at the secondary school level. Greenwood (2012, 2016) stressed the importance of the context where any study is located. She argued that researchers should become familiar with local stories in order to develop awareness about local practices, which may differ from other areas. The local context, she argued, is influenced by a complex range of political, social, cultural, and economical factors. She emphasised the need for research to meet local needs.

In the following discussion, I will draw mostly on my personal experiences as a teacher educator and other published resources to focus on and explain the contextual aspects which are related to this study. As this study was located in a rural area of Bangladesh and the present Bangladesh region was previously a part of Indian subcontinent, I will highlight the history as it relates to the present Bangladesh region only; occasionally when discussing the past, Indian history might come across as supplementary to understand the source clearly. As this

project is especially focused on the educational and learning needs and proposed changes in that context, I purposefully focus on educational developments that are relevant to this study. Accordingly, this chapter presents a description of the current context, and refers to the past of Bangladesh where necessary to understand the present context and its relationship with this study.

A Glimpse of Bangladesh

Geographical

On the north-eastern part of the south Asia, Bangladesh is located in the Bengal Delta, the world's largest delta (Brichieri-Colombi & Bradnock, 2003; Steckler, Akhter & Seeber, 2008). Despite of the world's climate change and the frequent natural calamities, most of the people of Bangladesh like to live a calm and happy life enjoying the natural diversity (David, 1993; MoEF, 2009). However, as the school where the study took place was situated in a southern part of the rural Bangladesh, the school and the adjacent locality are always challenged with frequent natural calamities and often struggle to carry out regular everyday activities.

Economic Factors

A market-based economy dominates Bangladesh. Although many industries are increasing, eighty percent of the people of Bangladesh still earn their living from agriculture (Alam, 2008). However, recently a trend of moving away from agriculture is visible. Bangladesh has an average GDP improvement rate of 6% and impressive progress in human development, but it is still characterised as a developing country (UNDP, 2015; World Bank, 2015). Bangladesh has big metropolitan cities with huge shopping malls, contrasting with small villages with little bazaars and low living standards, which are reflected both in a promising economy and in widespread poverty (Kefford & Biswas, 2011).

Socio-Cultural

Bangladesh is a multiracial country with a diverse culture. The name Bangladesh came after the Bangla ethno-linguistic group who comprise 98 percent of the

population (Saad, 2011). However, the English language is compulsory for schooling as a second or foreign language because of the wide acceptance of this language today (MoE, 2010; Thapar, 1966). The long influences of religion and ethnicity have also moulded the culture of Bangladesh, which resulted in a distinct lifestyle of its own (The lonely Planet, 2014). The people adjacent to the school area in this study encompass the above diversity and this is reflected in the different cultures, foods, festivals and dresses (Islam, 2012).

Political

The political background can be traced back to the Stone Age (Leung & Meggitt, 2012; Olivelle, 2006); however, I will focus more on recent Bangladesh perspectives that are relevant to this study.

The respective settlement of ancient Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman people (Bagchi, 1993; Dutt, 1962; Habib & Dharma, 1983; Inden, 1976; Kulke & Rothermund, 2004; Raychaudhuri, Thapar, 1966) and later on the European traders like Portuguese, French, Dutch, Spaniards and British (Eaton, 1993; Spear, 1975) strongly influenced the peoples' lives of this area.

At the end of British rule in India, the British identified the Bangladesh region as a part of Pakistan in consideration of the religion only. This created huge dissatisfaction and discrimination among the Bangladeshi people and the Pakistan central Government (Kulke & Rothermund, 1993; Nair, 1990; Oldenburg, 1985; Rashiduzzaman, 1970). The partition of India was more like political decision made on paper rather than reflecting the needs of people. It therefore created other issues and became perceived by Bangladesh as an occupation by another foreign power regardless of how consensual it might have been at the beginning (Kulke & Rothermund, 1993).

This dissatisfaction and discrimination triggered a long nine months of fierce battle between the Pakistan Army and the *Mukti Bahini*, a liberation army of guerrilla and the regular armed forces and the civilians of Bangladesh (Beachler, 2007; Haider, 2009; Rummel, 1994). On the day of 16 December 1971, the

Pakistan Army surrendered and the independent country of Bangladesh was born (Haider, 2009).

Although Bangladesh was born with many hopes and wonderful dreams of a struggle-free peaceful life, unfortunately that dream has not yet fully come true. There are many causes behind such discontent, however, I am not going to discuss every issue in detail. Any researcher doing educational research in Bangladesh may face some regular challenges, as I faced; briefly mentioning those would help us to understand the context more clearly. The earlier studies of some current authors (Alam, 2015; Burton & Azim, 2014, Greenwood et al., 2015; Kabir, 2013; Mazumder, 2013; Podder, 2013 and Rahman, 2015) also identified some of the issues that often influence the change factors in the Bangladeshi education sector. They are:

1. Teachers' unwillingness to say something controversial. For example, they might say, I like it, I enjoyed it, I'll use it in the classroom; but in reality, it is the opposite.
2. Lack of teachers' scope to be experimental as everything is directed following a top-down from the Ministry of Education.
3. Research in a school is full of complexities. For example, in some cases the head teacher bypasses the assigned teacher taking sessions, when a researcher wants to get data on classroom practices. Therefore, very few studies focus on pedagogy.
4. The concept of closely investigating classroom practices for change is relatively new. Therefore, very few established norms could be seen.
5. Few teachers have participated in qualitative research as this is relatively new in Bangladesh and at a developmental stage.
6. Many of the robust studies are completed by foreign agencies and largely using quantitative methodology. They also tend to serve statistical purposes of the Government, NGOs (non-Government organisations) and of foreign donor agencies.
7. Lack of readiness in schools to adopt to new practices as most of the research does not influence actual change in the classroom practices.

8. Political unrest such as strikes and *hartals* (political closure) and local pressure.
9. Often interrupted power supply and slow or no internet facility.

The particular year when this study was carried out coincided with major political conflict over the national election causing shutdown all of the schools for indefinite periods, which significantly hindered the progress and scope of this study. This reduced my fieldwork to six weeks and prevented follow up. The uncalled for political conflicts often called for *hartals* (political closure) which stop all activities in the country (Rashiduzzaman, 1997).

In the media, Bangladesh is often presented as a country of natural calamity, poverty, slums and floods. It would be worthwhile to look at Bangladesh in a different way to understand the context completely. Bangladesh is not simply a country of unified slums; she has very rich history of knowledge and culture and big cities as well. She was never a hollow culture, with people who never thought, read and write or kept a manuscript (Sen, 1991). Here a knowledge system existed for thousands of years (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004; Leung & Meggitt, 2012). However, as history shows, many issues remain unsolved from before and after the liberation war of Bangladesh, and these still influence and create national tension and differences among people (Beachler, 2007; Kulke & Rothermund, 1993; Mascarenhas, 1986; Nair, 1990; Spear, 1975). These issues are controversial and beyond the scope of this study; however, although Bangladesh has a rich background of a developing knowledge system, it is still 'battling for its space.' As a result, people often see Bangladesh as poor and classified as a third world country. While there are many factors that have contributed to this reputation, it seems timely and important to engage in a more critical analysis of educational practices that may extend this view.

As this study is looking to break the classroom silence and as students learn to be participatory and engage in more critique in their learning, they may become more willing and confident to engage in the bigger debates as they arise during their education and in later life. They are not necessarily learning the skills to be engaged. However, through the process discussed in this study, they may become

more engaged and critical. There is little discussion in Bangladesh about the role criticality could play in all levels of schooling. Kabir (2010, 2013) contends that the development of criticality skills is important for university students. I believe it is also applicable to Bangladesh secondary education. He continues his argument that university students lead the movement of resistance and there is a tradition in the universities that encourage the students to think that they are the movers of resistance. He cautions that this is limited in Bangladesh due to the top down or transmission style of teaching, few social science courses and the introduction of neoliberal monetary system. Consequently, university students may become activists without a deep understanding of a specific issue.

This study attempts to foster critical thinking among the secondary school students. Although limited in scope, it is like a 'straw to show the direction of the wind,' as discussed in Chapter 9. Maybe if silence could be broken in our classrooms and the students could learn actively, they may become more engaged and prepared to participate in future debates. I believe, it is not impossible and our teachers do not need extensive training by outsiders. We can begin to do this, as this study may provide some support and evidence for more participatory classrooms, which in turn may encourage greater critique and critical thinking for the students.

The Education System of Bangladesh

In the following discussion, the past and present of the education system of Bangladesh is presented to highlight the significance of this study and future needs. As widely recognised, in any country, education evolves over time and by knowing the influences from the past it allows greater understanding of the present while identifying the future goals and actions.

I purposefully omitted to provide full detail on the history of education in Bangladesh. However, some relevant periods, which still influence the current education system of Bangladesh are briefly discussed.

The Educational Developments

Ancient to Medieval Time

An education system, which had been prevailing in this area for more than thousands of years (Sen, 1991) until the British came to rule India, was commonly known as the native indigenous education. This native education system was influenced in every respect by the Aryan/ Hindu (de Dreuille, 1999), Buddhist (Gupta, 2007) and Muslim education system (Powers, 2007; Thapar, 1966). It significantly influenced the contemporary social, economical, political and even peoples' personal lives (Eaton, 1993; Flood, 2003). Although education was centralised around Gurukulas, the traditional type of residential schools where the pupil (students) lived near the Guru (teacher) often within the same house or monastery (de Dreuille, 1999), it was free to all. It was not a formal system of education but the teachers discussed any subject according to the students' needs. There were no formal printed books for the students for primary sessions but students tried to memorise the teachers' words or wrote them down on paper in higher education. It was a one teacher one school system; therefore, in absence of the teacher, the advanced student who was called *Sardar* or the leader took the session. As the teacher could not teach all of the different age groups at a time, he used student leaders to lead the students in the practice of memorisation. It was often called *Sardar poro* or leader read technique (de Dreuille, 1999). It was the most common practice at that time and one of the significant characteristics of the native education system. In my view, it is still practised in modern school sessions through the group leaders. However, although modified somewhat and the objectives and methods are different, group leaders still lead the students in teacher designed educational practices as the *Sarders* did in the past.

In my view, the people of the south Asian region have a tendency to rely on the mythological belief system without challenging it. A well-established religious education system and a lack of proper formal education in previous times may foster this attitude, which is still seen among the general population of this area.

Aside from the Gurukul system, the education was a community affair that happened in a kind of village square by talking and gossiping and through various religious practices of that time, rather than formal teaching and learning. That was how they taught and learnt farming, fishing, planting, weaving and other everyday skills. It was like the education of life skills. So, although the education was open to all, different groups of peoples had different meaning and area of learning.

The Colonial Era

Although the continental Europeans came as traders and missionaries, the internal conflicts between the native kingdoms gave opportunities to them to gradually propagate political influence and establish European power. Among these Europeans were the British who came to India and Bengal as traders and later as rulers, and who influenced the education and society of this area to a large extent.

British Influence on the Education of Bangladesh

At the very beginning, the British Rule focused on the expansion of territory and monopolised the trade of Bengal. However, in course of time, the British Rule in India realised the importance of reforming the education of this area (Keith, 1937). Adam's Report (Rosselli, 1974; Wheeler, 1922), Macaulay's Minute (Evans, 2010), and Wood's Despatch (Moore, 1965) played a considerable role in reforming contemporary education. The Hunter commission in 1882, Lord Curzon's University commission in 1902, Sadler Commission in 1917 and Sergeant Scheme in 1944 also brought some fundamental changes to the education system of this area (Rahman, 2002) as well.

However, many critics decried those initiatives as a sheer concept of colonialism under the name of education (Evans, 2010). As Bangladesh was part of India at that time, the current Bangladesh society and education system is still influenced by those changes. For example, many people in Bangladesh often love western style and tradition and like to learn English language as a status symbol. They also believe that by learning English language, they could easily adhere to western culture. However, it is a matter of argument whether learning English language is

a necessity, or a fashion or both in modern Bangladesh. I take position in favour that most of the people of Bangladesh still believe that learning English could bring greater status in the society. For instance, if someone in Bangladesh can speak English, not necessarily fluently but including some English words when speaking, she/he often obtains a great deal of status in societal decision-making. Most likely this contextual attitude was formed because of the direct effect of Lord Macaulay's decisions, which were considered to have a big impact on the contemporary education system in Bangladesh.

Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education

In 1835, Lord Macaulay introduced English medium education in India through his famous Minute on Indian Education, which introduced the compulsory learning of the English language (Evans, 2010). To resolve the then ongoing debate between native education and the English education Macaulay in his minutes tried to persuade the Government that, as Persian and Sanskrit were not the languages of Indian native people, it would be better to accept English language as the medium of education instead of those languages. He argued that Persian or Arabic and Sanskrit were totally inadequate for the learners of history, literature, science and technology. Through the learning of English, the people could be better educated with modern history, science and technology. He was also sarcastically critical about native education and blatantly declared that all the books written in Sanskrit were less valuable than what might be found in a single shelf of a small school library in England. Influenced completely by the western view, Macaulay divided the world into civilized nations and barbarism, and identifying England as the high point of civilization, thus playing a major role in introducing English language and western concepts to the education of India. To persuade the then Governor General of India, Lord W. Bentinck, about the necessity of the English language learning, Macaulay stated,

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class, we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to

render them by degrees' fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (Evans, 2010, p. 271).

To do so Macaulay suggested a 'Downward Filtration Theory,' which became famous later on as Macaulayism, a deliberate policy of liquidating native culture through the planned replacement by different culture via education (Evans, 2010). It was thought that if an elite class could be created then they would teach western concepts to others. In this way, everyone would be educated with western culture and the gap between the natives and English would be minimised. As a result, the British could rule India more easily and for a long period. Inspired by the utilitarian ideas of useful learning, Lord Bentinck agreed with Macaulay and took necessary steps that gradually shut down native education. He also ordered the setting up of secondary English schools in every district to teach English language, literature, culture and technology. Consequently, many English schools and colleges were established, which created the expected class divisions as Macaulay had hoped.

Outwardly, it might seem a total reform of the existing education; inwardly it was like an experiment (Moore, 1965) and made to permanently establish every facet of colonial influences. As a result, the English language was introduced and prioritised all over the education sector. Moreover, through the exam-oriented education system, a class of office clerks was born to do regular administrative works only, which hindered the development of universal education for the people. Evidence is sparse about the detailed curriculum of that time; however, from the informal discussions with my grandparents, it was evident that in the then 'exam-based' educational curriculum only promoted memorisation of basic contents that avoided any development of the decision-making skills. Similarly, the teaching and learning of the English language using the grammar-translation method, which forced the learners to memorise the grammatical rules only, supports the fact as well. The learners did not develop sufficient language or critical thinking skills. As a result, they were not equipped to participate successfully on the highest level of an organisation. Thus, the native people were largely ignored and exploited by not allowing them a voice in how the English language should be taught in schools. The colonial history influenced people's

attitudes towards the English language and western culture in general (Rahman, 2002; Phillips, 2007). Moreover, by process of transfer from the native language, the English language formed a new structure. The education became more competitive and brought some negative consequences to secondary education, such as, an emphasis on memorisation and copying in examinations (Rahman, 2002). The Bangladesh education is still suffering from those consequences.

The Pakistan Era

As discussed above, the attitudes of the British rule in India was mainly based on what could be called the policy of 'enlightened colonialism' (Anghie, 2005, p. 157). The Pakistani regime continued with the same notion, but this time in relation to the people of East Pakistan after the British left. Although the Pakistan central Government did not take any initiative to reform the education system, the local Government of the East Pakistan formed two education commissions in 1952 and 1957 for the reformation of education in this area. Both of the committees submitted their reports with various recommendations for the development of education. But unfortunately, these reports were never implemented on a mass scale (Rahman, 2002).

The Education of Bangladesh

After gaining independence in 1971, the people of Bangladesh tried to abolish the influence of long colonial rule by looking forward to the progression of their own values, cultures and identity through reforming the education system. Consequently, the first National Education Commission was formed in 1972. In 1976, 1987 and 1994 different Governments formed various education commissions and many meetings and discussions were held for the improvement of the education system in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2002). All the reports and dialogues suggested some important changes to the primary, secondary, higher education and teacher training sectors. However, due to the rapid changes and turmoil in Bangladesh politics, those recommended changes never came in light or remained largely unimplemented. Although a few of those recommendations were realised, most of the time they were influenced according to the needs of the

political agenda. Some were hastily introduced later. However, those often brought no benefits to the general people. Consequently, there was no recognised national education policy in Bangladesh since 2010.

The National Education Policy, 2010

After 39 years of campaigning by the people, the Ministry of Education designed an education policy and the Government of Bangladesh started implementing the first ever full scale National Education Policy in 2010 (MoE, 2010). The policy documented everything relating to the present education system in Bangladesh and included the future of education in Bangladesh as well.

The policy recognised the importance of public views. In designing the curriculum as the Government opened it to the public and asked opinions from them, it explored, valued and reflected the views of various peoples from diverse classes and professions. Therefore, it became more public-oriented rather than committee oriented as most of earlier education commission reports or policies were. In the same way, this policy seemed more open to new changes and more closely reflected the expectations of the entire nation. The most significant objectives of the policy (MoE, 2010) that directly coincide with this study are:

- to stimulate the intellectual and practical qualities of the learners so that moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values are established at personal and national levels;
- to foster creative and thinking faculties among the learners through a system of education that contains indigenous spirit and elements and which will lead to a life-oriented development of knowledge of the learners;
- to evolve an education process that is oriented to creativity, practicability and productivity to achieve advancement in the economic and social fields of the country; to create a scientific mind-set of the students and to develop in them the qualities of leadership;

- to ensure the marginal competencies of learners at each level so that they are discouraged from rote learning, rather use their own thoughtfulness, imagination and urge for curiosity;
- to attach substantial importance to information and communication technology (ICT) along with maths, science and English in order to build up a digital Bangladesh based on knowledge-orientation and cultivation of ICT;
- to ensure a creative, favourable and joyful environment for the students at the primary and secondary levels for their proper protection and congenial development;
- to show tolerance for different ideologies for the development of a democratic culture and to help develop a life-oriented, realistic and positive outlook;
- to help develop learners' latent intellect and comprehensive inner faculties. (National Education Policy, 2010, p. 8-10).

In regard to secondary school English classrooms, this policy asked for English learning to be more interactive, enjoyable and creative. It also called for the development of criticality skills for the learners.

Of significance was the focus of the policy on creating an attractive and engaging learning environment in the school. To make learning more effective and to reduce student drop-out rates, the Government introduced a ban on any physical abuse or corporal punishment to any student at any session and in any school (MoE, 2011). The examination system was changed to include more creative responses to reduce the propensity for memorisation. Although it may be argued that there are many points in the policy that are hard to achieve, it is aimed at increasing positive outcomes for the next generation of learners.

The Recent English Curriculum

The new English curriculum outlines and guides the implementation of English language learning contents and activities (NCTB, 2012). It is also the base of developing textbooks and other instructive materials and teaching and learning

approaches. Following the National Education Policy 2010 objectives, the revised English curriculum was introduced and was intended to be gradually implemented at all levels of schooling.

The recent English curriculum follows a very structured process (NCTB, 2012, p. 2), which made it different from previous curriculums. In developing this curriculum, most notably an analysis of needs was prioritised (ibid, p. 4) and how these could be analysed to answer the most common questions such as to whom, why, what, how, where, by what, with whose help, for how long and how to measure such needs.

This new curriculum is intended to assess the needs of learners by formulating specific instructions for the teachers and learners; however, it seems to encourage the learning of direct grammar by introducing direct grammar. The number of grammar items allocated for the grade six students (page 67), who were only 10-11 years, could also be a challenge for them. Consequently, it could be argued that this discourages more students from learning English language, as in the existing situation most of the students still perceived English language learning as difficult and most often did not like to attend the English sessions, thereby increasing the dropout rates. It could also be argued that the further introduction of direct grammar in the examination would only encourage memorisation of grammar rules and may not bring any functional benefit to the learners. Overall, this curriculum tried to reduce direct grammar learning items in the lower grades, compared with the old one. In the future, it is hoped that it could gradually bring to an end of direct grammar learning. The following section examines the factors that made the 2010 Act necessary.

The Recent Past and the Continuing Reality

Why was the new curriculum needed? The answer lay in the recent past. Now I would like to focus very briefly on the recent past of the education system to unearth some possible answers. Although I called it the recent past, it still exists or could be called the reality.

English as a Second Language

After gaining independence, although various governments of Bangladesh tried to shape and reshape the education system according to their requirements, there were no significant changes in the education system, which had largely been inherited from the British colonials. In Bangladesh, the English language is compulsory and it could be argued that this has resulted in the English language being awarded the status of second language. This is strengthened by the fact that no other language is used in Bangladesh except Bangla, the mother tongue for most of the people. However, because the people of Bangladesh never used the English language to communicate with each other it could be argued that English is a foreign language.

However, I would argue in favour of a second language status. This is because at the time when the compulsory learning of the English language was introduced it was given the status of a second language and taught and learnt in that way. Because it is extremely hard to find any evidence, current grandparents' knowledge and use of the English language compared to recent generations might give us a hint about the status and methods by which the English language was taught and learnt in the past. In addition, until the introduction of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in early nineties, the traditional grammar-translation method had been used for teaching and learning English for more than a century. When I discussed English language learning with members of my parents' generation they confirmed that grammar and literature with the key components and that English did really function as a widely used second language. As the CLT is a more recent and acknowledged approach for teaching and learning a second or foreign language, it will be fully discussed in Chapter 3.

However, the newly formed Bangladesh Government and later ones were influenced by a concept of *Pure Bangalism* and tried to introduce Bangla as a sole language for every business and elsewhere for nearly two decades. Changes in the curriculum minimised the scope of learning English. Consequently, a little English was learnt in the school grades, but the importance of learning of the English language skills was not a priority and a generation was brought up with few skills

in the English language. English was also being taught using the traditional method. During this period, the English language obtained a foreign status with everyone being expected to learn English as a foreign language. Then the curriculum was changed without direct grammar rules to learn and the CLT was introduced to teach and learn the English as a foreign language, which was a major pedagogical shift in the long history of learning English language in Bangladesh. It brought the modern 'learning by doing' concept into the Bangladesh education system. In spite of this, the learning of the English continues to be viewed by many as a foreign language.

However, the aims and objectives of the recent English curriculum that related to the use of English in Bangladesh, and the importance of learning of the English language, which was reflected through the peoples' attitudes towards learning it, clearly indicate the English's second language status in Bangladesh. In any Government office, both Bangla and English language can be used. Teachers and students are encouraged to use English outside of English sessions. Many FM radio stations are broadcasting programs randomly using both Bangla and English language. The young generation, especially in urban areas, are also currently motivated to use English language every day and in a range of contexts. In my view, all of these features really indicate the current status of English language in Bangladesh as a second language. In this thesis, the viewpoint is taken that English holds second language status.

Most Common Challenges Faced by ESL Teachers and Students

The second language status and change of teaching-learning approaches did not improve much of the teaching and learning that occurred in schools. In fact, it created more challenges in implementing the curriculum, which affected the English language learning outcomes. As a teacher educator for more than fourteen years and from my previous study (Rasheed, 2011), I will present the most common challenges, which the teachers and students face for teaching and learning English language in Bangladesh context. However, before proceeding towards the challenges it would be better to understand the Bangladeshi peoples' views about the importance or role of the English language both in Bangladesh

and internationally. The participants of the above-mentioned study affirmed the importance of learning English in Bangladesh. For example, in an interview students from the Green School described the importance of learning English in the following way:

We have to learn English... our second language... international language, where ever you go, it is needed... for higher study, no Bangla... only English... for communication with the other countries (p. 51).

No one can live alone, to be global... knowledge, communication everywhere... needed (p. 51).

Similarly, both teachers and parents placed a great emphasis on learning English as a second language. A parent explained:

For good job, better life in home and abroad English is very much needed. Bangla is our mother tongue, but as global citizen now it is not enough to learn single language...we need to learn international language...English, besides Bangla. We should learn English from the very beginning, then there will be no such problem for communication, unless there could be dangers when going abroad for work or pleasure...so we need to learn English (p. 67).

Then a teacher added,

It's an international language... better job for any sector in Bangladesh ...not only Bangladesh but all over the world... foreign education, to be smart English is needed both for the teachers and students and other people also, I think... in this modern era we cannot communicate with the other world without knowing English. If a student learns English s/he can get better opportunities in life... business world is also dependent on English. So, we cannot deny English. In a word, we can say that we cannot go on a single moment without English (p. 67).

After summarising the interview data, I argued,

Learning a second language is very important. As English is an international language, it is more appropriate than other languages to learn English as a second language in Bangladesh in order to pass school exams, go on to further study, learn about world literature, increase employment opportunities (either in Bangladesh or overseas), communicate with foreigners, use internet and email, travel to other countries, for pleasure and so on. If students learn English and can appropriately use it outside the classroom, it can provide many more choices in their future lives (p. 51).

Therefore, according to these participants the learning of the English language in Bangladesh context assumed great importance, which included empowerment for

everyday existence, communicating with the world and creating better opportunities in life. Moreover, the people of Bangladesh have an inherent fascination with western culture and learning of the English language because of the long history of Europeans in this area.

So, whatever causes there might be, many Bangladeshi people would like to learn and use the English as a second language. However, in a mono-language country, learning a second language is always challenging and it is not unique to Bangladesh. Whilst most of the participants of the above study (Rasheed, 2011) had a positive attitude towards the value of learning English language notwithstanding it being a compulsory subject, there were several challenges apparent that were barriers to effective teaching and learning as a second language. When describing the reality of a classroom, the student participants indicated few practice opportunities, short class time (duration), insufficient resources, apprehensions about English learning, no enjoyment, not focused on language skills and the underlying pedagogy as the most common challenges for a typical English classroom.

On the other hand, the participant teachers and parents of the same study (Rasheed 2011) mentioned that the large classes (number of students), a lack of English practice environments and resources, a shortage of time, vast syllabus, lack of awareness of the parents about the importance of practicing English, faulty examination system, an attitude of aiming only to pass, a lack of proper motivation for the students to use English, time shortage and class load were the primary challenges that profoundly reduced the effectiveness of the English sessions in Bangladesh context. Moreover, the teachers talked about the physical classroom environment, which was usually not suitable for interactive teaching and learning, and often limited the teachers' access to the students and resulted in unacceptable noise levels.

The teachers also identified that numerous class tests and uncalled for political vacations, such as *hartals* (political closure), interrupted the regular learning for the students. Although most of the teachers agreed on the need for interactive learning and expressed a desire to make teaching purposeful or interesting, their

workloads often prevented them from doing this. Consequently, both students and teachers focused only on passing the examinations. The examination system also did not encourage the students to practice the four language skills. The teachers in that study (Rasheed, 2011) tended to agree with the teacher who stated,

The communicative system is totally based on four language skills but our assessment criteria is on only written (reading and writing) skills...there is no test on listening and speaking (oral) skills... we need to make a big change in examination systems (p. 70).

However, as positive aspects in between many challenges, the students liked to learn and enjoyed activity based participatory learning, as they mentioned in the same study (Rasheed, 2011),

Yes, and it helps us to share our learning's... we can understand easily our positions... we can learn English clearly... we are learning not only memorising... we are reading and we are trying to find the answers... which helps us to recollect and use the language with confidence... it's good (p. 58).

The teachers showed a determination to teach all four skills and to convince the authorities to make suggested changes to the examination system. They believed that a modified system, which includes a congenial atmosphere to use English language, could be created not only in the class but also at home.

Very recently, a new challenge has emerged that locally is called *Question Out* or the leaking of question papers. The public examination question papers had been circulated in Facebook and through other social media prior to the examination. The Government restructured the process of question papers setting, the printing and distributing of recent public examinations, and strengthening the law with bigger penalties as detailed in Chapter 3.

Classroom Resources and Textbook

The only classroom resources that were used in most of the classrooms were textbooks, blackboard, chalks and dusters. The teachers were frequently unprepared for the sessions and most of the time there were no textbooks for the students or teacher guides for the teachers. Participation resulting from textbook resources were rarely undertaken due to teacher reluctance, despite these

resources being available at no cost to teachers and students. In the same study (Rasheed, 2011) it was also noticeable that most of the students did not like or enjoy textbook content and this was attributed to unengaging content:

Not always... problem mainly... sometimes teachers are not well prepared, most of the time no text book in the session, sometimes teacher be late to come... so much noise... we can't hear teachers' voice (p. 54).

As the basic classroom resource is the textbooks, which are written and supplied by the Bangladesh Ministry of Education, a brief discussion on the textbook features could be very helpful to understand the situation. The English textbooks are used as the prescribed resource for the teaching of English Paper One, whereas various grammar books are used for teaching and learning leading to the English Paper Two. Before the introduction of the CLT approach in the early nineties, the English textbooks consisted of prose, poetry, short stories and compositions. The students were asked to read the text aloud, translate into Bangla and then answer mostly descriptive questions. However, after the introduction of the communicative approach, the English textbooks were changed accordingly. As the CLT is based on 'learning by doing' notions, the textbooks are written including various activities. A glimpse of the recent grade six textbook pages 01 & 02 was given below.

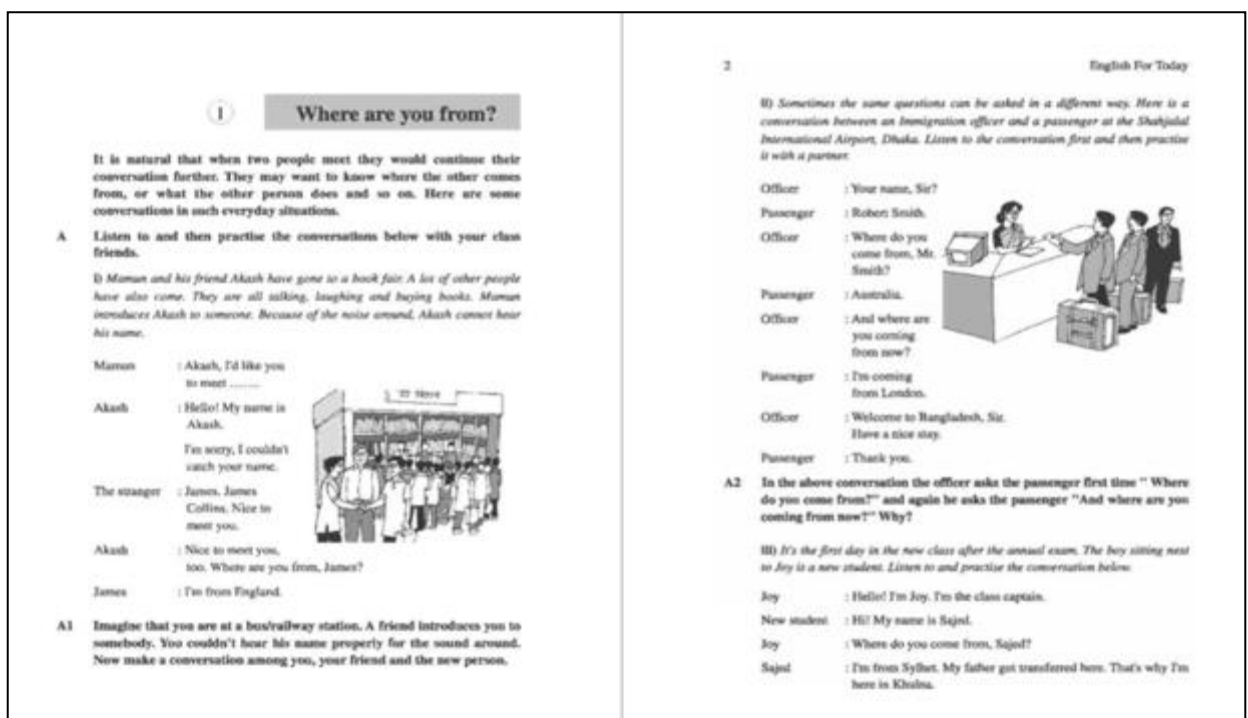


Image 2.1: Grade six English textbook pages

The textbooks are full of clear instructions for the students and various activities related to the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, in the above textbook pages, listening and speaking activities are practiced through dialogues. With these activities, the English sessions are supposed to be interactive; however, the teachers and students often complained that there was nothing to be learnt and those activities could not be completed in the session time. As there are no direct grammar rules to be learnt and as the examinations are focused only on the writing skill, both teachers and students tend to ignore the text activities to focus on the memorisation of answers for examination. More recent textbooks appear to be written to cater for city students, thus ignoring the rural contexts.

Classroom Practices and Government Initiatives

Although the CLT approach was introduced more than two decades ago, the teachers still dominate the session with an emphasis on the grammar and translation method. The teachers frequently require the students to memorise the grammar rules when learning the English language. Because of the traditional teaching methods and the examination system, the teachers and students seldom bother to practise the oral skills as there are no marks allocated in the examinations for those skills. In my previous study (Rasheed, 2011), the students mentioned that vocabulary, grammar and a lack of practice were the most frequent problems they faced in learning the English language.

In many recent tests such as SSC (secondary school certificate) and HSC (higher-secondary school certificate) examinations, the students are seen to be improving in the English subjects. However, this may provide false information about the quality and real improvement in learning English language in Bangladesh as there are many other causes that could be involved, such as leaking of question papers. This was supported in my previous study (Rasheed, 2011) that found both parents and teachers agreed that students were doing better in English but still not to the desired level. Examination results showed that the students were developing

some written skills but oral communicative competency was lacking. One of the teachers in the same study uttered an uneasy but real example,

But I think that they cannot communicate with others in English freely and also correctly... as an example, some of our cricket players when face media interviews, cannot speak correctly or speak English at all...for them we have to use a translator. So, this is the situation of English in Bangladesh...but we hope that this situation must be improved and we are working on that (p. 69).

The complexity of the reality is hard to explain. Large parts of educational projects such as SEDP (1993-2000), ELTIP (1996-2010), FSSAP (1993- 2001), FSSAP-II (2002-2008) PROMOTE (2000-2005), SESDP (2006-2012), TQI (2005-2011), TQI-II (2012-2017), SEQAEP (2008-2017) and English in Action (2008-2017) are mostly funded by donor agencies and these projects often suffer by focusing on the fulfilment of donors' objectives and ignoring local needs. However, considering the facts, the Government undertook the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) in the 2005-2011 periods. This was the biggest ever education project taken by the Bangladesh Government for the improvement of the quality of education in the Bangladesh secondary schools. The funding consisted of a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Government of Bangladesh's (GoB) own finance. Without detailing the structure of the TQI-SEP, the following is a summary of the most important initiatives.

Although many of the earlier educational projects worked for the improvement of the quality of the secondary education, TQI-SEP was launched to uplift and ensure the quality of teaching-learning in the secondary education sector. The TQI-SEP considered both local and national challenges such as inadequate classroom infrastructure, untrained and incompetent teachers, overlarge curriculum, non-Government teacher registration process, insufficient teaching-learning materials. The TQI-SEP provided enhanced training programmes for both pre and in-service teachers and professionally trained most of the school teachers. The subject oriented Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course and the School Teaching Certificate (STC) course were introduced as a training

programme. The curriculums for those courses were developed specially for the existing school teachers to develop greater professionalism. To improve the training quality, all of the teacher educators were provided with training in contemporary pedagogical approaches and resources through intensive local trainings. They were also sent to different countries for short and long term study programs. The TQI-SEP also developed the physical infrastructure and supplied resources to all of the teacher training institutions and the necessary teaching-learning materials to most of the schools.

At the end of the TQI-SEP, the project was evaluated and reported to be a success for the development of the secondary education. TQI-II or the second phase of the TQI-SEP was launched for 2012-2017 term with the funding of ADB and GoB. Following the previous path, TQI-II continued with the CPD-follow-up programme but this time focused more on the field level monitoring aspects, as there was a tendency among the teachers not to implement the changes but to continue with the traditional methods.

However, although the extent towards which TQI-SEP made improvements to the quality of education has been critiqued, as a teacher educator involved in that time I observed that change did occur throughout the secondary education sector, such as providing training to teachers, head teachers and teacher educators, constructing more school buildings, and supplying teaching resources, all towards a better education. Then again, as a continuation, the new curriculum, especially the English curriculum, has been changed to focus on the existing local and global challenges to improve the English language learning in the Bangladesh context.

However, there are still questions about the progress of the English language learning in Bangladeshi context, as the outcomes still fall short (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Ansarey, 2012).

Current English Language Usage in Bangladesh

A short discussion on the current English language usage in the Bangladesh context might further help us to understand the reality. As the long colonial history of the English language indicated how the language was used to establish

the British era in this area, the influence of more formal English language continued until the recent periods. However, in course of time the English language has changed many of its features and formed a new face in the Bangladeshi context. A recent form of English that purely evolved in Bangladesh, often called Bangla-English (Begum, 2015) is a modified-indigenised English. Although I was not looking into the changed characteristics of English language in Bangladesh, in my view a change in the use of definite articles, increased use of the present form of verbs, and different form of intonations is frequently noticeable. Often English words in Bangla sentences were the most common features of the English language, which the ordinary people of Bangladesh used in a required conversation. The English language in Bangladesh has changed its features like other models of English language change that occurred in many other countries. However, in comparison to other languages, such as a Jamaican language, known as *Patwa*, an extreme form of the transformation of English that was radically different; the Bangladesh change in English language was relatively mild.

Similarly, there are other patterns of language change such as the non-formal English used in the New York (Labov, 2006). Labov talked about the language used in the Brooklyn, New York by the black people. It might be different in structures but probably very similar to those changes, where they have their own rules. Labov argued that when correcting the language in a session, the white English teacher sometimes thought that the black students did not know correct grammatical connections or they were using inappropriate grammar. As a vernacular form of English was spoken in the Brooklyn area, the teacher had to make a decision as whether he/ she should attempt to change this practice or not. However, the first understanding was to recognise that the Black-Brooklyn English has developed a grammar that differed from white American English (Labov, 2006). Similarly, Bangla-English has evolved as a vernacular language (Begum, 2015). Close examination of that vernacular is outside the boundaries of this study, but it is significant that when rural children hear any English in the community it is probably Bangla-English. The language of commerce, banking, and everyday life are using Bangla-English that is evolving and continuously shifting.

However, the textbooks are written in the formal standard English. Therefore, teachers and students experience difficulties in aligning the spoken language, with the textbook English. The rules in the textbooks often seem arbitrary, which causes challenges for teachers and students to use the English language in everyday situations.

The hybridisation has resulted in many difficulties, especially in the educational sectors when most of the senior teachers looked for accuracy rather than approximation in the classrooms and especially when marking the examination papers. As discussed earlier, the former generation learnt more formal English following more grammatical rules because of the colonial influence, which has resulted in large differences in student achievement. Traditional English grammar books that are usually used in the Bangladesh are written with a mixed language of Bangla and English, which also puts the learners in a challenging situation when learning English as a second language. A glimpse of a traditional grammar book page is given below.

Sentence

Definition:

Sentence হলো language এর একক বা একটি word বা একাধিক শৃঙ্খলাবদ্ধ word দ্বারা তৈরী, যাতে সচরাচর একটি subject ও একটি verb থাকে, যার sense ও meaning আছে এবং expression প্রকাশে সক্ষম। সুতরাং, সংক্ষেপে আমরা বলতে পারি যে, word বা word গুলি sense, meaning এবং expression সহ একটি language এর unit হিসেবে কাজ করতে পারে, তবে তারা sentence হিসেবে গন্য হবে।

A word or a set of ordered words having sense, meaning and expression and acting as a unit of a language is called a sentence.

যেমন :

X : You can certainly learn through mistakes.

Y : Really?

X : Of course.

এখানে X এবং Y এর তিনটি expression ই sentence হিসেবে কাজ করে যদিও শেষের দুটি expression-এ verb নেই এবং দ্বিতীয় expression টি মাত্র একটি word গঠিত।

Formation of a sentence:

Traditional grammar এর মতে sentence দুটি part নিয়ে গঠিত:

1. Subject এবং **2. Predicate** যার সম্পর্কে sentence এ আমরা কিছু বলি বা লিখি তা হলো subject এবং subject নিয়ে আমরা যা বলি বা লিখি তা হলো predicate. যেমন: I learn English for my examinations.

এই Sentence এ 'I' হলো subject এবং 'learn English for my examinations' হলো predicate.

Modern communicative grammar এ আমরা sentence formation এর সময় subject, verb phrase, object, complement, adverb, adverbial phrase এর অধিক্ত স্বীকার করি। এক্ষেত্রে -

Subject: A subject is a noun, noun phrase or pronoun representing the person or thing that performs the action of the verb.

যেমন : He prefers to speak very little. এখানে 'He' হলো subject.

Verb phrase: A verb phrase is a word or group of words that expresses an action, an event or a state. যেমন : It had gone on for years and years.

এখানে 'had gone on' হলো একটি verb phrase.

একটি Sentence এ verb এর পর object, complement, adverbial –এর একটি বা একাধিক থাকতে পারে। আমরা জানি -

Object:

An object is a noun, noun phrase or a pronoun that refers to a person or thing that is affected by the action of the verb, or that the action is done to or for. যেমন I always speak English with my friends.

এখানে 'English with my friends' হলো object.

Image 2.2: A traditional grammar book page

My own experience with the traditional grammar book was similar. At the age of seven when I was a student of grade four, for the first time I encountered a grammar book. It was a small book but looked strange to me when I first opened it. A typical feature of the book struck me. Until that age, the books I experienced were written either in Bangla or in English language. But for the very first time, I came across a book, which was written in both languages. Then gradually I learnt that it was called a grammar book, the English grammar book. It seemed very challenging to me to memorise those grammar rules without any scope to use them in real life but merely to remember them for the exams only. Many of the English language learners in Bangladesh may have similar experiences and many

of them face difficulty in learning the grammar rules. Hence their acute apprehension about the subject of English (Rasheed, 2011), possibly the traditional English grammar book in Bangladesh was written in both languages to help facilitate the learning of the English grammar.

The Present-day Issues and Anticipations

In the past and even after the independence of Bangladesh, the people were longing for a steady progress; many inner and outer forces disrupted that progress with profound effects on the general population.

Most recently, the Government has been trying to elevate the status of Bangladesh to that of a mid-level income country by 2021 (GoB, 2010; UNESCO, 2011) and is working hard to achieve the target in due time. Consequently, Bangladesh has implemented a revised Education Policy, which shows a clear pathway from recent to future educational achievements. Like other curriculum areas, English language learning is especially focused to meet with the national and global needs and new textbooks are written and introduced according to students' learning goals and needs. The interactive pedagogy is enhanced through extensive teacher training programs. More open-ended questions are introduced as an assessment tool for the examination. Corporal punishment is banned in the school premises to reduce learners' apprehensions about school and in particular the learning of English. The grading system recognises a greater range of achievements in an effort to reduce competition among the students and schools. Commercial coaching centres are discouraged in an effort to promote more effective classroom teaching and learning. As a result, it is often claimed that students are learning more, which is reflected in the pass rates in the public examinations which are increasing rapidly over the last couple of years.

That said, as an experienced teacher educator I believe that education in the 21st century demands that students are equipped with more knowledge, understandings and skills than merely achieving passing grades in examinations. Therefore, the role of education should be to create cultured citizens who are capable of dealing with the current local and global complexities and challenges.

There are many socio-cultural influences and political and economical issues that are hindering the development of education and the developing pace of Bangladesh. Most advanced students very often move to different countries even before finishing their studies in Bangladesh. Those who stay in Bangladesh and finish their studies or those who come back from abroad after finishing their study, do not often stay long due to group and party politics. Even in public universities, the influence of group and party politics is so strong that it is often impossible for a teacher not to be influenced by them.

The Government is aiming to establish a digital Bangladesh, although the education system still remains analogue and traditional and falls short of the global standard. Most the foreign universities do not accept or often devalue the degrees obtained from Bangladeshi universities. Although the Bangladeshi people are preparing to elevate the country to that of mid-level income countries in the near future and turning manpower into human resources, the question still remains as to whether it is really possible to achieve advancement and growth while neglecting learners' global needs. Other Asian countries, which have developed economically and technologically, such as Japan and China, they have focused utmost importance on the quality of education.

Moreover, unethical practices in most of the sectors cause an impact on the steady progress of Bangladesh. Among many areas in the education sector, there are two of the recent negative practices really impede good initiatives. Questions that required responses involving a more creative approach were debuted in 2010 to discourage recalling or memorisation and to develop learners' creativeness. It was hoped to reduce students' dependency on cramming and guidebooks, as the experts and the officials described it on the launch programme in 2010 (Dhaka Tribune, 2013). Teachers received training and were supposed to create new questions for every examination focusing the learning outcomes. However, very recently the effectiveness of this method came under scrutiny (Banglanews24, 2016). In practice, it seemed the teachers copied questions exactly from the guidebooks, which were available to everyone at the open market. Consequently, the students could collect those books easily and tried to memorise for the

examinations. Both teachers and students were trying to follow the shortcut route to improve results in the examination, thereby erasing the actual goal of introducing more open-ended responses in the examination system.

Another unethical issue relates to that of commercial coaching centres. In 2012, the Government announced the close down of all commercial coaching centres; however, in practice, not a single centre is officially closed down. The law enforcing authority appear reluctant to take adequate action against centres operating illegally. Students become victims of those coaching centres, which rob billions of *taka* (Bangladeshi currency) from the parents each year (Banglanews24, 2015).

In the same way, although the Government rewrote textbooks and trained all teachers to introduce interactive exercises in the classroom, the teachers generally adhered to traditional teaching methods. In this study, when I went to the school to work with the teachers, I was informed that all of the teachers got training in teaching interactive sessions. But, when I went to the regular sessions most of them were taken following traditional methods. However, in a few instances, the teachers tried to make those sessions interactive by implementing group activities only. I unearthed later when talking with the teachers, that although they were trained, they were not confident enough to make sessions interactive on their own by merely following the textbook activities. However, as a teacher educator, when I worked with the teachers in this project, they slowly became confident to take sessions interactively, as it could be observed from the activities in Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9. I believe that a teacher educator's regular involvement with a teacher's classroom activities might improve the teacher's regular practice minimising many challenges, which often lead to interactive activities being perceived as unattainable.

Moreover, it could also be suggested that the life skills that relate to the village people have somewhat disappeared from the education of Bangladesh. The textbook topics prescribed for the rural students sometimes seemed alien to them. A context-based education is very important to successfully relate the learning to

the everyday life practice. In this study, I also tried to relate the textbook topics to students' life skills and to their life experience.

Very recently a World Bank (2015) report stated that Bangladesh is listed in the lower-middle income countries, which indicated that Bangladesh is gradually developing towards its goals. Within the contextual challenges, and as outlined in the above discussion, the Government of Bangladesh is trying to improve the educational outcomes. For this study, I narrowed down my focus to the challenges that related to classroom pedagogy in English language teaching. I attempted to align classroom pedagogy with the English curriculum goals and the textbook exercises to make English sessions interactive. I introduced mini-drama and role-playing activities as interactive techniques to make the English sessions more enjoyable and practical, as teachers and students, especially in rural areas, often complained about the English textbook topics and the ineffectiveness of the activities. So, by acknowledging all of those pedagogical challenges, I located my study in a rural context and tried to introduce some interactive techniques so that the English sessions could be more engaging. Hopefully, the teachers could also become more confident to use interactive exercises in order to encourage the students' more functional English language learning.

The Participating School and the Neighbourhood

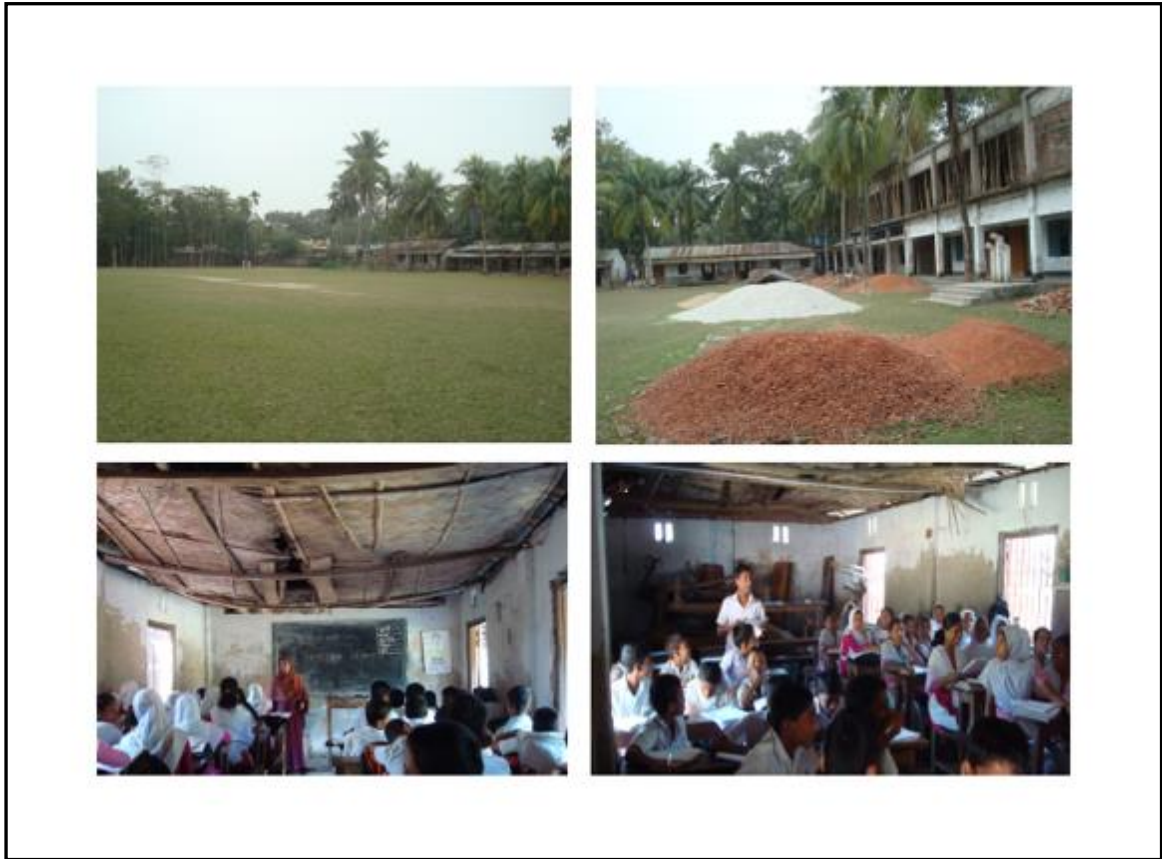


Image 2.3: The school building and surroundings

The school was located in the most southern divisions of Bangladesh and the study focused on the year-six students' classroom activities of the school. These students were in the age group of 10-11 years. As it was a co-education school, both girls and boys were present in every session. Although the school was situated in the rural and a low socio-economic status area, students were neatly dressed and were more disciplined than students in the nearby schools. I learnt later that a very good relationship between school and community through the school managing committee (SMC) and the school leadership created a positive culture. It was reflected in the community's positive attitude towards education even although they were living below poverty level. It also indicated that I could receive enough support from the school leadership that would facilitate my study.

The year-six classroom was placed at the middle of the 'L' shaped school building. Although the other extended part of the school was built of brick, the ceiling of the year-six classroom and adjacent part was constructed of tin and wood except the wall, which was also brick. Because of insufficient funding, the other part of the

school building was prioritised for brick construction. However, there was no such confirmation when the other part would be newly constructed. The floor was brick paved at the time of construction, but it was hardly evident. Equally true for the ceiling, at the time of construction it was well insulated to reduce heat from the hot tin. But now, that insulation could barely be found. Small holes were evident on the ceiling that allowed raindrops to drip every now and then especially in the rainy season. There was no ceiling fan to combat the scourging summer heat and humidity, but the students rarely complained because they knew that those were the harsh realities of schooling in their context. Although some of the classes have electric fans, the unavailability of electricity in most of the school time makes no difference between having and not having a fan.

There was some evidence of white paint remaining at the top of the walls. In addition, in some parts, the plaster had fallen and some was about to fall. Although a number of unusual graffiti was visible, there was some weak effort to cover it. The classroom was damp even although there were three windows and three doors for ventilation but no windowpanes to shut those at the time of rain.

It was a room of approximately 14 feet wide and 25 feet long with a cemented black board at the front side, where the teachers stood. There were 12 rows of benches for 5 to 6 students to seat on a single bench for a total of 63 students. Even though it was a coeducation school, boys and girls were not allowed to be seated on the same bench. Respecting the societal values, which represent the cultural and religious traditions, this rural school set a limit on the free mixing of boys and girls even in the school classrooms.

The physical infrastructure vividly reflected that the school was in a low socio-economic status area, although the teachers, especially the English teachers of that school appeared to cope with those harsh physical situations every day dealing with the challenges presented by a large number of students and maintaining discipline in a small classroom area. The students were eager to learn and tried to attend sessions on a regular basis. When I was working in that school at the time of collecting data for my Master's thesis, the teaching and learning atmosphere

among both of the teachers and students made this school attractive for me to use for my present study.

In that local context, the school was quite exceptional in the large number of students, large classrooms (number of students), big playground and lovely natural beauty made it an attractive learning environment for this small rural community. It had 20 staff, 16 of whom were teachers, and 450+ students. Although this area was adjunct to the city, it was isolated from it, like many other rural schools. The people here were mostly rickshaw pullers, rickshaw-van drivers, fishermen and daily labourers by profession. They were generally very poor and underprivileged and most of the students came from these families. In every class, students were seen with a varied age range, as some students did not begin their schooling at the age of school entry. The approximate age range in this school was 10-18. When discussing the community, Khaled, the Assistant Head Teacher of the school, commented that the ages of the students were different from the norm:

The community is different... not like other..., so students come from families of daily hard labourers, who are usually illiterate and not conscious about students' study. But in the nearest school, students come from families who are educated and in business. It creates a level of difference in thinking, caring, and their goals of learning as well. For example, now is the time for cultivating paddy (IRRI rice), so many of our students from year 6-10 come to the school after working 3-4 hours in the paddy field which starts early in the morning. It is really hard for these young students to concentrate and learn at that moment. Therefore, in many cases the school needed to accept older students. But, this is also the economic reality and needed for their survival. So sometimes students are absent from the school for 2/3/4/5 days, and often happens without any notice. If asked where you were last week, they answered that they were working in the field or in the family. And in fact, teachers or the school have very little to do to prevent these absences but to agree with it.

This upazilla (sub-district) is not large in area; however, it has seven secondary schools and madrasas (Islamic/religious school). Although these people are illiterate, they are trying to improve their living conditions. Khaled added,

From my experience of last 3 years as a teacher in this school, I realised that the people here are working more than before and trying. I saw many boys here who never worked beforehand but only liked to hang around; they are working full time now. They have changed their life style and trying to get better one.

He also stated,

This area is closely connected with the capital city Dhaka and with other places. People here always want to go outside of this area for higher education and work. Even now, many people are working overseas and so many want to travel and work there. This change is frequently visible now.

It seemed that this community appraised this school very positively. However, as I learnt from the informal discussions with other teachers, seven or eight years ago it was not like this. The school is developing and succeeding gradually. The last five years it has been the best school in this area considering the highest pass rate of the students in the public (SSC) examinations. The teachers and the staffs created a caring environment for the school. In an informal discussion about the school's achievements Safu, the Head Teacher, articulated,

BRAC (a Non-Government Organisation) declared this school as a model school of this locality. The teachers from nearby schools often come to visit this school. They also observe sessions and talk with teachers about pedagogy and management. Actually, they want to know how this school is doing so well in the SSC examination.

The community expected that the students should learn social values and principles from the school according to the local culture and religion. When I asked a parent of a student who is also a teacher of this school about parents' views on this school, she mentioned,

The parents think that the students here learning many things or not, that does not matter. But they are learning good manners from the school activities as the students behave according to the social values and hardly disrespect elders' opinions. However, they do logical arguments with the elders on many dubious matters.

In addition, this community never needed to explicitly interfere with the school activities as the PTA (parent teacher association) meetings always reflected community values and instructions. Collaboratively the school and the community working together for the betterment of the students and the society as well. There was no outside (socio-political) pressure that could hamper school's regular activities. To ensure students' safety and free movement the nearby bazaar (a local market) and associated committee helped the school on frequent occasions. The students, especially the female students, could move freely without any kind of

safety issues like eve-teasing, a Bangladesh euphemism for public sexual harassment. The existence of the euphemism highlights that such harassment is silently condoned by society, and so the risk to girls is increased.

If anything occurred, this committee handled it carefully by supporting the school and the victim. The students' attitudes also included respect for the school environment. The students usually did not engage in activities that could offend the school and the parents. They always tried to help people in need. Although the society was poor, people were mostly caring and complacent and liked to value the culture they inherited. Although it still does not allow students to mix freely across genders, it is very much concerned about every student's learning and celebrates their successes.

While this school is called a non-Government school, it is mostly funded by the Government. All of the schools in Bangladesh, whether Government or non-Government must adhere to the rules of the Ministry of Education. Khaled said,

According to the curriculum every subject is studied and learnt in this school. But we do co-curricular activities as well, e.g. debating, indoor and outdoor sports especially football and essay-competition, where we won first prize last year.

The school conforms to the Government rules, and it also considers the need of the local culture and society. Safu said,

All the teachers must arrive at the school around 9.30am. 10-10.15am is the assembly. 10.15am-4pm regular sessions that includes co-curricular activities. From the very first day of the year, this school starts and continues taking 7-8 periods (sessions) a day, throughout the year as Government recommends. No other school in this area could maintain this regularity so far.

The school is trying its best to cherish the next generation for the local society and for Bangladesh in general. However, it has its own challenges, which very often hinder the best outcomes. As Khaled mentioned,

Everything is good in this school comparing other nearby schools. But sometimes, it suffers when good students leave this school and go to the big city schools. It's like, gradually when this school makes a good student or prepares his/her foundations for the public examination, then all of a sudden, he/she goes

to another school. When this occurs, the school suffers, which is reflected in the public examination results.

In addition, the relationship between the teachers seemed very warm, friendly and collaborative. There were no noticeable problems on the surface, although after working at this school for couple of months I realised that there was something going on inside of this school, which could erupt at any time. As I wrote in the journal,

I perceived a tension between the teachers and head teacher. The head teacher is dynamic, hardworking, ...believes in the vision and mission to make this school a better one. He is flexible, a good administrator and even caring for the students and staff of this school. As a result, this regarded as one of the best schools in this area. But the staff members are not really happy.

The exact nature of the tension within the school are outside the scope of this thesis. Here I simply note that there were tensions.

On the other hand, this school seemed very proud of the students getting higher education in different institutions and also working in different positions all over the Bangladesh and the world. One of the former students of this school, Ponna, whom I met in the bazaar, stated,

We did not need to learn much later in our life as this school carefully crafted our basics. We comfortably go and work anywhere. I feel proud for being a student of this school.

To conclude, it could be stated that this school and the community were working in a positive way to equip the students to cope with the future world, regardless of the contextual challenges. The Government may need to focus more attention and reward those teachers, who are effective and in many instances using interactive and more creative approaches and care for their students. As this school was located out of the city, it was often neglected compared to most of the city schools. This school context had its own challenges, despite the good will of the teachers to promote better outcomes for the students.

The next chapter further discusses literature related to topics that have been discussed in this chapter as well as other themes related to this study as a whole.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature

This literature review reports on published research regarding English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh classrooms. In the first section, studies will be reviewed that have focused on Bangladesh ESL (English as a second language) classroom activities. The literature is reviewed with a particular focus on the current challenges in the Bangladesh ESL context and those that address ESL classroom pedagogy with reference to local contexts. Later on, the review explores language-learning theories, ESL learning methods and approaches especially the CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach, and the possible way forward focusing on the connections between enjoyment and learning, and the introduction of more interactive approaches such as drama. Finally, the recent global position of the English language is considered and critiqued in relation to the effect on the Bangladesh socio-culture and economy. These issues themselves have been discussed in the chapter 2; here it is the related literature that is reviewed.

ELT in Bangladesh

The overwhelming theme that came from the literature was that the English language teaching in Bangladesh was not considered to be effective (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Mazumder, 2013; Podder, 2013). The detail of these concerns will be addressed in the pages that follow.

Several reports address the nature or description of the ESL classroom (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Shrestha, 2013). A report by TQI-SEP (Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project, 2006), which was supported in another report of EIA (English in Action, 2009) succinctly summarises and acts as a reminder of the typical secondary school ESL classroom in Bangladesh. EIA (ibid) reports,

If there is such a thing in Bangladesh as a typical lesson in a secondary school, then it begins with the teacher borrowing a book from one of the students and

asking which page they are up to. He then proceeds to teach from the book, sometimes varying the delivery by asking the students to take turns reading the text, or asking the occasional closed question. The students are not required to think other than remember the text and there is no active learning on their part. There is no evidence of a lesson plan to guide the teaching process, and additional teaching and learning resources are scarce (p. 3).

In addressing the classroom context quoted above, both the published research and the media expressed deep concerns about the condition and effectiveness of English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Podder, 2013; Rasheed, 2012). In response to these findings, the Government has taken several initiatives for the educational development in Bangladesh (Ali & Walker, 2014; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014), by identifying various constraints, which have hindered the developments (Ali & Walker, 2014; Abedin, 2012; Alam, 2015; Chowdhury & Phan, 2008; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Podder, 2013; Rasheed, 2012; Shrestha, 2013). These are discussed further in the following section.

Traditional Top-down Teaching Method

A traditional way of teaching and learning usually known as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was the most commonly applied approach in Bangladesh ESL classrooms (Ali & Walker, 2014; Alam, 2014; Begum & Farooqui, 2008; Shrestha, 2013). Such an approach typically places primary importance on the memorisation of grammatical rules and acquiring a vast amount of vocabulary, as well as the translation of every sentence which are mostly completed out of the context (Abedin, 2012; Chowdhury & Phan, 2008). This approach also places an initial focus on reading and writing with an importance on accuracy.

In a study on the contemporary educational situation of Bangladesh, EIA (2009) reported that the existing classroom pedagogy did not support communicative or interactive learning environments and indicated the regular use of GTM. Among many other findings, it was reported that most of the teachers did not adopt task-based approaches and did not ask thought-provoking questions to stimulate students' learning. It was also reported that 67 percent of the teachers liked to position themselves at the front of the classrooms addressing the students seated

at front only and that the teachers spoke more Bangla than English in those sessions. Teachers were found to teach formal “grammar and translation, following the book without explaining the definitions properly” (p. 28).

Similarly, Hamid and Baldauf, (2008) argued that, “...in reality only the skills of reading, writing and grammar are usually covered in classroom teaching, particularly in rural schools” (p. 17). That said, the EIA (2009) pointed out that although most of the rural school English teachers used GTM, a few urban teachers were seen to use participatory teaching methods after having some general training in this pedagogical approach. Overall, the teacher-centred, non-practical, non-communicative, memorisation-based top-down GTM approach to teaching dominates the secondary school ESL classrooms. This indicates a concerning, outdated and ineffective learning environment in Bangladesh especially in the rural areas (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Rahman, 2015).

The English language learning with GTM was not working as expected in the curriculum and this extended beyond the secondary level to occur in both primary and higher secondary levels, (Rahman, 2015; Shrestha, 2013). Rahman (2015) in a study that focused on higher secondary classroom pedagogy argued, “...GTM did not work well to meet the goals of learning English” (p. 97). Similarly, in a study with primary teachers Shrestha (2013) found that “Speaking skills are almost completely ignored in this method” (p. 151). However, the EIA (2009) did report that while teachers were practicing GTM in both rural and urban scenario, most of the teachers interacted with the students in a positive manner despite the teacher-dominated, top-down and prescribed approach. Furthermore, most of the students were reported to be keen to learn in that traditional learning context, which suggests that the teachers do have positive attitudes towards learning, and the students in general want to learn. That said, consideration needs to be given to the needs of the learners’ needs and how teachers can meet these needs using a traditional teacher-centred non-practical teaching method. This is because, as discussed in Chapter 2, students were frequently apprehensive about English sessions with teachers maintaining classroom discipline through the threat of corporal punishment. In a non-active classroom, where the students are silenced

through fear, often inhibiting creativity and student interaction is an inappropriate description of a learning-friendly environment (Das et al., 2014).

Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors

As education played a major role in reducing the poverty level in a developing country like Bangladesh, the low socio-economic status of many individuals has considerably affected mainstream education (Sulaiman, 2015; Ilon, 2000). This challenge became more apparent when determining the status of English language in Bangladesh and to shift the pedagogy from a traditional to an interactive one. As Erling, Seargeant and Solly (2014) argued, in Bangladesh, where 75% of the total population are engaged in agriculture with a low and unstable socio-economic status and outlook, the English language seemed to be irrelevant. However, they continued arguing that most Bangladeshi people were highly influenced by the past colonial period and had a very strong interest in English. They also noted that the Bangladeshi people were well informed as to why they needed English and how English contributed to the people's lives even in extreme rural areas. Moreover, in a response to the challenge, Erling, Seargeant and Solly (2014) argued in favour of learning English in rural Bangladesh due to the fact that the rural economy was shifting from being reliant on agriculture to a more global industrialised economy that not only promoted the functional learning of English, but also that the acquisition of English signified a symbol of social status, especially among the rural people.

Hamid and Baldauf, (2008) in their discussion of the failure of English language learning, especially in the rural Bangladesh referenced the Education Watch study of 2006 (CAMPE, 2007). This study found that an investment of "US\$ 2.9 per student per month" in non-government schools was "deplorably inadequate" (p. 21). They (ibid) affirmed in a language proficiency test with 10th graders that the students whose families had higher level of incomes obtained significantly higher scores in English and in SSC examinations compared with the students whose parents had lower income or family status. They also argued that a positive socio-economic and home culture had a large impact on the students' English language achievements. They also pointed out that because of the lower socio-economic

status, which often featured in a poorly financed and inadequate infrastructure, it would be hard for the rural schools and the teachers to do much to improve students' language proficiency using a different pedagogical approach (ibid). In a similar voice, Thornton (2006), in her study on Bangladesh secondary school teachers' collaboration argued that the challenges related to the wider context within which the teachers were working influenced teacher motivation that resulted in negative teaching outcomes. She also reported that low economic status and contextual constraints had a large impact on the development of positive teaching and learning environments. She also argued that in a context where the financial condition of teachers forced them to take additional jobs like private tuition, as well as, continuously seeking other opportunities to elevate their social status; it detracted them from their "responsibility for teaching effectively in the classroom" (p. 192). Low-economic conditions, where children were forced to work rather than going to school also affected the number of children's enrolment in the schools as well as in the child labour sector because, at times, the child preferred to work (Sulaiman, 2015).

As accessibility to education is commonly linked with the financial status of a family, and as the low socio-economic position is a very significant issue in Bangladesh, a question might arise, as to whether increasing the funds in education can resolve the challenges related to poverty in education. Although, as discussed previously, the Government of Bangladesh contributed considerable amounts of funds to the education sector, particularly for the improvement of English language learning through various projects, it appears that most of the initiatives were largely ineffective. Baldauf et al. (2007 as cited in Hamid & Baldauf, 2008) compared the learning of English in Bangladesh context with a "white elephant" (p. 22), which consumes precious national resources but hardly produces any desired outcomes" (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p. 22). Although those initiatives or funds were inadequate in regard to the contextual needs (Ilon, 2000; Rahman et al., 2010) and as the teachers urged for more professional support as well as infrastructural support (Thornton, 2006), it was also uncertain as to whether only increasing the education funds would impact significantly on the educational challenges in Bangladesh, especially in the rural contexts. While it was

acknowledged that increasing education funds might result in smaller changes, it was unlikely that teachers' attitudes would change enough to result in improved educational outcomes. In a study on a development project and its long-term effect on increasing the household level of ultra-poor people in rural Bangladesh by providing with income generating assets, Sulaiman (2015) affirmed that the project did have a positive effect on the peoples' wealth and income. However, he argued that there was no immediate increases in the enrolment of children from those families who would gain the most benefit. In addition, while no major impact was measured on the children's quality of education, increase of wealth did have some very slow "spill over effects" on education (p. 155). It was not always the low socio-economic and cultural influences; rather the teachers' attitudes towards learning that were equally responsible for creating a learning friendly classroom. This meant that teachers required extensive motivational and professional support to create a more enjoyable and learning friendly English learning classroom within the same contextual and financial constraints (Alam, 2014; Rasheed, 2011; Shrestha, 2013).

Class Size and Resources

One of the most common comments made is that class size prevents pedagogical innovation. On the same way, as large numbers of students (large class size) in a single classroom is one of the biggest challenges faced by the teachers in Bangladesh (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ansarey, 2012; EIA, 2009; Rasheed, 2011), this is really important issue to the study of my thesis. However, like many other developing countries this remains an economic reality in the Bangladesh context (Caprariis et al., 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 1994). In a quantitative study by Alam and Kabir (2015) involving 79 teachers, they found that 86% of the participants identified large-class sizes as a huge issue, which significantly hindered the implementation of the CLT approach in secondary English classrooms. This was supported by Ansarey (2012) in a study of that found high number of students in the classes was a major problem. Large classes were also found to be an issue in Rasheed (2011), that found

...but sometimes we face problems implementing CLT because the class size is huge...large class (number of students) e.g. 63 students we have and its quite impossible for us to handle all the students... (p. 69).

The physical classroom environment in terms of the seating was also found to be unsuitable in a large classroom of more than 80 students, (Rasheed, 2011). EIA (2009) echoed in a similar voice that the overcrowding and lack of infrastructure noticeably affected the regular classroom learning.

These afore mentioned studies suggest that large classes are one of the most challenging aspects that Bangladeshi teachers face. The disadvantages to large classes have been well-researched in terms of student management and learning (Greer & Heaney, 2004; Herreid, 2006; McConnell, Steer & Owens, 2003). Machemer and Crawford (2007) noted that in large classes students could easily be anonymous and isolated. However, large classes are an economic reality in developing countries like Bangladesh, due to fiscal restraints (EIA, 2009). Despite the fact that the teachers in Bangladesh often apportion blame on large class size for the lack of achievement in English language learning and ability to implement more engaging tasks, studies have shown that big class sizes is not the sole contributor to low quality teaching sessions. Ahmed and Arends-Kuenning (2006) argued that while there were other influential factors that could affect the quality of education, increasing student numbers in a session did not necessarily reduce the quality of the learning. In their study on the affect of a program (Food for Education) within a rural Bangladesh context, they found that although the program was successful in increasing the students' enrolment in a session, it did not reduce the quality of education in the classroom.

Although many of the city schools might have large classes, in contrast most of the rural schools in Bangladesh do not have adequate numbers of students. According to Asadullah (2005) in a developing country like Bangladesh where larger class size is the reality a reduction in class size would not ensure an increase in the quality of education. He further argued that, "Class size is endogenous in educational production," rather competition between schools might have a positive impact on student achievement (p. 217). Equally, he emphasised that there needed to be an efficient distribution and utilisation of resources, which

could also help to increase student achievement. In a teacher centred knowledge transmission model of learning environment that lacks supportive resources (Alam & Kabir, 2015; EIA, 2009; Shrestha, 2013), the Government needs to ensure the supply of adequate resources at the time of adopting changes in education in Bangladesh (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). In another study, Ahmed and Arends-Kuenning (2006) argued that a low-cost investment in supplying blackboards only, in large classes for the schools with poor physical conditions might improve students' achievement significantly. Overall, large class remains an enormous challenge; however, they could be better managed to be made more effective.

In a study that emphasised the student-centred paradigm and the active learning in large classes, Machemer and Crawford (2007) suggested that teachers need to shift from traditional to more student-centred pedagogies. This finding is not new, with other studies finding that active and cooperative learning were the most effective approaches in large classes (Fink, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Jungst et al., 2003). Fink (2003) indicated that active and cooperative learning did not drive away the need of lectures but created the opportunities for the students to uncover, co-construct, evaluate, walk around, create and relate to the information offered (cited in Machemer and Crawford, 2007, p. 10). Roy (2015) argued that although large classes created huge challenges for the teachers in Bangladesh in terms of being able to give a regular effective feedback, by involving the students in that process using "peer feedback" it could promote students' learning (p. 53). Although the effectiveness of active and cooperative learning has been debated, it is widely acknowledged that the implementation of strategies such as "lectures in large classes include using Think/Pair/Share, Just-In-Time Teaching, Peer Instruction, Concept Tests, computer based instruction, recitation sections, case study teaching" and more could allow students to actively participate in the classroom and immerse themselves into more practical learning experiences (Herreid, 2006, p. 44). Therefore, the project reported in this study tries to explore approaches to apply interactive teaching practice within current large class size.

CLT in Bangladesh: Gap among Context, Policy and Practice

Considering the aforementioned challenges to improve the English learning situation and to put aside GTM, the Government of Bangladesh introduced the CLT (communicative language teaching) approach nearly two decades ago, which was a comparatively recent but widely recognised student-centred learning approach for second and foreign language (Alam, 2015; Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Chowdhury & Phan, 2008; Das et al., 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Rahman, 2015; Rasheed, 2012; Shrestha, 2013). However, the introduction of CLT in the Bangladesh context appears to have been largely unsuccessful and not working to the expected level in terms of developing students' English competence. This failure caused great concern with the aforementioned studies identifying many deterrents behind it. In a study, Alam and Kabir (2015) identified a gap between policy and practice in the implementation of CLT in the Bangladesh context. They argued that it was not the failure of the CLT as an approach but the way it was implemented that often caused unsatisfactory outcomes. Using a mixed method research approach, which included questionnaires, interviews and class observations as data collecting tools, the indicators indicated that although there were many other causes which slowed down this progress, there seemed a mismatch in planning and implementation of CLT. Alam and Kabir (2015) reported, "...our Government did not consider the pros and cons when they decided to replace GTM with CLT" (p. 67). The researchers also commented that CLT featured a totally different pedagogy than traditional teaching-learning methods in Bangladesh schools. Moreover, when referring to the findings of Nunan (1988), the above researchers argued that a lack of an approach by the Government to integrate all of the aspects of a given curriculum often hindered the practice creating those conflicts. Following those challenges, they recommended a practical change in classroom activities, which could potentially change perceptions of the roles of teachers and learners and might ensure a more meaningful application of CLT in the Bangladesh context.

Ali and Walker (2014), in a similar way, argued that mandating a new curriculum only was not enough to change the classroom practice in Bangladesh, rather a

strong ELT (English Language Teaching) policy that included collaboration with different stakeholders in the curriculum was fundamental. They added that a policy needed to consider the socio-cultural and economic realities. However, although they identified some other practical challenges, they strongly argued that the policy assumptions did not align with the national ELT curriculum in Bangladesh context. As there were no detailed guidelines in the curriculum to match the policy, teachers and learners were unfamiliar with the respective and relevant classroom activities and these triggered other challenges. Ali and Walker (2014) concluded that the national ELT curriculum must be continuously backed up and guided by the ELT policy to influence the entire community for better outcomes, as they continued,

The main goal of the policy is to create collaboration among all the stakeholders and to establish consistency in ELT practice, and hence to contribute to the achievement of the overall national ELT goal (p. 37).

Hamid and Baldauf (2008) also argued that although the CLT was an essential shift from the GTM in Bangladesh at policy level, there was little evidence to show any significant changes in classroom teaching practice. They labelled ELT (English Language Teaching) in Bangladesh as “bogged down” and questioned, “Will CLT bail out the bogged down ELT in Bangladesh?” (p. 22). Hamid and Baldauf (2008) again argued that a lack of sufficient training, non-CLT textbooks, teachers’ own beliefs on classroom practices, old evaluation systems, and low public investment in secondary education negatively influenced the implementation of CLT. Although the ELTIP (English Language Teaching Improvement Project) did provide a small-scale (13-day) CLT training programme the researchers questioned its quality and argued that the limited exposure did not guarantee effective implementation of the practice in the classroom. Inevitably, a huge gap between policy and practice developed and the ability to balance “between the breadth and depth of English in national curriculum” and practical initiatives were required to enhance English language learning in Bangladesh context (ibid, p. 22).

Teachers were not only responsible for implementing the new curriculum into practice while focusing on the students’ learning activities, but, assessment also needed to be aligned with the goals of the curriculum (Das et al., 2014). An

extensive document analysis on assessment in the Bangladeshi secondary level found that there were certain loopholes between teaching and assessment, especially within English sessions (Das et al., 2014; Khan, 2010; Podder, 2013; Rahman, Kabir & Afroze, 2006). The ELT curriculum, clearly documents the assessment of listening and speaking; however, in reality little evidence exists that assessment occurs. As Khan (2010) pointed out, in practice teachers seemed to most often test the traditional grammar rules only despite the fact that it was claimed to be a communicative assessment. This was supported by Das et al. (2014) who stated,

...the communicative English language curriculum was introduced in Bangladesh nearly two decades ago, the current assessment system is still heavily focused on written exams and tests (p. 331).

In a study using mixed methods they (ibid) tried to explore the inappropriateness of the traditional assessment practices, focusing on contemporary ELT classroom contexts. Data from the classroom observations, interviews and focus group discussions revealed that while in some cases teachers tried to implement formative practices, primarily summative assessments were practiced. Some of these directly clashed with the CLT approach, which emphasised the development of competence in four language skills. However, when the teachers tried to practice formative evaluation techniques, most often used question and answer techniques. These techniques included, “multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, close-ended questions, questions to individuals or to the whole class” (p. 337). While appearing encouraging, the data indicated that the CLT philosophy was not reflected in the test items, as Das et al. (ibid) suggested that an essential reform in ELT curriculum necessitated the integration of classroom pedagogy and assessment procedures that aligned with curriculum goals and could result in better communicative language learning in Bangladeshi context. Most of the participants in that study expressed dissatisfaction about the recent reforms and newly introduced assessment system (ibid). When they were asked about the recent SBA (school based assessment) system, which was formally introduced in 2007, one of the participants said, “...We know the system of SBA, but we do not have sufficient scope for organizing the system. We are being trained on SBA but

atmosphere is not ready” (p. 335). In SBA, students were assessed according to their classroom and school performances. Consequently, students’ performances in English sessions with CLT were also assessed. Begum and Farooqui (2008) were also concerned about the successful implementation of the SBA in Bangladesh contemporary context. They argued that although teachers and trainers were overall optimistic about this change, there was a broad apprehension among them about its misuse in the local context, particularly in rural areas. Searching for the reasons behind this concern, they quoted Rahman, Kabir and Afroz (2006) stating, “A program needs to work within the social and contextual realities of their environment” (p. 50), and therefore suggested that the Government needed to take into consideration the local constraints when introducing any change in educational assessment system.

Then, as discussed earlier, there were inadequate resources for the teachers to use in the classroom, even the textbooks were not adequately used to implement the CLT in Bangladesh. Das et al., (2014) argued that although new revised textbooks on the CLT were introduced in Bangladesh in 1997, it was necessary to use available material in the classrooms to achieve the curriculum goals. Similarly, Ali and walker (2014) in their report of the CLT argued that the introduction of the newly designed textbooks only was not enough and that training that focused on the implementation methods and compatible assessment were essential for the success of CLT in Bangladesh. They further argued that when CLT textbooks were introduced without teachers being adequately trained, it created much confusion among teachers. As the teachers did not know how to teach from those textbooks within the classroom contexts, the teachers and the students formed a negative attitude towards CLT. For example, in the textbooks, there were listening skill tasks but most of the teachers did not know how to teach those activities, and as a result ignored those tasks (ibid). In another study, Podder (2013) found that the lack of aural-oral resources in the textbooks and inadequate teacher training created an attitudinal gap, which reinforced examination-oriented education. Alam (2014) also confirmed that as some textbook activities could be avoided due to lack of relevance to the examinations, there was a tendency in both teachers and students to ignore those activities, especially in relation to literacy content.

Consequently, students were not exposed to the aesthetic pleasure and other benefits of literature when learning the targeted language. However, although recent textbooks included inter-cultural contexts that focused on creating the students' awareness of the world around (Siddique, 2011), the non-usage of the textbooks in the classrooms tended to extinguish the purpose of the curriculum goals.

Confusion about textbooks promoted dependency on guidebooks, which were supplementary texts to the textbooks published in Bangladesh that contained examples of examination questions and answers. Written in a fusion of Bangla and English language, those guidebooks featured a semiotic strategy, which generally produced a readymade solution for learning the English language and therefore greater ease in passing the examinations (Saha, 2013). In one study, which focused on English language learning guidebooks (ELLGs), Saha (2013) argued that such guidebooks were business-oriented. He also argued that guidebooks backed up the traditional form of education, which emphasised a memorisation and examination oriented culture, thus ignoring the CLT curriculum goals that emphasised a more progressive form of education.

Private tutoring and coaching centres also affected the natural flow of the mainstream education in Bangladesh, especially in rural areas (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009; MoE, 2012). As Bray (2013) called it "shadow education" (p. 18), the value and benefit of the private tutoring were widely argued and accepted on contextual needs and learners' achievements (Aurini, 2004; Bray, 2013; Davies, 2004). Although there were arguably many benefits of private tutoring, Hamid, Sussex and Khan (2009) contended that in the Bangladesh context it seemed more attitudinal than practical. In a study on private tutoring, they (ibid) evidenced that private tuitions and coaching centres focused solely on getting higher grades and passing examinations, even though the teachers and students were repeatedly blaming the schools for poor quality of English teaching. In reality, it was also considered to be a hidden social prestige to attend private tuitions and coaching centres (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009). This emphasised the socio-educational and

psychological issues rather than practical needs and focused on learner's rapid achievements that ignored the learner's actual ability.

Besides those, one of the most frustrating challenges, which confronted the Government of Bangladesh in recent years was the mass leakage of public examination question papers (AmaderShomoy, 2014; BSS, 2014; eduicon.com, 2013; Prothom-Alo, 2015; The Daily Star, 2015; The Independent, 2015; TIB, 2015; The New Nation, 2014). It became a common occurrence in educational and other occupational sectors in Bangladesh, over the last couple of years, occurring from primary to tertiary education as well as in some admission tests and public service examinations, (BSS, 2014; Karim, 2007; New Age, 2014; The Daily Sun, 2015; The Independent, 2008). The Independent (2015) articulated, "...it was probably never as rampant as it has been for the last few years" (p. 6). Estimations that 64 allegations of examination papers leak in four years were reported by The Daily Star (2015). This was not assisted by the advent of digital technologies such as social media like Facebook that easily facilitated communication (The New Nation, 2014). However, because the claims mostly come from the media, the Government ignored the situation and usually took no serious actions against them (The Independent, 2015). Although the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB, 2015) reported about that the policy-level's non-activeness in taking timely actions against leaking question papers, the problem remained unabated. The TIB (2015) strongly claimed that without the involvement of Government employees, many of whom were involved in setting the questions, printing and distribution phases, it was not possible and deemed appropriate to investigate those leakages. The TIB also observed that the fierce competition existed between various coaching centres and educational institutions to get higher achievement results, which repeatedly provoked that illegal trend. Traditional learning contexts, which were orientated only to pass of the examinations, created additional challenges. However, responding to the outcry of the people, the Government took some steps that included amending the laws to include increased punishments, developing eight sets of question paper for each of the examinations, changing the examination systems and putting restrictions on coaching centres and mass productions of guidebooks (bdnews24, 2016; Just

News, 2016, MoE, 2015; MoE, 2012; Prothom-Alo, 2016). As Nurul Islam Nahid, the contemporary Honourable Education Minister of Bangladesh in a press conference said, “No vested quarters now can leak question papers due to measures taken by the Government in this regard” (Just News, 2016, p. 1).

Government Initiatives

The studies outlined above and other scholarly views reflected the enormous concern about the learning of English language in Bangladesh and CLT as well. Evidence clearly indicated that the CLT approach was not functioning as it was designed to do. The question remained as to what action the Government and other agencies could take to address those issues. Subsequently, many projects were introduced that included ELTIP, SEQAEP, TQI, EIA, PACE, and BBC *Janala* for the development of English in Bangladesh (Begum, 2015; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014; EIA, 2009). One recent Government project called English in Action (EIA), specifically focused on the development of English in a more contemporary learning context, would be discussed in greater detail below.

EIA, an educational project, was scheduled to run from 2008 to 2017 with the goal of increasing the Bangladeshi English language learners’ communicative skills which would enable them to participate fully in economic and social activities and prospects (Ali & Walker, 2014; EIA, 2010; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014). At the very beginning, EIA carried out a baseline study to determine the current situation of English language learning in Bangladesh (EIA, 2009). Unlike previous studies, it sought to determine areas for improvement that considered the contextual needs for English language learning in Bangladesh. Aimed at promoting CLT in both primary and secondary schools, EIA implemented and studied a variety of interventions such as classroom materials including mobile phones, Internet, print-materials, television and peer-to-peer learning, and school based teacher support (EIA, 2016; Shrestha, 2013). The EIA model of mobile technology and classroom audio resources, which were often called “the trainer in your pocket” was a successful innovation for developing English language as many teachers appreciated it (Walsh et al., 2013, p. 187).

The comparison of the 2009, 2012 and 2014 studies resulted in EIA claiming that the program was running well and shifting teachers' traditional practices while also improving English language learners' competencies significantly. The reality, however, revealed a different perspective as the studies above indicated. Although there were many positive aspects of the project's interventions that included peer support, cluster meetings and wider project support through knowledge sharing and school visits, the question remained as to whether the context, especially in the rural areas, supported the introduction of ICT-based mobile technology for learning English language. Many schools were lacking electricity and most of the learners and the teachers did not have access to computers and internet, which made the assertions of the EIA open to debate. As Ali and Walker (2014) noted,

...just having the policy assumptions of a project is not enough. The policy assumptions need to reflect the goal of the national ELT curriculum of the country where the project is being under taken... for successful implementation of any project, like EIA, and also for the real innovation of an ELT curriculum in an EFL context, a socio-culturally and contextually appropriate national ELT policy is needed as part of the national ELT curriculum (p. 35).

Furthermore, all of the comparison studies (2009, 2012, 2014) had been carried out by the EIA, which was funded and manoeuvred by donor agencies. This meant that reports were often manipulated to solely focusing on the achievements, which sometimes hid or exaggerated the reality. Although it was argued that the activities of EIA or many other donor-funded educational projects brought some effective initiatives, which could function in some irregular settings, there was extreme concerns about English language learning in Bangladesh that made the findings of the EIA questionable. This could be also true for other donor-funded similar projects such as ELTIP, TQI-SEP, TQI-II, and A2I that appeared to be promising at policy levels but when applied failed to make adequate changes, as the above studies confirmed.

As a teacher educator in English language teaching area in Bangladesh, it seemed pertinent to reflect on my own experiences. Most notably, in the Bangladeshi context, especially in rural areas, many schools lacked functional electricity, teachers often lack confidence, and classrooms lacked adequate resources. Examination systems also encouraged memorisation and many parents were

illiterate and living in low-economic circumstances where students did not have access to computers and Internet. A significant number of the teachers did not have any computer knowledge and the teachers were not empowered to move freely in their classrooms with every step was determined at the policy level. The classroom learning was mostly teacher centred and student centred learning was considered only as pair work and group work. The teachers continuously needed to look for a more financially secure life ended up in illegal private tutoring or coaching centres. With all of those challenges the questions arises as to whether the context was one in which it was feasible to introduce CLT, especially given that its basis was in digital media content. It can also be questioned whether it was ethically appropriate to establish a single multimedia classroom in a school with more than 300 students, which would make ensuring equal opportunities for all students difficult within single multimedia classroom.

Studies, so far, appear to report that English language learning in Bangladesh is not fulfilling the nation's ESL goals (Ali & Walker, 2014; Alam & Kabir, 2015; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Rahman, 2015). This indicates that those projects did not working adequately to increase learners' English language competencies. But, as prescribed by the foreign donor agencies such as World Bank, IMF, ADB, Bangladesh needed to respond accordingly without having other options and without giving the context enough time to sufficiently prepare the grounds to accept the changes. Consequently, the context always tended to reject the positive aspects that were advocated by those projects. The teachers could often only recall the name of a training programme, but little was seen to be implemented in the classrooms (Alam & Kabir, 2015). It could be argued that postcolonial hegemony; that is, conflict between the context and western pedagogical approaches, and the manipulation of teaching and learning by western pedagogy has affected a developing country like Bangladesh. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Despite the Government's endeavour to bring the changes up to the expected level, there was little increase in learners' achievement levels to meet the national goals (Alam & kabir, 2015; Rahman, 2015). Most often students, especially those in rural areas, left the school with no working knowledge of the English language that

included a lack of listening skills and somewhat inappropriate speaking skills, few reading skills and inaccurate writing skills, all of which contradicted the CLT principles. As Abedin (2012) critiqued, “Is it the practice of CLT or disguised GTM” (p. 1). Similarly, in an interview on a recent homicide performed by a 12-year-old current student, a teacher regretted, “we did make students to pass the grades but could not make them true human beings” (Banglnews24, 2016, p. 01). A recent report of BANBEIS also claimed that although a large number of schools were supplied with digital resources, the number of trained teachers to handle those resources was decreasing substantially (bdnews24, 2016). This questioned whether it was adequate to supply digital resources only and build one multimedia classroom in a school, if the teachers and students were not ready to accept and use those items for their learning. Although all secondary schools have computers, a lack of teacher training and resistance to change often kept those computers in their boxes. However, although there were many related factors, in my opinion there was a hasty tendency on the Government’s side to adopt and implement new initiatives due to the time frame set by the foreign donor agencies. The government needs to cultivate the ground first before putting the seeds in; without the necessary preparation, there could be a strong chance that the ground might reject those seeds.

The aforementioned studies recommended various steps aimed at overcoming the challenges in English language learning, which would assist those seeds to grow. Key recommendations included:

1. enhance training and support for the teachers (regular professional development course)
2. reduce teachers’ authoritative positions (teacher centred) and increase learners’ autonomy (student centred)
3. change examination system/ balance between textbooks and test systems
4. invest more in secondary education
5. consider the contextual needs before adopting any new initiatives/ from different educational contexts

6. balance between traditional and more progressive approaches to teaching and learning
7. ensure supportive language learning atmosphere by more interactive sessions
8. reflect the national goals of learning English in the ESL curriculum
9. collaborate different stakeholders' acts when implementing the curriculum
10. be focused on the rural schools and disadvantaged students in making and distributing resources
11. reduce tensions between formal and informal education
12. enhance teacher educators' involvement with each of the schools for in-depth monitoring of teachers' and classroom activities
13. ensure more involvement of the community with the school
14. ensure teacher training courses to be more practical and equipped with the knowledge of global politics and power embedded in the English language

Regardless of the causes and what recommendations were made, it was evident that a more effective change management system was essential to empower the teachers. This would require greater collaboration with others when implementing a multi subject syllabus focusing on the bilingual policy. The application of the strategy needed to be practiced and more widely implemented in the Bangladeshi English language classrooms. However, as the Government of Bangladesh was trying to bring certain changes in the English language classrooms, a more thorough exploration of more contextual, creative and classroom-based experiential approaches seem appropriate.

Learning, Language Learning and Literacy

This section will examine fundamental theories of learning and in particular language learning. Theories that have had major impact in the last century include Pavlov's classical conditioning (Eggen & Kauchak, 2013; Pavlov, 1927/2009), Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Conkbayir & Pascal, 2014; Fraisse & Piaget, 1968), Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), Skinner's behaviourism (O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2001; Skinner, 1989), Chomsky's universal grammar and

language acquisition device (Chomsky, 1955, 2001, 2005, 2007), Gee's socio-cultural theories of language learning (Gee, 1992, 1999, 2001, 2012), Vygotsky's constructivism (Eun, 2016; Vigotsky, 1978), founded on the principles of communicative competence of Hymes (1971), Communicative Language Teaching further developed by Canale and Swain (1980), Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis (Eun, 2016; Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1988) , and Krashen and Terrel's Natural Approach (1983). However, although this list is not exhaustive and there are many more to explore, the literacy theory that Paulo Freire (Freire, 1996; Giroux, 2010) provides the theoretical framework for this study. In addition, the Chomskyan approach that is focused particularly on the socio-cultural theory of language learning and draws on the cognitive process of language learning (Yang, 2016) is also explored in relation to the study.

The publications including Richards and Rodgers, 2014; Toth and Davin, 2016; Eun, 2016; Mardani and Soleimani, 2016; Nejabat, 2016; Abdullah and Shah, 2015 and Howard and Millar, 2009 that incorporate theories that are pertinent to this study and these are also explored.

The overwhelming question regarding how one learns, became prominent in the language learning field especially during the second half of 20th century. As many specialists, linguists and other scholars presented numerous studies to understand the phenomenon of human language learning, there remains much debate surrounding this learning process.

Differences between Behaviourist and Cognitivist Views of Learning

It has been well documented that more many decades, human beings used the rote learning method for learning. In this process, it is believed that through repetition and incentives, learning can be easily stored in long-term memory. Pavlov, a Russian psychologist successfully carried out the most famous experiment called 'classical conditioning' where he discovered that a stimulus could make a non-stimulus create response when conditioned on demand (Pavlov, 1927/2009; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013). Pavlov did experiments on animals, although an American psychologist, John B. Watson included human beings in a similar study

(Mergel, 1998). Becoming the first person to use the term 'behaviourism,' Watson in his experiment confirmed that human behaviours could also be influenced by certain stimulus (ibid).

Later the Behaviourists expanded the theory by concentrating on open behaviours, where the outer actions were observed and measured quantitatively, thereby ignoring the process of inner thoughts (Skinner, 1989; Mergel, 1998). Skinner continued the research on behaviourism, introducing the concept of operant conditioning, which differed from Pavlov's classical conditioning. In operant conditioning, learning occurred through the process of trial and error, which included social exposure to external sources, such as modelling and practice (Skinner, 1989; O'Donohue & Ferguson, 2001). In his book, 'Verbal Behaviour,' Skinner argued that this pattern could also be used in language learning (Skinner, 1989). In this process, the language components essential to learn were identified along with the behaviour controlling variables, which were then analysed to determine how those bits interacted with the learners when followed by sufficient exposure to the outcomes. From a behaviourist viewpoint, all the learning should be acquired externally and a quantitative measurement could be performed accordingly to determine whether successful learning had occurred.

On the other hand, the Gestalt or cognitive psychologists opposed the behaviourist approach and focused on the organisation of cognitive processes. Derived from the German word 'Gestalt' or 'whole form,' the Gestalt theorists endeavoured to understand the world holistically not in fragments (Carlson, 2013). Unlike behaviourism, in Gestaltism, the focus is on the brain's ability to perceive the 'whole form' rather focusing on particular stimuli. Based on the principle of totality, the school of Gestalt theorists simply believe that the language learning process is internal rather than external. To further this view, in a theory called *cognitive development*, Piaget emphasised the effect of environmental experience on the development of human intelligence (Fraisie & Piaget, 1968). He believed that children form a view about of the context around them and adjust their ideas through assimilation and accommodation involving both understanding and

change. As learning, especially language learning takes place through cognitive development with the environment playing a key role in this process, the child-centred education or open education is the direct outcome of Piaget's cognitive development theory (Fraisie & Piaget, 1968; Conkbayir & Pascal, 2014). Moreover, Benjamin Bloom in his famous book, *Taxonomy of educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, clearly classified the educational learning objectives (Bloom, 1956). He argued that educational learning objectives must include cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (ibid), when designing the curriculum. In addition, by de-categorising those domains into various sub-categories, he also shows the stages of developing the skill of higher order thinking and creativity, which are the ultimate goals of education as well as language learning (Bloom, 1956; Shaw, 2008).

Of note among cognitive theorists is Noam Chomsky, who rejected the radical behaviourist theory of Skinner and introduced nativism (Chomsky, 1955). In Skinner's behaviourist view the mind was featured as a 'blank state' and therefore language was viewed as a learnt behaviour (Skinner, 1989). In contrast, in Chomsky's nativist view, it is believed that certain skills and abilities such as language were 'native' or in-built into the brain at the time of birth (Chomsky, 1955, 2001). Based on the bio-linguistics, in his more recent work on theoretical linguistics and cognitive studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Chomsky has argued that the structure of human language was biologically determined inside the human mind and genetically transmitted from generation to generation (Mergel, 1998). Unlike any other animals, language is a unique evolutionary human form of communication and in the Chomskyan approach, it is believed that human language possesses transformational generative grammar often termed as universal grammar, which is inbuilt as a cognitive module in the human brain (Chomsky, 1955; Thornbury, 2007). It is then fine-tuned by an individual's experience with his or her native language context (Chomsky, 1955, 2007). In the 'poverty of the stimulus' argument Chomsky argued that because of the universal grammar of language, a child can easily acquire at least one language during his or her childhood; whereas, household pets living and exposed to the same linguistic input or surroundings never acquire these skills (Chomsky, 1980).

Therefore, the inbuilt cognitive modules are responsible for certain human skills such as language (Chomsky, 1955, 2007). In the case of language, Chomsky named it, language acquisition device (LAD) through which human beings acquire language. However, this is only for language acquisition (oral) not for literacy acquisition (reading and writing). To learn reading and writing, a human child needs to go through rigorous steps. Consequently, as language acquisition is focused on the linguistics (language form, language meaning and language in context), not on the rules of language (grammar), the rules are important but the mechanisms, which the brain uses to form the rules of language, are more important and therefore are integral to the development of language-learning methodology (Chomsky, 2001, 2005, 2007).

Besides innateness, sociological and cultural factors also have important roles to play in the learning of a language (Toth & Davin, 2016; Chomsky, 2007). As the innate LAD needs to be triggered for language learning, it is important to create a learning context that provides learners opportunities to practice and play with the wide-ranging language skills. This suggests that socio-cognitive or cultural pedagogy could help inherent skills to flourish, which this study is focusing in language learning in the Bangladesh ESL context. However, like other theories, Chomsky's cognitive theory is not beyond criticism. Among the critics, Popper (1980) and Lews and Elman (2001) argued for the inborn or native form of human language and continued to argue that nativism could not be measured and often obscured to be falsifiable. Despite the critics, many empirical researchers use the Chomskyan learning model of language acquisition to form the theoretical basis for their research (Ramscar & Port, 2016; Toth & Davin, 2016; Ramscar & Yarlett, 2007). Arguing on the role of categorizing in language learning, Ramscar and Port (2015) stated that

... English speakers do not acquire discrete concepts of *tree* or *friend*, but rather they learn a system of linguistic contrasts, and they learn how to discriminate when to use the words *tree* (rather than *bush*, *oak* or *shrub*) or *friend* (rather than *buddy* or *pal*) in order to satisfy their communicative goals (p. 76).

A Shift from Cognitive to Socio-Cognitive Learning

Although there are many theories of second language acquisition and learning, the most discussed are the Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model, the Affective Filter and Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, and Acculturation Theory (Hite & Evans, 2006).

The Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model highlights the socio-linguistic, psycholinguistic and other linguistic aspects of language acquisition (Gass, 1988; Mackey et al., 2016). In comparison, a comprehensible input of the target language in non-threatening emotional environments is important in the Affective Filter and Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982; Toth & Davin, 2016), which are based on the Chomsky's learning models of language acquisition. In the Acculturation Theory, the learner's social and psychological participation with the target language group is emphasised (Schumann, 1986; Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Jia et al., 2016). Although there are many arguments about language acquisition and learning, none of the theories appear to be complete on their own. Many issues remain unresolved, possibly due to the interdisciplinary nature of the language-learning field. Overall, in the case of second language learning, a shift from the cognitive learning approach is apparent, as the 'socio-cognitive learning approach' (Toth & Davin, 2016) has become more prominent.

In cognitive language learning approach, the focus was mostly on mental processes; however, in the socio-cognitive approach the focus shifted towards the social aspects of second language learning. In both theories, the influence of second language learners' socio-linguistic settings are emphasised (Block, 2003). For example, in the Schumann's Acculturation model where learners' ultimate second language learning occurs when social factors and psychological factors function meaningfully in between the learners and targeted the second language community (Schumann, 1986; Jia et al., 2016). Similarly, in Gardner's Socio-educational model, the learners' ability, motivation and cultural context play an important role in learning another culturally distinct language successfully (Gardner, 2010).

Other theoretical models such as the Inter-Group model, Language Socialization approach and Norton's theory of Social Identity attempt to define the connections between languages, identity and power as well (Ellis, 2012). Accordingly, the findings in second language learning research are varied and contradictory. As Mitchell, Myles and Marsden (2013) argue, synthesising all theories into a single model has never eventuated as no theory has rejected any previous one completely but instead has acknowledged the contribution that some have made to more current views. In recent years, a more applied form of linguistics (Poehner & Infante, 2016) and second language learning approaches, which include the socially engaged perspective have become popular (Pennycook, 1994; Block, 2003).

Translanguaging (Code-Switching) and Blended Language Teaching in Bangladesh

Because of so many multicultural, multilingual and multinational people living across the world now days, a new terminology 'Translanguaging' emerged in case of transnational bilingual users (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). Although the terms that include code-meshing, code-switching, code-mixing, language transfer, and cross-linguistic influences have also been often used and discussed by the scholars of multilingualism, more recently translanguaging emerged in relation to the bilingual education (Agoli, 2015; Carstens, 2016; Kwon & Schallert, 2016; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016; Willy & Garcia, 2016). Growing challenges that arose from of globalisation and diversification (Semiante, 2016) resulted in the call for a "multilingual awareness pedagogy" (Garcia, 2008, p. 451) that developed translanguaging practices (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). Moreover, arguing for translanguaging, Garcia and Wei (2014) challenged the Saussurian notions of formal system of language and Chomsky's theory of one universal grammar, instead supporting Bakhtin's heteroglossia, which focuses on the linguistic contexts (Rivera-Amezola, 2015; Adamson & Coulson, 2015).

As a concept and practicing pedagogy, translanguaging, encourages the co-use of first and second language in any bilingual context especially in the classrooms (Adamson & Coulson, 2015; Carstens, 2016; Song, 2016). Garcia (2009) argued

that, as language is a resource for making meanings, translanguaging implies the knowledge of multiple languages and dialects as linguistic resources of a single language system that an individual uses to make meaning achieving own linguistic objectives (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). As such, users freely move across the languages choosing words or sentences as required. It is like, in an interaction, L1, L2 and more languages are flexibly and strategically used to create and negotiate the aimed meaning (Adamson & Coulson, 2015; Song, 2016). Translanguaging encapsulates code-switching, translating, brokering languages and interpreting when communicating between culturally diverse individuals (Daniel & Pacheco, 2015; Gort & Sembiante, 2015).

The use of translanguaging theory in practice by many recent scholars (Carstens, 2016; Kwon & Schallert, 2016; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016; Song, 2016; Willy & Garcia, 2016) points towards its growing significance in promoting language learning. In the same way, Gort and Sembiante (2015) addressed the recent global context as containing hybridised language learning spaces and suggested translanguage pedagogy for language learning. As “a growing view of bilingualism being an advantage rather than a disadvantage” (Carstens, 2016, p. 206), “this paradigmatic change supplants decades of schooling”, where bilingual students are discouraged to use home language in the classroom (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 450).

Translanguaging offers a deeper understanding of the content, healthy home-school relationship, development of the second language, as well as the opportunity to develop and establish multilingual identities and a strategy to promote literacy (Carstens, 2016; Kasula, 2016; Makalela, 2015; Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016). Garcia (2011) also claimed that “translanguaging is an essential meta-cognitive regime for students of the twenty-first century students” by which they critically assess the context when communicating (as cited in Carstens, 2016, p. 206). As a result, translanguaging practice not only encourages the learning of two and more languages, it also expands and enriches students learning in both academic and non-academic settings by creating opportunities for the students to move freely among languages, negotiating and constructing

appropriate meaning for a context (Song, 2016). studies in different contexts, such as, Adamson and Coulson (2015) in a Japanese university students' context, Carstens (2016) in a South African university students' context, Daniel and Pacheco (2015) in a US school context, Kasula (2016) in a Hawaiian (US) online context, Kwon and Schallert (2016) in a Korean adult literacy context, Song (2016) in a Korean school context and Stewart and Hansen-Thomas (2016) in a US secondary school context, found evidence that the practice of translanguaging in a classroom context enhances multilingual students language productivity, creativity and criticality as well as supports their learning. However, Garcia (2009) suggests, "Translanguaging pedagogies must begin from the bottom up or build on the actual language practices of multilingual students" (as cited in Daniel & Pacheco, 2015, p. 654).

In the Bangladesh school context, although there are few studies focusing on translanguaging practices, some studies have reported on the medium of instructions of the university classrooms (Akhter, 2008; Chaudhury, 2013; Hamid, Jahan & Islam, 2014; Sultana, 2014). These studies found that in many tertiary level sessions, the teachers and students often switch between Bangla and English languages in order to understand the content and meaning, which encourages blended teaching. However, in the typical Bangladeshi context, Hasan and Akhand (2015) argue that ordinary people ignorantly switch codes thinking the switched language as native; whereas, the higher class of the society switch codes mainly adopting with the notion of modernisation. Although the wave of translanguaging has not moved the whole Bangladesh context, it already engulfs a major portion of the media as we have seen in the Chapter 2.

To take the wave of translanguaging to the Bangladesh secondary school ESL classroom, this study introduces *the translator*, a support device in interactive exercises. Detail about the process of translator is presented in chapter 5. It was introduced to legitimise the code switching in the classroom as the Government still cherishes the notion of using English language only in the English classroom. Because translanguaging encourages code-switching, translating, and brokering languages (Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Daniel & Pacheco, 2015), the strategic use of

translation in the ESL classroom would create opportunities for the students to be creative and critical when making contextual meaning.

As the latest trends try to focus more on the ESL contexts and the learners' engagement in learning, both the interactionist and socio-cultural research posit how learners' interactions with the context affect their learning opportunities and how they use such experiences (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013) to learn the target language. Thus, the theories of second language learning are continuing to be a focus for many scholars in the field. The following section discusses the ESL learning approaches and recent classroom practices.

ESL Learning Methods and Approaches

The consequence of differing theoretical perspectives discussed above is that various classroom-teaching practices have emerged for the learning of a second language. Among these the most discussed and implemented approaches are the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the Structural Approach, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach (Abdullah & Shah, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Su & Tian, 2016; Yang, 2016). However, most of the more recent language teaching practices and issues need to be contextualized within the history of language teaching (Howatt, 1984; Kelly, 1969). In the history of language teaching and learning whether it was a bilingual or multilingual context, second or foreign language learning was often a challenge for the learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The oldest of all these methods is the GTM, which was widely introduced 500 years ago in the time of learning Latin, the most dominant language of that time for education, business, religion and offices (ibid). It was deemed desirable for students to learn Latin besides their mother tongue, therefore learning grammar and translation dominated the learning of a second language and foreign language. Richards and Rodgers (2001, 2014) argued that, as the focus is to develop the understanding of the literary texts only, the GTM ignored the need for applied linguistics. The learners needed to memorise endless lists of mostly impractical grammatical rules and vocabulary thereby ignoring speaking skills, which often created apprehension for the learners about their oral language skills in the target

language (ibid). However, Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Khan and Mansoor (2016) claim that the Grammar Translation Method is still widely practised for the learning of a second or foreign language without any advocacy or research-based evidence.

Towards the middle of the 19th century a new trend demanded more practical approaches, including oral proficiency when learning a second language (Crookes, 2016). A language reform movement occurred and linguists became interested in the more practical task based approach of second language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In general, the reformers agreed to believe that:

- “the spoken language is primary and that this should be reflected in an oral-based methodology
- the findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training
- learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written form
- words should be presented in sentences, and sentences should be practiced in meaningful contexts and not be taught as isolated, disconnected elements
- the rules of grammar should be taught only after the students have practised the grammar points in context- that is, grammar should be taught inductively
- translation should be avoided, although the native language could be used in order to explain new words or to check comprehension.” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 10).

Consequently, second language teaching and learning become more applied with greater student interaction, and as a result, the target language become more meaningful to the learners (Lee, Ardeshiri & Cummins, 2016). Moreover, the positive relationship between enjoyment and learning (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016; Zosh et al., 2016) and interactive approaches that encouraged spontaneous learning using various tasks (East, 2012) caused a shift in paradigm from deductive grammar teaching to inductive grammar teaching, thus forming the theoretical basis to many of the recent second language teaching-learning methods.

Recently, the use of Dynamic System Theory (DST), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) Model, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) Model, Language Corpora in second language learning, Ecological Model, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Model, the need of Bilingual Policy, Redefining Translation Method, and attitudes to L1 in ESL/EFL context have also been widely discussed in second language field (Chua, 2011; Erling, 2015; East, 2015; Kim & Petraki, 2009; Li, Wang, & Liu (2016); Mozayan, 2015; McMillan, 2011; Quinones-Guerra, 2016; Rosmawati, 2013). These theories considerably focus on the cognitive development in language learning as well as its functionality, and therefore puts emphasis on the natural contextual learning. Consequently, in Bangladesh, as it is also essential to look for new practices that focus on the contextual needs and functional aspects of language learning, such models could be used for expected changes.

Although these identified approaches derive from different contexts, most of them feature similar philosophical and pedagogical links specifically on the practical sides of learning. One of these, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (Hamid & Honan, 2012, Howard & Millar, 2009; Yang, 2016), will be discussed next as the Government of Bangladesh introduced this approach in the secondary school classrooms for teaching and learning English as a second language. This current study also mirrors the CLT approach, which encourages interactive and participatory classrooms.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach

Based on the notion of a language learner's need to understand and communicate, the CLT approach is focused on the communicative function of the intended language rather than reciting and memorising the grammatical rules and vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014; Wilkins, 1972, 1976; Yang, 2016). Derived from the theory of language as communication, the aim of CLT is to enhance learners' communicative competence through the development of four language skills (Ahmed, 2016; Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 2003; 2001; TQI-SEP, 2006; Yang, 2016). This contrasts Chomsky's theory of competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014) where the focus is on the learners' knowledge of language

(competence) and the generative grammar or syntax of a language, which ignored the use of it (performance).

Hyme (1972), in his Communicative Competence theory, argues that the language learner needs to communicate competently in the target language; whereas, more traditional methods refer to linguistic or grammatical competence. Hyme continues arguing and highlights that while learning a second language, a communicative competent person has both knowledge and ability to use the language (ibid). In this argument on the communicative competence or the functions of language, scholars like Halliday (1970), Widdowson (1978), Brumfit and Johnson (1979), Canale and Swain (1980), Littlewood (1981; 1984), Johnson (1982; 1984), Savignon (1983), and Skehan (1998) also strongly supported the importance of interactive activities that engage communication, carryout meaningful language practice and create meaningful language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014).

In “learner-centred approaches such as CLT” (Hamid & Honan, 2012, p. 139), language activities need to be chosen in a way that enables the learners to be engaged to create a meaningful and authentic language to use in the real life context (Wingate, 2016). Therefore, the CLT approach clearly emphasises these second language-learning principles (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Littlewood (1981) states,

One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view (p. 1).

Task-based language teaching is emphasised as CLT focuses on the phenomenological perspective of learning by doing and the notion that language learning not only depends on the mechanical practice of language patterns but also the ability to use the language in real life situations for communication (Ahmed 2016; East, 2015, Hymes, 1972; Hiep, 2007; TQI-SEP, 2006). In view of that, the CLT not only focuses on communicative competence, but also incorporates the grammatical rules, sociolinguistics, discourses and strategic uses of the language in different contexts as well (Hyme, 1972; Hasan & Akhand, 2009).

However, when comparing the language acquisition and language learning, it is apparent that Krashen does not agree on the CLT principles directly. Krashen and other second language acquisition theorists characteristically put emphasis on the communicative use of the target language when learning a second language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, 2014). Therefore, as CLT is based on the theoretical concept of communicative competence, it does not focus only on accuracy, but primarily on fluency in communication (Ahmed, 2016; Savignon, 2003; TQI-SEP, 2006). It is widely agreed that, the main purpose of a language is to make successful communication with others (Aryal et al. 2016, Thornbury, 2016). To achieve learners' communicative competence, CLT focuses on the linguistic form, social context, interpretation and the function of the language in diverse situations (Savignon, 2003).

Although CLT is highly accepted and widely used in the non-English speaking countries as an approach to develop English as a second language (Dashwood & Son, 2007; Hiep, 2007; Howard & Millar, 2009; Mangubhai, et. al. (2007); Nishimura, 2000; Ochoa et al., 2016; Savignon, 2003; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996; Zhang, 1997), English-speaking countries such as the UK, US and the European Union (EU) also use this approach to teach ESL learners from diverse backgrounds (Anderson, 2008; Carlo et al., 2004; Hite & Evans, 2006; Sirota & Bailey, 2009; Safford & Costley, 2008; Savignon, 2003).

In spite of CLT being highly acclaimed, Nawi (2014) argued that the achievement level of CLT was largely inconsistent in the Malaysian urban and rural context at the time of adaptation. He reported,

...through the years of implementation of CLT in the Malaysian school context, English proficiency has been on the decline, throughout the 80s, 90s, and the year 2000 and beyond (p. 50).

Furthermore, by citing Chandrasegaran (1980), Murugesan (2003), and Talif & Edwin (1990), Nawi (ibid) also identified some specific causes for this underachievement of CLT approach in Malaysian context. Likewise, Rao (2001) argued that CLT was facing difficulties in achieving the language learning goals in China. It is also seen that in Bangladesh, CLT is not working to the expected level

in terms of achieving learners' communicative competencies (Ahmed, 2016; Ali & Walker, 2014; Alam & Kabir, 2015; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Khan, Hasan & Clement, 2012; Rahman, 2015,).

In a discussion of the limitations of task-based language teaching, East (2015) identified two folds of CLT that included weak and strong (with direct grammar and without direct grammar) and questioned the variety of interpretations of CLT as an overarching methodological approach to language teaching. Similarly, Wingate (2016) argued that CLT "could be called grammar translation in communicative disguise" (p. 12), as many teachers use pair or group work for teaching grammar only ignoring the opportunities of communicative language practices that underpin CLT.

In contrast, Savignon (2003) argued that CLT can be undermined in practice by focusing excessively on the learners' oral fluency. She stated that in most cases this is not true to the CLT approach. It is the procedures of implementation and evaluation, which create such disparity. In a similar voice, East (2015) suggested that any task-based methodology such as CLT "needs to be supported by instructions" (p. 8). In the Malaysian context, Nawi (2014) advocates more activities with a hands-on approach to contextual learning such as drama to make a positive difference. Rao (2001) argued, "EFL countries like China needed to modernise and, not westernise, English teaching" (p. 85). Similarly, Howard & Millar (2008) highlighted the contextual needs by suggesting,

...it is important that policy-makers are clear about the role and status of English in their localized setting and define communicative competence for this context. They also need to determine whether the goal of communicative competence in English is necessary for all students and, if not, what alternative language goals are appropriate. The best pedagogical framework for achieving these desired language goals then needs to be identified (p. 72).

Subsequently, many countries have contextualised CLT to make it relevant. Japan has reformed the curriculum and Hong Kong and Costa Rica have changed public examination systems and curriculum. Taiwan has shifted into a bilingual environment with all road signs in English and Chinese and the EU have shifted their focus on learner autonomy in language education (Hiep, 2007; Howard &

Millar, 2009; Nishimura, 2000; Sakura, 2001; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2003; Zhang, 1997).

Focusing on the communicative syllabus (communicative challenges and engagement), classroom activities (classroom as social context) and overall on learners' needs, CLT could be made more learner-centred and functional (Johnson and Johnson, 1998; Littlewood, 1981; Prabhu, 1987; Savignon, 2003; Wilkins, 1976; Wingate, 2016). Overall, considering some changes, CLT is still considered to be one of the most acceptable approaches to support the second language learners (Aryal et al., 2016; Howard & Millar, 2008; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the Bangladeshi context, a modification to CLT may be needed in an effort to develop confidence to use the target language in authentic contexts.

Use of Drama as an Interactive Pedagogy to Facilitate Language Learning

“The term Drama comes from the classical Greek word *drao*, means ‘I do,’ ‘I struggle’ (Sharma, 2015, p. 279). In general, drama is a particular form of imaginary situation that comes with formal performance in the theatre. Drama comes with the notion of “let’s pretend” for another person or situation (Davies, 1990, p. 87). However, as this discussion is not about formal staged drama but drama as an interactive pedagogy for language-learning classroom, the focus is all about on the classroom dramatic activities.

Using drama in the classroom teaching is generally called Drama-in-Education (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). As the classroom activities are not the formal drama, Maley and Duff (1984, 2005) adopt specific drama techniques, which the actors use in formal dramas, to the classroom context. By drama techniques, they mean dramatic activities, which create opportunities for the students to use their own personalities, draw their own ways, and create whatever they like according to the language session's needs. These could be simply vocalising vowels to complex role playing and overcoming problems in the role. However, “they also assure that the ‘dramatic techniques’ are not a substitute for psychoanalyst’s couch (Stevick, 1979, p. 201). In their study, Maley and Duff (1984) point out the value of dramatic activities by stating that “the value of these activities lies not in what they lead up

to but in what they are, in what they bring out right now” (Maley & Duff, 1984: 6 as cited in Davies, 1990).

Di Pietro (1983) suggested a more structured form of teaching where students take thematically cohesive scenarios and develop dialogues as they go along. There should be at least two interacting roles in each scenario and Di Pietro called this pedagogy the strategic interaction method (Nawi, 2014). However, in a learning situation, where both the students and teacher work together in and out of the role, this is called process drama. In a notable publication, Kao & O’Neill (2015) analyse process drama in detail within the Taiwan context. They argued that if the continuum is followed, which starts from scripted dialogues, role-play, process through dramatic story, language games, simulations, improvisational role-play, scenarios and finally ending in process drama, this process can make L2 learners engaged improving fluency in communication (ibid, p. 6). Process drama can also be used to teach other languages, whether it is a first language or an additional language (Mogos & Politi, 2008; Piazzoli, 2011).

Another kind of drama technique, which is also adopted to make classroom learning interactive, is called Creative Drama (Cruz et. al., 2010; McCaslin, 1990). In creative drama, without any formal scripts or memorisation, the students are free to develop drama, as they like, from their own thoughts, imaginations, and emotions (McCaslin, 1990). In the same way, Batdi and Batdi (2015) stated, “creative drama includes improvisation, movement and rhythms and is created on the spot not memorised or scripted” (p. 1460). As such, students’ spontaneous self-expression is evident (McCaslin, 1990). As the students create a drama and perform a story that they learnt previously, this improvisational and natural process provides them with opportunities to further analyse the information and form personal meaning from it (Arieli, 2007, cited in Batdi & Batdi, 2015). As creative drama encourages students’ active involvement in the learning situation, students learn from sociological perspectives, which often provides confidence to more quieter students, enabling them to become more engaged with the content (Ceylan, et. al., 2015).

Studies have also found that the use of dramatic activities in language learning classrooms enhances learners' language learning skills (Ballman, 2008; Bell, 2009; Gill, 2016; Mages, 2008; Miccoli, 2003; Rieg & Paquette, 2005). As Froebel emphasised on the child's playing time for the human development in the child, it is the purest form of experiences through which the soul explores the reality and relationships within (Sharma, 2015). Therefore, in dramatic situations, the child discovers life through performances and struggles of the roles (ibid). As a result, students' socio-linguistic development is often enhanced through the using of drama in the classroom (Cylan, 2015; Cruz et. al., 2010; Gill, 2016; Guner & Uygun, 2016; Miccoli, 2003; Teke & Gedizli, 2016). In a study on Asian ESL students, Gill (2016) found that using drama techniques in ESL classroom enhanced student's oral proficiency. The students, who are apprehensive about using English, gradually develop communication skills through drama. Similarly, in a Brazilian study, Miccoli (2003) argued that using drama not only enhanced students' language skills but also enhanced transformative learning. Consequently, classroom drama increased students' literacy understanding by offering opportunities to use their strengths in recreating and analysing text stories that resulted in greater understanding and a considerable effect on achievement levels (Adomat, 2009; Batdi & Batdi, 2015). In addition, in an in-role situation as the students could not make mistakes, only the roles could make mistakes, it gave them freedom to enjoy the language practice.

Through dramatic activities, as the students become more creative and able to analyse person/ situation more critically, it also opens opportunities for the teachers to use multiple learning styles to make the learning more effective (Batdi & Batdi, 2015). Although many teachers often try not to take drama in the classroom excusing a lack of training, dramatic activities often can be adopted in the classroom with regular classroom teachers without any special training (Miccoli, 2003). Miccoli (2003) also suggests that building trust between the teachers and students could result in effective language development when using drama in ESL classrooms. In the current study, I adopt the view of process drama as well as creative drama when developing the teaching resource. Most of the classroom dramatic activities are created using textbook contents; however,

sometimes drama is developed upon students previously learnt concepts. It was always an effort, when I tried to go beyond the textbook, which directly coincides with the research objectives. Accordingly, in the Bangladeshi context, a modification to the ESL teaching may be considered in an attempt to develop confidence to use the language in real contexts.

Learning the Confidence to Use a Second Language

Reading the word, Reading the world (Freire & Mecedo, 1987 as cited in Luke, 2012, p. 5) reflect the Freirean view on literacy. Literacy is not about decoding, and encoding only, it is all about having freedom to learn the confidence to use language in order to achieve one's purpose. Freire (2005) states,

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanistically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands: it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllable, -lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe-but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context. (p. 42)

Based on Freire's (1970/2006) critical pedagogy, literacy has to generate critical consciousness in the learners' intellect through which they can attain power to distinguish and react accordingly to social and political issues (Stillar, 2013; Espinoza-Gonzales et al., 2014). This involves the capacity to enter into the dialogue to take an individual stance, and to expect the societal change when appropriate.

As a practice of freedom, education should encourage learners to discuss any problem in the context, warn them about the dangers of the time, offer them courage to confront these challenges, and uphold their positions while respecting others in decision making (Brown & Perry, 2011; Freire, 2005; Kirylo, 2012). Reflecting on Freire's views, Giroux (2011) stated:

Freire believed that education, in the broadest sense, was eminently political because it offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life, and critical agency"..."the educational movement guided by both passion and principle to help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize

authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power, and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice, and democracy (p. 154-153).

Freire (2005) also argued that the traditional curriculum, which lacked “concrete activity and disconnected from life could never develop a critical consciousness” (p. 33). As “the critical consciousness is integrated with the reality” (p. 39), the acts of creation and re-creation make the cultural reality and add to the natural world. Moreover, an active dialogue, which involves “communication and intercommunication” (p. 40), can increase “critical understanding” (p. 41). Therefore, an education system demands “instead of a teacher, a coordinator; instead of lectures, dialogue; instead of pupils, group participants; instead of alienating syllabi, compact programs that were ‘broken down’ and ‘codified’ into learning units” (p. 38). Moreover, he suggests an active critical pedagogy, where

...the educator's role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down; but only from the inside out; by the illiterate himself; with the collaboration of the educator (p. 43).

According to Giroux (2011) Freirean critical pedagogy offers learners the “opportunity to read, write and learn from a position of agency” (p. 154) from where he/ she could question personal experiences and obtain meaning of the social facts. Unlike traditional approaches, such critical pedagogy shifts the focus from teachers to students and makes the relationship among knowledge, authority and power noticeable to all the learners. Giroux (2011) stated,

...it was about offering a way of thinking beyond the seeming naturalness or inevitability of the current state of things, challenging assumptions validated by “common sense,” soaring beyond the immediate confines of one’s experiences, entering into a dialogue with history, and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present (p. 155).

An interactive learning context, which creates more freedom for the learners to learn and participate in discourse, can enhance personal confidence with the use of the targeted language (Brown & Perry, 2011). Giroux (2011) said, “Under such circumstances, knowledge is not simply received by students, but actively transformed, open to be challenged, and related to the self as an essential step

towards agency, self-representation, and learning how to govern rather than simply be governed” (p. 156). Empowering students also encourages them to learn the process of engagement in critical dialogues with others and to be responsible for their views (Porter & Yahne, 2008; Dillon, 2008).

The views discussed above suggest that education provide learners with the opportunity to learn by being involved in dialogue and discourse and respecting each other through the development of critical consciousness, which could have a positive effect on the contemporary challenges in life (Mustakova-Possardt, 2011; Stillar, 2013; Brown & Perry, 2011). The ESL classrooms that create opportunities for learners’ engagement, to have fun, to be creative and to enhance criticality can have an impact on the learning outcomes (Abednia & Izadinia, 2012). Freire equally argues that

it is not possible to think of education without thinking about ‘power,’ the authentic education must be socially and politically transformative as a liberating process that embodies a theory of knowledge put into practice (praxis) aimed at contributing to the emergence, development and maintenance of a just society (Quinn, 2009, p. 83-84).

In a similar voice, Gramsci (1971) asks the question in his Notebooks:

...is it better to ‘think,’ without having a critical awareness..., or on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one’s own conception of the world?... revolutionaries need to be critical and make it clear that the starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is... (p. 323).

Critical consciousness offers the ability to view the world beyond existing context, “as Freire (1997) says, critical literacy is an alteration in the ways of thinking to recognise what is real and what is an illusion” (Rasheed, 2013, p.96).

As literacy holds a certain ‘power status’ (Datta, 2007), negotiating the power relationship both at an interpersonal level and at a wider societal level language plays an important role (Rasheed, 2012, p. 32). However, since hegemony has a big rapport with power relationships, critical consciousness is also essential to prevent hegemony and to ensure balance in society and in the world. Foucault’s ‘critical philosophy,’ Andreotti & Souza’s (2008) ‘other eyes’, Gramsci’s (1971) ‘ideological hegemony’, McCowan’s (2009) ‘global citizenship education’,

Battiste's (2008) Eurocentric Knowledge (EK) and Indigenous Knowledge (IK), Altbach (1975) 'distributed unequally', and Pike's (2008) 'legend', all argue the relationship between hegemony and power and place emphasis on the development of critical consciousness (Rasheed, 2012). Similarly, focusing on the Bangladesh educational context, Greenwood et al. (2015) and Kabir (2012) argue that there is a neo-liberal hegemony in global higher education and hope for a fair academic trade, which would focus on both of the local and global context. Greenwood et al. (2015) are optimistic when they argue,

... collaborative critique and support for developing research that is thought to be relevant to students' home country needs is an important element in creating an academic trade that is two-sided and fair (p. 16).

Although Greenwood et al. (2015) is referring to higher education, it is equally important to the Bangladesh secondary education context. Secondary education of Bangladesh often viewed as loaded with numerous challenges, and many of them arise as a result of ignoring the contextual needs when implementing any changes recommended from the foreign donor agencies. In the later part of this chapter, the influence of foreign donor agencies on developing countries education system is explored. However, to cope with global hegemony, scholars have recommended a change in classroom practices. Challenging the existing ESL teaching practice, Greenwood et al. (2015) look forward to a change in the classroom practice where textbooks could provoke curiosity, engagement, and the early criticality in students so that they experiment with the target language rather receiving the instructions passively. This implies that, changes in the Bangladesh secondary ESL classrooms could bring practical outcomes in learner's ability to use the language in everyday life.

In recent times, philosophical and theoretical discourses in education appear to have shifted and focused more on 'meaning' or 'knowing' the reality and on generating 'ways of knowing' and 'ways of seeing' (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013, p. viii). In a discussion on educational research, O'Toole and Beckett (2013) argue that as the intensity and ambiguity of meaningfulness often lies within the social, personal and even idiosyncratic human experience, it is essential to consider the complex and unique context for designing new teaching and training strategies

and practising a variety of learning styles. As a result, in the last century a paradigm shift and many changes in the school classroom practices are visible. From traditional to activity based and practices based on socio-cultural principles have become popular. Among them Dewey's (1956) child-centred, experiential and discovery learning in the USA; Newsom's report (1963) and Bruner (1977) inspire process-learning in the UK; and in Australia, Garth Boomer's (1981) negotiated-curriculum become commonplace (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Similarly, in the Bangladeshi ESL context the traditional GT method has been replaced by the activity based CLT approach, so as this study focus on to make ESL classrooms more interactive.

Therefore, to the curriculum developers, key words like 'lifelong learning,' 'creativity' and 'employability' have become more pragmatic with the key competencies such as involvement and collaborative skills encouraging teamwork, communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution when preparing classroom activities for new global citizens. Driven by 'curiosity' these need to encourage the 'creative ways of seeing' (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013, p. 5).

Based on the Freirean concept of literacy, bell hooks (1994), an American author, feminist and social-activist, puts forward a pedagogy entitled "engaged-pedagogy" to counteract student passivity and authoritarian pedagogical orientations" (Florence, 1998 p. 79). Following the Freirean critical pedagogy, it contrasts with the "traditional transfer-of-knowledge" approach as well (ibid, p. 79). In the book *"Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice for Freedom"* hooks (1994) defines 'engaged pedagogy', as characterising reflective and critical ways of thinking to social realities. It also re-conceptualises knowledge based learning to more practice oriented learning that encourages students' empowerment, passion, and multiculturalism. Although there are negative connotations of "transgress", hooks uses the word for this pedagogy to mean a breakthrough of barriers or moving beyond the limitations or going against the conventional moral codes (Florence, 1998, p. xvii). Following the Freirean slogan 'Education as a Practice of Freedom,' hooks also highlights the importance of an educational system that counteracts authoritative passive learning; and by upholding

multicultural views encourages “a more active engagement and critical interrogation” (Florence, 1998, p. 85).

Consequently, to make a link between theory and practice, engaged-pedagogy primarily focuses on the empowerment of students incorporating their experiences and community involvement, thus generating learners’ passion for learning and engagement (Florence, 1998).

As “dialogue is the central to a transformative pedagogy” (Florence, 1998, p. 110) in classroom practices, hooks argues against the concept of fixed pedagogy and always encourages flexibility and aptness. She states,

We communicate best by choosing [that] way of speaking that is informed by the particularity and uniqueness of whom we are speaking to and with... the engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself (Florence, 1998, p. 132).

As engaged pedagogy opposes the ‘banking approach’ (Freire, 1970; Straubhaar, 2014) to education, it encourages more interaction between teacher and students in the classroom focusing on the enhancement of critical consciousness. However, it is not beyond limits. Similar to the Freirean theory of education, it has received much critique. Scholars such as Beyer (1995), Harris (1995), Noddings (1995b), Nieto (1996) and Perkinson (1991) critiqued this pedagogy arguing that it has little effect on students’ achievements, and not enough for social reform (Florence, 1998). Critics also like to claim this theory as utopian with too much involvement in political influences (Roberts, 2015). Despite the critics, it is quite apparent that the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic views are dominating recent practices in most of the countries. To conceptualise the knowledge and link the theory to practice through creating the opportunity to learn freely, these interactive approaches could play an influential role to change many ESL classroom practices (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013; Florence, 1998; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Watson, 2014). To highlight the practicality of interactive approaches Greenwood et al. (2015) state that it is essential for a classroom to offer opportunities for “the students to take role, to play with fictional contexts, to draw on the sum of their accumulated language knowledge, to apply what the textbook offered to new contexts and to feel safe in trying out language patterns and in making mistakes”

(p. 13). Consequently, the textbook would become alive and “beginning to develop students’ inquisitiveness, their creativity and even their critical awareness of language as a tool for communication rather than as merely a subject for examination” (p. 13). Furthermore, interactive strategies which are developed by Nawi (2014) to work in Malaysian context as well as Greenwood’s (2005) for creating rapport, suggest that interactive pedagogy or participatory approaches could bring changes in the classroom context resulting in more functional outcomes in second language learning. The main focus is on the freedom to learn and to grow to be the successful second language users, so as this study is focusing on.

Recent Global Position of English Language and the Decisive Consequences on Bangladesh Context (Socio-Economical-Cultural)

The term lingua franca suggests that English was not the world’s number one language (Hammond, 2014). Just 500 years back, French was the dominating language for international communication. However, with the rise of the British Empire, the sailors, soldiers, tradesmen and missionaries have primarily taken the English language throughout the world (ibid). A popular saying “the sun never sets on the British Empire” would provide the glimpse of the fact. Although the sun has set on the Empire, the English language still continues as a dominating language in every single former British colony (Hammond, 2014).

Without the rise of USA, the “world’s language landscape” would have been different (Hammond, 2014, p. 3). After the two World Wars, booming US business, technology, industry, and cultural sectors have assisted the British leftover English language around the world to become the most popular choice of global medium of communication (Hitchings, 2012; Hall, 2011).

In a similar voice, citing Crystal (1997), Nunan (2003) argued that English became global because of its special role as the language of business, education, science, technology, Internet, entertainment and even sports. He also argued that “more than 50% of the millions of academic papers published each year are written in English, and the percentage is growing year by year” (p. 590) and in particular

fields, English becomes the “universal language of communication” (p. 590). Consequently, considering its global acceptance Birch (2009) states,

The notion that English language belongs to the Americans or the Britons is very narrow-minded. English is now the language of the world (p. 17).

However, although there is no doubt about the unabated popularity and therefore a global use of English language in today’s world, Pennycook (2013) expressed concern about the cultural politics that support English as an international language. She contends that language relates to inequality in the recent global context and shows how the very term international language becomes a new invention of western imperialism. In a changing perspective, Hall (2011) maintains that the learning of English can perpetrate a tension between native and non-native speakers, which can lead to linguistic imperialism by putting the native speakers in a superior position (ibid). Within the Japanese context, Neeley and Dumas (2016) claim that native English speakers gain unearned status because of English language competency.

Ricento (2015) raises the question about the world’s lingua franca, which is English, and positions “English as an agent of linguistic imperialism” (p. 28). He also argues that there is little evidence to suggest that many people actually get benefit from it (Nicholes, 2016).

Considering that, Phillipson (2016) critiqued that neoliberal agents have marketed the English language more as a ‘lingua nullius’ than the neutral ‘lingua franca’, which still resonate colonial exposition (p. 1). He further argued that English as a global language is a myth rather than a reality. Addressing different cases in countries such as Singapore, Germany, India, and Sweden, Phillipson (2016) stated, “English in academic work, written and spoken, is not a lingua franca in the original sense of a limited, hybrid form of a language for specific trading functions” (p. 12). In addition, the US and UK’s education export policy with active EU support, foreign aid funding and planned activity of many British agencies such as British Council, Pearson, Macmillan, Oxford University Press, promotes English language worldwide and puts it in the position of global language especially in former British colonies. Consequently, in many instances,

English becomes the language of the social elites and the academics at the direct expense of native language and culture. Phillipson (2016) states, “Global English’ is a project to establish English as the language of neoliberal empire serviced by global finance whatever the consequences for other cultures and languages” (p. 8). When referring to Bourdieu, he states that education needs “creative, independent, critical scholarship” (Phillipson, 2016, p. 15) and it could be achievable by preserving the liveliness of all the languages via a bilingual academic literacy that could be an option to minimize the hegemonic and imperialistic attitude of the English language (Chua, 2011; Phillipson, 2016).

As an active factor of globalised economy, English language is often used by foreign aid agencies to have a great but hidden influence on the recipient countries (Bhatta, 2011; Riddell & Nino-Zarazua, 2016; Rahman, Sadath & Giessen, 2016). Aid agencies often try to manipulate native educational functions of the beneficiaries (Hamid & Honan, 2012). Consequently, they hinder the natural flow of development, which might not be applicable for the native context (Bhatta, 2011; Heyneman & Lee, 2016, Kabir, 2010). In addition, the neoliberal view of the international donor agencies has a great impact on outlining the educational policies of the recipient countries. Like many developing countries, the Bangladesh education system is also influenced by the foreign donor agencies (Hamid & Honan, 2012; Rahman, Sadath & Giessen, 2016). In a study, Hamid and Honan (2012) concluded that due to the neoliberal influence of global capitalism, Bangladesh reforms education policy and encourages the learning of English language as a means by which to attain economic success. In the same way, Bangladesh has to follow the policy directions and imperatives of the world policy organisations and funding agencies. In the Bangladesh primary education context, Hamid and Honan (2012) questioned whether it was feasible to introduce English in the early years of schooling and whether CLT as learner-centred pedagogy should be used in all grades of schooling. As a result, ESL learning in the Bangladesh primary education becomes more challenging. Although they questioned this within a primary education context, it could be applied to secondary education as well. For many developing countries like Bangladesh, Hamid and Honan (2012) suggested to consider “local linguistic ecology, the

academic culture and various local givens” before bringing in “new pedagogies from the west as aid-packages” (p. 154).

The neoliberal or market-driven view of education (Sardar, 2013; Phillipson, 2016) that encourages “individual competition, accountability, performativity and management” (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p. 100), dominates existing educational contexts (Walker & Bergmann, 2013; Acton & Glasgow, 2015) that generates multiple obstacles. As Bangladesh has adopted this view since the 1970s (Kabir, 2013; Sardar, 2013), unethical competition is often observed among schools, which create many challenges, such as coaching centres, private tuition, and the leakage of question papers.

As a recent “shift from Anglo-American English to English for international communication for global participation” is observed, it has been noted that the English language has changed its appearance according to local features (Hall, 2011; Leinter, Hashim & Wolf, 2016). Chua (2011) identified the development of a new form of bilingual English in Singapore, which she called “Singlish” (p. 125), so as Labov (2006) commented on the different kind of English in the New York City, which is different from regular English in intonation, syntax and even in choice of words. This trend is also notable in Bangladesh. Begum (2015) identified a blend of Bangla and English language, which does not follow the regular English language pattern. She called it *Banglish* (p. 242). This form of language is widely used mostly among the Bangladeshi young generations, as well as in media and publications (Begum, 2015).

Changing language has also resulted in changing classroom pedagogy that focuses on the contextual and cultural needs (Leinter, Hashim & Wolf, 2016, p. 7). In focusing on the post-liberal approach to language policy, Petrovic (2015) argues that in local context it is important to encourage multilingual practices. He also argues that “teachers must be able to exploit strategically the inherent heteroglossic contexts of schools and classrooms, empowering students to navigate liminal linguistic spaces” (as cited in Hamid, 2016 p. 200).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the imperialistic influence of English language in Bangladesh education alongside the impact of neoliberal view and the international donors' hidden control over the education system are clearly visible. However, focusing on Freirean theory of education, this study tries to make the classrooms interactive, through which the learners enjoy learning by experiencing the freedom to learn. The aim was to gradually develop criticality skills in students, as well as, dealing confidently with the global linguistic hegemony (Yoo & Namkung, 2012).

This review has explored mainly focusing on:

1. ESL in Bangladesh context,
2. CLT and the gap among context, policy and practice,
3. the recent developments of learning and language learning,
4. drama as an interactive approach to facilitate language learning,
5. the importance of an interactive pedagogy in developing criticality skills in Bangladesh ESL context.

As this study seeks to enhance the Bangladesh ESL learning situation, the above reviewed literature has indicated the challenges and ways that the context needs to cope with and follow through to move towards the expected changes.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study reports a project in a rural Bangladesh school that sought to make English language learning more interactive and enjoyable, despite numerous contextual challenges. The project involved the development of a learning resource based on an existing textbook. This was followed by a workshop with teachers that explored ways to make teaching more interactive, and observations of classroom activities for the six weeks that followed. The overarching methodology is one of a qualitative examination and analysis of classroom

activities accompanied by a reflection on my own practice. Thus, the research takes the form of a case study of work arising from my project at *Ruposhi Danga High School*.

The research question was: How can ESL teaching in a junior-secondary classroom in the Bangladesh context be enhanced to promote interactive learning?

The focus, therefore, is on classroom activities. I focused on students' and teachers' interactions and activities, and the applicability of interactive pedagogy to the Bangladesh ESL context. In addition, I reflected on how I, as a teacher educator, could support a group of teachers to become more confident and professionally competent in using interactive techniques to enhance students' English language learning and helping them navigate the contextual challenges of learning English in a rural Bangladeshi school.

My primary research goal was to explore whether a more interactive and creative approach was possible in a Bangladeshi context that consists of large class sizes and limited resources. Therefore, the focus in this study is not on measuring gains, or losses, and in English language proficiency, but on identifying and analysing shifts in interactive behaviours, in students' confidence, enjoyment, agency and creativity, and in the development of critical awareness on the part of teachers and students. Therefore, taking a qualitative approach, I was interested in the texture of what happened in the classroom during the case study.

Case Study

This case study is a single classroom of a rural Bangladesh secondary level school. A case study explores and interprets a social unit, a group, community, classroom project or system, in order to evaluate or explain or understand the activities of that entity (Best & Kahn, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Examining how “the things get done” a case study tends to explore “the work and play of people” of the social unit (Stake, 2005, p. 444). While talking about the importance and focus of the case study Stake (2005) argues that what is important is “what specially can

be learned about the single case” (p. 443). Consequently, to better examine a case, Stake suggests the value of investigating the following aspects:

- “The nature of the case
- Its historical background
- The physical setting
- Other contexts, such as economic, political, legal and aesthetic
- Those informants through whom the case can be known” (as cited in Martens, 2010, p. 233).

Therefore, in this report, in Chapter 4, the nature of the case, and in Chapter 2, historical background, physical setting and contexts are detailed.

In a case study, the researcher investigates in-depth in order to better understand the complexities of the case. Martens (2010) articulates, “Case studies focus on a particular instance (object or case) and reaching an understanding within a complex context” (p.233). This study focused on a year-six English classroom and the activities within. The gathering of information occurred in order to better understand the case and its context.

The Project

This project involved three phases:

- the development of a teaching resource for a rural Bangladesh secondary school English classroom that utilised some of these practices I learned about in New Zealand or gathered from the international literature
- a workshop with teachers who would be involved in working with that resource package
- a trial of that resource in a rural Bangladesh secondary school classroom.

First Phase

In the current stage, I examined resources and practices in New Zealand classrooms as the New Zealand curriculum encouraged to use interactive pedagogy (MoE, New Zealand, 2007). I also considered the literature of other

countries. I visited six New Zealand schools, observing eleven regular sessions. In those sessions, I critically examined the activities and pedagogy the teachers used to make the sessions highly interactive, informally discussed the methods with the teachers, and considered how they might be adapted to a rural Bangladeshi context. I also attended professional development workshops at the University of Canterbury to develop a framework for creating interactive sessions in which a supportive learning environment could be developed and reflective thought and action could be encouraged.

From my observations, workshops and readings, I developed a classroom learning resource package (Chapter 5) for a Bangladeshi context. The learning resource was based on chapters within the Bangladesh official textbook, *English for Today* and used the material provided in chapters in order to develop a set of interactive exercises that aimed to bring the content alive. This resource pack was discussed and trialled with a group of other Bangladeshi teachers also studying at the University of Canterbury. Following their feedback further adjustments were made to the resource. An observation checklist was developed that emphasised the different learning areas specified in the selected textbook sections. This can be found in appendix 1 and 2. This checklist also helped the teachers to match the learning areas for each session with the activities that had been suggested, as well as providing a focus in the classroom observation process.

Second Phase

To begin the project in Bangladesh, I selected a secondary high school that I have worked with professionally. A rural school was selected for two reasons. Firstly, the majority of schools in Bangladesh are rural ones. Secondly, the quality of English language teaching and learning in rural schools has repeatedly been criticised in literature (Alam, 2015; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014). A description of the school and the surrounding context was presented on the Chapter 2. A team of three qualified English teachers, a large number ($n = 398$) of students (as student drop-out rate is very high in Bangladeshi rural schools) and school administration that seemed to be co-operative, which made this school suitable for the project. A small team of qualified English teachers was needed to explore

ways of developing interactive learning. A sufficient number of students in a session was also necessary in the trial, as most of the schools have to run sessions with large numbers of students. Moreover, co-operation from the school administration was essential to run the project in this school.

I selected year six (age 10-12) students as the main participants. Year 6 students are beginning of secondary education in Bangladesh and most often the students are fresh and eager to learn the new ideas. Then all of the three English teachers and the assistant head teacher of the school were invited to join to the project. The assistant head teacher showed interest, joined in and participated on some of the informal discussions; however, he could not actively continue with the regular sessions due to unavoidable administrative duties. Every now and then he managed to attend in to some of the sessions and provided important feedback and support.

To start the project, a five-day practical workshop was conducted with the English teachers to familiarise them with the new resource package and to explore how they might use it effectively in sessions. A detailed description of the workshop is presented in Chapter 5.1. During the workshop the resource pack was amended, when necessary, with the help of teachers.

Third Stage

After finishing the scheduled workshop, the teachers started applying the resource package in the English sessions with the students. Following the school's routine, they carried out the process three days a week for six weeks, with a two weeks break at the middle. I observed the sessions, and tried to do some side coaching when necessary to make the teachers more confident in their activities. An account of the sessions is presented in Chapter, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

I maintained a journal and also requested the teachers to keep journals to reflect on the progress of classes. I wrote reflective memos at the time of fieldwork, mostly after each day's sessions. Those memos were the reflections of that time and were often written appreciatively but with analytic thinking. An example of a reflective memo is offered below.

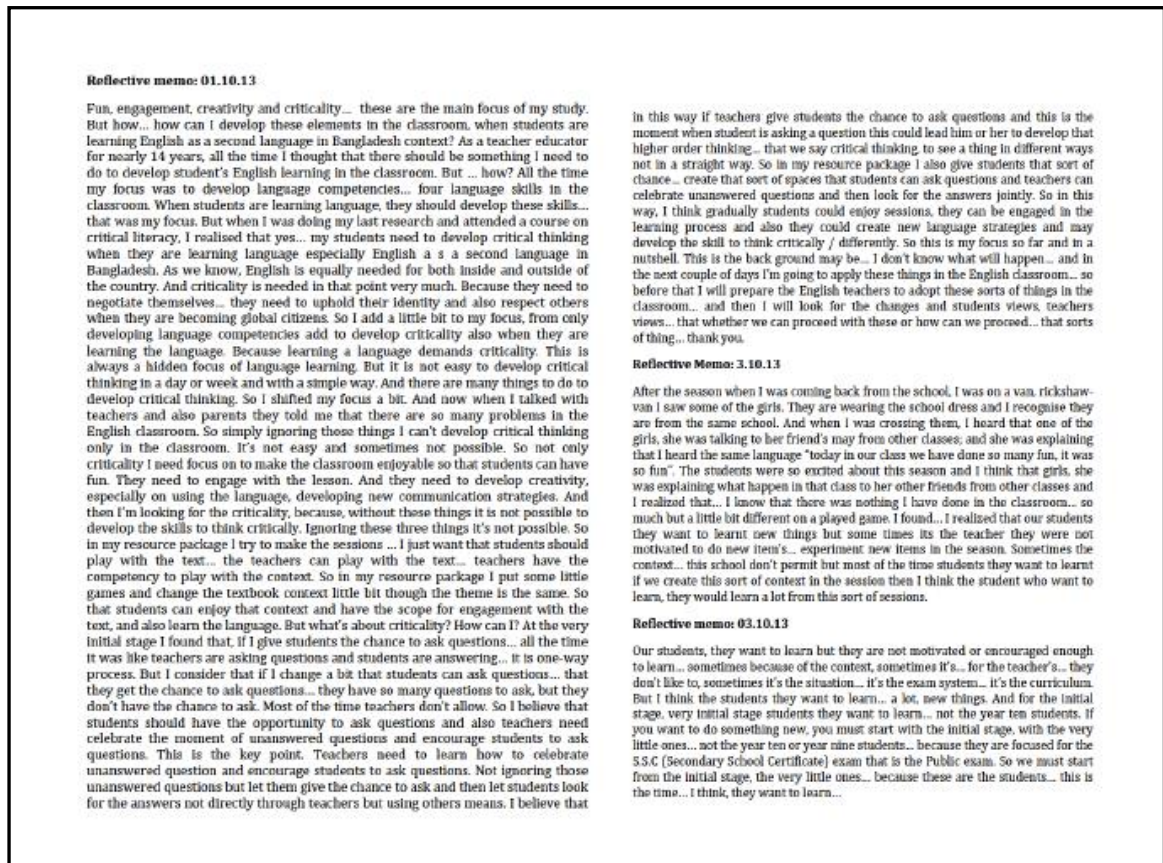


Figure 4.1: Excerpt from my reflective memo

After each session, a short discussion was conducted with the teachers and randomly selected students to explore their reactions to the day's programme. Feedback was used to further refine the resource pack. At the end of the project, a semi-structured interview was carried out with twelve randomly selected students and the three teachers to obtain overall feedback about the sessions, which was subsequently used to improve the resource package; thus, integrating a process model.

Table of Participants

In the table below a list of key participants and their pseudonyms are presented.

Students' Pseudonyms	
Student One	Shompa
Student Two	Kabir
Student Three	Rani
Student Four	Hasan
Student Five	Fuli
Student Six	Shohel
Student Seven	Sumi
Student Eight	Kamal
Student Nine	Shilpi
Student Ten	Munir
Student Eleven	Raam
Student Twelve	Khadija
Teachers' Pseudonyms	
Teacher One	Nagma
Teacher Two	Razzak
Teacher Three (Assistant Head Teacher)	Khaled
Teacher Four	Tutul
School's Pseudonym	
School	Ruposhi Danga High School

Table 4.1: Participants' pseudonyms

A Reflective Practice

A key element of this research is critical reflection of the classroom activities of the teachers and students and on my own activities as a facilitator. The concept of reflective practice is integral to the study. Reflective practice is a process, which underpins thinking about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it. It is a way to thinking back, to reflect on what happened and to make it better next time. Lindon (2012) defines reflective practice as serious thought along with positive critical

judgment of existing practice directing towards careful plans for change to cause improvements. His definition invites us to critically consider practical values and theories that inform everyday actions to lead to improvement, that is, to consider where we are now and where to go from here. So, it could be a reflection-in-action or a reflection-on-action but should lead to creativity and change (Schon, 1991). Lindon (2012) characterises this as a “learning journey” towards change (p. 53).

Correspondingly, to get the information, the key tools used in this study were my own critical reflection on the projects and its activities, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers and students and their reflections on activities. So, how did I get the reflection? To some extent the reflections happened automatically as I responded to the needs of the teachers and then the students and as I looked back on each activity to plan the next one. However, I also deliberately reflected in my journal and I captured moments in each lesson in photos that provided an additional observational lens and so provoked further reflection. When describing and analysing photos, I critically reflected on the action the photos represented. As a part of the reflection process, I put time-lapsed photos beside each other and wrote about them, considering the contrast and comparison. I developed a series of critical lenses that I tried always to carry with me. My critical lenses are shown below:

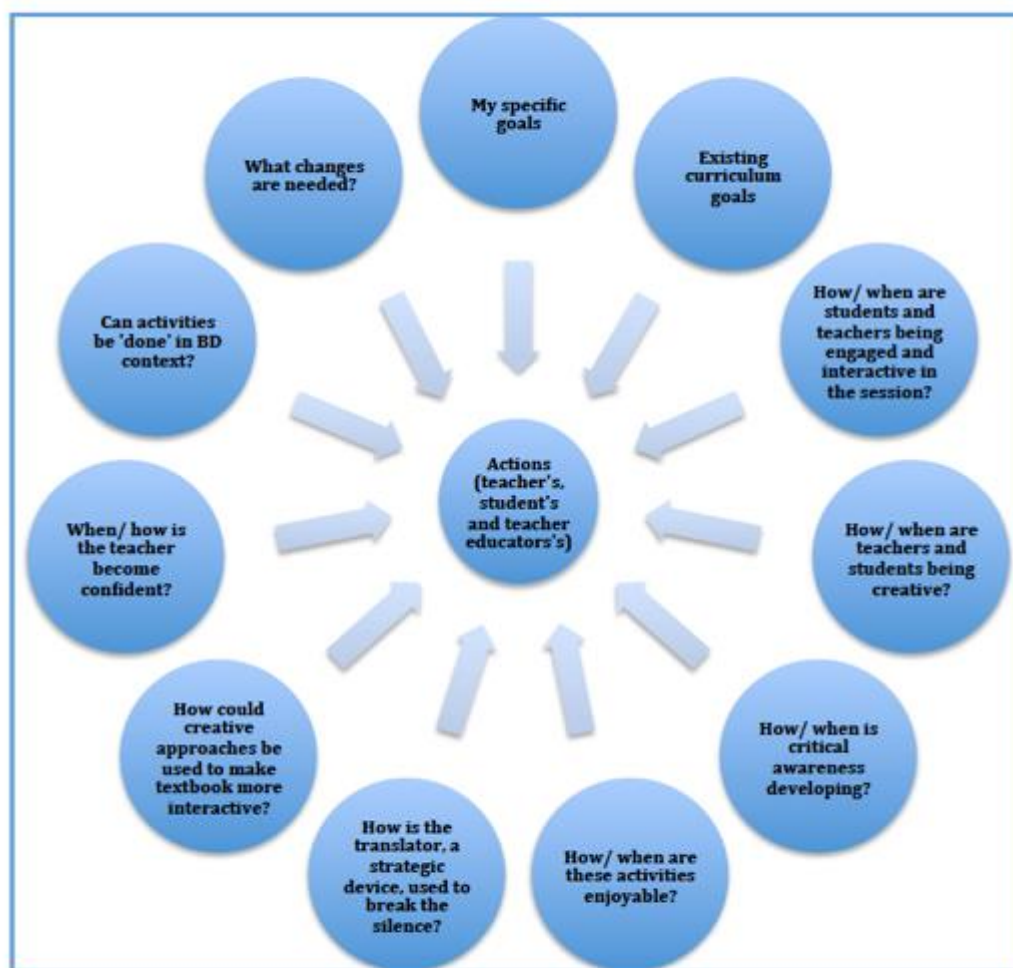


Figure 4.2: My critical lenses

Now, I would like to describe briefly some of the reflective lenses that I used to gather information. My specific goals were to increase interaction and fun in the session, to make student use more English language in a session that lead to break the traditional English language classroom silence. As the traditional class used to be silent and students used to be mere receivers, I wanted, in these sessions, the students to speak out in English or at least start talking more, even in Bangla. The goal of an English lesson, especially within a CLT approach is to enable students to speak English. However, answering the question, how much of the talking needed to be in English in an ESL language learning session, from my observation it seemed to me that it would better to have a single English word than nothing. I

hoped that even when they spoke in Bangla, the shy students could come forward to participate in the classroom activities more frequently. I saw these moment as breaking the student silence. So, my reflective lens focused on getting the students to actively participate in the lessons.

A further critical lens reflected on how and when the teachers increased confidence in moving beyond the textbook, using their own knowledge, and drawing on students' experiences and their responses.

Among the existing curriculum goals, another reflective lens focused onto the session's timing, syllabus contents, relationship to examinations and to the textbook exercises. The teachers and students often complained about the vast syllabus contents, which were not possible to complete within the timings of the regular sessions. As a result, they would frequently seek short cut ways to face the examinations, such as using coaching centres, as well as copying and leaking examination papers.

I also reflected on creativity and when it came into play. Creativity is called for by the national curriculum policy as discussed in Chapter 2. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, literature reports that it is not evident in most classrooms. As such, in the project I looked for the opportunities where teachers and students were creative, innovative, and I also considered the importance of creativity in my own role as a facilitator.

Another reflective lens focused on criticality skills. This lens paid attention to indicators of how critical awareness was evolving in classroom. When teachers went beyond the textbook exercises to relate the textbook contents to students' real life, I considered they were exercising criticality and helping students to develop critical awareness of their life situations. When teachers started thinking about their classroom activities and amending activities according to students' needs; I considered they were developing criticality skills. In addition, when I, a teacher educator, started thinking about the project and teacher-student activities and stepped forward to create change, I was engaging with criticality. This

reflective lens sought to examine those critical moments that occurred in learning situations, as detailed in chapter 9.

As fun in learning brings effective outcomes, another reflective lens led me to gather information on how and at which point a session and an activity was enjoyable to both the students and the teachers, as discussed in chapter 8.

As explained in the following chapter, *the translator* was a key strategic device in the project. When and how the translator was used to break the classroom-silence was especially the object of another reflective lens.

As in this project creative approaches were used to make the textbook more interactive, a reflective lens critically examined how and when the teachers reshaped textbook exercises using creative approaches to go beyond prescribed premises.

Consequently, how and when the teachers became confident and professionally encouraged to make textbook contents interactive and use such exercises in the learning sessions was the object of another reflective lens.

A reflective lens also focused on how those interactive activities could be *done* in a Bangladeshi rural classroom despite various constraints, such as class size, lack of resources, absence of English language in the community and constraints of time.

A further lens led me to examine what changes are needed for the future, for example how an active involvement of a professional development facilitator could uplift teachers' confidence.

Observation and Interview

Observation was a key strategy for data collection and was the basis of reflection. I observed all of the English sessions, which applied the learning resource and recoded my observation in field notes and in photographs. I wrote reflective memos highlighting new insights and questions and possible answers. My observation focused on how the English language teaching took place in the

classroom using the resource, and on initiatives that teachers and students took to make the classroom interactive and enjoyable. In the classroom, my position was mostly as an overt participant observer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). I was careful to establish rapport with students before observing, and also to abstain from activity that could hinder the flow of the session. However, at the start of the first session, as I describe in chapter 6, I stepped more actively into a leadership role when I found that the teacher was losing confidence.

Talking with students that occurred spontaneously in my role as participant observer. In addition, I conducted short interviews. I used open-ended one-to-one interviews with randomly selected students from the session after each session. In addition, the English teachers who took those sessions, and the assistant head teacher were interviewed to get their views about those sessions and ideas for further improvements. Usually each of the participants was interviewed for ten to fifteen minutes. On the importance of interviewing, Seidman (1991) points out, "If the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing people provides a necessary, if not always sufficient... avenue of enquiry" (as cited in Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007, p. 271). I tried to keep the interviews open-ended as I believed it would help participants to be more open providing natural information. This aligned with Patton (1990) who argued that the argued, "The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind, but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed" (as cited in Best & Kahn, 1998, p. 254). As a reflective practice, I also tried to reflect on the interview situations when making connections between the teachers, students, and their activities and the supports they got and desired on the way to interactive learning in the school classroom and beyond.

I also used photos and video recordings of the classroom activities to collect data. As mentioned, time lapsed photos were put together to explore differences in confidence and engagement. I went back to the photos and video recordings when critically reflecting on a particular session's activity. Wang and Burris (1997) discuss the value of photos to help the researcher initiate critical analysis on a

social activity. However, when the observing sessions were recorded and photos were taken using audio-visual equipment, they were done following the ethical procedures approved by the university's Ethics Committee and with the formal consent of the participating students and teachers.

Analysis and Presentation

As is common in qualitative research, the analysis of data was an ongoing process (Lindon, 2012) that formed an intrinsic part of building the progression of lessons. After finishing formal data collection, I put all the reflective lenses together and I critically went through the information to look for missing bits before determining any conclusions. Every interview and observation was treated as an individual case to avoid confusion. The observation data was used to portray the participants' activities vividly and to provide a description of classroom practice. Both interview and observation results were aligned to examine whether the resource package was creating opportunities for interactive sessions to ESL learners.

When presenting the findings, I looked at four particular clusters of themes, which evolved from the reflective and critical analysis of the data. Initially I had looked more broadly into a range of themes related to an ESL classroom. I started the project looking into the practices in Bangladeshi ESL classrooms, which obstruct interactive teaching and which encourage top down teaching. So, the initial focus was whether the teachers can do interactive sessions or not in the face of the challenges. To explore that I looked for features that evidenced interaction within lessons in the project. Keeping in mind the challenges, such as large classes, short periods of time for sessions, a huge syllabus, lack of resources, lack of teachers' own usage of English, classroom seating arrangements and examination oriented teaching (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ansarey, 2012), I looked for features that made the sessions student-centred, enhancing engagement in the classroom. As the top down exam-oriented approach often limits students' interaction, I considered that a student-centred approach could create opportunities for the students to talk, have fun, move around and interact more. Then, as the concept of *the creative question* has been introduced recently in Bangladesh (MoE, 2010), and as reports

suggest this is a challenge to both teachers and students (Dhaka Tribune, 2013), I also focused to features that encouraged the students to be creative in using English language and in thinking about scenarios they encountered through English language. Previous critiques of the practices of the English language teaching in Bangladesh have found evidence of passive teaching to pass the examination (Alam, 2015; Alam & Kabir, 2015; Rasheed, 2011). Consequently, I looked at features that indicated opportunities for the students to make meaning of the language and play with it. Therefore, although I started the project looking primarily at engagement in the classroom, as the project evolved and as my analysis evolved with it, many other themes began to emerge. Finally, for the reasons described above I decided to priorities four key themes: engagement, creativity, enjoyment and criticality. These form the focus of chapters 6 to 9 consecutively.

Presentation Mode

Janesick (2003) argues on the style of presenting data in a qualitative study and states “the researcher must find the most effective way to tell the story and to convince the audience of the meaning of the study” (p. 63). Accordingly, at the time of analysing data and during the initial phase of writing the draft, I realised that to make the classroom data meaningful, a narrative story telling style would best serve the purpose of this study. Chase (2011) articulates, “Narrative is meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience” (p. 430). Thus, narrative gave me freedom to interpret and present classroom interactions vividly and meaningfully, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As the ESL classroom described in this thesis was situated in a rural context and were likely to be strange to many readers, detail of classroom conditions and interactions offer as basis for readers to better understand the existing Bangladeshi ESL context and the current use of pedagogy. In this study, therefore I detailed the sessions’ activities as well as the local context.

As a narrative of the classroom activities in which I was involved, the presentation style is unavoidably subjective. As a qualitative researcher, I played a dual role (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015) in that my voice was consciously allowed

in my reporting of the project, while at the same time I endeavoured to represent others' voices faithfully.

Language

In a qualitative research that is situated in a multilingual context, language is a challenge for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting qualitative data (Martens, 2010). Although this study was conducted in the ESL sessions and most of the activities were done in English language, Bangla, the national language of Bangladesh, was the primary language for both of the interviewees and interviewer. Therefore, as the student participants did not have much skill in the English language, they participated in the interviews in Bangla. The English teachers, on the other hand, were interviewed in English, apart from that the assistant head teacher who was interviewed in Bangla due to his lower fluency in English. The interviews that were conducted in both English and Bangla in order to get the comprehensible data. This means, at time, I proffer both the original Bangla version and its English translation. Moreover, the interviews and dialogues were transcribed in English in order to make the English translation appropriate with the Bangla meaning. Two Bangladeshi colleagues who were pursuing their doctoral study at my university assisted me reliability in terms of meaning and accuracy.

Ethical Approval

This research had ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) (ref: 2013/42/ERHEC, 2 August, 2013) prior to fieldwork. The following actions were taken to fulfil my commitment to seek and gain informed consent, including permission to use photos.

Following the Bangladesh practice, I sought the permission from the head teacher of the participating school. However, although the head teacher has the eventual authority to permit entrance to the school, he needs to acknowledge the SMC (school managing committee) about the project. Therefore, in a meeting with the head teacher, assistant head teacher and some of the SMC members I explained

the project in detail and how it would affect the students' English learning. After a discussion about the study process the head teacher asked everyone's opinion. Among others, the assistant head teacher very positively stated that it would be a great opportunity for the rural students and the teachers as well to be a part of this project. He hoped they might get a different pedagogical experience and so improve their English learning. Permission was gained at the end of the meeting.

Then to reduce any risk of professional influence as a practicing teacher educator in Bangladesh, I informed the teacher participants early in this study that my professional role should not influence their choice of whether or not to participate. As I went there as an insider, worked long time and developed a good rapport with them, they gradually accepted me as their colleague. I supplied information about the project to all of the teacher and student participants and got their informed consent, including permission to use photos, before preceded with it. In the information sheet, I provided information about the purpose of the study, data collecting, and participants' rights. I gave them time to decide, as the participation was voluntary. The written permission slips from the participants were collected and kept as records of approval.

In order to maintain 'anonymity' (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 70), I used pseudonyms instead of giving participants real names as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Chapter 5: The Resource Package

As discussed in Chapter 4, the experimentation with interactive approaches to English language learning was based on a resource package that was developed to engage students actively and creatively while at the same time closely following set curriculum goals. The package provided a sequence of lessons based on the nationally mandated textbook that extended the given activities to make the sessions more explicitly interactive.

The units in the resource focused on the students' engagement with the learning contents of the textbook, while seeking to shift the pedagogical focus from teacher-centred to student-centred. The initial shift was creating opportunities for the students to talk. In addition, since the directive has recently been developed to introduce so-called *creative questions* into public examinations (MoE, 2010) and since both teachers and students are reported to be fearful of the challenge (Dhaka Tribune, 2013), the resource developed activities, still based on the textbook contents, to allow students to make creative choices and to enjoy working with language. As a practicing teacher educator, I have long been questioning the passive learning of English language in Bangladesh classrooms. In an earlier study (Rasheed, 2011), I had asked what passive learning of a foreign language could bring to the learners, and in my practice, I have been looking for language learning strategies, which could go beyond textbooks and become practical experiences. Therefore, a sense of criticality towards the uses of English language learning and the ways the language is taught underscored the development of the resource package. I tried to put the session activities in a way that prompted the students to play with and make sense of the targeted language.

At the time of developing the resource, a key focus was to set an example to the teachers that an interactive classroom session is possible in the Bangladeshi context, despite class sizes, seating arrangements and the dominance of the examination system. As teachers often feel discouraged about taking interactive

sessions, the resource package initially tried to create encouraging opportunities for students and teachers to be interactive.

Although I developed the package ahead of going into the field, I deliberately kept it open for the teachers to amend according to their contextual needs and as detailed in the description of the teachers' workshop (Chapter 5.1), the package was continuously evolving as it was introduced into the ESL classrooms.

The first session of the resource is presented next, to provide an idea about the features and activities of resource package.

Class: Six

Time: 45 minutes each day

Title: Where are you from?

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the learners will have

1. identified the personalities and professions of some characters
2. listened to and talked about some everyday conversations in different contexts
3. written down different answers of the same question in different situations

Other curriculum related skills:

- Asking questions
- Making comparison through experiment
- Exploring relationships
- Playing with language and its different use
- Opportunity for creativity and working in teams

Resources: Textbook, white & colour papers, 5 pictures or items of different professions

Key question: How can we use language in different contexts?

Teacher's job:

- To facilitate the work, and to support students to get ownership of the story.
- To begin by modelling followed by a language game.

The work:

A. Initial phase (Day One)

Context: It is natural that when two people meet they would continue their conversation further. They may want to know where the other comes from, or what the other person does and so on.

Start the session with the "Name Game" (We are family) using little introductory conversations and useful vocabulary (see annex 1).

Then (if possible) show some fun videos (provided) about family and its members.

Close the session discussing about introductory conversations, e.g. Hi, Hello, Good morning, Good-bye, etc.

B. Initial phase (Day Two)

Start with previous discussions and the same context reminding how to introduce each other.

As first time the class is doing this type of activity, it is good to introduce the idea how drama works as quickly as possible.

Teacher says:

Today we are going to do a drama. In drama we pretend that things are happening but not real. And we will all see them in our imagination. For example, if I tell you that we are at an Airport, can you all pretend to see it? So, we can all pretend together that it is true, as it is in our drama.

Then explain the context at the airport, e.g. immigration officer, passport, different people from different countries and professions.

Distribute HO 1 (Annex 2) and ask students to fill the columns making a passport highlighting their dream occupations.

Now teacher says:

We are now at the airport coming from different countries. Teacher takes the role of an immigration officer to check everyone's passport randomly and says: now I'm an immigration officer and will check your passports. Please show your passport, where do you come from, where do you live, etc.

Ask students to read the dialogue at page 2 and practice with your partners.

Student's expected responses:

Students take role of officer and passenger and practice the dialogue in pairs.

Then ask students to use the same dialogue with different emotional contexts and practice (play) with it, e.g. angry passenger, bossy officer, calm passenger, etc. If students are brave enough they can try this with different contexts and professions, e.g. teacher asking for admit card in an exam room, bus/ train supervisor asking for tickets, etc.

This is the stage where teacher, as facilitator, can enhance the practice time and help students to prepare for the next discussion.

After that ask students to discuss and write the answers of the questions on activity A2.

After finishing the activity, close the session discussing the different use of same language in different contexts (see language focus at page 4). And also give some hint about the next day's act, e.g. to carry passport always and bring it tomorrow also.

C. Experiential phase (Day Three)

Start the session asking students to show their passports and teacher randomly checking those.

Invite students to write names of various professions on BB/ WB. Put students in different occupational groups.

Teacher says:

Let us write some names of our dream professions on BB/ WB. Tell some of your dream professions that you like to join when you will be grownups.

Ask students to do activity B at page 5 discussing in groups about different occupations.

Teacher says:

Now form groups, five members in each group. Choose an occupational name for your group. Open your textbook at page 5, and ask and answer questions about different person's professions.

After that, ask students, "Can you write more questions about these professionals (page 5)?"

Teacher needs to bring 4 pictures (could be stick figures) of different professionals and hang on the BB/ WB. The students need to choose one profession and do the next activity. Teacher could do a role play with a student using HO2. Hang the blank dialogue (HO3) on BB/ WB to help students to get enough vocabulary.

Then use students' interest to make parallel dialogue about their different dream professions. If not possible in English, ask them to make it in Bangla and then translate it into English.

This will encourage more language than nothing.

Then teacher shows different items (apple, shirt, ball, pen, sun glass, etc.) and asks questions about these, e.g. what is this, who does this belong, what is the need of this item, etc.?

This is the stage where teacher encourages and facilitates students to create and use language in different contexts and play with it. If the students are not creative, let the teacher be creative first and help students to be creative and adventurous.

Context: a TV presenter who is making a documentary on various professions and takes interviews of different peoples.

Then ask students to think about this context and write questions they want to ask to different people with different professions.

Students expected responses

They write questions like where are you from, why do you like this occupation, what is good of this profession, what was your dream profession, etc.?

Select students as TV presenters from each group and ask them to interview different people in different occupations, following a model interview between teacher and two students. Write selected questions on the BB/ WB that students can use when interviewing.

Teacher says:

Now choose a TV presenter from each group. The presenter will now interview different persons of different occupations in each group. Look at the BB/ WB and ask these questions. They can add questions also. After that they will report to the whole class.

Teacher slips in and out of role here, sometimes as doctor, sometimes as garment worker, sometimes as him/herself (teacher). This is the time to empower the students.

Close the session focusing on the different use of language in different contexts (please refer to 'language focus' at page 4).

Then provide clues that tomorrow we are going to meet with more people with different professions and their responsibilities.

Key Features of the Package

Now a description of key features of the package is detailed below.

Objectives

For each session, specific language learning objectives were identified, always with a focus on being explicit and achievable within the session. Other curriculum related skills were also specified and acknowledged. The identification of objectives was intended to give an overview of the coming session and prepare the teacher to focus on the activities that would lead to achieving the learning outcomes. For example, the first session was based on a chapter in the textbook that centres around making conversation in order to learn about someone's background. Where the textbook chapter simply offers a number of sample dialogues to practice, the unit in the resource package identified specific objectives and specified skills to be practiced. It also identified other related curriculum skills.

In the textbook, there are no written objectives nominated for textbook sessions and teachers often tend to take sessions without any definite learning outcomes, except that of passing the examinations. Although objectives are identified in the teacher's guide, many of the teachers do not consult, or even know about the guide. The snapshot of the beginning of a textbook chapter, given below, shows the absence of nominated objectives.

It is natural that when two people meet they would continue their conversation further. They may want to know where the other comes from, or what the other person does and so on. Here are some conversations in such everyday situations.

A Listen to and then practise the conversations below with your class friends.

i) Mamun and his friend Akash have gone to a book fair. A lot of other people have also come. They are all talking, laughing and buying books. Mamun introduces Akash to someone. Because of the noise around, Akash cannot hear his name.

Image 5.1: Beginning of a textbook chapter

The resource package, therefore, specified objectives to help the teachers to determine the session's learning outcomes and the activities that follows. As numerous theorists affirm, explicit identification of learning outcomes potentially assists better teaching and learning (Priestly, 2016; CEDEFOP, 2009; Kelly, 2004). A snapshot of the resource package session's objectives is seen in the picture below.

Title: Where are you from?

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the learners will have

1. identified the personalities and professions of some characters
2. listened to and talked about some everyday conversations in different contexts
3. written down different answers of the same question in different situations

Other curriculum related skills:

- Asking questions
- Making comparison through experiment
- Exploring relationships
- Playing with language and its different use
- Opportunity for creativity and working in teams

Image 5.2: A session's objectives in the resource

Low-Cost Resources

In the resource package, essential resources for each session are stated. All the resources were designed to be very low cost. The teachers can prepare the resources themselves or with the help of the students. For example, in the teachers' initial workshop, the teachers needed to make a picture of *the translator*. They called on Timmi, a year 8 student, to draw the picture. She was invited to draw a good picture of the translator and other pictures that were required. As seen in the photo below, Timmi is drawing pictures with the guidance of teachers.



Image 5.3: Timmi is drawing pictures as low-cost resource

As discussed in the Chapter 2, there is a lack of teaching-learning resources in Bangladesh and the teachers often use cheap guidebooks instead of textbooks in the ESL sessions, in order to pass the examinations. However, the use of resources could make a session more interesting and enjoyable. Ahmad (2014) argues that

the use of resources in a session could make the lesson more meaningful to the students and increase their awareness about the session's contents. Sometimes, the teachers also seem baffled to use resources in the classrooms. Each session of the resource package, therefore, indicates the special resources needed for that lesson. The snapshot of a session is presented below.

Resources: Textbook, white & colour papers, 5 pictures or items of different professions

Image 5.4: Special resources for a session

As the teachers often look for expensive resources, baffled and become discouraged in terms of using them in a session, the resource package encouraged low cost materials to be used to make a session more interesting and enjoyable. In addition, the resource provided handouts for specific session's activities that the teachers can easily use or adapt in the session.

Key Questions and the Teacher's Job

The resource package also featured key questions and teacher's jobs. Related to the objectives, the key question summarises the main focus of the session, and would quickly remind the teacher the purpose of the lesson as well as its outcomes.

In addition, in the teacher's jobs, the teacher's role was identified for the session. The image below illustrates key question and teacher's job for the first day's session.

Key question: How can we use language in different contexts?

Teachers job:

- To facilitate the work, and to support students to get ownership of the story.
- To begin by modeling followed by a language game.

Image 5.5: Key question and teacher's job

As aforementioned in Chapter 2, the teachers often try to use traditional lecturing methods in the classroom that results in overlooking the objectives. Therefore, key questions and identification of the teacher's job would help them quickly remember the purpose of the session and allow them to adjust their roles accordingly.

The Work (Session Activities)

In the work section, the session activities were described. The package as a whole was based on regarding the textbook in its entirety as one overarching project for year six students, and treated each lesson as a small contributing part and set the sessions accordingly. Although the resource did not follow the sequences of textbook lessons, it tried to follow a sequence according to the lesson themes.

To overcome the time constraint and the extensive syllabus, the resource split a lesson into two to three sessions to make it easy for both students and the teacher. The focus was to make the sessions interactive and finish in the time frame as the teachers often complained about the difficulty of converging the huge syllabus within the time constraint, and the consequent impossibility of making sessions interactive. All of the activities were developed following pre, whilst and post stages. What the teacher needed to 'say and do' and even the students' expected or targeted responses were also clearly mentioned. It was intended to provide the teachers with confidence, as often the teachers do not know the English used in an ESL classroom. That said it was not obligatory to follow as the pattern exactly as written, but it was intended as a suggestion to assist and encourage the teachers to use the English language in sessions. It also aimed to minimise the teachers' apprehension about the use of English language in the ESL sessions. All the sessions were time framed for 45 minutes, according to the school routine. The activities were also selected and arranged in a way that they are expected to be finished according to the time frame.

The sessions were divided in two phases: initial and experiential phase. In the initial phases, the teacher would present the lessons according to the text context

and prepare the students for the next step, the experiential phase. The initial phase consisted of preparatory games and textbook oriented activities. A preparatory game is detailed in Chapter 6 and the selected textbook activities are presented in Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9. In this phase, the classroom activities were very structured in practice, so that the students could get an idea about upcoming activities for the next phase. This was the stage where the teacher, as facilitator, could enhance the practice time and help the students to prepare for the next discussion.

The experiential phase was created to enhance opportunities for the students to go beyond the structured practice of the textbook. The activities were open-ended to generate creativity skills in the students. This was intended to be a free practice time for the students to use and play with what they had learnt in the initial phases. Although there are many interactive exercises that could be used in this phase, this resource especially introduced drama techniques in the ESL sessions as the interactive exercise, as discussed in Chapter 3. As a result, the students and teachers could slip in and out of role as part of role-playing and making mini-dramas.

As the sessions introduced a role named *the translator*, the teachers would often need to be in and out of the role of the translator. Although in the sessions, the role was represented by a picture, it played a significant role in making the sessions interactive and interesting. The sessions introduced a role named *the translator*. This was a device that allowed the teacher to take role and act as a translator who would be available as needed. The taking of role would create a strategic separation between the teacher as facilitator of the class and the function of translating from English to Bangla. The teachers would often need to be in and out of the role of the translator. Although in the sessions, the role was represented by a picture, it played a significant role in making the sessions interactive and interesting. The role of the translator is described in teachers' workshop section later in this chapter.

Moreover, it was envisaged that the teachers could be encouraged to become creative through experiencing mini drama out of textbook stories. In the textbook,

there is a story about Bulbul, who is a rubbish picker. As in the image below, the textbook story about Bulbul is seen.

B **Read the text about Bulbul and answer the questions below.**

Bulbul collects rubbish from the Sankar area in Dhaka. Every morning, he wakes up at 5 o'clock and walks along the streets of Sankar to collect rubbish. People of Sankar put their rubbish in plastic bins and leave them in front of their houses. Bulbul walks from door to door to collect them. Sometimes the bins are very dirty and they smell bad. But Bulbul does not mind. He takes out everything from the bins and puts them in a large plastic bag. He believes that all jobs are important. He works hard every day to keep this area clean.




Image 5.6: The textbook story of Bulbul

The teachers and I made a mini drama out of this story, as seen in the picture below. It was an adaptation of the textbook within the resource package. The students also performed the drama accordingly as detailed in Chapter 9.

Annex 2: **The Story of Bulbul**

Characters: Bulbul, Neighbor, Student, Rickshaw-puller and Teacher as prompter

Scene 1:

Bulbul is picking waste polythene bags and papers in an area.

Bulbul: Look, people are making so much rubbish these days. It is increasing day by day. Hope people could put this rubbish in a bin without throwing everywhere. It is so hard to keep clean the area.

A student is going to school and talk to Bulbul.

Student: Hi, Bulbul. How are you? How is your work today?

Bulbul: I'm good, thanks. But look rubbish is everywhere. It is hard to clean it all.

Student: Yes. It is really not good. Can I help you?

Bulbul: Oh! Thanks.

They both pickup some rubbish for some time.

Student: I need to go now or I'll be late for school. See you tomorrow. Bye.

Bulbul: Ok, thanks for your help. It looks much cleaner now.

Scene 2:

Bulbul gets sick. Stays at home and does not pick rubbish for five days.

Bulbul: I'm not feeling good today. I'll not go for picking up rubbish.

Neighbor: This place becomes a mess nowadays. No one cares, but they throw rubbish everywhere.

Rickshaw puller: Yes, you are right. It is not good.

Neighbor: There was a boy, who used to pickup rubbish everyday. But for some days he is not coming to pick rubbish.

Rickshaw puller: Oh, you are talking about Bulbul. He is a very good boy and always tries to keep this place clean. But he has been sick for some days. That's why this place becomes dirty.

Scene 3:

After five days, Bulbul comes back to pick rubbish again.

Bulbul: Oh! No. There is rubbish everywhere. How will I pick all up in a day?

The student is going to school and talk to Bulbul again.

Student: Hi, Bulbul, where have you been? I was looking for you every day. Are you ok?

Bulbul: Oh! Hi, how are you? I'm good now. I was sick. I couldn't pickup rubbish for five days.

Student: I'm so sorry to hear that. And look what happened. If you do not pick rubbish up everyday, our place becomes dirty. Thank you bulbul for great work to make this place clean.

Bulbul: If we all work together, we can make our place clean.

Thank you

Image 5.7: Mini drama on Bulbul's story

The experiential phase would be the time to empower the students as well. In this phase, the teachers also encouraged the students to continue the discussion using Bangla if it was not possible to do so in English and it was hoped that this would

encourage more language production. As in the traditional ESL sessions in Bangladesh the students often stay silent and inactive, in this experiential phase it was intended to create opportunities for the students to be interactive using the language to break the silence of the language classroom. This was the stage, where the teacher could encourage and facilitate the students to create and use the language in different contexts; that is, to play with it. If the students were not spontaneously creative, the teacher could be creative first and help students to be creative and adventurous.

At the end of every activity or lesson there was a plenary stage, where the teachers could wrap up with the activity or session summary and provide hints for the next day's lesson as seen in the session activities in Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9.

While the resource was developed to minimise teachers' apprehension about English sessions and to assist them with step-by-step activities and related language, it was also intended to empower them with ownership, by allowing them to modify the resource as they thought suitable for their sessions. The resource actively set out to create opportunities for the students to practice and play with the language, going beyond the textbook activities. As a result, it was hoped that by breaking the silence of ESL sessions, the teachers would be able to create more language learning opportunities for the students.

Besides these, the resource package hoped to provide evidence that a teacher educator could make a difference in the school classroom practice. With the help of this resource, I, as an existing practicing teacher educator, hoped to motivate and assist the teachers to cope with the challenges, which often hinder the participatory approach in the Bangladesh context, and to demonstrate that interactive sessions were possible, even in an extreme rural area.

Although I developed the resource package, I opened it up to the teachers to make it suitable for their sessions. The draft resource was just a model for them. They could cut the session's activities short or make them longer or add more resources. I did not interfere but only suggested that they should make it interactive. In that process, I assisted them with some tips or hints, such as *the translator*. I gave them

that idea but let them discuss it before they made decisions. They did discuss it and decided to introduce it in the session. Moreover, they figured out when to and how to use the translator. I only assisted them to select the appropriate sentence for the students to utter when they wanted to use the translator and that was “we need the translator.”

As the resource package was practically structured, I started my fieldwork to implement it in the ESL classrooms in Bangladeshi context. Although the development of the resource was a continuous process, as detailed in Chapter 4, it evolved its working shape in the workshop with the teachers. The following part of this chapter reports the workshop.

Chapter 5.1: The Workshop for Teachers

A scheduled workshop for five days was held with the three English teachers to familiarise them with the resource and to motivate them to adopt it in the English sessions. As the English teachers were participated, the workshop was conducted in English. The teachers were encouraged to use English in the workshop, as they needed to implement the sessions in English later on. As it could be an English language practice session, they agreed to do the workshop in English. At times, Bangla was also used to clear any confusion during the workshop.

Different days were allocated for discussion on different themes and contents. The schedule is provided below.

<p>Day One (motivation/ awareness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the research • Research objectives and need for critical thinking • Bangladesh English curriculum • Problems (class size, time, big curriculum, apprehension about English sessions, textbook, inactive session) • About the resource (brief introduction)
<p>Day Two (session activity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the resource (features) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think, whole book as one story • Pick some lessons to make drama/ game to play within two weeks or more (not have to be a made up story) • Play with the text (thinking, deconstructing, improvising on) • Classroom strategy (environment/ inter activeness/ develop a partnership with the students) • Work in teams (collaboration) • Sense of experimentation (making choices) • Asking questions (T&S) • Setting the empowerment (go beyond the text)
<p>Day Three (role play/ drama/ scaffolding textbook)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher in role (shift roles/ be creative/ adventurous) • Students in role (motion practice) • Translator (how much use/ decrease/ legitimacy for using <i>Bangla</i>) • Teacher leading activity • Use of pictures and different items • Teacher has to be successful (how can we change it)
<p>Day Four (asking questions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to ask question (Teacher) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking open answered questions • Encourage students to ask questions (so much teaching is transitional) • Celebrating unanswered questions (develop partnership with students) • At the end leave students with some unanswered questions (future goals) • Students ask questions to themselves
<p>Day Five (practical)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation sessions to use the resource in class

Table 5.1.1: Workshop schedule

At the School

However, although the workshop was the first field activity for the project and I prepared to go to the school with the above schedule, the entrance to the school was not so smooth. Lots of difficulty, anxiety and concern were being encountered every now and then, but light was also seen in the process as well. As in my journal notes, I was scheduled to be in the school on 25 September 2013. So, I made the 9-hour (approx. 455 km) journey on 24th to Barisal, a southern divisional town of Bangladesh to where the school was located. After reaching Barisal, I called the head teacher of the school to remind him that I was coming to school tomorrow. But he replied that due to some unavoidable circumstances a meeting will be held with the SMC (school management committee) that day and requested me to come the day after. I thought it would be ok, as I would get little more time to adjust with the local atmosphere. However, the next day when I rang the head teacher again, he replied even more hastily, that he is on the way to Dhaka, the capital city, for an urgent piece of business and requested me to come to school three days later when he will be back. As I was not prepared for that, it brought considerable amount of anxiety and concern about the school and the project as well. For a moment I thought, it would be better to change the school, as it seemed the school was not really cooperating. I also considered which school I would select, how I would begin everything again and many similar thoughts. But leaving behind those thoughts, I requested the head teacher that as the school is open, if I could come to the school and talk to the teachers especially the English teachers as an introduction with them. With a small pause, he said, "it would not be a problem," and it gave me a big relief that I no more had to think about changing the school. Then I realised later that the head teacher really wanted me to be in the school and work with them but he was worried that a grand reception for me would not happen without him. I made him understand that it was not necessary, as I would work long and would like to become one of them. So, it would be better to be simple and easy.

So, I had permission to enter into the school. However, that night I could not sleep well. On one hand, there was excitement to go ahead with the project and on the other hand different kinds of anxieties kept me awake all the night, such as, what will happen, how I will be reviewed, how I will proceed with my project. Sometimes I thought, maybe I should change the school. If that is so which school I should take and how I will continue. Then again, I came to conclusion that it could happen in any school, so let's try. Be confident and hopeful.

The next day at 11am, I went to the school and the assistant head teacher, Khaled, welcomed me warmly. He introduced me to all of the teachers. Very briefly, I explained the project to them. Khaled also listened carefully and was so excited that he told the teachers that this was an opportunity to learn new approaches about teaching English. It encouraged me a lot to proceed with the project. Then he rescheduled the timetable so that I can start my workshop the day after tomorrow as the next day was the weekend. Khaled and other teachers also expressed the hope that the workshop would build an active teachers' community to introduce my resource package with the year six students.

My initial worries were gone for the time being. However, other issues, such as, countrywide *hartal*, local politics, and even a sporadic non-cooperation between teachers and head teacher of the school as detailed in Chapter 2, intruded on the pace of the project every now and then.

When I was working with the materials for the workshop the next day, again worries came back; but I kept preparing myself to face the unexpected confidently. Therefore, I suggested to myself to be more tactful in my speeches and activities when working at the school and arranged everything accordingly. I realised that I had to continue my project facing all of those circumstances. It was frustration at the beginning but it was an encouragement as well. I started the scheduled workshop the next day.

The Workshop

An analytic reflection of the workshop activities is presented below. Here the days are presented as a continuous flow. However, it was not so, as it took more than

two weeks to finish the scheduled workshop because of unavoidable socio-political events, such as discussed above and in Chapter 2. In the image below a glimpse of the workshop activities is presented.



Image 5.1.1: Workshop activities

Day One:

As this day was scheduled for creating awareness and to motivate the English teachers to adopt the resource in sessions, I wanted first to understand the academic reality of the school. The teachers said that the school was doing remarkably well on the academic side, and as the co-curricular activities were also done regularly, the numbers of students were increasing consistently. To increase the students' interest in reading books they had changed some library rules, so that the students could get the books easily. In addition, to motivate the development of reading skills, the school had introduced some prizes for the students who read the most books in a year. The teachers also motivated the

students to use the library. Nagma mentioned that she always tried to encourage the students to read more books. She quoted her usual words to them,

The more you read the more you learn. You do not need to understand everything but if you read more and regularly you will gradually understand and it will increase your knowledge. Beside textbooks there are many books you should read to increase your knowledge.

Most of the teachers were trying to apply different and sometimes new approaches after attending a training course on subject-based pedagogy. This also helped to increase the students' willingness to learning.

As the discussion continued, the teachers added that although the school was doing well in many ways they had potential to do better in other co-curricular areas also, for example, playing football and debating.

They also mentioned that the teachers did not know how to use multimedia in a session, although they have received new multimedia from the Government. In a reply to my question about the reasons, they reported that they did not have suitable infrastructure to use the projector in a session. Although the renovation of the building was under development, it was uncertain, when it would be finished.

When I asked them about the English curriculum, they said that the recent curriculum is more flexible than before. "Very good ... or even you can say excellent comparing with the previous one," said Razzak. The recent curriculum was also seen to promote creativity, as he continued, "It will help the students to be creative." The teachers also reported that the new curriculum was resourceful, as any one passage could allow the students to do many tasks and play with the text. Its focus, they said, was to develop language skills. There was opportunity for the students to create language individually and share with pairs or groups. But all of them regretted introducing this curriculum at the end of an academic year, which meant that it was not suitable for the students and teachers to follow effectively. As it created so many problems for the teachers, students and even parents, they feared about its successful implementation. At this point I encouraged them like this:

It is a teacher's responsibility to make it a success. We need to remember that the students are unique and we have to use each of them to make the activities successful. Reducing teacher-talking time could remarkably increase students' engagement in the session. Moreover, we need to keep in mind that the students not only need to develop language aspects but also need to develop the skill to think critically.

At that point, the teachers agreed with me and Nagma added that in a language session students needed to talk much or use the language to get fluency. However, they seemed confused about the criticality part. So, I tried to explain in this way,

Very initially, critical thinking is a skill to perceive other dimensions, or think differently. If anyone asks you a question, before answering, think about the background of it. Whether it will be ok to answer? Or how far to answer? Or what to say? If texts are related with real life situations and addressed through the practical activities it would be possible to encourage critical thinking. So we need a change in the classroom activities.

Although the teachers said, "Yes, it's needed," their facial expressions conveyed confusion. However, I overlooked the theme for the moment and proceeded with the next area of content.

As the day continued, I wanted to find out the problems the teachers faced in the English sessions. So, I asked them to make a list of the real academic problems for year six sessions. The teachers identified many problems they faced in the sessions and we discussed them. The problems were more or less similar to the classroom challenges discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. However, they mentioned that although year six is the entrance for secondary level school, the students often could not utter any English words. Secondary school teachers placed blame on the primary teachers for that. Tutul in a similar mood added, "Most probably primary is not doing its work properly."

The teachers also mentioned that they did not have enough time to finish the lesson using the practical activities. "We just use the time to focus on passing the examinations," said Razzak. They added that some students never try to say anything in English due to coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. At the end of this discussion, I asked them what they did to overcome those problems. "In reality we never try to find out individual students' problems. We start using

textbooks from the very beginning of the year,” uttered Nagma. I thanked her and proceeded with the discussion. But this time I pushed them little further and invoked them to think critically about their duties, the following way,

We know the reality that the students at year six come to the session without knowing anything. So, what to do? Just throw them away? We need to find ways. If necessary, we have to give ample time even only to teach the English alphabets. As these students are mature enough, they will learn quickly. I believe that spending first two to three weeks at the beginning of the academic year to refresh their memory using appropriate teaching aids could promote students learning.

As the secondary teachers always like to blame primary teachers for the current situation and do nothing, I just hinted to them little ways to make the sessions active. At that point, they seemed to be thinking something about the session activities. Nagma said,

Hum, *ha...* I mean, yes! We could just tell the students at the beginning that this week we only discuss about the leanings of primary, your earlier knowledge. From next week, we will start the textbook. Then if necessary we can continue basic discussions for next 2/3 weeks before formally starting the textbook lessons. Yes, this sort of activities could give us enough time to prepare the students for the year six lessons.

I also encouraged the teachers to use Bangla in the session to improve students’ English. “As some of the students never try to use English,’ I added, “Tell them to make a dialogue in Bangla and then translate it into English. This could encourage them to think about the context.” To discourage memorisation, I also suggested that the teachers could put the students in a context that would make them assess the situation and use the language as well. For example, take a story from the book and ask the students to make dialogues accordingly, so that they would get the opportunity to find the appropriate language for that context. Even they could use Bangla if necessary, when making the dialogues.

However, Razzak asked at that point, “We are not allowed to use Bangla in the English classroom. How can we do that?” In reply, I mentioned that later in this workshop it would be discussed in detail and finished that day’s workshop.

In that evening, in my field journal, I reflected on the workshop day one, “The teachers were confused and blamed the challenges for making the English sessions non-active but desperate only to pass the examinations.”

I noted that I had opened the discussion to know about good deeds and their challenges as well. However, as an experienced teacher educator, when I realised that as an excuse they were just blaming others, I pushed them a bit further to make them think differently about their classroom activities. In the journal I wrote that although it may seem top down, I thought that it was necessary to take them on the right track. That was the point; the teachers seemed to start thinking critically about their classroom activities. It was done to make the teachers to come out of their traditional cocoons of thinking to look more openly on the resource package and made changes when necessary.

Day Two:

Although the day was scheduled on the resource, we started the workshop and continued the previous day’s discussion on the problems the teachers were facing in the English sessions, because I wanted to go deeper into these issues. The teachers acknowledged that although pair work was a good idea, the classroom seating arrangements were not suitable for group work. As a large number of students had to be accommodated in a single class, it often created a lack of behaviour management in the classroom. The teachers said that students’ knowledge of English was not up to the required level, which also hampered learning, as they could not pay attention to all students’ learning needs in a session. So, they usually overlooked students with lower levels of English proficiency. They said that some students did not like to assist leaders in group-work causing problems with behaviour management. The teachers also mentioned that although most of the students wanted to learn English, some students did not like to attend English sessions because they considered English to be a difficult subject. Parents were also reluctant to get involved with students’ learning. These parents considered that it was the school’s responsibility to educate students, and so they did not need to do anything extra. Furthermore, they

said the position of English sessions in the school roster and allocated times were not suitable to perform activity-based teaching.

The teachers also mentioned that a shift in attitude about private tuition was perceived in the last six to seven years that also slowed down good teaching in the school sessions. Tutul added,

At the time of private tuition, very often students are attentive and willing to do activities, but never seem very thoughtful at English sessions in schools. Not only students but also parents were seeking out for the best coaching centres. If the teachers were teaching better in the school sessions, I mean attract the students in the English sessions... as it is not, they look for better coaching centres.

As the discussion continued, I explained critical thinking to the English teachers. Reflecting on the day's workshop, in the field journal I wrote as much I could remember that I said to the teachers,

As every human being is unique, he or she has different experiences and different perceptions of an event. So, we need to develop the skill to interpret different possibilities from diverse angles to formulate better communication. It is very important to develop the skill to think critically when we learn any language. And it is not easy to develop critical thinking in a day or two. Just as we ask different types of questions at an early age, we need to continue this skill throughout our lifetime. But due to the traditional education system we put students in a situation that they learn only to follow what they are told to do without asking or challenging the context. A changed learning situation is needed so that students can continue asking questions not only at an early age but also when they are mature.

It may seem a direct lecture and at that time it was; however, the teachers are accustomed to follow a top down tradition, so in the workshop a direct lecture like that was done purposefully to encourage the teachers to reflect on their classroom activities and to consider the need for change.

In addition, the teachers raised some social problems that impacted negatively on students' learning, such as drug addiction, the level of family education, and living conditions.

However, I then asked, "there are so many problems, what can we do?" Answering the question Razzak said, "If teachers want and try, then it is possible to overcome those problems" He also suggested that a teacher needed to find strategies for

each problem, and shared how. He introduced grade points to encourage the students to do homework. I agreed with him and continued the discussion, saying that as a teacher we had greater responsibilities than others. I also suggested them in the following way,

We need to find students' competencies, mix weak students with better ones, make an annual plan and related textbooks with real life situations in order to attract students to the English sessions and enhance better learning.

After this brief discussion on classroom problems we agreed that there were many ways that we could try to overcome those hindrances. Then I explained the strategies used in the resource to the teachers. As the resource was looking to create interactive English sessions, which could support students' language learning, I described the development of the resource package as well. In doing so I highlighted and asked the teachers to write on their journals the points below to reflect on when shaping their own lesson plans. The summative points of the resource package included:

- consider the whole textbook as single story or one story of year six students.
- consider related topics in the textbook, as one continuous story and teach accordingly but not in a single day.
- take time to finish a big topic, for example, divide a lesson into two or three sessions to make it easy for students).
- teach related topics according to the current social and national context. For example, if the nation is celebrating the Independence Day today, select and teach the topic before or after of that day, so that the students would be more interested to learn about those topics.
- have the authority to play with the text and reshuffle the textbook lessons as the situation demands.
- make partnerships with students.
- collaborate among themselves and so develop a learning community to adopt resources in sessions effectively.
- change attitudes to offer access to other teachers to their sessions, and if possible hire others to fill the gap.

Then I asked the teachers to discuss role-playing. They discussed about the need of making sessions interesting so that the students could be attracted to and attend the English sessions and role-play could be one of the best ways to do so. The teachers could consider asking students to make dialogue comprising of small sentences. "If not in English, try with Bangla and then translate it into English," I said. I also added, "After some sessions when some dialogues would take form, then try to perform these dialogues as a mini drama in the session. It would help the students to learn and practice context-based language and also could create interest to use the language in real life situation outside the session." As it was a general discussion, at the end of this discussion I asked for the teachers' opinion on those strategies. Razzak said, "Yes, it could be possible, will try... let's see." In the same way Nagma expressed, "It seems very interesting and could work as it is related to practical situations." Moreover, I added that as the new English textbook is more reality based than previous ones, we could try. So all the English teachers agreed to proceed and try the approach in their sessions.

I ended Day 2 workshop, providing some hints on tomorrow's workshop on asking questions and other strategies.

After finishing the day's work at the school, on the way home I stopped at a village tea stall to have some homemade cookies and a cup of tea. As it was late afternoon and nobody was there at the stall but the shopkeeper and myself, I started reflecting on the day's workshop. In the journal, I wrote that it was a big discussion day. We discussed many things, such as seating arrangements for group works, large number of students in a session, students' apprehension about English sessions, reluctant parents, a changed attitude towards private tutoring, role-play and obviously, the resource package. Although the day I had tried to be less authoritative, at one point I found myself pushing the teachers to reflect on their session activities. As I wanted to dig deep into the challenges to ask them for the remedies, the teachers replied positively. They discussed the features of the resource and the role-play and it seemed they became interested about the resource. But from my experience as a teacher educator, I was not convinced, as teachers often say yes but in reality, they never implement change.

At the beginning of today's workshop, I let the teachers discuss the challenges they face, it took a large amount of time, which was out of the day's plan. However, it brought some issues to the front, such as the parents' attitude about the school and about private tutoring, and the need to overcome those issues locally. With the analysis of the resource package I tried to encourage the teachers to reflect on their classroom activities and think further on the resource for change. Although the teachers agreed to do role-play, I became apprehensive about its results. As they were not trained drama teachers, I became scared thinking about the fate of drama in the resource. Consequently, I decided to focus more on the classroom activities as mentioned in the resource to prepare the teachers to introduce the resource in the ESL classroom.

Day Three:

We started the workshop reflecting on the previous day's discussion. Then I asked the teachers to think about the strategies they used when students did not understand English words or texts. They told me that usually the students looked for translations from their teachers but it was also apparent that different teachers used different strategies. Nagma said, "After reading the text, I translate," In the same way, Razzak added, "Let students read first, then discuss words they don't know, then translate." But Tutul reported that he used weak students to read the text first and then translated if necessary. At the end, they all came to translate the text. As the students demanded, teachers responded.

At that point I asked the teachers, "Isn't such translation creating students' dependency upon you?" I also added that the students could become more and more dependent upon teachers following that process. And so, they would not explore the meaning of the text themselves. As a result, they were likely to learn Bangla and not enough English language to use outside the classroom. The teachers agreed, and we continued to discuss strategies to minimise students' dependency on teachers.

Then I introduced the concept of *the translator*, a strategic device used in interactive exercises, with the teachers. As I will detail in the following chapter *the*

translator allows the teacher to take role and selectively translate between English and Bangla as needed. According to Krashen (1988) in his Monitor Model comprehensible input is essential in language learning and that translation of the language could intervene the process of comprehensible input in language learning (Nawi, 2014). Although there are many other approaches of language learning, Nawi (2014) used this concept of a teacher-in-role translation in a Malaysian ESL context, where the students seemed over-dependant on the teachers, often asking for clarification of the English words and sentences. He also highlighted the use of L1 in the ESL sessions, introducing teacher drama techniques especially utilising the teacher in-role to minimise students' dependency on the teachers. In a similar ESL context in Bangladesh as detailed in Chapter 2, where the teachers are not (officially) allowed to use L1 in their sessions but the students need L1 for clarification to proceed with the language practice, this resource package introduced translator in the ESL classroom. Therefore, I explained the device and we discussed the rules of its usage in the classroom. As the use of *the translator* in a classroom is detailed in Chapter 6, a quick summary of the discussion is presented below,

Following the resource, it was a part of the techniques that would be introduced in sessions. In the session, the translator was simply a picture but it created the opportunity for the teacher to shift roles when the students were stuck. However, although in English sessions the use of Bangla was restricted officially, the students needed Bangla in order to understand the meaning easily. In the long run, the translator could help to minimise the dependency of the students on the teachers and the use of Bangla in the English sessions. However, by increasing the students' engagement in the session's activities, it would help the students to minimize the communication gap as well to improve better understanding.

Although it was the concept of teacher in-role as translator, we decided to use a picture of the translator for easy access and variety. The making of the translator's picture is detailed in Chapter 5. Instead of asking the teacher to translate, students were required to ask the translator for a translation. Students would say, "We need the translator." However, sometimes the translator would not be available to

translate. Teachers would need to motivate the students so that they did not ask the translator for the meaning of all words or sentences, but only words or sentences that were difficult for all students to understand. And also, the translator might be upset if students did not behave properly. Sometimes the translator might not say a word. Moreover, the translator might ask students to look for a word or sentence meaning in various other sources, such as dictionary, or friends and family members. The students would also need to cooperate with the translator, or the translator might get upset and stop talking. This could create opportunities to students to try and find answers on their own, although might not be easy. I suggested, at this point, that the teachers could encourage the students to gradually exclude the translator from the session. I also provided a table for planning the role of translator (appendix 4). At the beginning, however, they would need to proceed slowly, taking time to understand students' needs.

We then discussed how asking questions could be another good move towards both teacher and student empowerment. The teachers could ask open-ended questions so that students could think before choosing from various answers and reflect differently. The teachers could encourage the students to ask questions, especially those questions to which they did not know the answers. I called this celebrating unanswered questions. In a role-play a teacher might ask students to switch over roles (e.g. less able students, good students, teachers and many more) to understand different contexts. It was expected that in this way, the students would gradually learn to behave properly respecting others. Then I asked the teachers if they thought we could really do it or not and they said that although it is really new to them, they agreed to try it.

We continued the discussion about the resource and I mentioned that in the resource teachers would find strategies like these. They would follow the textbook chapters as required by the curriculum but not exactly. They would need to create new contexts according to the textbook topics, as well as do role-play or perform mini dramas accordingly to practice the text practically. These activities would help them to create interactive English sessions. Moreover, the teachers would

need to be confident in order to make sessions interactive using English so that they could foster success in students.

The teachers asked “how?” and we then started exploring how we could change the activities using the same prescribed textbook. As the teachers needed to find the answers, this could empower both teachers and students to make the English sessions active. We finished the day’s workshop keep exploring the question above to discuss on next day.

At night, reflecting on the day’s activities, I wrote on my journal that the workshop was very interactive and the teachers were more self- evaluative as well as being more concerned about classroom activities. Compared with the last two days’ workshops, where the teachers placed more focus on their problems and appeared largely unenthusiastic about change, today the teachers seemed more positive and ready to explore and apply the changes in the classroom. Although the workshop went well, my greatest fear, was whether the teachers would be able to introduce the resource in the English sessions and if not, what I would do. This though engulfed me for that moment. Thinking of next day’s activities, I closed the journal.

Day Four:

We started Day 4 continuing discussion on the resource. I explained the resource activities in detail to the teachers. The features of the resource and the activities are presented in Chapter 5. As discussed earlier, students like translations of words or texts, so I reminded the teachers to first tell students to create dialogues and then to translate. This would help the students to open up from shyness and gradually develop the language. In the same way, activities like role-playing and mini-drama could offer opportunities for the students to learn how to use vocabulary and sentences practically within a variety of contexts.

After that I wanted to know about teachers’ current English sessions and asked the question “what works well in your English sessions now?” They offered examples of several practices that worked well. They affirmed that when they greeted students in English at the start of a session the students felt that the

teacher was there to teach something really important in terms of learning English, and that the teacher cared about students' learning. Then the students were more likely to try to answer, cooperate, and learn.

The teachers also pointed that most students liked activities that called for the development of writing skills over activities focusing on speaking skills. As there is little scope to practice spoken English outside the session, they felt shy to use spoken language. The existing examination system also only encouraged writing skills also meant that students lacked interest in practicing spoken language skills during or out of English sessions. The teachers noted that changes to the examination system meant that students are more interested in practicing and using spoken language in and outside sessions. I added that we needed to take this chance to motivate the students and create positive classroom environments so that the students could practice and learn English language to use outside the classroom.

The teachers told me that group activities work really well as students get time to think and work freely. They enjoy talking with each other, sharing ideas, and have fun doing so. However, at times students only gossip without cooperating with the leaders to complete the activity, so the learning for students was variable. I suggested that using all of the members of a group when presenting the group work could minimise this problem. I added that the teachers could inform the students about the presentation procedure and helped them to select parts of tasks for each student to present. This would also help the students to get rid of shyness and to gain confidence in their use of English language.

Then I asked the teachers, "What do the students like about English sessions?" The teachers noted that the students like to do practical and participatory-based activities that used real items. Nagma occasionally tried to introduce some textbook activities using participatory approach. "Sometimes the students like to attend sessions that support creativity, but it was not always possible due to reality," added Razzak, further noting that authority, parents, society, or the teacher often hindered change in the English sessions. Examination oriented teaching learning is, therefore, expected and supported by the societal factors, as

discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. Consequently, although most of the students and some teachers may like to be interactive in the ESL sessions, often it is not possible to continue. However, when a teacher tries to make a session interactive with one or two activities, the students liked the session very much. This view was supported in my previous study (Rasheed, 2011).

I continued the discussion asking why if they like practical participatory activities that English sessions were always be held in the same place. Taking students to school areas outside the classroom, (but inside school campus) to meet with real items could promote students' deeper understanding about language and its use. For example, we have a *Shaheed Minar*, a monument for the language martyrs, in most schools in Bangladesh, and also a topic about the National Monument in each year's curriculum. The students could see the Shaheed Minar every day but being beside it in a learning context would enable them to perceive it from totally different angles. Teacher could take the students to the Shaheed Minar, and teach its inner meaning by saying "Could you feel the pain of the Shaheed Minar? Touch it, and feel it. Visualise the firing from brutal police on unarmed people and the death of innocent people upholding our mother tongue." In this way, teachers could teach affection, respect, responsibility and the real value of the Shaheed Minar. However, I also cautioned that although it seems very easy, it is not; it requires careful attention and skill for the teachers. The above suggestion was made to trigger teachers' imaginations about making ESL sessions practical, as they seemed stuck in the middle of making sessions interactive with regular textbook contents and looking for ideas.

To get more specific ideas, I then asked the teachers what activities or part of activities do their students' often like to do in English sessions. Most of the students liked reading English texts following translations, I was told. The students also liked to learn the theme of the text that was needed to pass the examination. Furthermore, the students mostly appreciated stories with easy texts that related to their own contexts. Most of the students got support from practicing English language when teachers used it in sessions. Although a few students enjoyed solving grammatical problems, all of them needed to attend

grammar sessions for passing the examination. On the whole, the students loved to have fun and to be creative with attractive new ideas of language learning in English sessions.

I also tried to get a glimpse of what the students disliked in English sessions. As stated earlier most of the students did not like sessions where a Bangla translation was not provided after reading texts. They also did not like to learn topics that would not be included in examination papers. The students favoured following Guidebooks without reading the original textbooks. Such attitudes were due to the focus of the past examination system but recent change to the system meant that students regularly tried to use texts and learn language skills accordingly. At this point of the discussion, I added that we could develop students' English language creating various contexts in the classroom so that they could practice using the language in real contexts. However, new things would need to be introduced gradually, such as the use of translator. In the classroom, the students needed to experience that they were learning English language for everyday life, not for English sessions or passing examinations only. We all agreed that language sessions needed to be interactive focusing on student engagement and creativity and that an organized teacher could ensure those aspects in English sessions.

In the late evening, I wrote in my journal that teachers and I had discussed a lot about the resource activities. The most interesting moment was when I talked about the translator and, the teachers appeared to be interested in knowing more about the translator and of making sessions interactive using the textbook contents. When they became stuck, I, as a teacher educator, facilitated them with little suggestions to open their minds looking new possibilities. Today I had to talk a lot and although it was demanded, I think it would have been better if I had thought about those issues earlier and put the teachers in related activities. Although the teachers are accustomed with different approaches and their pedagogical thinking circle, many other aspects such as private tuition and the resource seek to change pedagogy; the teachers still seemed nervous about the application of the resource. Therefore, I had to discuss many things to encourage them and increase their confidence, as a teacher educator. I tried to encourage

them to think critically about the session activities making some changes and the teachers gradually becoming focused on the resource and planning for sessions accordingly. Overall the day's workshop was good and teachers seemed more comprehensible with the resource package.

Day Five:

Sessions in the resource package were discussed in detail. The teachers studied the classroom activities and how they might adapt or revise them according to the context. The session activities and games are discussed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. We then made a number of teaching aids, including posters, pictures and handouts to use in sessions. At our invitation, Timmi helped to make the picture of a Translator, as she was a good artist. The teachers also collected costumes and props to be used later in classroom mini-dramas. I tried to make them understand the resource activities, especially the new games that would be used at the beginning of a session. The games processes and the rationale were detailed at the end of the resource package; however, the teachers needed to understand the new games fully to play in the classroom. It was hard to make the teachers understand the 'name game,' a game to find the family members and make groups accordingly. The way the 'name game' was played is detailed in Chapter 6. The teachers asked multiple questions around how many names would be needed and where to put them. I made them read the instructions about the game and then we discussed those questions to clear the procedure of the game. We selected many names to make the list of family members. Then we made handouts to use in the classroom by cutting up small papers.

After that we talked about the game called 'Simon Says,' a very interesting game played to break the ice at the beginning of a session, as described in Chapter 6. However, when we were discussing about its process Razzak asked whether the name could be changed from Simon to another Bangladeshi name. As Simon is a foreign name, it would be better to use a Bangladeshi name, which Razzak argued would help the little students to understand easily. I said, "Why not, if you agree." We then decided that at the classroom we would ask for volunteer and change the name with the student's name.

Next, we discussed role-playing and mini drama. Although in the resource package I detailed the role-playing handouts, and dialogues for mini dramas, the teachers were hesitant about acting out the roles. As they were not drama teachers and did not have any training on acting, they felt anxious about acting in front of the students. Nagma said smiling, "I can't do that... acting!... its not possible for me." But Razzak encouraged her, "Why not? It is not drama and we are not going to judge you. You just read the dialogues and try to change your facial expressions accordingly." At that moment, Razzak and I demonstrated a dialogue with little facial expressions. Then she said, "Ok, I'll try but you all need to be there." We all said, "Don't worry, we'll be there." I added, "Its better. It'll be not so complicated, just be easy and keep going." Inside me, however I was worried thinking that it is not easy and requires a lot of attention to keep the session's flow. Overall, it was fun and we gradually becoming ready for the sessions to be introduced in the ESL classroom.

I Then demonstrated a section of one session, and explained what to do in that context, such as celebrating unanswered questions. The teachers expected a session from a teacher educator to do simulation sessions in order to encourage and develop confidence to use the new resources in the classroom. I chose the moment of celebrating unanswered questions and demonstrated the activities and dialogues, as the concept was new to them and it would help them to use this in the sessions. The idea of celebrating unanswered questions was so appealing to the teachers and they considered it could be useful for students' learning that they agreed to experiment with it in upcoming English sessions, as I came to know later. In this way, the teachers tried to prepare themselves for the next week's sessions and I finished the formal workshop with them.

Reflecting on the day's activities I wrote in the journal that the day was full of arguments, amendments, anxieties, and also fun. It was hard to make the teachers understand the games the very first time, but as the teachers were experienced, they quickly got the idea and demonstrated accordingly. I realised that the game instructions were not clear enough so were challenging to the teachers. I suggested to myself that in the next workshop I should make the instructions more

clear according to the local context. Although the workshop achieved most of its objectives, I did not feel the workshop was an overall success. The workshop tried to motivate and prepare the teachers for using the resource in sessions in coming days. Consequently, the fear of using the resource in the sessions and its actions and reactions again engulfed me. The teachers say, they are ready, and I know they are ready and also I am ready, but thinking about the coming days uncertainties, I closed the journal.

However, after the last day's session, when I was on the way to home, I came across an incident that I want to recount. I was in a rickshaw van and was passing a group of students when I heard one of them say, pointing to me, "Hey look! He is the Sir, tomorrow's session." My confidence increased as well in terms of thinking that I was on the right track. I was also surprised because until that time I did not make any direct contact with the students but I realised that I had been noticed and that they seemed interested to work with me. It was unexpected at that moment. I had asked the teachers in the workshop to tell the students a bit about new sessions that would come in the following week. I did it purposefully to create an interest and to motivate the students to look forward to the new sessions. I believed that creating this sort of interest could really be helpful for positive learning. I reflected in my journal that evening that if policy makers and school authorities could generate interest among the teachers, students, and parents about upcoming changes in curriculum or learning approaches, then it would help the students to explore and hopefully accept the changed content with anticipation and excitement.

As the teachers were ready and seemed confident to introduce the resource package in the ESL classroom and given the students were appeared excited to be in the sessions, the teachers introduced the resource the next day. The following chapters present and discuss the session activities according to the themes that emerged from the analysis of the classroom data. The following discussions also reveals how regular ESL sessions can gradually be turned into more interactive ones; thus, breaking the silence of a Bangladeshi rural context.

Chapter 6: Engagement

The year-six students were eagerly waiting for the day's English session, as they were told last week that something new would happen. It was the second period in the regular school timetable. I told the teachers to create curiosity among students by saying, "from next week the English sessions will involve different activities that you will find new and interesting." The students were curious and ready for the sessions as had I wanted and everything was on the way. As it was the first session that would follow the resource, the participating teacher was a bit nervous. To counteract this I invited the other English teachers to attend the session and help her if needed. I was there as an insider-outsider. On one hand I was there to observe the session (outsider) and on the other I was there to facilitate the session (insider) to facilitate improvement to the regular teaching culture. As an outsider as well as an insider, I was also excited and a little nervous about that first session.

This chapter discusses students' engagement in the classroom activities. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, engagement is often absent in the English language sessions and increasing the engagement of students was one of the goals of this project. The activities of the first planned sessions, named 'Where are you from' are presented as they occurred. My intention in the description is to show the flow of the lesson, and at the same time highlight the moments that demonstrate the emerging engagement of both teachers and students. This was the first session following the resource and the students reacted differently in different teaching moments as they gradually became encouraged to be engaged in the session's activities. When looking at the students' activities in a session, I purposefully considered students' willingness to follow instructions (involvedness in an activity), their eagerness to be creative (interest), and the after-effects (possessiveness) of that activity. It would be also noteworthy that involvedness, interest and possessiveness are very often comes with pleasure. Consequently, when anything offers pleasure instant involvement may be generated.

In the following discussion, various reflections from my point of view as a teacher-educator are also added to explore in-depth the learning of the students, teachers, and the teacher educator. A brief discussion on the significance of engagement in ESL sessions and in Bangladesh context is also presented.

The Session: Where are you from?

The Silence of the Students

Nagma, the assigned teacher, began the session. She started with the greetings in English, “Good morning, how are you today?” Some advanced students replied, “We are fine / I am fine.” But others were silent and appeared somewhat puzzled, thinking maybe about what to say and about what was going to happen. The silence became obvious when the teacher continued the session with the next instruction using English as in regular sessions the teacher hardly used it. As aforementioned, in English sessions Bangla is nearly always used in the form of translation with grammar rules only being taught intensively in order to pass the examination. The text is normally read aloud as English practice and then translated into Bangla to gain meaning. When the teacher started with something new and in English it seemed very foreign and difficult for the students to follow. They even could not react properly as confusion engulfed them, as I noted in my journal.

Ignoring that, Nagma continued with the English language and tried to explain that when two people met they would start conversation with greetings and further the conversation with short dialogues. She wanted to declare the session’s title based on the answers given by the students; however, the students were confused as looked at each other to determine what was happening. As seen in the picture below, it appears the students were a bit confused by the teacher’s instruction. In the second row a student is seen scratching his head and in the fifth row a student is seen putting his hand on his chin. They are just looking at the teacher but not engaged with what she is talking about.



Image 6.1: Silence in the classroom

After the session, I reflected in my journal about the big communication gap, which caused that confusion. It seemed to me that a long use of English language without translation underpinned this problem, which highlighted the necessity of using the mother tongue in ESL learning situations.

Continuing the session, Nagma declared the session entitled 'Where are you from?' and wrote the title on top of the black board using white chalk. All the students were silent and inactive but at the same time appeared to be eagerly waiting to know what was going on, as seen in the picture below where everyone is looking at the blackboard.



Image 6.2: Session's title and students' inactiveness

Fifty-six students were present in the initial session. This was a large number of students; however, it was very quiet due to the confusion of the students. However, following the school culture they remained disciplined. At the same time, they were excited to know about the language. There was a mixture of confusion and expectation. Later reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that in a teaching moment it is needed to remember that bringing something new into a session does not mean the students should always follow it without questioning. A session could fall apart at that moment. But it could grow as well. I highlighted in the journal that newness is always threatening as well as hopeful.

Teacher in Bewilderment

Nagma continued the session saying, "We will start our lesson with a game." She seemed somewhat indecisive and lacking confidence at that moment, as her English voice became fainter and hardly audible from the back bench and she was unable to make eye contact with the students at that moment. As I wrote in my journal, trying to use English language at all times in a session, which was totally different from the normal teaching style, could cause the uneasiness for the teacher. Similarly, although Nagma was talking to the students, she seemed to be searching for English words in the teaching notes and appeared to be confused. As

seen in the picture below Nagma's facial expressions and body posture seem serious and not confident to face the students.



Image 6.3: Teacher's uneasiness

I reflected in my journal about the normal practice of teaching where the teacher used a traditional grammar-translation method and Bangla for most of the time. Fear to apply new things in this session forced the teacher to be hesitant. Whether it would work or not was the main cause for that uncertainty and in some way the fear damaged the teacher's confidence. From my experience, it appears to be a common attitude in that situation and is not a teacher's weakness. Therefore, as a part of professional development, teachers would need to practice situational English frequently, when applying anything new in sessions. It would help the teachers if they could prepare themselves beforehand to overcome those moments and keep experimenting with new ideas.

After that Nagma tried to hang two family's pictures - one with a small single family and another with a big mixed family, as seen in the next picture.



Image 6.4: Family

As she was little nervous and could not reach the hanging pin, Razzak and Tutul, the other teachers who were also attending the session helped her to hang these pictures in front of the students. The picture below showed the teamwork. I reflected in my journal that it was a small initiative of collaborative teaching.



Image 6.5: Collaborative teaching

Timmi, a student of another grade, who could draw well, helped to make these pictures. The teacher could use students to make various low cost teaching materials when necessary. It would also help the students to be more involved in

a session theme, as I reflected in the journal and discussed in the workshop and as reported in Chapter 5.

After hanging the picture Nagma asked, “Do you know these pictures?”

As seen in the picture below Rani (one of the advanced students) stood up from the bench and replied, “May be a family.”



Image 6.6: Conversation between Rani and Nagma

Continuing the conversation Nagma asked, “What is in the picture?”

Rani replied, “In this picture, one man, one woman, one girl, and one boy. This could be husband, his wife, his daughter, and his son.”

Nagma asked indicating the next picture, “In this picture?”

Rani replied, “There are some people.”

Nagma said, “Good, it is also a family, a big family,” and continued, “When a man and woman live together with their children, what do we call it?”

Rani replied, “We call it a family.”

Nagma agreed, “Yes, we call it a family,” and said, “Thank you Rani...sit down please.” “Now we will play a game with family. The name of our game is ‘we are family.’”

I reflected on the moment and wrote that although the dialogue seemed structured and fluent, actually the teacher had improvised according to that moment. Although it did not exactly go along with the resource package, it was sufficient to allow an emerging engagement to occur. Nagma was a little confused about the progression of the conversation at the very beginning. But when Rani replied satisfactorily, it made Nagma confident to keep engaging in the conversation. This might also indicate that the teacher was not only following a prescribed model but also about to own it by making changes in it. In this way, the teacher gradually gained ownership of the activity. As a part of continuous professional development, such freedom to improvise could assist the teachers to be more confident in adopting changes in ongoing sessions.

At that moment when the teacher seemed a little shaky and forgot to engage with other students’ understandings, Razzak came forward and helped Nagma by asking, “Any student’s opinion about the picture?” However, there was no more responses. When the students did not give any more opinions Nagma continued with the game instructions in English. However, while there was little engagement with the students, there was evidence of collegial engagement with Razzak coming forward to assist his colleague. As a part of professional development, this would also be a great example of forming a learning community where we could help each other to overcome uneasy situations, as I added in my journal.

Nagma continued the game by saying, “look here is a small sheet of paper and in the paper six names are written. And one name is circled.” As seen in the picture below, Nagma is showing the circled paper.

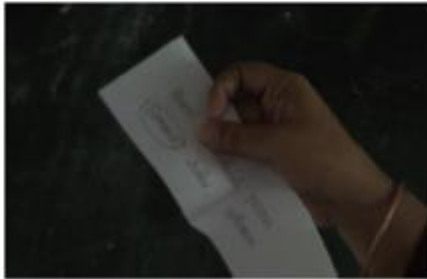


Image 6.7: Family game

Then Nagma explained the game using English language. She explained that there were a number of different families. Each family had six members. The students needed to find family members by names. As there were sixty names and fifty-six students present in that class. The students were asked to make 10 groups with each group consisting of six members. Each student would take one sheet of paper from a box and then they had to find their other family members from the sheet.

At the time of explaining the game Nagma spoke English very slowly, so that the students could understand properly. Although it seemed simple, in fact, Nagma was a bit confused about the related instructions in English and related vocabulary. It was easily visible from her serious appearance and the style of her speaking as well. She tried to be calm but the nervousness was apparent. As seen in the picture below, she seems confused not making eye contacts with the students, when explaining the game.



Image 6.8: Nagma's nervousness

Reflecting on the moment I wrote in my journal that it indicated that the teachers needed to not only engage with the students but also to engage with English on a daily basis. As discussed in Chapter 2, in regular sessions communicative English language was hardly practiced by the students or the teachers. In my experience, I observed that most of the English teachers often believed they knew English grammar well and they did not need to practice English language every day. However, it was evident that it was essential for the teachers to practice English language everyday alongside the students, or they would lack communicative fluency in real situations. As Nagma was facing an uneasy situation at that teaching moment, it could cause hindrance to the session's flow as well as engagement.

Emerging Engagement

Then Nagma asked, "Do you understand?"

Nobody answered.

Nagma continued with the instruction and explained the game once again in English and asked, "Do you understand?"

“Yes madam,” replied some students. Although they replied positively, it seemed that they really did not understand properly.

Nagma again said, “Every student will take one sheet of paper.”

Some students uttered with her, “One sheet of paper.”

Nagma continued explaining, “...and the sheet you get, your name will be circled on it. This circled name is your name.” Then again, she asked, “Do you understand?”

But the students still looked puzzled. So, she asked, “Do you need to translate it into Bangla or no need?” I noted that, she took the decision instantly, as she had tried several times to explain the game slowly in English but it seemed the students did not understand properly. That action suggested that she was gradually getting out from bewilderment and getting back her regular confidence, as I wrote in my journal. At that moment, she had a little smiling face and it seemed that this was the moment everyone was waiting for. As seen in the picture below, Nagma starts smiling for the first time in that session getting back her professional confidence.



Image 6.9: Teacher becoming confident

Some students said, “yes,” but some advanced students said, “not all, ...little.”

However, I wrote in my journal that it looked like the students were even more confused to say their needs, as in English sessions no Bangla was allowed officially. Although in regular sessions the teacher very often used translated texts, in a special session like that, the students were not sure whether Bangla would be allowed for that time or not. So, they asked for the Bangla, although in a very low voice and added, “little.”

Reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that at the moment although the students seemed disciplined, they were not attentive or engaged in the session content, as some of them were often looking behind with confused faces and even did not reply enthusiastically. It seemed the students came to the session with much curiosity and hope. But they were about to lose that curiosity even if they were still disciplined following the school culture and disrupting engagement as well.

So responding to the students’ reactions of quietness Nagma again asked, “Do you need Bangla?”

The students replied in a voice, “Yes.”

Nagma continued, “Ok...we will translate it.”

Then she looked for the picture we had prepared earlier, but could not find. At that time Razzak came forward to help her to find and hang it. As I learnt later, Razzak thought that the delay could hamper the regular flow of teaching. I reflected in my journal that it was a very good initiative, which obviously highlighted the necessity for fostering the development of a learning community.

Nagma continued the session, “Look at the picture. Do you know who is this?” As seen in the picture below, Nagma is introducing the translator, pointing at the picture.



Image 6.10: Introducing translator

Then Hasan replied, “He is a man.”

Although the students replied with various answers like man, boy, and stranger, Nagma then chose the answer ‘a man’ and said, “We will select him as a ‘Translator’. He is our translator. He will translate for us in Bangla. I’ll not translate it. He will translate for us. I’ll help you to understand.” Then she stapled a piece of paper written ‘TRANSLATOR’ at the bottom of the picture, as seen in the picture below.

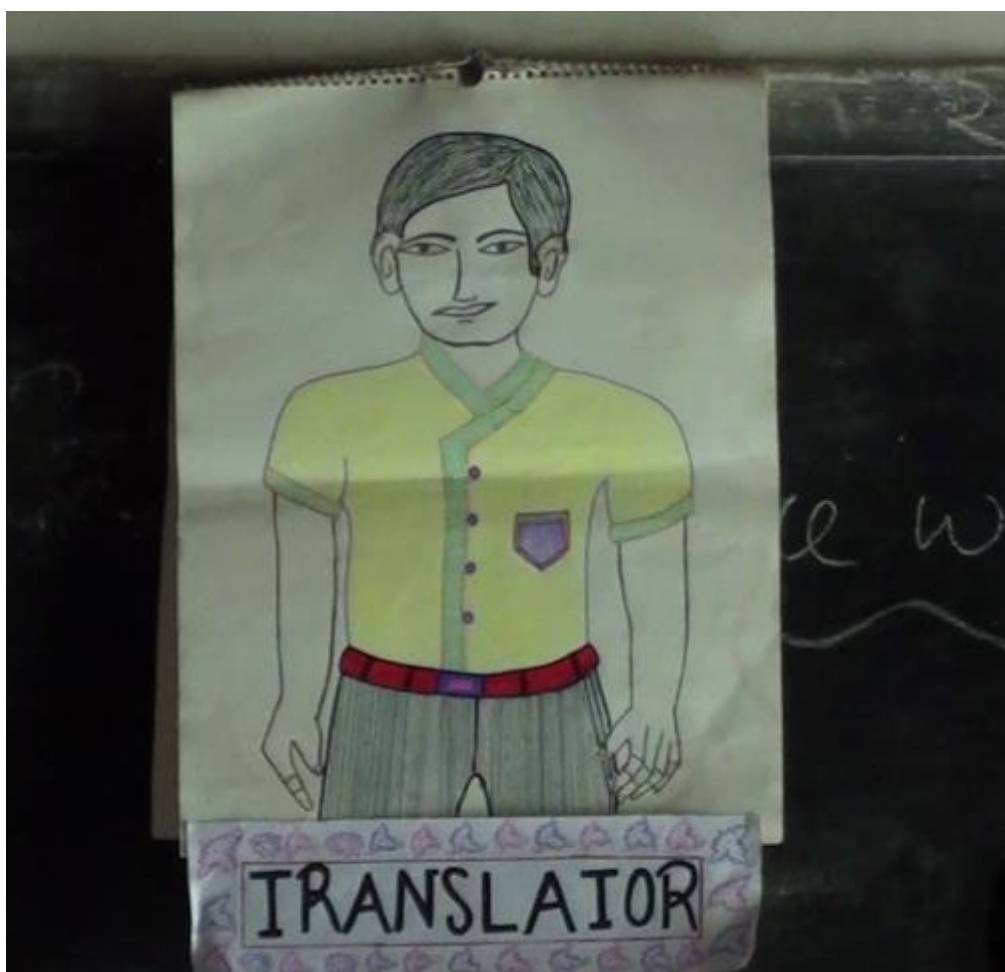


Image 6.11: The translator

As discussed in Chapter 5, the teachers and I had decided in the pre-session workshops that the use of a support device in the role of a ‘Translator’ could help us to minimise the use of Bangla gradually in English sessions. It would also help to increase the students’ engagement in the session’s activities, as it would assist the students to minimise the communication gap and increase better understanding. It was one of the techniques that I had planned in the resource. In our session, it was simply a picture but it could create the opportunity for the teacher to shift roles when students were stuck. However, the teachers and I agreed to restrict the flow of Bangla gradually as well. As discussed in Chapter 2, although in English sessions the use of Bangla was restricted officially, the students need Bangla to understand the meaning of lessons. Therefore, as students do not get enough scope for English practice outside the session, they need to practice it inside the session as much as possible. But the fear was that, if

the teacher used English from the very beginning and continued throughout; most of the students might not understand the session properly, as occurred at the beginning of this session hindering engagement. So, the role of translator could be introduced with conditions, and through it, Bangla would be used to give quick meaning, but the teacher could avoid using Bangla in the session. At the same time, the teacher could get a chance to shift roles from a teacher to a translator and vice versa. It would provide much variation in learning moments and could make the students more attracted to and engaged in a session even although gradually minimizing the use of Bangla.

“This is our translator. He will translate everything for us. I’ll not translate it. He’ll translate it through me,” Nagma continued. I wrote in my journal that she was more confident in what she was doing and saying at that moment. As seen in the picture below, she seems confident when describing the role of the translator looking straight to the students.



Image 6.12: Nagma, describing the role of translator

At that moment, she used Bangla and said, “I’ll express his voice only. Do you understand? We will ask him and he will reply through me.” She tried to explain the translator’s role gradually getting into the role of the translator.

I reflected in my journal that before that moment the students seemed like they were fish out of the water, facing so much English language at a time without the use of Bangla language. But now they seemed to have got back to their territory. Now the students were attentively looking into a new character and seemed more interested to be involved into the session. The use of 'Translator' had led the teachers to explore the impact of the teacher-in-role, as both the teacher and the students now seemed more engaged in the session.

Nagma continued in Bangla, "*Amra sob somoy Tranalator er sahajja nibo na, kenona amra nijera chesta korbo* (And we will not always take help from the translator, because we will try ourselves), Ok?"

"Yes," replied most of the students. "Yes" was heard even from the backbench, as I wrote in the journal.

Then again Nagma continued in English, "Gradually we will be self-developed. Ok...now I'll explain the game in Bangla through the 'Translator' as you asked for Bangla earlier."



Image 6.13: Nagma, explaining the name-game in Bangla

The above picture shows her explaining the game in Bangla. At the end she said in English, "You have to make a family with those names. They are your family members. So, we will form 10 groups or families at the end."

In my field journal, I wrote that the students seemed so attentive getting the instructions properly, although in Bangla. They were also a little more curious than before to be involved into this game. In addition, they had the opportunity take more risks in using English language when it was mixed with Bangla. According to Song (2016) a good mixture of English and Bangla could provide more understanding of instructions that might immediately foster student engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Then Nagma asked the students to come forward to take a piece of paper each and start the game. But at that moment the students started to collect their papers one by one and it was very slow. So, I intervened and asked them to stand from the sitting and go together to collect papers for each of them. Nagma also told them to hurry and that was the first time the students got movement and something seemed interesting to them. As I wrote in my journal, before this moment the classroom atmosphere seemed serious but it was the moment when the students broke free from the seriousness getting involved in the activities enthusiastically. As seen in the next picture, the students were happy and smiling when got the chance of moving.



Image 6.14: Students movement

While the students were busy collecting papers, Nagma wrote a 4 sentences dialogue on the black board:

Hi, Good morning. I am Karim, nice to meet you.

Hello. My name is Hasan, nice to meet you.

Sorry I'm looking for my family. Goodbye.

Nice to meet you, we are a family.



Image 6.15: Nagma, explaining the dialogue

After each student finished collecting their piece of paper Nagma then explained how to act out this dialogue, “When you are looking for your family members you have to use this language. Hi, Good morning. I am Karim, nice to meet you. Hello. My name is Hasan, nice to meet you. When you will find your family member you say: nice to meet you, we are a family. And when you will fail to find out your family member and need to go to another person; you have to say: sorry I’m looking for my family. Goodbye. You have to use these sentences. Clear?” She also asked the students to write those dialogues on their exercise books to make the dialogue easy. The above picture shows, Nagma explaining the dialogue written on the blackboard.

But as the students did not reply satisfactorily, Nagma continued explaining the dialogue again, to prepare the students for the game. I wrote in the journal that although she tried to make it clear again, most of the students did not respond accordingly. The reason might be that she was explaining the game in English. So again, I intervened and reminded the students to ask for the ‘Translator’. I also told them to say: “We need the translator.” And the students did that.

Then Nagma used some Bangla to explain the game and asked two students to demonstrate the activity practically with the dialogue. As seen in the next picture, Rimi and Kona are practicing the dialogue and the students are eagerly listening and watching them.



Image 6.16: Rimi and Kona, demonstrating a dialogue

“Like this, everybody try to find out your family members. Not only that when you find your family members you have to come together and make a group. And gathering all of the family members, who will make the group first, they will be the winner”, she added after the student’s demonstration. She also used some Bangla to explain that. At the end of instruction she said, “So... now everybody stand up and go to everyone to find out your family members.” And with that, the game began.

Researcher such as Cook (2001) argued for a mixture of native language and foreign language to help students to be more engaged and make the learning more effective. However, it would be helpful for teachers to learn how to carefully blend those two languages in challenging situations. This is because while there is need to determine when to use native language and how far to use it, the focus needs to foster the development of the targeted learning language.

Challenges to Emergent Engagement

Following the instruction, the students stood up and mingled together looking for their family members. But at the beginning it was not as expected. The students

did not use the English dialogue at all. They were only using their papers to match the names, and in that way, they found family members easily.

However, although the students were moving around freely, talked in their mother language and enjoyed doing so, there was total chaos with lots of noises. The students used Bangla, such as, “*aae tor naam ki* (what is your name), *tor kagoje ki naam ase* (what name is in your paper), *amar kase Junaed, tor ki* (my one is Jonayed, what is yours), *amar na amar na, oor kase Tinku* (not here, s/he has Tinku), finding their family members. Even Razzak and Tutul’s intervention could not control them from using Bangla. As seen in the picture below, the teachers seem little helpless to control the students.



Image 6.17: Students, using Bangla in activity and the teachers’ helplessness

Reflecting on that moment I wrote in my journal that, as the students were not familiar with interactive classroom participation, having never previously experienced freedom in the classroom, which could enhance practice in learning, the process created indiscipline. As a result, the game was about to fail and no language practice was there, which invalidated the objectives of this activity. That could be the most challenging part for a teacher in introducing something new. Primarily everything seemed chaotic but underneath a shift was taking place as the next description indicates.

As the students were managing to find their family members in one way or another, we, the teachers and I, quickly discussed the matter. Then Nagma stopped the game for that moment and asked the students to go back to their seats. As they had already found their family members they were told to sit in their family groups. After making groups, the students were asked freely to practice dialogue on the board with their family members. It was done deliberately to induce more language practice. In the next picture, the students' facial expressions and gestures indicate that they are indeed practicing the English dialogue with their group members.



Image 6.18: Students' compulsory dialogue practice

Teachers in Action (Teachers Engaging with Students)

Three teachers (Nagma, Razzak and Tutul) helped the students to ask and answer questions following the dialogue. I wrote in my journal that it was done to practice at least some structured English language, and also to create an environment to further practice English. It was not according to the resource package but the change, which was needed at that time, was to encourage language practice. It also indicated the flexibility of the resource package, empowering the teachers. I, as a teacher educator, also noted that I needed to be more focused about arranging backups for session's activities. I later included this part of activity in the resource package to make it more fluid.



Image 6.19: Teachers' facilitation

The session went on. The picture above demonstrates the process of scaffolding that was going on. All three teachers were helping the students and each other as well. In my journal I wrote that, as the teaching moment was about to fail, the teachers engaged with each other to keep the session going. Nagma especially led a group of the most shy students in the class to practice the dialogue separately. In the picture below Nagma's effort to push the students one by one to utter the dialogues is seen.



Image 6.20: Nagma's effort

Reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that there was a real breakthrough at that time, as the students were involved and practiced the language. They were

enjoying as they practiced freely and were making jokes with each other. It was also evident that the students tried to go beyond the structured dialogue as when they finished practicing the dialogue, they did not stop instantly; rather they continued their conversation on the same theme, although English was mixed with Bangla. They also made fun of it, as they were in-role with different family names, which was novel to them.

As Chapter 2 discussed, in regular English sessions the students are required to follow certain disciplinary rules, which means they often do not get enough free space to share their own ideas. In this session, the freedom to use the classroom space as part of the learning process fostered engagement as well as increasing the enjoyment of learning as well. The students seemed to have fun being somebody different through role-playing. They could not make mistakes, only the roles could make mistakes, and that gave them freedom to be engaged with the content enjoying the language practice. At the same time, through having free space, they began to engage with agentic thinking, which enhanced the engagement and also made them more confident.

Engaging Students (Interactive Students)

After practicing the dialogue for some time, the teacher then asked the students to select family members with their status, for example father, mother, sister, brother, aunt, uncle to make a complete family. The teacher used English instructions but at times the translator was used to make the instructions clear. To select family member's status, the students discussed among themselves and offered their suggestions to the group members. Then they agreed on status and gave out the roles. When doing so, they had lots of fun discussing and deciding how to be in-role as a mature family member. The students' facial expressions and gestures seen in the next picture indicate that they are enjoying being in-role and having fun breaking the silence of an ESL session.



Image 6.21: Students enjoying being in-roles

Moreover, sometimes girls and boys needed to be in opposite sex roles. Those in-role activities triggered enormous enjoyment in that moment. As seen in the picture above, the students laughed, made noises, used Bangla, clapped and even fashioned different gestures when doing that part of the activity.

Then Nagma asked the students to practice dialogue like “My father’s name is Karim, my mother is Amina, Sabina is my sister, I am Kamal, he is my uncle, his name is Jobbar” and so on among family members. The teachers and I believed that this could enhance more open-ended language practice. In my journal I wrote that it did encourage and force the students to practice the English dialogue interactively.

Increasing the Engagement of Others

While the students were engaged in the interactive session it was evident that other students passing by the classroom from other classes (years) were also very curious about that session’s activities. They stopped and observed carefully through the windows. As seen in the next picture a girl was peeping through the window eagerly watching the session’s activities.

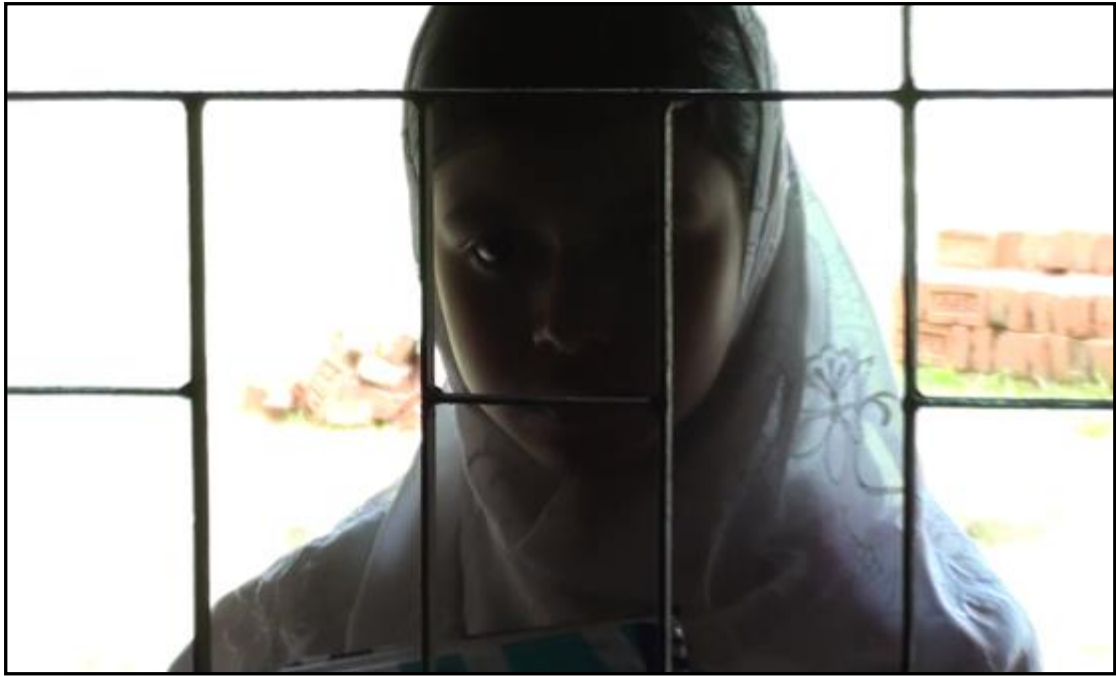


Image 6.22: A girl of other grade watching this session's activities

Reflecting on that moment, I wrote in my journal that it seemed they might be wanting to join this class, as they sometimes smiled and tried to assist that session's students with little words and gestures. Those attitudes indicated that in regular sessions, even if not totally negative, the students were often very passive and sleepy or dormant. But here they found something new and different that might enhance their curiosity.

More Interaction and Facilitation (More Engagement)

After selecting in-role status of family members and practicing dialogues accordingly, the students were asked to introduce their family as group and its members to the whole class one by one. The teachers assisted the students by suggesting a process to follow: that was to introduce the senior member first, for example, father and then the rest accordingly. Then the students started introducing their family members in groups.

In group 1,

Kabir said, "My name is Russel; I'm father of my family/ of this family."

Shompa said, "I'm Himu; I'm mother of my family."

Sumi said, “My name is Nijam; I’m son of this family.”

Kamal said, “I’m Nishu; I’m daughter of this family.”

Munir said, “My name is Kamal; I’m big son of this family.”

Hasan said, “I’m Salauddin; I’m also son of this family.”

In this way, all the families and their members were introduced to the others. The picture below shows Ratan introducing his family members.



Image 6.23: Ratan introduces his family members

In my journal I reflected that in that process the teachers tried to make sure that all the students were involved and at least spoke a little English, although sometimes this meant repeating it after the teacher. The teachers’ scaffolding continued as required. This suggested that there was a need to practice, which could enhance students’ fluency in using oral English every day and as such their engagement in subsequent sessions. Students hardly used spoken English outside the English session or even in regular English sessions. At the same time, it also demonstrated students’ increased liveliness in the session’s activities. Because of new approaches like role-playing and discussion time, the students got the freedom to make more choices compared to regular English sessions. By using a wider range of pedagogical approaches than traditionally used, teachers could create free spaces where the students would be able to grow agency and move

freely. This could help teachers to reduce students' inactiveness, enhancing engagement.

At the end of the session to further the discussion Nagma explained the language needed when two people met. She said, "When two people meet, then we use this language, which is written on the board (pointing the board). Hi, good morning, I'm Karim, nice to meet you; how are you; I'm fine; I'm also fine, thank you."

Nagma continued and asked, "Do you agree?"

The students did not reply, as the word 'agree' was unknown to them. But then Nagma explained the word in Bangla with the help of translator, and all of them replied together and enthusiastically: "YES". After that she again reminded the students about the translator and said, "He will help us but he will not be here all the time. Sometimes we will ask him for help but gradually we will reduce it. When we need him, what we have to say?... We say, 'we need the translator.'" She summarised it in Bangla but asked again in English, "What we need to say?... We need... ." The students repeated after Nagma, "We need the translator." She said, "Good. Very good. Thank you for now, we finish our session," and she finished the session.

Surprisingly, when she finished the session, the students asked me, "When are you coming again." As I found later by asking Razzak about the incident, the students learnt and enjoyed the lesson much than regular sessions and were very interested to attend more new sessions like that. I told them, "next week" as next day was a weekend. However, it demonstrated that the students liked and accepted the new and changed pedagogical approaches used in that session, and through their engagement they were encouraged to learn more. It also suggested that the students usually wanted to learn more but the regular learning situation did not facilitate engagement by fostering that curiosity. Further sessions are described in each of the following chapters.

An Engaging Session

As this chapter focuses on the moments of engagement, the story of the first lesson (where are you from/ the name game) exemplifies the need for engagement in ESL sessions, of taking control over the textbook, playing with it and applying it to real life contexts. Despite an initial confusion and moments of sheer muddle and disengagement, the students gradually became confident. After reading dialogues on the board and finding family members, they sometimes used Bangla to further a dialogue that continued from the English conversation. Thus, even when the students lost their English vocabulary, they were still trying to form a meaningful dialogue, although in Bangla. This indicated that the students were gradually trying to be involved in the English session and were seeing a reason to become interested in learning the language.

Engagement in Other Sessions

In the sessions that followed, the students seemed more engaged than they usually were in the regular sessions. In a later session named 'Grocery Shopping' (Chapter 8) when the teacher asked the students to make shopping lists for different shops and later explained it in Bangla with the help of the translator, the students became actively engaged making their lists. They also seemed more active than ever before, as I learnt from Razzak later on.

Again, in the session, 'We Live in a Global Village' (Chapter 9), when the teacher asked the students about globalization, she asked different questions to force the students to think critically, which made them engaged with the text topic. When some students seemed inattentive in discussion time, the teacher asked them questions about the topic to make them engaged in the session. It was encouragement for students' freedom as well as keeping discipline to be engaged in the content.

Engagement from the Perspective of Students (Interviews with Students)

Moreover, in interviews with the students after all the sessions were completed their engagement was also evident, because they expressed that they had enjoyed

the session and learnt a lot from the lesson as well. To some extent it might simply be a reflection of their goodwill. Nevertheless, it was a good affirmation that they were not unhappy and the energy in their voice confirmed that it was an honest feeling.

Shompa, a student, said, "...yes, the session was different...it was in a new way. We learnt about each other's and from each other's easily."

Then I asked for significant reasons for that and she continued, "I enjoyed those sessions as there were practical activities for real contexts and games for fun and real communication."

Similarly, Fuli, another student, said, "Those sessions were mostly enjoyable and easy learning, more practical than regular English sessions. We learnt easily about cleanliness, respect for others, through those sessions. I loved role-playing."

In response to my question about the session activities she continued, "We move around, go to each other, collect information and compile those together and form groups. It was totally different from regular English sessions. Because in regular sessions we generally do not move or talk but we only listen the teachers' lectures and instructions."

I wrote in my journal that, as the students were very excited to do these activities following the instructions properly, it encouraged students' to engage in the learning situation. The excitement of being in-role and the free discussion moments in those sessions seemed to set off students' curiosity and engagement.

In the way the lessons proposed, the students got more scope to practice language through such activities. As Hasan, another student, said, "Yes, we spoke more English than in regular sessions. We learnt practical use of the language. Teachers helped us a lot, sometimes through the translator. Traditionally madam reads and translates, we, listen, understand and then answer. Here, all of the students were involved in practical and real activities. We were allowed to make mistakes. I liked the 'Translator' and learnt a lot from those sessions."

Likewise, Shilpi expressed, "...teachers cared more about students leaning of English compared to regular sessions. In pair and group works we practiced and learnt a lot. For example, in shops, and drama sessions, we had more opportunities to ask questions and use the language in a real context."

In fact, it was the change in English sessions that students liked. The role-playing, mini-dramas and free movement moments through pair and group works created more opportunities for the students to be involved (engaged) and to be enjoyed themselves as well.

The students also tried to take the learning from these sessions' activities outside of the classroom. They talked about those activities to their other friends, family members and teachers. As Hasan, a student, said, "... after each day's sessions, at home I talked about those new activities with my parents, friends... how we enjoyed and learnt easily. I was so excited about those sessions."

Similarly, Kamal said, "... I talked about those sessions with my private tutor at home, and friends, ... in our English sessions we learnt many new words and sentences in different ways."

I wrote in my journal that the students were more engaged in those sessions than regular ones, as they were keen to follow instructions, participated language, excited to be resourceful and at the same time carried the learning across and over the classroom periphery.

Although the interviews with the students indicated that they enjoyed the work and were more engaged in that session, the progress of the first session indicated that the students were confused, muddled and even bored or surprised at the very beginning. After a certain period of time, when the teacher introduced the 'Translator' to the students, they gradually became interested and involved into the activity. Because of the newness of the sessions' activities, the students performed unexpectedly. Year-six is the entrance year for secondary schools, and the students, especially the rural ones, hardly got those learning experiences in primary level.

Engagement from the Teacher's Perspective (Interviews with Teachers)

Interviews with teachers also indicated that they were excited, confused, and had lost confidence at the very beginning. Therefore, while such confusions might be a part of the normal process of uncertainty and change, it was probably also due to the fact that the teachers themselves were not comfortable yet with the new process. But after some time, they got back into their regular pace of teaching and gradually enjoyed taking those sessions. They also felt excited when they found the students to be more active and engaged in the session, as they mentioned that students seemed to be very involved in those sessions and enjoyed then and learnt more language than in regular sessions.

As Nagma said,

Usually I never felt so such problem to take sessions like those and in that way. It was very interesting for me to do activities like those because it was not a big deal for me to speak English always in English sessions. But at the very beginning I was little confused about the simple English words that I should use for effective instructions. In regular sessions as we never use English continuously; I might have lost my language for that moment, as you would have realised from the back. But I liked those sessions' activities as I went on and got back my confidence.

Nagma's comment reminded me, as an observer, of those moments of the first session. I reflected in my journal that, it had seemed a total disaster at the beginning. A lack of regular English language practice and excitement could have caused that nervous situation. It would be more advantageous for the teachers to be aware beforehand of the possibility of uneasy situations when applying changes to the session and substantially prepare for them. Initially it could create frustration but if they could gain the confidence to continue after some time, they would realise the advantages of change.

Nagma continued talking about the students' involvements and said,

The students learnt quite a bit of language beside textbook language. They were interested to learn, attentive, and tried to take part in those sessions. Students tried to speak English. It was like a silence breaker, as in regular sessions students hardly get any opportunity to speak English. But in those sessions, they were always active doing or making something. They tried to communicate with

each other in English through games and activities. And of course, students were much more involved in those sessions than in regular English sessions.

Similarly, Razzak talked about the students' involvement with the content and tried to explain more vividly when he gave an example,

Yes. Through the 'Name Game', little family conversations, and selecting family members, students learnt the differences between single and joint families easily. The sessions were different from regular sessions because there were no usual lectures like in regular sessions and it was practical and participatory. For example, how many kinds of families were there? We did not explain any differentiation between those kinds of families, but students learnt automatically through activities as the teacher used two pictures and little in-role dialogues so that students could comprehend the differences. In addition, how many family members? who are the guardians? - they learnt easily. Teachers also tried to make it clear during activities but only through facilitation.

My Analytical Reflection on the Session

I reflected in my journal that the sessions were full of activities and the students learnt and used language outside of their textbooks. The teacher did not use the traditional lecture and translation method but created a learning situation using different approaches like role-play and interaction generating free spaces for students to move around and share ideas, which seemed to have enhanced students' participation. As the teachers mentioned that moment as a 'silent breaker.' It also pointed to the value of change in a session through the use of various approaches instead of the use of a single method for teaching every day enhancing the level of sessions' engagement.

I also noted in my journal, just as Nagma and others were confused and uncertain about session's activities, so was I. I was not certain whether the process would work or not. Anxiety engulfed me on that very moment and I thought for sure, "Oh no...she is not doing well. The session is going to fall apart. What should I do now?" That was really a critical moment for all of us who were in that session. If looked carefully, that moment put three groups at risk. The students were at risk in terms of their English learning. The teachers were at risk because if they taught the session badly, the students might not engage in future sessions. I was at risk because if it did not work the teachers would not follow me again and would close

me down. A professional developer who might be seen as an expert was as much at risk as a learner as well. As if he wanted to make an impact, he was also had to get into that engagement. So all the way through that level of change, it was needed to be engaged with the session.

When Nagma was less confident, the other teachers discussed, assisted and helped her all the time. The teachers took steps instantly when in some points of the session it was about to fall or students were not reacting according to the session objectives. The importance of a teachers' learning community was continuously demonstrated in that if just a teacher was teaching it could be risky, but when they were teaching all together it would be much safer. When all of the teachers were helping each other, it increased the degree of scaffolding previously provided and increased the likelihood that students would engage in the session. By engaging in the process as colleagues, it could also be suggested that teachers' ownership of the session was created.

The account of the first session also showed that the students' involvedness did not occur from the very beginning. As we have seen, there was non-engagement at first but gradually it changed when the students experienced Bangla through the Translator. Before that the students were confused, as the teacher used English language all the time, which was an absolutely new experience to those year six students. It was a complete communication gap for most of them, which created boredom and hindered participation. Then through the role of the Translator, the gap was bridged and the students seemed to engage straight away. The students started to move, talk and carry out instructions accordingly with great enthusiasm.

The engagement was also noticeable when at the end of the session the students asked me when the next session would be. They were curious and interested to attend more new sessions. I reflected that little change in regular session activities could generate a massive difference in the level of students' engagement and curiosity.

Engagement in ESL Contexts

In the following section I briefly review what the literature says about the need of engagement in ESL contexts.

The research findings in non-English speaking contexts consistently report that teaching and learning the English language in an unfamiliar context is very complex and challenging (Anderson, 2008; May, 2002; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). English as second language (ESL) learners face enormous challenges when learning the language, as most of the time without fulfilling students' essential needs, new achievement is demanded from them (Decapua & Marshall, 2011). Students are not offered what they want to learn or how they want to learn but they are expected to shape new languages. Often, they are in acutely vulnerable positions that creates fear of the new language and are put off from learning. Decapua and Marshall (2011) state that a changed learning environment could facilitate students to be actively engaged in learning. In the same way, Agbatogan (2012) agreed that, "Necessary interaction, active engagement and dialogic communication could promote improved learning outcomes" (p. 1). When the students are given opportunities to interact actively in the classroom and they willingly take the language outside of the session, it is at that point language is best learnt. A beginning factor for effective teaching and learning is student's engagement with the lesson content (Bachman & Bachman, 2011).

In addition, better engagement in sessions could enhance the learning of criticality skills. Schlechty (1994) argued that student's positive engagement could promote higher-level thinking for enduring better understanding of texts. Likewise, Edgar Dale's (1969) learning pyramid suggested that most learning occurred when students are actively engaged in a session; and added that interactive pedagogy could set off meaningful learning enhancing critical thinking. Therefore, it is very much important for both the students and teachers to enhance engagement in session activities to get real achievement from a session. A discussion on criticality is presented in Chapter 9.

Engagement in Bangladesh Rural Context

As detailed in Chapter 2, in the Bangladesh rural context, the students are not fully engaged in the learning sessions when considered students' willingness to follow instructions, their eagerness to be creative, and the after effects of those activities as engagement. Consequently, high dropout rates from school or a session, high fear of various subjects, and also low exam success in particular subjects, especially English, is apparent. Using traditional teaching-learning methods, together with large classrooms and students' socio-economic status tend to result in students' poor engagement in sessions' activities. As a result, the students recurrently lose interest in learning. Hasan and Akhand (2009) articulated that a lack of proper classroom instructions and insufficient resources might result in non-effective learning in the Bangladesh context. Nesa (2004) also argued that very limited teaching / learning materials and implementation strategies create hindrances to the implementation of CLT approach in the Bangladesh ESL context. As discussed in Chapter 3, CLT is used all over Bangladesh as an approach to teach and learn English as a second language and it is standardised by the Government. However, students' engagement in learning is hampered not only by the classroom environment, but also the poor socio-economic conditions. Sometimes, students get very little support from their families about learning English language. As Khaled, the assistant head teacher, said,

...the people living near the school are mostly van drivers, fisherman and daily labors by profession. They are generally very poor and under privileged families. As a result, ... students come from families of daily hard labourers, who are usually illiterate and not conscious about students' learning. But ...(urban) students come from families who are educated and office going. It creates a level of difference in thinking, caring, and also their goals of learning. For example, now is the time for cultivating paddy (IRRI), so many of our students from year 6-10 come to the school after working 3-4 hours in the paddy field in morning.

The challenges presented to young students hinder their ability to concentrate and learn within the classroom. However, that is the economic reality and what is needed for their survival. Although that is a harsh truth, schools need to be encouraged to try to make a way through. A changed classroom practice and environment could make a difference in students' classroom engagement when

learning, especially when learning English as a second language. As Nesa (2004) suggested, enhancing self-directed study, including more instructional materials, and furthering teacher training in CLT as well as better supervision of CLT sessions could improve the achievement of students' English learning in Bangladesh. However, there is continued debate about whether a blend of content-based approaches and CLT could minimize the challenges of teaching English in Bangladesh. In the teacher-training curriculum, more practical activities could be introduced to highlight the possibilities of student engagement.

Furthermore, as it is commonly known that engagement generally involves to learn, and a willingness to proceed through challenges and obstacles, which implies anticipation of success and incorporates learning in an individual's own life, I wrote in my journal that the students are expected to be involved in an activity, to try hard to surpass obstacles, and generate enjoyment through success. It means that school can enable students to get involved into it instantly and with pleasure. At the end, they feel proud of the learning and achievement and apply it to real life.

Likewise, as I reflected in my journal, when the students are learning they need to be in an environment that encourages their engagement. Without genuine involvement in a session's activities, effective learning is certainly very hard. Therefore, one of the major themes that emerged from this study is the importance of students' engagement in a session's activities.

The first session activities and the interview data suggested that the students became very enthusiastic to follow the instructions and became interested and involved in the session. They even became curious to learn more and tried to take the lesson's learning outside of the class. Similarly, the teachers were also becoming more involved in the session activities and enjoyed them after the initial uneasiness. I, as a teacher educator, also learnt that a changed learning situation could enhance engagement. The way the teacher applied different teaching approaches using the resource to create opportunities for the students to be engaged in that session could help other teachers to make a changed English learning situation in the Bangladeshi secondary school classrooms.

The following chapter discusses how creativity was encouraged within the sessions.

Chapter 7: Creativity

The previous chapter presented an account of the start of the classroom project, detailing the initial hesitations and uncertainties and the gradually growth of confidence on the part of both teachers and students. It showed that it was possible to create an interactive classroom environment even with a large class tightly clustered in a classroom by benches. It also showed that it is possible to teach according to the Government issued textbook and yet adjust lessons to be relevant to students and to facilitate their more active participation (engagement). It reported how the teachers had broken with approved practice to actively encourage the use of first language, Bangla, in the English class but also attempted to contain and direct its use through the strategy of teacher-in-role as 'the translator.' It discussed how the shift to more interactive activities and the blend of first and target languages contributed to significantly increased engagement by both students and the teachers themselves.

This chapter continues the account of the classroom sessions within the project and examines how the interactive approach contributed to an increase in creativity. A consideration of creativity is important for several reasons. The Ministry of Education recognising the limitations of rote learning for examinations, is calling for more creative approaches to learning and teaching which it seeks to endorse by the instruction of what it calls the *creative question*. Language is in itself a creative activity - we search for ways to express meaning rather than merely reproducing learned sentences like robots. Creativity is in some ways related to play and the young students in this class enjoy playing, but have not previously had the experience of playing with English which is often associated with fear. The chapter briefly reviews concepts of creativity. It then reports the progress of several classroom sessions, identifying aspects of difference from habitual practice and examining how the creativity that is involved. Finally, it discussed the importance of creativity within language learning, relating it to findings and theorisations in the literature and to possible future directions for language learning in Bangladesh.

Ways of considering creativity

Although there were many aspects and forms of creativity, such as, mental, emotional, cognitive, environmental (Fernandez-Cardenas, 2008; Fleith, 2000; Saebo, McCammon, & O'Farrell (2007); Vygotsky, 2004), in a working concept creativity can be defined as a process of 'thinking new' or 'making new' (Greenwood, 2009, p.45). In a similar voice, Gaut (2003) argues that creativity needs to be "original, that is, silently new and which has a considerable value" (p. 269). However, concerning the value of creativity Greenwood (2009) argues "that creativity in itself is not necessarily a 'good' thing" as "new thinking and making do not necessarily solve global problems" (p. 45). As the term 'creative destruction' (Gaut, 2003) often impairs the quality of creativity, it is important to remember that a creative process produces something original, which is valuable to all.

In this chapter creativity is considered in a number of ways. The ways students used language and made physical props within the classroom are examined. Here it will be seen that creativity takes several forms: it involves experimentation with given phrases and language forms; it involves playing with situations and roles and the making of symbolic props that will support them; and it involves the embodiment of ideas, the process of exploring textbook material *in the body*, of *doing* instead of just listening and repeating teachers' instructions when learning English. Creativity in this context is spontaneous physicality through making something, such as using learned sentences for making personal meanings or making paper props to play within support of an imaginary context. This is quite different from repeating after the teachers or just following what is told. It is not like the process of training a dog or of shaping behaviour purely to please the teacher. Creativity is also involved where more than one possible answer or action is encouraged and explored.

The activities in the sessions, as detailed below, encouraged the students to be creative in the ways discussed above. Students were exploring ways to use and form language through the use of role and imaginative play.

The teachers also behaved more creatively than they usually did; changing lesson plans according to the immediate visible need in the teaching moment, taking role, and experimenting with new ways of dealing with textbook resources. I highlight these creative teaching moments in the account that follows. I also had the opportunity to act creatively within this project; I developed a resource that sought to incorporate teaching strategies that are new to Bangladesh and align them with existing material in the textbook. I was attentive and responsive to shifts in energy and understanding both in the teachers' workshop and in the classroom sessions, and I negotiated adaptations. I encouraged the teachers to grow professionally to try different strategies in classrooms.

I will illustrate these elements of creativity in the sections that follow. I begin with continuing discussion of "Where are you from," an early session in the resource package.

Creativity in Language Practice

The Session: "Where Are You From?"

This was the second part of the session detailed in Chapter 6. Therefore, the students were eagerly waiting and were a little excited about that session because they had a very active and fun oriented session the day before.

Razzak, the assigned teacher, entered into the session with greetings and said, "Good morning, how are you today?" Only the advanced students replied, "Good morning, I'm fine;" most of the students stayed silent because it still seemed quite new to them to participate in dialogue. As it was the second session the students had not yet had much time to be accustomed to the new expectations. Razzak once again just reminded the students about greetings and the learned replies. The picture below shows Razzak reminding the students about the practice of greetings.



Image 7.1: Razzak is reminding students about greetings

Razzak moved forward with the lesson, starting with a discussion of the previous day and recapping the process of introductions when two people meet.

Embodiment of Textbook Content

Razzak said, “Today we are going to do a drama.” That was the first time the students were introduced to classroom drama. He explained it very briefly and stated, “In drama we pretend that things are happening but they are not real. And we will all see them in our imagination. For example, if I tell you that we are at the Airport, can you all pretend to see it being there? So, we can all pretend together that it is true, as it is in our drama.” But when the students seemed not to understand clearly, they asked for the translator. Razzak took the role of translator and, just summarized the general content but did not translate word-by-word.

This was a very important part of the teaching moment, as I reflected in my journal. This is because in that moment, the teacher tried to explain the background of a new activity before introducing it fully. Although the teacher used a little Bangla, this background knowledge not only helped the students to perform the activity according to the instruction but it also made the new activity easier for the teachers to act out effectively in the session. Although it is not often

the practice in Bangladesh classrooms, I felt it was important for the teachers to be sure that the students got a brief background about the activity in terms of what the activity was and how it could be done. It is also hoped that clear instructions about any changed strategy and the related activities could make a difference to the sessions' outcomes.

I also reflected on the journal that it was quite natural, when two people meet that they would most likely continue their conversation further. They may want to know where the other comes from, or what the other person does and so forth. In this textbook lesson, there were five different everyday contexts of two people's meeting with regular conversations. But as people are often going abroad now days, the teachers and I agreed earlier in the workshop, to take the airport context following the textbook and make a mini drama using the dialogues provided in the textbook. As the next lesson involved different professionals and their responsibilities, we had agreed to further use the airport context setting to set the scene in this first lesson. The textbook dialogue was also used as the students would later need to answer questions on the contexts of the dialogues in the examinations. In addition, the drama was performed to provide the students with an impression of a real environment and use of the targeted language.

With the help of translator, Razzak then re-explained the context of the airport, highlighting the activities of an immigration officer, the necessity of the passport, the arrival of different people with various professions from different countries and their reasons to visit a country. In the pictures below, the gestures and body language indicate that the students were listening attentively to Razzak as he explained the airport context.



Image 7.2: Razzak is explaining the airport context

Once the students understood the context Razzak distributed handout 1 and asked the students to fill out the columns creating a passport that included their ideal or dream occupations. The photos below show the students fully engaged in making their passports. Razzak is also seen preparing himself for the next move.



Image 7.3: Students filling out the handout

The passport handout had a column about occupation, as well as name, age and address. The students were asked to fill it with their dream professions. At that point, Razzak showed a real passport to give the students an idea about the original passport, as seen in the picture below.



Image 7.4: Razzak showing a real passport

After each of the students had filled out the form and made a passport, Razzak said, “We are now at the airport and you are coming from different countries” and showed a picture of an airport immigration area and explained how the people needed to stand in queue. The following photos show the moment.



Image 7.5: Razzak showing and explaining airport immigration

Razzak then took the role and attitude of an immigration officer and began to check passports randomly. He said, “Now I’m the immigration officer and will check your passports. Please show your passports.” Razzak asked questions such

as, “Where do you come from? Where are you coming from? Where will you live in Bangladesh?”

As seen in the pictures below, Razzak explained an airport scenario being in-role as an immigration officer and putting some of the students in role as passengers. He told a story about a person who travelled with a false passport and how he faced terrible consequences for that. Although that was not in the resource package I had designed, the teacher took the opportunity to add authoritative detail to the context as he thought necessary. As I wrote in my journal that evening, it was an instance of teacher’s empowerment to go beyond the textbook or fixed contents and move freely as the learning environment required.

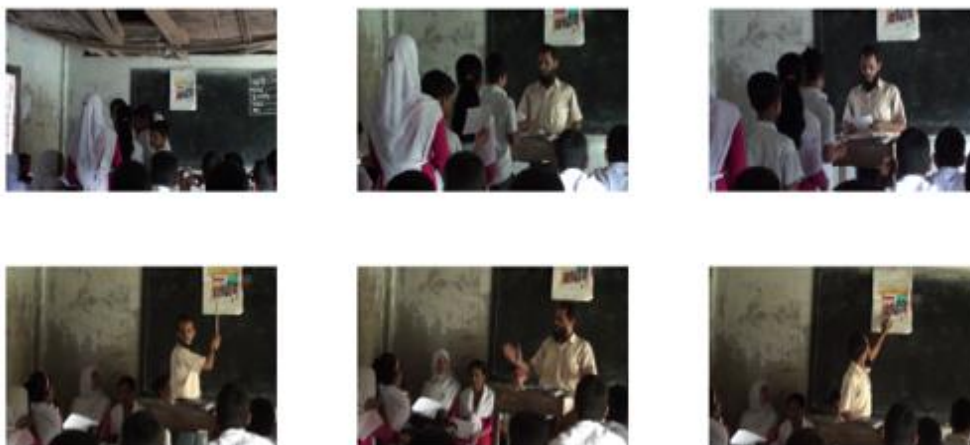


Image 7.6: Razzak in-role as immigration officer and the students as passengers

Experimentation with Given Phrases and Language Forms

Razzak then asked the students to read the dialogue on page 2 of the textbook and to practice with their partners. The textbook dialogue is shown below.

ii) Sometimes the same questions can be asked in a different way. Here is a conversation between an Immigration officer and a passenger at the Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka. Listen to the conversation first and then practise it with a partner.

Officer : Your name, Sir?

Passenger : Robert Smith.

Officer : Where do you come from, Mr. Smith?

Passenger : Australia.

Officer : And where are you coming from now?

Passenger : I'm coming from London.

Officer : Welcome to Bangladesh, Sir. Have a nice stay.

Passenger : Thank you.



Image 7.7: Textbook page 2

As the textbook dialogue was between an immigration officer and a passenger at an airport, the students took role of an officer and a passenger and practiced the dialogue in pairs. This created the chance for students to be in role in that context and practice contextual language with their partners accordingly. Razzak required the students to practice the structured patterns of language for that moment. As Bangladesh teacher training emphasises, a structured activity at the beginning of a lesson provides support for more creative activities that are to follow (TQI, 2008). I observed that the students seemed more engaged at that time practicing the dialogues than they had been at the start of the previous day.

After practicing the dialogue for seven minutes, Razzak asked the students to use the same dialogue with different emotional contexts and play with dialogues, for example, angry passenger, bossy officer, and calm passenger. When Rani asked for the translator, Razzak explained the gist of the request in Bangla. Then he added,

“If you like, you can try this with different contexts and professions, for example, a teacher asking for admit cards in an examination room, a bus or train supervisor asking for tickets,” and again he explained it in Bangla, taking role as the translator. Then he gave an example of what might occur in the examination hall:

Teacher: Can I see your admit card?

Student: Yes, Sir. Here it is.

Teacher: What is your name? Card number?

Student: 24637.

Teacher: Ok. Thanks. Keep writing.

Student: Thank you, Sir.”

The students started to practice the dialogue with their own names, and with places they wanted to go and come from. Then again, with the help of the teacher they tried to ask and answer the questions reflecting different contextual emotions. The photo below shows the students engaged in practicing the textbook dialogue in pairs.



Image: 7.8: Students practicing textbook dialogues in pairs

Razzak proceeded with another example to make it more practical: at a railway train station, an angry passenger was asking for the manager. Although the teacher made the dialogue in correct English, I noted on the journal that the students most often practiced it mixing Bangla with English and made fun of it.

Shompa: Hi, I'm looking for manager.

Fuli: He is not ... (shakes the head).

Shompa: What... where he is?... I... want now.

Fuli: Please, *chup koren* (calm down)... *ki hoise* (what happened)?

Shompa: Your train attendants... not good.

Fuli: Ok... thanks ... *aamra eta dekhbo* (we'll look at it).

Some of the advanced students attempted to apply the dialogue in different professions according to the teacher's instruction. For example:

Kabir: Hello. I'm Juno. Nice to meet you.

Rani: Hi. I'm Tiku. Nice... meet you too.

Kabir: What do you do?

Rani: I...'m... a doctor. You?

Kabir: *Ami...* I'm... engineer. Very busy time?

Rani: *Ha...*Yes, Doctors are always busy.

Kabir: We are not very busy.

Rani: Ok, talk *onno* time, *ekhon* busy.

Kabir: Ok...see you.

Rani: Bye.

Reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that there was lots of laughter and teasing when practicing the language. The students enjoyed this role-play, although often they used Bangla to further the practice. The teacher strategically ignored the language blends and any mistakes, as he focused more on the creative

language practice than on correcting the mistakes. As a result, the students seemed playfully creative and engaged as they took the opportunity to use the English language in different contexts, and according to their own preferences.

In addition, reflecting on the above moment I added in my journal that this teaching moment also created a free space for the students to practise a semi-structured pattern of language and to play with it. This was the moment, which furthered the possibility for the students to move freely, share ideas, create new language and use it according to the context. As the students practiced different styles of language for different professional roles (for example doctor, engineer), I saw the possibility that it might help the students to develop consciousness about the use of different languages in different attitudinal contexts as well. Consequently, in that session, the students used and experimented with English much more than regular sessions, where only the textbook's structured dialogues were often loudly read out ignoring the contextual features of the language. In addition, the teacher, as a facilitator, enriched the practice time by providing examples and allowing the students to try out different language forms and helped them to get prepared for the next discussion.

After that Razzak asked the students to discuss and write the answers to the questions on activity A2 of the textbook. In this activity, the students needed to answer why did the immigration officer asked the passenger, "where do you come from?" and again why he asked the passenger "where are you coming from now?" Those two questions were asked purposefully so that the students could understand the differences between superficially similar questions. After five minutes of discussion, Razzak asked the students to read the conversations from pages 2, 3 and 4 of the textbook, where they would find how superficially similar language was used differently in different contexts. The extract below shows how the textbook addressed the different intentions of similar sounding sentences.

Notice that sometimes the answer to "*Where do you come from?*" or "*Where are you from?*" is the country one belongs to. But when both the speakers are from the same country, the question would obviously mean what part of the country one belongs to.

Notice the difference between "*What do you do?*" and "*What are you doing?*" '*What do you do?*' means the same as 'What's your profession?' On the other hand, '*What are you doing?*' refers to what you are doing at the moment, or to something you are doing around that time.

Image 7.9: Language focus

After explaining the differences, Razzak finished that activity. He then closed the session for the day giving some indication of the next day's lesson: he said, "Always carry passport when going abroad and bring it in tomorrow's session again!"

The Next Day's Session

Razzak started the next day by continuing to be in-role as an immigration officer, and asking the students to show their passports, which he went around the room randomly checking. I wrote in my journal that it was full of fun, as some students forgot to bring passports and so they were not supposed to attend the session. Then he allowed the students three minutes to make new passports as needed, adding, "Travel to other countries is not allowed without having legal documents." He also warned that it could create serious problems if anyone did not have a passport. Although this little introductory drama was used as an icebreaker at the beginning of a session, it was more than an icebreaker. It was a recapitulation from the last session as well as a signal of what was coming next.

Playing with Situations and Roles

Then Razzak invited the students to write the names of various professions on the blackboard, saying "Let us write some names of our dream professions on the blackboard. Write your dream professions that you like to be when you will be grown-ups." As seen in the pictures below the students randomly wrote the names of their dream professions on the blackboard.



Image 7.10: Students writing various professions on the blackboard

However, when the students were hesitant to write the professions in English, Razzak encouraged them to write their dream professions in Bangla as well, to engage every student to write on the board. According to Machemer & Crawford (2007) big classes like this, there often exists some silent observers, who very often do not want to participate in the session activities. Nagma and Tutul therefore assisted Razzak to find and encourage those silent students to write on the board about their dream professions, even in Bangla, thus creating opportunities for all of the students.

The activity was designed to know the students' dreams and also to put the students in different occupational groups for the next activity. In general, the students identified the most common professions. Razzak then selected the four most prioritised occupations and said to the students, "Now form groups, five members in each group. Choose an occupational name for your group. Open your textbook at page 5, and ask and answer the questions about different person's professions. So, you have to be in-role as having different professions to ask and answer the questions." A snapshot of the textbook page is presented below.

B Look at the pictures below. Ask and answer questions about what each person's profession is, and what he or she is doing at the moment.

Follow this model:

What's his/her name? What does he/she do?

What is he/she doing now?

At the moment he/she is _____.

He/she is not _____. (not doing what he/she usually does, e.g. He is not seeing a patient)



Captain Harun, Pilot



Nadia Sultana, Student



Rashid Ahmed, Doctor



Shumana Chowdhury, Lawyer

Image 7.11: Textbook activity B at page 5

The students took different professional roles and filled in the blank spaces in the textbook questions and asked them to their partners. It was a structured question-answer dialogue that the students practiced for five minutes. The students' facial expressions and gestures, as seen in the pictures below, confirmed the engagement with which the students took roles and practiced asking questions and giving answers.



Image 7.12: Students practicing question and answer

Using Learned Sentences for Making Personal Meanings

Although the exercise itself did not require innovation for finding vocabulary or shaping sentences, it was a preparation for innovations that would follow in later lessons. At the end of this structured exercise, Razzak asked the students, “Can you write more questions about these professionals?” A free space was created purposefully following a structured practice so that the students could ask more creative or open-ended questions. As a result, the students wrote some more questions, such as:

how a pilot fly a plane?

when is the lawyer coming home?

who is Nadia playing with?

While the students were busy practicing the conversation, Razzak hung four pictures of different professionals on the board, so that the students could choose one profession and complete the next activity. So besides facilitating the teacher was active, preparing the students for the next activity. After writing questions about different professionals Razzak did a role-play with a student, using handout 2.



Image 7.13: Razzak practicing dialogue with Rani

In this handout, a model dialogue was given about a teacher's profession and activities. Razzak asked Rani to help him give a demonstration of the conversation that could occur. The picture above shows Rani and Razzak practicing the dialogue:

Rani: what is your name?

Razzak: my name is Sujon.

Rani: what do you do?

Razzak: I am a teacher.

Rani: what are you doing now?

Razzak: I am preparing lesson plan for my class tomorrow.

Rani: will you go to market today?

Razzak: yes, I need to buy some pictures and colour papers

It was highly structured and the students followed the dialogue to ask and answer questions accordingly. Then Razzak distributed handout 3 to help the students with further vocabulary. In this handout, the dialogue was similar but it had some missing words. An example of the handout dialogue is provided below.

Student: what is your name?

Teacher: my name is

Student: what do you do?

Teacher: I am a

Student: what are you doing now?

Teacher: I am

Student: will you go to market today?

Teacher: yes, I

Then Razzak asked the students to fill in the blanks with their ideal professionals. The pictures below show the students engaged in filling the gaps in the dialogue. The less skilled students were also encouraged to participate, as in the second picture: Jaami, a shy student, although his chin is on the bench, is participating in the discussion.



Image 7.14: Students filling gaps in a dialogue

Reflecting on the moment, I noted in my journal that this was a semi-structured dialogue, which could help less skilled students to move forward with adequate vocabulary. Here the teacher used some advanced students to help others to fill in the blanks. As a result, all the students became active and seemed eager to learn. However, although it was semi-structured, it did make some opportunities for the

lesser skilled students to be encouraged to engage and play with the language using new vocabulary.

More than One Possible Answer or Action is Explored

After that Razzak used the students' interest to make a parallel dialogue about their different dream professions. He asked, "Now make a dialogue with any profession you like and practice the conversation with your friends." The students started making and practicing dialogues, as they liked. In doing so, they discussed a lot and helped each other to make the dialogue, as seen in the pictures below. In the second picture especially, a mood of argument before writing the dialogue on exercise book is visible from the students' facial expressions.



Image 7.15: Students are making and practicing dialogues

After observing the students for a short period of time Razzak added, "If not possible in English, make it in 'Bangla' and then translate it into English." The teachers and I had agreed earlier in the workshop as discussed in Chapter 5 that using a little Bangla in an English session could encourage more language, whereas strict adherence to a target language only policy often produced nothing. Again, it offered a free space for the students to play with the language, as they could use any vocabulary and sentence structures to create dialogues as well as practice, so going beyond the textbook language. Consequently, they could play with the language, as they liked, becoming more creative in language learning.

Razzak then showed different items, such as an apple, a shirt, a ball, a pen, sunglasses, and asked questions about these that included:

what is this,

who does this belong,

what is the need of this item, etcetera.

After questioning and answering with the students for seven minutes, he finished the activity.

In my reflection on the activity, I wrote that this was the stage where the teacher tried to encourage and assist the students to create and use language in different situations and obviously play with it. It seemed to be done with the notion that if the students are not creative, then let the teacher be creative first and help students to be creative and adventurous. I reflected that the resource had been designed to encourage not only the students but also the teachers to be creative in making and using English language in various contexts. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Bangladesh it seemed that most of the teachers were not encouraged to apply language in different ways but rather to follow the textbook content rigidly. Therefore, when doing this activity, the students and the teachers took a step towards becoming creative.

Then, Razzak started another activity describing another related context, and said, "A TV presenter is making a documentary on various professions and takes interviews of different persons." He asked the students to think about this context and write suitable questions that they would like to ask different professionals. It was a preparation for the next language activity. He assisted the students to write various questions. For those who were unable to make questions in English, he encouraged them to first design the questions in Bangla, which he then helped to translate them into English. The picture below shows Razzak discussing with Fuli and assisting her to write questions, translating from Bangla to English.



Image 7.16: Razzak assisting Fuli

Fuli wanted to ask a *Rickshawala* (rickshaw puller): “*Tumi kokhon dupurer break nao?*” But she could not form the question correctly in English. She asked help from the translator. The teacher in role as a translator helped her to translate. The translator asked her, “what is the English of *Tumi*,” she took little time, but replied “you.” However, as Fuli did not know the English of *kokhon*, the translator said “when.” Then Fuli tried to make the question in the following way translating the Bangla sentence: “You when lunch break take?” In response, the translator just gave her the correct word order without explicitly explaining the grammar. So Fuli wrote: “When do you take your lunch break?”

Reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that the flexibility in the teacher’s approach was helping the students to be more optimistic about the English session. Here the teacher purposefully ignored the grammatical aspects of the questions, as it might hamper the natural flow of the session. The objective of the session was not to teach grammatical rules, rather it was to create opportunities for the students to be creative in forming and using language. Whether the syntax of the language was correct or incorrect did not matter, rather the focus of the session was on encouraging the students to create new sentences in the target language, as Fuli did. I also that since it was hard for the students in that rural

context to write correct questions in English, other teachers came forward and assisted to make the session more effective. Therefore, colleagues had the experience of working as a team in what could become a teachers' learning community.

After confirming that every student had written at least one question, Razzak asked the students to form groups of five members. Then he helped the students to select a TV presenter from each group and asked them to interview different people in different occupations. However, when the students were still a bit confused about what to do, the teacher introduced a model interview with Kabir and Sumi, two students. The interview began like this:

Razzak: Hello, are you a businessman?

Kabir: Yes.

Razzak: Where do you do your business?

Kabir: New market *ae (at)*.

Razzak: Ok, thanks. Hi, *aapni bolen* (you say)?

Sumi: Hi, I'm a teacher.

Razzak: Oh, nice. What is the name of your school?

Sumi: Kakroil High School.

Razzak: Ok, thanks. Nice to meet you both.

Razzak then wrote selected questions on the blackboard so that the students could use those questions when interviewing. For example:

What do you do?

What is your profession?

How does it feel to work as a teacher/ doctor/ lawyer?

Why do you like your profession?

Have you tried any other profession?

As an instruction Razzak said, “Now choose a TV presenter from each group. The presenter will interview different persons from different occupations in each group. Look at the blackboard and try to ask and answer these questions. You can also add questions. After that you have to report to the whole class.” At the end of the English instruction, he briefly summarized the instructions in Bangla with the help of the translator. I noted in my journal that the Bangla summary helped the students to be confident about participating in the activity. As mentioned in Chapter 2, students often did not like to attend English sessions because of the difficulty to understand the session’s activities fully, which often also creates apprehension.

After selecting a TV presenter in each group the students started interviewing different people in different occupations. That was a very interesting moment for the students, as is reflected in the photos of the activity. The pictures below show Roni writing the report after interviewing, and Rumki in-role of a Doctor trying to explain something, and Simi, the first girl from the right, smiling, looking at the gestures of Rumki.



Image 7.17: Students in-role as different professionals

In reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that the students got in-role as various professionals as well as TV presenters. Although sometimes they used Bangla they had a chance to be different professionals and to talk like them. They had fun and appreciated being in-role as various people; however, they could also experience the challenges of being a professional. I reflected that it might also help

the students to think differently about different professionals in our society. As I observed the activity in progress I noted how Fuli's understanding about the *Rickshawala* had changed. Fuli asked some questions about the rickshaw puller when she was creating questions about different professionals. She then made a significant comment when Shilpi interviewed Hasan as a rickshaw puller and Hasan said, "I do not take lunch-break every day." Then Fuli uttered, "*Rickshawala ra sob somoy lunch break nai na!* (the rickshaw pullers do not take regular lunch break!) *Bache kemone?* (how do they survive?)" She was so surprised to hear this and was excited to know more about that profession. I saw the incident as a beginning of the student's critical thinking.

During this activity, the teacher slipped in and out of various roles with different groups, sometimes as a doctor, a garment worker, and sometimes as herself. He used the changing roles to empower the students, establishing a free space, where the students could make choices about what to do and be in-role if they wanted. In this way, the teacher tried to shift the authority to students. It seemed the students were in charge of that learning moment. As a result, the students were encouraged to be more active and engaged in their learning and I reflected on the journal that this considerably reduced their apprehension about English sessions.

After fifteen minutes, Razzak stopped the interviewing and asked the interviewers to make a report including their group members' opinions and present it in next day's session. Then the teacher closed the session focusing on the different uses of language in different contexts and referred again to the language focus on page 4 of the textbook.

In reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that in this session the teacher had carefully proceeded with different activities. He started with a structured one, followed by a semi-structured one, and then opened up a free practice of activities. I considered that this was done with the intention to help the students to become familiar with new activities as well as becoming confident on the on-going ones. Consequently, it could be hoped that the students would become less apprehensive about English, resulting in more functional knowledge of the language and more practice in different contexts. Although the students

sometimes formed incorrect sentences and often used Bangla, they became increasingly interested in being experimental and creative in using English in specific circumstances, as was often evident from their enthusiastic involvement in the activities and from their facial expressions.

Creativity in Making Material Items

In the next section, the focus is on two sessions where the students, as part of being interactive in various practical activities, created various paper models, wrote statements, and tried to make body sculptures. The creative aspects of these sessions are discussed here, and other aspects of the sessions will be visited in the next chapter.

Grocery Shopping

In the second day of the session named *Grocery Shopping*, Nagma started by talking about the shopping lists that the students had made the previous day and asked, “Can you remember the shopping list we made yesterday and the shops we wanted to visit?” When the students agreed, she asked them to draw pictures or make paper models of various items they wanted to buy from different shops. They could draw or make as many as they wanted, and it would not matter how they looked.

The students drew pictures of different items, such as flowers, fish, TV, radio, microwave oven, freezer, biscuits, cakes, rice, wheat, sugar, and oil can as favourites to buy from different shops. They also made models of different clothes, refrigerator, TV, flowers, table, chair, stars, boats, and balls. They even made a manual weight scale for the grocery shops. These items and different shops are examined further in Chapter 8. However, overview the session some snap shots are presented below.



Image 7.18: Snapshot of the session “Grocery Shopping”

In reflecting on the moments captured in these images, I wrote in my journal that in the activity, creativity was inherent. This was the stage where the teacher, as facilitator, not only encouraged the drawing or making of items with fun and play but prepared the students for the next step through the encouragement of being creative. Then the teacher helped the students to select different places and group’s items according to different shops, for example grocery, bakery, stationery, electronics, and clothes. The session finished for the day but in this way when the next day’s session began, the teacher motivated the students to be in-role as sellers and buyers and to act accordingly. Then the students made different bank notes to be used as the medium for shopping. They were going to buy from an imaginary market as a part of the drama. The teacher reminded the class to use the shop language that had been practised in the previous day’s activities.

After that the students started to take on roles by going to different shops and trying to buy items according to the shopping lists that they made earlier. They also tried to use shop language as instructed by the teacher. I reflected that although students often used Bangla or blended English and Bangla, the activity helped them to become familiar with the discourse of shopping. It was very enjoyable for both students and teachers. In this way, the students became creative in using language (although often in Bangla) in different contexts as well as making different material items to fit the shops.

Our Pride

Moments of creative activity were also very evident in the session based on the textbook chapter about the national monument to the nation's heroes. That session is discussed in detail in chapter 9. Here similar key learning moments are considered. Activities in the session are shown in the collage of photos below.



Image 7.19: Snapshot of the session “Our Pride”

After asking questions about heroes, Nagma explained that a hero is a good person who helps others without asking any return for their service. After that, she asked the students to make five to six groups and pick five or six heroes they liked, and then to do something for those heroes. For example, they might say some good words about those heroes, draw pictures, make body sculptures of their heroic deeds, or anything they liked.

I noted in my reflective journal that evening that at this part of the work the teacher as facilitator was motivating and assisting the students to be creative. Involving students in an activity where they needed to create something new for the hero went beyond textbook. In this way, the teacher was also being creative. And it seemed that both teacher and students enjoyed being active in this way. I reflected that creating something new is not always easy, but it often creates a great deal of pleasure.

As a result, one group tried to make body sculpture, and others individually tried to draw flowers and write a sentence for the hero, and some even tried to write little poems and also recite them. The teachers fostered engagement in the session by contributing ideas so that every student could make something. When the group who was trying to make a sculpture faced problems trying to create a perfect representation, Razzak came forward to help them. Then again, when a group of students, who were writing a banner, made grammatical mistakes, he corrected the sentence so all the students would see the banner and therefore such errors were undesirable. The collaboration evident in this activity highlighted the value of collaborative teaching and the usefulness of a learning community as well.

In presentation time, Piru shared a nice flower and a sentence was written underneath that said, “I love my Hero.” But when Shymoli presented a statement, “Thank you, my hero, I love you very much” with a picture of a monument, it created a funny moment in the session as a girl had said *love you very much*, which made boys curious as they instantly asked, “Who is the hero?” The students just

made jokes and the teachers also laughed at that time as seen in the third picture of second row above. In the average Bangladeshi classroom such joking would not often occur. The freedom to joke here is indicative of a sense of play that can become the basis for creative experimentation.

Then Raj recited a poem that he wrote for his hero, as seen in the third picture of first row above. He wrote:

We love our hero very much,
We do everything for our hero,
We are proud of our hero,
He battles for us every time,
Always we love him.

One group tried to make a sculpture with five group members. They mingled together their hands and tried to make a shape like the national monument and at the top one of the members was holding the flag of Bangladesh and another was holding a banner, which displayed, "Heroes never die." However, it came out so funny and quick that it was not possible to capture any picture of that moment, as I noted regretfully in my journal.

Overall, in this activity both the students and teachers were engaged and became creative without paying particular attention to the unusualness of being creative in class, and it was evident that they enjoyed those sessions as well. At the same time language practice was continuously going on, as the teachers kept encouraging the students to write or speak statements for their heroes in English.

Interviews with Students and Teachers

The interviews with the students and teachers also highlighted students' acts of creativity in those sessions. Hasan, a student, said,

...I enjoyed and learnt a lot from those sessions. In the shop session, we made many things and had practical experience of a market and its associated language. I learnt about an immigration officer, passports, how to fill forms and what to do in immigration when going abroad... practically.

Similarly, Kamal, a student, stated,

...we used English most of the time and a lot in those sessions. We had more students' talking time... we had more opportunities for asking questions. ...I liked all of those sessions. To speak English in an English session is always preferred to me. I also enjoyed doing practical activities such as shops, heroes, drama in those sessions.

In the same way, Nagma, the teacher, articulated,

...students tried to use English whether in a funny way or making jokes; that does not matter much to them, but they tried. It provided an opportunity to practice further... speak, and use new English words, and sentences and make text related items. They obviously learnt more English language in those sessions.

In comparison to the traditional regular English sessions that involve only a lecture style delivery with the teacher dominating proceedings and the students inactive, in these special sessions the students had opportunities to ask more questions, answer in their own ways and become involved in more practical activities, as I noted in my journal.

Similarly, Sumi, a student, said,

...it was a real learning time for us, in those sessions... we learnt, enjoyed, felt free to ask questions and raise problems. It was practical and new language; we tried." In this way, the teachers allowed students more options and those encouraged students to become creative. Therefore, I reflected, it is very important to design a learning environment that enables the students to become creative and active as well.

Reflecting on the above sessions, I wrote in my journal that the ways the teachers took those sessions by furthering students' language practice in ways that went beyond textbook language and creating a friendly learning atmosphere by encouraging the students, seemed to clearly indicate that the teachers were becoming creative as well.

As a teacher educator, I went to the field with the resource and with a plan thinking that everything would go my way; however, it did not. In Chapter 5 when I presented the resource package, in the workshops the teachers raised many questions and arguments that required explanations and reconsiderations. After discussion, we changed some of the parts of the resource to align better with the

context. Every day after the session we would discuss the next day's sessions and amend our plan according to the challenges that arose in our current work. Most dramatically, at the very first day's session, as already discussed in the previous chapter, how the session was supposed to be collapsed and we had to find strategies to survive. I reflected on the importance of creativity on the part of the facilitating teacher educator as well as the teachers and students. I recognised I had encouraged myself to take and manage risks as well as when supporting the teachers to do so.

Need for Creativity

The following short discussion relates what occurred in our session to published literature about creativity and learning. Many theorists point out that while creativity is often interpreted as making something physical or concrete; however, it is more than that (Craft, Jeffrey, & Leibling 2001; McCammon et. al. (2010). It could be an art, sculpture, model, picture, paperwork, and so on; but even if it seems always physical, it is preceded by a huge amount of mental effort as well. Creativity is both a physical and mental condition that offers productive views and ideas while involved in a creative activity (Craft, Jeffrey, & Leibling 2001). However, Vygotsky (2004) focused more on the psychological aspects of creativity, such as imagination. He argued that the human brain functions in two different ways: with reproductive (imitation) activity and combinatorial (creative) activity. Creative activity lives inside the person even if she or he creates a physical object or is engaged in some mental or emotional construction (McCammon, Saebø, & O'Farrell (2011). Vygotsky continued that if human activity was limited to reproduction of the past only, the human being could only be able to adopt contexts to the future to the extent that barely reproduce the past. Therefore, because of creative activities, the human being becomes a creature that can create its own future and change it accordingly.

Furthermore, creativity is a state of mind that could be imagination or even fantasy, that triggers new ideas or alternative ways of looking at a context, thing, art or even a setting up to go beyond conventional routine (Robinson, 2011; Vygotsky, 2004). It could be an individual effort or a combined group work and

that could be huge or a tiny bit that tries to modify, alter, amend, or even change the contemporary situation or state or position or setting (Robinson, 2011). However, as criticality also involves looking for the inner views of an issue and searches for various options to rise above it, Kabilan (2000) argues that creativity and criticality are equally significant to develop as skills when learning a language.

As a result, Fleith (2010) encourages the development of learning situations that encourages students to become creative. In a similar way, Vigotsky (2004) said that in everyday life creativity is essential for our existence and we are constantly involved in the creative process whether acknowledged or not. He considered as well, that this process of creativity starts in early childhood. Even at the very earliest ages, when they start playing with a doll, car or even sticks, children begin to imagine or fantasise and become creative. Thus, a body of theory argues that it is valuable to set up a well-planned classroom-learning situation to promote creativity among students and teachers.

As I wrote this chapter, I reflected that the outcome of creativity could be huge or tiny and that it may be shaped individually or in a group and that the activity could occur mentally or physically. This means that a creative classroom could be a learning environment that basically follows the textbook but enables the students to draw pictures from their imaginations, and create different paper and stick items; or even play with atypical language structures, or just be involved in finding various options of addressing a problem and suggesting ways out. The session recounted in this chapter demonstrated a learning situation that could enhance the students' creativity, especially when the students are learning English in a second language context. The ESL sessions taken in this project were noticeably different from the regular sessions in encouraging more creative students and teachers.

The next chapter continues the account of the sessions in the project highlighting the theme of enjoyment.

Chapter 8: Enjoyment

Implicit in the preceding discussions of engagement and creativity is an acknowledgement of the enjoyment students and teachers (and I) experienced in the sessions. The previous chapter examined a range of ways the teachers were creative in adapting the textbook and so provoking creative responses from their students. It reported how students were encouraged to take roles and to be physical and how they experimented and played with the vocabulary and sentence structures they were given to bring their roles to life, as well as, how they made props to support the roles and the stories they were creating. As noted throughout the thesis, such activities do not occur in normal lessons and so students do not normally get the opportunity to explore their creativity. The previous chapters also reported how much the students laughed and teased each other and generally had fun. This chapter further explores the concept of enjoyment and its importance in learning.

Previously, I have discussed both the formality and the relative student silence of Bangladeshi classrooms and the fear many rural students have of their English classes. This chapter reports the laughter and happy chatter that increasingly occurred as teachers and students became more confident during this project. It focuses on particular moments in a lesson, such as the *Grocery Shopping* session, to examine what it was the student and teachers were enjoying and how it affected their attitude to class and to the English lessons. It then discusses the value of enjoyment in ESL learning contexts, drawing on my own reflections and feedback from the teachers and students as well as concepts from the literature. Although I am focusing separate chapters on engagement, creativity and enjoyment, these concepts and their related experiences were seen to be related to each other in this project. Therefore, this chapter will also continue to report how engagement and creativity were evident in the lessons.

The session: Grocery Shopping

Breaking the Ice

The session began with the expected greeting. Nagma entered and said, “Good morning students. How are you today?” All of the students replied, “Good morning teacher. We are fine. How are you?” Nagma said, “I’m also fine, thank you. Sit down please.”

The students’ response to the greeting was remarkably different from the first session as detailed in Chapter 6. Now the students seemed confident and enthusiastic in their reply. I reflected in my journal that even this somewhat formal moment, there was evidence of the customary silence in English classes. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is widely reported that rural Bangladeshi students are not be able to understand and use functional English in the ESL sessions. Therefore, the teachers tend to use the traditional grammar-translation method and regularly provide Bangla translation of the English texts. The cheerful rote-learned greetings indicated that a friendly learning environment was encouraging for these rural students to use English language confidently.

Then Nagma started the session with a short game that in many western countries is called “Simon says.” At the beginning, she introduced new English vocabulary related to the game, such as *copy*. For example, she said in English, “Copy means to do exactly as somebody does” and exemplified it by saying “if I open a book, you do it after me, and this is called copying.” Then she asked the students to make a circle. Next, she explained the game in English and changed the name Simon to Ananda. Nagma introduced Ananda to the class and explained, “What Ananda says, others should exactly do that. However, the condition is that Ananda should say, ‘Ananda says.’ For example, when Ananda will say, ‘Ananda says, stand up’ and then all should do that. But if Ananda only says, ‘Stand up’ they should not follow that, as the order did not begin with ‘Ananda says.’ In that way the game would begin and when someone followed an order that did not begin with ‘Ananda says’, he or she should be out of the game.”

In my journal, I noted that the detailed instructions were in English and she repeated them once again and the students became excited to play the game. But before starting the game she translated the gist of the instructions into Bangla with the help of the translator so that the game would be played smoothly. In this way, she and the other teachers in the project were using English as much as possible in this little scope for students to listen to the English language outside the English session. In addition, the teacher also needed to use Bangla to clarify meaning, but she was avoiding word-by-word translation. The game was aimed to crack the ice at the beginning of a session and the students enjoyed it a lot with some funny moments. For instance, Ananda started the game by saying, "Ananda says, raise your right hand." All the students raised their right hand. After that he said, "Ananda says, raise your left hand." All of the students raised their left hand. But the funny thing happened when some of the students put down their right hands when raising left hands. Then Ananda said, "I did not ask you to put down your right hand." Everyone started laughing and those who made mistakes were out of the game. In this way, the game brought lots of fun at the beginning of the session breaking apprehension about the English language and prepared the students to move forward with a cheerful mood to the lesson itself.

At the end of the game Nagma introduced "we" instead of using "Simon or Ananda" and introduced the pattern "we say, we are sweeping the floor," "we say, we are picking rubbish," "we say, we are making foods," "we say, we are helping each other." Earlier the teachers and I had decided that this change could encourage students to focus on their responsibilities for each other in the long run. So, after playing with those sentences Nagma asked the students to collect rubbish from the classroom and put it into the bin and all of the students did that happily. Reflecting on the moment, I wrote that through a simple language game the teacher could try to form a positive attitude among the students about our regular collective tasks besides language learning. Within five minutes the game was finished, but the students had enjoyed it and laughed a lot when someone dropped from the game and also when they were picking rubbish actively. I reflected that a game could be used to achieve multiple objectives.

I also reflected in my journal that the game helped a lot to create an encouraging setting for the students. The students had developed a cheerful mood, which could prepare them for the coming serious learning but with thrills. The teachers and I agreed that when we learn through pleasure and enjoyment we can learn more than usual and more easily without feeling bored. Moreover, the game did provide the students with a simple opportunity to develop their English listening skills by listening and acting accordingly. Therefore, although it was a very short game, its effect was tremendous and seen throughout the entire session.

Lesson's Activities

After the game Nagma asked, "Can you remember the people of different professions who came to visit Bangladesh the day before yesterday that we discussed in the 'where are you' session?"

Rani said in English, "Omm... Yes... the doctor, the pilot, the lawyer and others..."

Nagma thanked Rani and continued, "Today they are going shopping." Then she declared the focus of the day's session by saying, "So... today we are going to learn about 'grocery shopping.' Then, as seen in the picture below, she wrote the topic "Grocery Shopping" on top of the blackboard.



Image 8.1: Nagma is writing the session's name on the blackboard

After that she asked in a slow pace, "What do we do before going for shopping?" She used slightly slower pace when speaking English so that the students could understand the meaning easily. As I noted in my journal that slower pace would help to minimise the use of Bangla in regular conversations between teacher and students in the English sessions. Then Junnu tried to reply in English, "We...make list... many thing."

Nagma continued, "Thanks. Do you think we buy all the items from a single shop?" The students kept silent. The question was carefully asked to push the students to think more on the theme. She again asked the question but this time, with the help of the translator gave a brief Bangla explanation, "*Sob kisu ki ek dokan theke kuni* (do we buy everything from one shop)?" Then again, she repeated the question in English.

As a result, Rani, one of the advanced students, replied in English, "We buy different items... from different shops" but the rest of the students tried to reply with the mixture of little Bangla and more English, for example, "We buy *bivinno* (different) item from *bivinno* shop." Nagma encouraged the students to do so. In the journal, I wrote that it was certainly different from the practice in regular English sessions, where no Bangla was encouraged but only English was accepted. Nagma later explained that she did this to encourage the students to use more English language although in a mixed form. It was viewed that mixed form was better than not speaking at all.

Active Students

Then Nagma asked the students to make a list of different items that they wanted to buy from different shops, for example, grocery and bakery products, as well as, stationery. The students started to make lists. As seen in the picture below, the students' facial expressions and attentiveness indicate their engagement in making lists of different items.



Image 8.2: Students, making shopping lists

I noted how actively the students jumped into the activity when asked to make shopping lists. They became more engaged and tried to make their own list longer than other students. At the same time, Nagma moved around the classroom to facilitate the students making their lists. Even when the teacher was facilitating one group, the rest of the students were busy with their own activities. I also noted in my journal that the students seemed more active than ever before. As the students had a clear understanding about what to do next they became more engaged and enthusiastic to do the activity. The next picture shows how all the students were engaged in their own activities when the teacher was facilitating one group.



Image 8.3: Nagma's facilitation

We could focus on Sumi who is near to Nagma and observe how she was behaving in the session. In the above picture, she was engaged with her activity, and in the next picture she was trying to clear her own understanding by listening to Nagma's facilitation of the other group.



Image 8.4: Sumi tries to clear her understanding

During the session, the students were allowed move freely about the room, which was not a common practice in regular English sessions, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Teacher's Encouragement

When facilitating and moving to different groups, Nagma came across Munir's list and saw that Munir had written some of the items in English and some in Bangla. After finding a lack of appropriate English vocabulary, Nagma helped Munir to find new words in English and encouraged him to try to make the list in English. Munir then tried to make the list in English. As seen in the picture below he happily crossed out the Bangla words and tried to write in English.



Image 8.5: Munir's mistakes and corrections

I wrote in my journal that it was a very good effort from the teacher to correct students' errors and get them back onto the right track. The way that Nagma helped Munir positively to use English without saying a harsh word for making the mistake, encouraged him to engage and enjoy the learning, as seen in the picture above.

After five minutes Nagma wrote 'grocery shop' and 'electronic shop' on the blackboard and picked Rani to read out her list. Nagma wrote the items on the

blackboard according to the shop category. As seen in the picture below, Rani is reading the shopping list to the whole class.



Image 8.6: Shimul presenting her shopping list

Nagma then said, “Look at the blackboard, you see we buy different items from different shops.” She then asked the students to categorize their listed items according to the different shops, which the students did. The picture below shows Shilpi categorising her list.

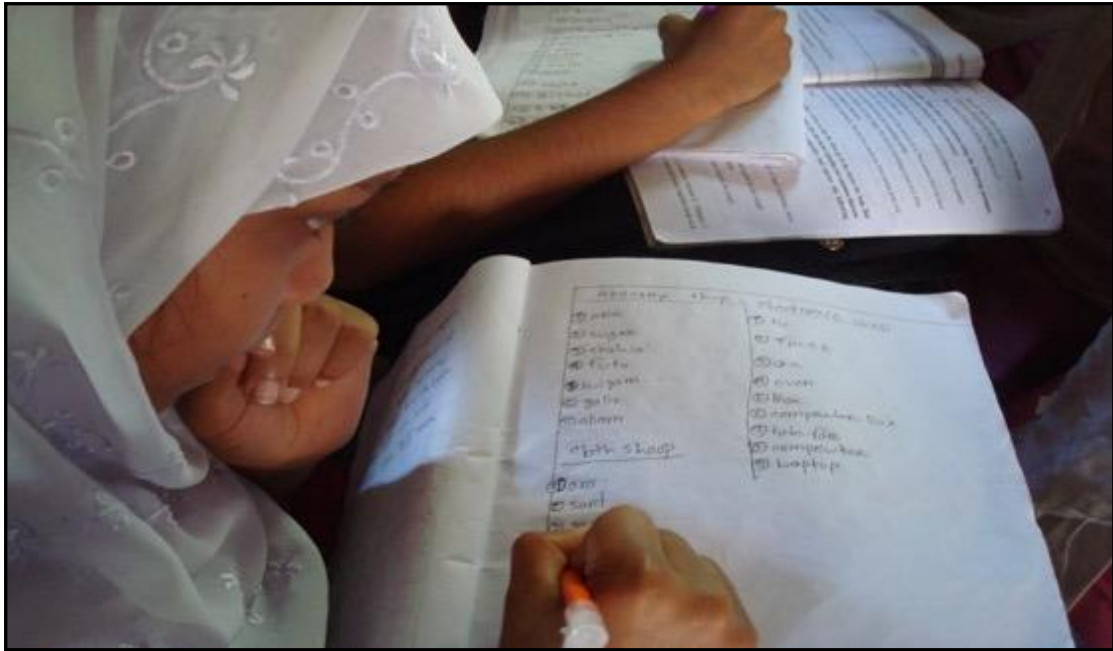


Image 8.7: Shilpi is categorizing her list

Students' Enjoyment

After this, Nagma gave an opportunity to Kamal to read out his list as he had the biggest list in the class. He started reading out his list but at the end of it he mentioned some items that could not be found in usual markets such as aeroplane, mobile software and some daily items that others did not mention like pin, nib of a pen, hooks, and buttons. All the students laughed and enjoyed the learning opportunity that enabled them to hear more unusual items being named. I reflected in my journal that the students never thought that in the English session they could have so much fun when making a simple list and presenting it to the class. The students' happy faces and gestures seen the picture below indicated that the whole class was enjoying the moment.



Image 8.8: Students having fun

In this way, the teacher set the scene for the day's lesson by using a mix of Bangla and English language. Reflecting on the moment, I wrote in my journal that this strategy considerably helped to keep the natural flow of the English session, as well as breaking the silence that very often dominated sessions. Although the students seemed to be laughing the most when they were using Bangla, the teachers' use of Bangla was used mainly to make the instructions clear. When the students did understand what to do in English language activity, they tried to do it, resulting in increased engagement and more active practice of English language.

Students' Self-learning

After individually making the shopping lists, the students were then asked to do an activity in the textbook, to make them familiar with a regular shopping list, but contrary to usual practice they were asked to do the activity in pairs. A snapshot of the textbook activity is shown below.

A1 Now look at the shopping list below. You have read the conversation above. Now put a tick against the items that Imran will buy and put a cross against the items he will not buy. Write the quantity of the items he is buying in the last column. (One is done for you.)

No.	Items	√/x	Quantity
1	Potatoes	√	½ kg
2	Tomatoes		
3	Onions		
4	Cauliflower		
5	beans		
6	Eggplants		
7	Eggs		
8	Oil		
9	Salt		
10	Sugar		
11	Milk		
12	Carrots		
13	Cucumber		

Figure 8.1: Textbook activity

The activity was done purposefully to enrich students' own lists and to ensure that their learning was aligned with the textbook's expectations. In this activity, they compared their lists with the text's list and further with their partner's list. It also demonstrated that the teachers did not need to provide all of the answers. When a learning environment with a clear purpose had been developed and when students could understand it easily, they were able to get the answers interactively and learn independently as well.

Nagma then introduced some additional vocabulary and explained the meanings in English. Most of the students seemed to understand the meaning; however, other students still did not, even after several explanations. Then Hasan asked for the translator and Nagma took on the role of translator offering a little Bangla to make the meaning clear to all. After that she told the students, "At first you look at the activity A1 and the table at page 25 for two minutes again and then read out the text silently in activity A on page 24 about grocery shopping. It is a dialogue, so read the dialogue silently. After reading the dialogue silently you have to

complete the table. Use the information given in the dialogue.” A snapshot of the activity in the textbook is presented below.

A Some guests will visit Imran's house tonight. So Imran's mother will cook dinner for them. She asks Imran to go to the local market. He often forgets to buy the necessary items. So his mother is making a shopping list for him. He is helping his mother make the list.

Read the conversation between the mother and son.

Imran : Mom, what do I need to buy?
Mom : Well, see if we have enough potatoes?
Imran : We have some potatoes but I don't think it's enough.
Mom : Then get half two kgs of potatoes. How about tomatoes?
Imran : I don't see any tomatoes.
Mom : Are there any other vegetables?
Imran : Yes, there are some beans, carrots, cucumber and eggplants....That's all.
Mom : Well, I'll need one kg of tomatoes. Half kg of beans and two cauliflowers.
Mom : Are there any eggs, dear?
Imran : There are only three eggs. Maybe I'll buy a dozen more?
Mom : Humm..... oh, yes.... get some sugar, and milk and one litre of oil, too.
Imran : OK. One litre of milk and.... one kg of sugar.
Mom : One more thing, dear. You are forgetting your list! Here it is.
Imran : Oh! Thanks, Mom.




Image 8.9: Textbook activity A

Nagma explained the activity of what to do with the text and table to the students in English twice, provided the gist of the activity in Bangla with the help of the translator, and then again explained it in English to keep the English flow.

Productive Learning

Nagma then asked the students to do the activity in groups and she facilitated as required. I noted in my journal the way students prompted each other in a mixture of Bangla and English. For example, Asad said to Tutul, “*Dekho ei dike* (look at this)... read the table first then read the dialogue.”

In another group where Ananda, Seraj, Bokul, Sami and Rokon were discussing the activity, it seemed a bit noisy. However, it was somehow productive noise, as it was filled with a mixture of Bangla and English. For example, Ananda, the team leader said to others, "I am filling the gaps and you find the answers in the text." Later he asked, "How many tomatoes are needed?" Sami answered in English, "Two kg." In disagreement Seraj and Bokul said in Bangla, "*Na Na... Ek kg* (no no 1kg)." Then Ananda Said, "Let's look at the text again." Then after finding the answer, Seraj and Bokul answered, now in English, "Tomato one kg needed."

In that way, after a little discussion the groups agreed on answers to fill the gaps. The students were cheerful and talked a lot, which indicated that they were enjoying doing the activity. They talked in English and sometimes mixed in a little Bangla. There was little apprehension about making mistakes, as the teacher overlooked minor errors and encouraged the speaking and use of English. At the end of the activity, Nagma created a space for the students to present their group findings. Then she collated answers from different groups and corrected where necessary.

Reflecting on pedagogical aspects of the activity, I wrote in my journal that the teacher introduced vocabulary first and then clearly instructed students to look at the table and read the text before filling the gaps in the table. In between she explained in detail what to do with necessary English vocabulary and gave instructions to set the foundation for the students to clearly understand what they had to do. The teachers and I had discussed earlier and agreed on the need to establish firm ground so that students could move freely into an activity, which would also reduce apprehension about engaging in the English language. The teacher asked the students to look at the table in the textbook first and then read the text to fill in the table gaps. It was done to make the reading focused and more effective (Schmidt, 2010). At the end, the teacher wrapped up the activity with a little discussion time, where all the students participated with questions and answers and teacher gave feedback accordingly. I noted that not only was there a careful shift in structuring the lesson, it was also done in a way that the teachers themselves later described as friendly, which as, we could see from the students'

enthusiastic participations in the activity. It minimised apprehension about English and enabled the students to enjoy the learning of English language in an interactive atmosphere.

In the above activity, the pedagogical shift involved careful planning to ensure activities were carefully scaffolded. This was in contrast to regular English sessions, whereby the teacher would just ask students to do the textbook activity using the traditional lecture method without following systematic steps such as pre-, during, and post- activity events. Although this was a small step, it represented an important one in ensuring the understanding of the content as well as being enjoyable teaching practice.

Extending the Time Frame

Ordinarily this would have been the end of the day's session. However, the day before, I had asked the teachers whether they could continue the session with the next day's topic, which was a continuation of the same theme. Combining these two sessions would make a longer session lasting 80 minutes. My reason for the proposal was that I wanted to observe the effects of a longer session time. I hoped that the longer session could generate more excitement and attraction and so students and teachers might experience a more challenging lesson. A longer session could provide an effective learning situation, and if the students and teachers enjoyed the work they might not notice the time frame and not feel any hardship. It aligned with the saying: time flies when you're having fun.

As such, Nagma continued the session with the next task without drawing attention to the time and remarkably the students did not hesitate to go forward. The students were so involved in the session that they were not even aware of the time and were preparing to do the next task. Nagma continued and talked about the shopping lists they made and different shops they wanted to visit. She then asked, "Ok, but for shopping where do we need to go?" Two of the students replied, "Bazaar... Market." Then Nagma said, "Yes, a market. So, today we are going to create a mini market in the classroom."

Interactive Students

Next Nagma explained the task. She asked the students to draw pictures or make paper models of the different items they wanted to buy from different shops. They were allowed to make as many as they could draw or make, and it did not matter how they looked. The students were also asked to select a particular type of shop and to make the various items accordingly. Nagma helped the students to select different places for groups to make different items according to different shops, for example grocery, bakery, stationery, electronics, and clothes. This was the stage where the teacher, as a facilitator, encouraged the drawing or making of various paper items and encouraged them to have fun and play.

The students drew pictures and made models of different items that they would like to buy from different shops. I noted in my journal that the learning moment was full of enjoyment and play. As the behaviour of the groups was fairly similar, in the following discussion I focus on two of the ten groups and report their activities.

In one group the students enjoyed drawing and making various items with paper. They talked and helped each other, for example, Sumon said to Rony in English, "Give me the red pencil," as he wanted to colour the fridge he had drawn. Similarly, Kamal helped Soheli to make a model of a TV with paper, after Soheli asked Kamal in a mixed language of English and Bangla, "Please cut the paper... *charkona* (square) shape *e...* I'll make a TV with these papers." Then Sabeek asked Sajeed and Farid, also in English and Bangla saying, "*Cholo* (let's)... make a microwave oven together. Sajeed will cut papers and we colour them." At that time, Farid tried to say in English, "I'll... I'll... *aatha* English *jeno ki?*" Then Sajeed said, "Glue", and again Farid completed his sentence, "I'll glue these papers together." Together they made an electronic retail shop. They even named it as "Hamidpur Electronic Shop" as the shop was in the local Hamidpur bazaar.

In another group, Sumi, Fatema, Dini, Johra, Rani, Fuli, and Titli were trying to make items for a grocery shop. The group leader Kona discussed with others and asked, "What items do we need to make?" In reply Sumi said in Bangla and English,

“*Ami* (I) rice and potato picture *akabo* (draw).” Then Dini and Fuli said in English, “We will make an oil container with paper and draw some cauliflowers.” Next Fatema and Johra said hurriedly in Bangla, “*Amra ful akabo* (we’ll draw pictures)” and decided to draw some flowers. When they said this in Bangla, others teased them and made fun of it. They then corrected themselves and tried to speak in English, “We ... will make... no, sorry... draw flowers.” Then Rani said in English, “I’ll make a weighing scale which is needed for this shop.” After deciding, they started making and drawing items accordingly. It was a busy moment for them, as I noted in my journal. They were all active doing their work. They talked to each other, asked for help, asked to pass items and tried to use English language as far as they could. They even talked to other group members showing what they have made. At the same time, they teased each other and made jokes. It was a free moment for them. They could do whatever they wanted to do. In the next picture the enthusiastic activities of this group is evident.



Image 8.10: Enthusiastic group work

A Free Space for Students

The students made the grocery shop items and got ready to open the shop for customers to come. In the picture below Rani is showing the weighing scale she has prepared for the customers.



Image 8.11: Rani is showing the weighing scale in a grocery shop

Likewise, other groups also made items for their shops such as a vegetable shop, a cloth shop, and a fish shop as seen in the next three pictures below.



Image 8.12: Vegetables shop



Image 8.13: The Cloth Shop



Image 8.14: The Fish Shop

Throughout the activity, the teacher was always moving around to motivate and help the students with appropriate vocabulary so that they could speak English as much as possible. The teacher was in a helping mode not in a correcting mode which also helped students to enjoy the learning. The facial expressions and activities of both students and the teacher in the next picture demonstrates that a congenial English language learning environment is being established.



Image 8.15: A congenial learning moment

Although I was there as an observer, the students would forget that and ask me to help them and join their activities. For example, Salma asked me, “Sir, what is the English of *sosha*?” I replied, “Cucumber.” Salma said, “O... cu...cumber... I’ll draw a cucumber.” She and her group were making items for the vegetables shop. In this way, students were feeling their way into the English language throughout the session within a very enjoyable atmosphere.

My observation also recorded that before making or drawing any item, the students argued openly and in making their decisions respected each other’s desires and opinions about making items. As a result, altogether it was a group effort and an enthusiastic sharing of ideas. Every group members made at least one of the items and helped each other to arrange their shops properly.

Students were also able to move freely to other groups and they shared ideas about different shops, in contrast to what would have occurred if they had been following the regular English session. The video footage also captured the fact that the students became competitive when making the drawings and paper models. They also created different shop names according to the items being sold, as seen in the earlier pictures. The students also extended on the activity by cutting and

marking some paper in the size of various hard cash money so that they could use the money when they would go shopping. The students' facial expressions, speeches and their active involvement in the activity substantiated that they were in a festive mood enjoying the English language learning.

Observational data also showed that although the teacher encouraged students to use English, they used Bangla for much of the time. While it could be argued that this is a failure, whereby students are not fully engaged in the English language; however, the freedom that students enjoyed facilitated the sharing of ideas although in a mixture of Bangla and English. Thus, the activity disrupted the non-activeness and made the students active with the English class. The activeness in the Bangla language was also viewed as a temporary necessity to make students increasingly active by reducing apprehension about English. In our teacher workshop, we had considered that a little use of the Bangla might allow the students to feel more comfortable in using English dialogue as they were learning English as a second language. As a result, the students would become more creative in using English language. This meant that the students use of Bangla was a part of the new interactive techniques applied in that session.

Overall, the session was organised in such a way that it was both enjoyable and interactive. As a result, when the students were engaged and creative in practising English they were also getting pleasure from language learning. While the teacher accepted a little Bangla when the students were practicing the English, she was always active motivating and pushing the students to use English language as far as they could.

It was also important that the lesson was carefully crafted to allow students to move freely when practicing English language. As discussed in Chapter 2, in regular sessions students are rarely given any opportunity to share their ideas among themselves and have fun and be creative together. In regular sessions, they are often compelled to follow a strict discipline, which most often causes silence, non-activeness and obvious boredom. Participants of my previous study (Rasheed, 2011) reported that students in Bangladesh often complain that they do not like to attend English sessions, because they are authoritarian. Therefore, it

commonly creates apprehension about this subject and the students most often tried to fly away from it. So, the teachers and I decided to try to create a free engaging environment where the students could move freely, share ideas using either language if they needed, do activities they liked and enjoy the learning. It was hoped in this way to attract students towards English. Therefore, opportunities were created for the students to enjoy fun activities when learning English language.

Active Practice of English Language

To continue with the session, Nagma selected different places and groups of items according to the different shops (grocery, electronics, clothes, electronics, fish and vegetables) and asked the students to read the dialogue in the next activity B on the textbook to get an idea about the common types of language used in a shop between shopkeepers and shoppers. A snapshot of the textbook dialogue is presented below.

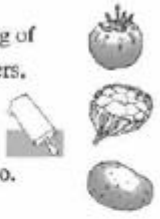



i)	Salesman	: Hello, how can I help you?	
	Imran	: Err..... do you have any carrots?	
	Salesman	: Yes, we do. How much would you like?	
	Imran	: I would like half a kg. And I'll also need one kg of tomatoes, half a kg of potatoes, two cauliflowers, a dozen of eggs and some ice-cream.	
	Salesman	: What ice-cream would you like, sir? We've vanilla, strawberry, chocolate and mango.	
	Imran	: I'll have chocolate.	
	Salesman	: Right! Do you need anything else?	
ii)	Imran	: Urrm.... let me check. (looks at the list). Oh, yes, could I have some sugar and milk?	
	Salesman	: Sure. How much milk do you want?	
	Imran	: Just one litre, ...and one kg of sugar, please.	
	Salesman	: Ok, let me find all the items for you.	
	Imran	: Thanks. Please put them in a paper bag.	
	Salesman	: Sure! We don't use plastic bags here. Here you go! I've put all the items here.	
	Imran	: Thank you. How much is the total?	
iii)	Salesman	: The total comes to Taka five hundred and thirty-five.	
	Imran	: Here is five hundred fifty.	
	Salesman	: Thank you. Here is the change, fifteen taka. Have a good day!	
	Imran	: Thank you, Bye.	

Image 8.16: Textbook shopping dialogue

First, Nagma modelled the dialogue with Rani. Then she asked the students to practice the English dialogue in pairs. At that time, she and her other colleagues helped the students to practice the dialogue in English. So, after students had enjoyed making various items and preparing the shops, the teacher then intensively focused on the oral practice of the English language. It was evident that the students enjoyed the English dialogue practice and it could be suggested that this was due to the fact that they were in a more sociable and responsive classroom environment. Being engaged in group activities encouraged the students to make choices in language practice.

It was also evident that when students were practicing the English language they made various gestures and facial expressions, which also brought much fun into the session. For example, Sumi as a salesman read and the following line of

textbook dialogue “Yes, we do. How much would you like?” In reply Johra read, “I would like half a kg” but saying so she tried to show the quantity by her hands but it was not easy to show half a kilogram by hands, so she moved her two hands in a way that made Sumi laugh out loud and Johra joined her when she realised that the movement of her hands was not appropriate. So, they both laughed and made jokes continuing the English dialogue and finished the rest, both enjoying the practice.

Similarly, in another pair, Sabeek as a salesman read, “What ice-cream do you like, sir?” In reply Sajeed read, “I’ll have chocolate” but in addition he kept saying, “Umm... I love ice-cream,” which was outside of the textbook dialogue, and licked his tongue around as if his hand was holding a melting ice cream. It brought much fun and made both of them laugh, increasing their enjoyment of the English language practice. In similar ways, every pair enjoyed their English language practice by freely moving around the language, making gestures and adding sentences, as they liked. It was a controlled textbook dialogue practice; however, the way students practiced the dialogue freely with the friendly help from the teachers made the practice enjoyable to them.

Another Free Space for Students

However, as this was a strategic preparation for the next step of activities, after ten minutes of practice, Nagma asked the students to volunteer as shopkeepers or sales persons for different shops and put the rest into role as shoppers, who would come to buy different items. I reflected in my journal that it was a new challenge for Nagma in terms of motivating students to take role in a way that would capture the real flavour of a market and to use the targeted language. Nagma said, “We have made items for different shops. Shops are now ready and we need shopkeepers... who want to be the shopkeepers?... rest of us will be the buyers... can you remember the language used in a shop. It is time to use that language. Ok, now we will go for shopping. But again, use the English language.”

I reflected that although it was an imaginary market, it was part of the textbook objectives that the teacher would teach the use of English language for shopping.

At the same time, it was necessary for the teachers to be mindful that this kind of role-playing could get out of control, if not implemented cautiously. So, Nagma took her time and started the role by asking the students to go to different shops and try to buy items according to their shopping lists, which they had made earlier but also ensuring to remind them to use English language when shopping.

Then the students started moving to different shops buying various items. This was clearly an enjoyable moment for the students. At the very beginning students tried to use English according to the text dialogue they practiced earlier. For example, in the vegetables shop,

Tutul, as a shopper asked in English Rony, who was the seller, "You have tomato?"

Rony replied, "Yes, we have... how many you take?"

Tutul said, "Four and how much?"

Rony said, "Twenty taka."

Tutul gave the money and said, "Here is twenty taka."

Rony gave four tomatoes to Tutul and said, "Ok. Thank you. See you again."

Similarly, in the grocery shop,

Shapla said to Tumpa, "Hi, how are you?"

Tumpa replied, "Fine. Could I have some sugar?"

Shapla asked, "How much do you like?"

Tumpa said, "One kg."

Then Shapla measured one kg of sugar with the scale and said, "Here is one kg sugar."

Tumpa asked, "How much money?"

Shapla replied, "Forty taka."

Tumpa gave forty taka, and took one kg sugar with thanks.

Shapla also said, "See you again."

Although the pace was slow and there was a lots of looking into the textbook to check the dialogue, the mini market drama clearly demonstrated that students were practicing the English language.

However, after some time the students started using Bangla. Although the teacher tried to motivate the students to use English, some students turned to Bangla when they had the chance. Some of the students used only Bangla, as the following cloth shop conversation shows.

Shompa said, "*Amake meyader jama dekhani* (please show me some ladies dress)."

Helal said, "*Ei jama gulo notun asshe se* (these are new arrivals)."

Shompa asked, "*Ei desiner onno color nai... laal* (do you have any other colour of this design)?"

Helal said, "*Ha... ei je laal color* (yes... in red)."

Shompa asked, "*Asssa, ami ei ta e nibo... koto daam* (ok... I'll take this... how much)?"

Helal said, "*Saat sho taka... sudhu apnar jonno* (seven hundred... only for you)."

Shompa said, "*Na na onek beshi... charso dibo* (no, no, too much... I'll pay four hundred)."

Helal said, "*Tahole loss hobe... assa soiso deyan* (then it'll be a loss... six hundred)."

Shompa said, "*Passhor besi arr dibo na... dile den nahole gelum* (five hundred... please pack it or we are leaving)."

Helal said, "*Asssa assa thik asse... den* (ok, ok, it's done)."

Shompa gave the money to Helal.

Helal said, "*Dhonno bad... aabar ashben* (thank you... see you again)."

Many other students tried to use more English and less Bangla. For example, the Electronic shop conversation is presented below.

Ananda asked Tuli, "How can I help you?"

Tuli said, "I'm looking... a fridge."

Ananda said, "We've many company (brands) and sizes. Which one...like?"

Tuli said, "*Majhari* (mid) size.... Middle, ...*kom* (less expensive) price."

Ananda said, "Walton is our *desi* (home) company and cheapest... here it is."

Tuli said, "Ok, I... *Ami ei tai nibo... daam koto* (I'll take this... how much)?"

Ananda said, "*taiesh hazar....* twenty three thousand only."

Tuli gave the money to Ananda with thanks.

Ananda said, "Good bye, see you again."

Although the students used Bangla frequently, the practice of English language practice continued as Nagma and the other teachers who were also there helped and monitored the students carefully to ensure the maximum possible use of the English language when the students were shopping. That was a very effective teamwork, which again highlighted the value of developing a learning community for teachers.

A Bit of Criticality Skill

After shopping continued for ten minutes, Nagma told the students to go back to their groups and do a further textbook activity in pairs. The activity consisted of appropriate ways of talking about quantities for various items of shopping. It is presented in the picture below.

C Discuss in pairs how you talk about quantities when you go shopping. Match the phrases in column A and the items in column B below to make an imaginary shopping list. Write down the list in your notebook. (One phrase may match more than one items.)

A	B
a can of	poster paper
a loaf of.....	bread
a packet of.....	paint
a tube of.....	facial tissue
half a kilo of.....	cake
a dozen.....	honey
a box of	eggs
a roll of	chocolates
a	toothpaste
a jar of	note book
a sheet of	pencils
	coke

Image 8.17: Textbook activity C

The teachers facilitated the students to match the columns in pairs. Although they frequently used Bangla to negotiate the meaning of words, they were focusing on English vocabulary. Sumi read, “A can of...” and both Sumi and Johra were looking for the item on the other side of the column. Then Johra said, “Can *er sathe* Coke *hobe*.” Agreeing with her Sumi said, “Yes. A can of coke.” Then again, Sumi said, “A loaf of...” and both of them tried to look for the item. But they could not find the item, as the word ‘*loaf*’ was new to them. So, in English they asked the teacher who was facilitating another pair, “What is loaf?” the teacher said, “The quantity of bread.” Then they thanked the teacher and matched the words, “a loaf of bread.” So, in this way they continued. But when they came across the word paint Johra said, “It is can again.” But as Sumi was thinking, she said, “Omm... *Amar o mone hoy*... I think you are right... a can of paint... let’s ask madam.” Then they asked the teacher, “Madam, a can of paint... *hobe*? The teacher said, “Yes. Carry on.”

Similarly, in another pair, Sheraj read, “a roll of...” and then Kamal and Sheraj started looking for the item. Sheraj said, “Facial tissue” but Kamal disagreeing said,

“poster paper.” Then they both discussed in Bangla and agreed, “*Hoito dui jagai e hobe.*” Then Kamal said, “Cholo... Madam k jiggasa kori” and they asked in English, “Madam... a roll of facial tissue or a roll of poster paper?” The teacher said, “Both are correct.” Then Sheraj said to Kamal, “*Dekso, we two are correct... amra dui jagai e eta bosaita pari.*” Agreeing with him Kamal said in English, “Yes, we can do that.” Therefore, the students continued doing the activity in this way where they enjoyed their sharing and also using of English language.

This particular exercise marked the emerging development of criticality towards the way the textbook was normally used. I will discuss the concept of criticality further in the next chapter. Here I simply highlight a moment in the lesson. Conventionally teachers, and their student, expect a one to one match between different items in a list like this. In the above dialogues, the students found that one word in the first list could match different words in the second list. It was evident that both teachers and students were focusing on making meaning than simply seeking to get the *right answer*. The processes was leading them to choose appropriate words thinking critically about the words and the meanings. In any language learning appropriate choices of words are very important to ensure effective communication, as discussed in Chapter 3.

After the practice Nagma closed the session by discussing the importance of learning shopping language and how it could be used in different places.

A Reflection on the Session

Looking back at the session a number of issues can be highlighted. Firstly, this session was carefully arranged to develop students’ English language and to minimise their apprehension about the English subject. As discussed in Chapter 2, many students in Bangladesh complain about needing to learn and they often do not like to attend the English sessions. In a rural Bangladesh context, the learning is particularly challenging for the students, as it is not a second language in their communities. Moreover, the dominant use of a traditional grammar-translation method in the English language teaching and learning makes language learning difficult and not engaging to the secondary school students. So, fear and

inactiveness is the most typical scenario in any regular English session in Bangladesh (Hussain, 2016).

Therefore, the teachers and I had decided that if English language practice sessions could be mixed with enjoyment, it might reduce students' fear and inactiveness in the session. At the same time, it could attract students to learning English. Therefore, learning spaces were created where students could be free to share ideas and the students were put into role-playing activities so that they could have fun in the session. At the same time, the teachers were flexible and helpful when correcting students' errors. As a result, when the students were doing different activities they were more engaged as well as enjoying those activities, which was apparent in their speech, facial expressions, and active behaviours and also in their enthusiasm in following the teacher's instructions.

Secondly, two sessions were taken together, one after another, to observe the effect of a much longer English language session. The teacher worked continuously through range different activities, but she used a fun activity or free time after each applied language practice. As a result, the students did not notice the time and continued with the next activity. A close reflection of the session reveals that after asking students to make shopping list individually the teacher told students to look at the textbook in groups for more suggestions. Then again after rigorously practicing the language of shopping the teacher asked the students to move to different shops using the language they had learned, which was a flexible time for them. A free time was allowed for the students following a controlled or challenging task. As a result, the students had been engaged in an English learning situation for nearly one hour and twenty minutes, without showing any inactiveness and boredom. It represented a significant change in teaching practice.

I had noted in my journal that an enjoyable English learning atmosphere enhanced students' enthusiasm for learning English language and diminished the fear of it. Interviews with the students confirmed these shifts. Rani said,

Yes, we do activities in regular sessions also, but only for sometimes and on a very small scale. I liked those sessions as we had much opportunity to ask

questions and teachers tried to answer or endeavoured to find answers later. In regular sessions, you will seldom find such interactive and on task behaviour. But in those sessions the teachers were much active and cared for learning of English language, which now makes for little apprehension about English sessions.

Then Shohel expressed this in another way,

Those sessions were especially for learning English, not like regular sessions. The activities dealing with shopping, immigration and making passports, the mini drama on Bulbul's life, many dialogues I liked most of them. I have little fear about English sessions now. I learnt English language a lot and enjoyed and had fun, all together. We learnt English language in different contexts, which create new ideas and forms of language.

Practical activities mixed with enjoyment could make an effective change to English sessions in Bangladesh secondary schools, as I reflected in my journal.

In addition, although this session's activities encouraged enjoyment, the shifts in activities and their careful scaffolding helped to maintain discipline in a large group of students. The teachers carefully developed three pedagogical stages, pre-stage, while-stage and post-stage, when doing an activity. For example, in the activity where the students were to fill gaps in a table from the textbook with information from dialogue in the textbook these stages were clearly visible. First, the teacher started the activity with slow and clear instructions in English but for more clarity she took the role of the translator with little Bangla when needed, and then she introduced the vocabulary. After that she asked the students to look at the table first for the purpose of the activity then read the dialogue to fill the gaps. All of these were done as the pre-activity stage to set the scene for the upcoming activity. Then the teacher asked the students to start reading the dialogue and students continued the activity by filling the gaps in the table and the teacher facilitated. This was the while-activity stage. After that when the students finished filling the gaps the teacher allowed most of the groups to present their findings. And then she corrected and collated all answers in an open discussion time with the students, and that was the post-activity stage. As a result, the students developed a clear understanding of the various activities and so they were able to become more active in the session.

The teacher used Bangla strategically with the help of the Translator and let the students use Bangla as well when sharing ideas. This allowed the session to flow and it also, as I have discussed earlier, gradually enabled the students to actively speak in English as they had broken their habit of classroom silence and were overcoming their fear of failing.

Enjoyment in Other Sessions

Before finishing, now I would like to turn other sessions' activities that were based on the resource where students were observed enjoying their English language learning. In the session called "Our pride" when the teacher asked the students to pick their heroes and do something for them. As outlined in Chapter 7, the students individually made various items such as writing poems, drawing pictures, writing a statement and even forming a body sculpture. At the time of presentation, the students had lots of fun and enjoyed the learning moment. For example, Rumki drew a picture of the national memorial and wrote underneath "I love my hero." When she was presenting and uttered aloud "I love my hero," everyone, even the teacher, burst into laughter as in this rural culture the word 'love' was still considered slightly taboo and not to be uttered publicly. As the picture below demonstrates everyone was having fun and laughing.



Image 8.18: Rumki's presentation

In an earlier session, also, called “Where are you from” when the teacher asked the students to practice the English dialogue about different professionals, the students get into the role of various dream professions, practicing the text dialogue, as detailed in Chapter 6. The students also made jokes to each other, such as when Rahim said to Sujon in English, “What do you do?” Sujon replied, “I’m a pilot. I’m flying an aeroplane. But Rahim replied jokingly, “But where is your plane?”



Image 8.19: Students enjoying English dialogue practice

Similarly, Sumi, a girl, asked Khodeja, another girl, “What is your name?” Khodeja replied joking, “My name is Hasan (a boy name).” Then Sumi joked back, “Oh! Really, *tumi to Hasan er moto na* (you don’t look like Hasan) but *tumi to Hasina* (a girl name)” and they laughed a lot about this dialogue, as seen in the pictures above. In this way, most of the students made various jokes to each other and enjoyed the English classes.

The Importance of Enjoyment in an ESL Context

A number of theorists discuss the importance of enjoyment in regard to learning. In general, enjoyment is a primary result of a happy experience that could be short, unexpected, informal and often purposeless (Dix, 2010). Koster (2010) explained that fun is against the chunked pattern of life that helps to get relaxation and acts as a social lubricant to systematize the regular activities once again. In a systematic routine, a moment of fun could add energy again to mobilize the system

when life has become monotonous. It is often considered as a friendly distraction from the regular routine interests (Sprenger, 2009). Accordingly, this chapter has demonstrated how the students enjoyed even the routine text practice when they have got the opportunity to make jokes to each other.

There are studies that emphasise the importance of enjoyment in learning (Zhou & Intaraprasert, 2016; Wong & Nunan, 2011; Ainley & Ainley, 2011; Griffin, 2005; Lumby, 2011; Goetz, et. al., 2006). Griffin (2005) argued that without fun, learning could be a failure and recommended the adoption of a pedagogy of enjoyment to improve achievement of learning outcomes. In a “comparative study into the learning styles and strategies of effective and ineffective language learners” in a Hong Kong context, Wong and Nunan (2011, p. 144) showed that there is a significant difference between how fun oriented and non-fun oriented classrooms impact on students’ classroom learning achievements. Chu et al. (2017) argued the value of making learning enjoyable in order to address the challenge of promoting students to be interested and engaged in learning. They emphasised the importance of innovation in order to develop curriculum and teacher training programmes that would allow teacher to include fun in learning. In a similar voice but focusing on a Chinese context, Zhou & Intaraprasert (2016) argue for using various strategies to make an ESL learning session enjoyable and effective. It has also been suggested that enjoyment could be created through various activities (Vazou & Smiley-Oyen, 2014; Chu et. al., 2017; Cohen, 2016). It is also suggested that if the people do not have the prior knowledge of the upcoming fun activities and become involved unexpectedly, they will enjoy them more and if they go through challenges and overcome those obstacles positively that too can result in enjoyment at the end. Buff (2014) emphasised the importance of putting greater attention on positive emotions to achieve psychological growth and wellbeing. I would suggest that the concept of positive emotions overlaps with that of enjoyment. As a result, in the classroom activities the students could be involved purposefully, without their prior knowledge of the activity, to enjoy the new learning.

This chapter has reported a learning environment that allows students to enjoy learning and reduces their apprehensions about learning English. Such a friendly learning environment could also help students to attain satisfactory academic outcomes. Safford and Costley (2008) argued that in ESL contexts students often withdrawn from learning due to a negative and potentially false perception about the subject's level of difficulty. So, the introduction of interactive exercises and consequent pedagogical shifts could create a learning environment in English language classes that would trigger fun and enjoyment. In this environment, the students could learn happily without feeling fearful about understanding the content in the textbook or being bored because they have lost connection with what is happening in the class.

Similarly, it might be argued that when anyone is in fun, time flies quickly. If the students could learn in an environment that provides lots of fun and enjoyment, it might help them to be more engaged in a session without noticing the time, as in the session I reported earlier in this chapter. Even when two sessions were combined together making a long session, the students hardly noticed the extended time frame, as the activities were mixed with fun and opportunities were created to move about the room freely. Moreover, the creation of activities that were enjoyable attracted the students towards practicing English language. Because they were not concerned about making mistakes, they enjoyed the learning of English language.

This chapter has argued interactive and creative activities can bring enjoyment to students' learning. It has also argued the value of creating a school environment where teachers can help each other to apply interactive pedagogy confidently and make English language sessions enjoyable to their students.

The next chapter continues the report of the classroom project and discusses how a developmental critical awareness was evident in the students' and teachers' work.

Chapter 9: Criticality

The previous three chapters examined the unfolding of the classroom project in terms of three elements, engagement, creativity and enjoyment that international literature often associates with effective teaching but that are all too often missing from ESL classrooms in Bangladesh (Alam, 2015; Rahman, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014). This chapter adds a fourth element, that of criticality. Although *critical* literacy is widely considered as an important aspect of the development of literacy (Freire, 2005; Giroux, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2015; Brown & Perry, 2011; Kirylo, 2012; Stillar, 2013; Espinoza-Gonzales et al., 2014; Hagood, 2002), it is perhaps not so often considered as an important element in the early learning of a second language. This chapter discusses why the development of criticality is important in education generally in Bangladesh, why it is a useful lens for examining what takes place in English language teaching and learning, and why a critically reflective attitude is important in decisions about approaches to English language learning. As in the preceding chapters, I report the progress of the classroom project, highlighting a range of aspects of critical awareness and critical choices that were involved, then relate these to concepts reported in international literature and to the needs and purposes of ESL teaching in Bangladesh. The national curriculum make several unspecific references to the need for critical thinking. In this chapter I explore some ways criticality might be developed in a junior ESL class.

As the sessions in project became more interactive with teachers going beyond the textbook and creating opportunities for the students to go beyond replicating expected answers and to explore meaning when choosing answers and making arguments, more critically reflective choices were being made by both teachers and students. In making sessions interactive, teachers thought about choosing different methods, selecting activities, and shaping sessions according to the deliberate consideration of their teaching goals. In the process, they were beginning to critically reflect on their practices as teachers. I also, as the facilitator, needed to constantly reflect critically in order assist the teachers to move their

thinking forward and this also allowed me to think critically about my own work as a teacher educator.

The session based on the textbook, *We Live in a Global Village* created opportunities for the students to practice English language going beyond the textbook exercises and to think about their relationship to their community and the outside world. A detailed account of the session is reported together with snapshots of other sessions. Aspects of criticality are discussed in the account. A short discussion on the need of critical literacy in an ESL context follows the reports of the sessions.

The Session: We Live in a Global Village

Strategic choices about corrections and interactions in terms of learning

Nagma again entered into the session with greetings. The students now replied confidently. Ngama quickly started the session asking the students, “Can you imagine how do we feel when we visit or go anyplace alone ...without our parents or family members?” The photo below shows the students eagerly listening at the beginning of the session.



Image 9.1: Nazma explaining the situation

As it was a new topic, the students asked for the translator, so Nagma, in-role as the translator, explained the question in Bangla. Then Tuli replied emotionally, “I do not want to go without my parents.” Bokor replied, “I feel happy to travel with my father. It is safe.” Then Nagma said, “Yes, we all feel happy to travel with our family. Most of us never want to travel alone.” Continuing the conversation Nagma asked about the students’ family members or friends who live in different countries. She asked in English, “Do you know anyone from this village or your family lives in any other country? How do they feel?” The teacher asked these questions as a means to set the scene for that day’s lesson, as well as to prompt the students to think deeper before giving their own opinions. Nagma allowed them two minutes to reflect and relate answers about these questions. Then she asked the students to raise their hands, as is seen in the photo below.



Image 9.2: Students raise their hands

Among those who raised hands, Nagma asked Sheela to answer first. Sheela answered, “My friend’s father lives in Dubai. He feels fine.” Nagma said, “Okay” and then asked Robi to answer. He said, “My uncle lives in America. He is not always happy.” Then Nagma asked Moni to answer. Moni replied, “My big brother work in Saudi Arabia. He... is not feels good. He...he...” She could not finish the sentence

because of insufficient vocabulary. Then Nagma asked her to call for the translator and finish in Bangla. Moni said, “I need translator.” Then Nagma as translator helped her to translate her thought into a meaningful English sentence. Then Moni finished in English, “He always wants to come back.” Nagma declared that day’s topic saying, “We live in a global village” and wrote it on the board. The picture below shows Nagma writing the session’s title on the blackboard.



Image 9.3: Nagma writing session’s title on Blackboard

In creating a new context, the teacher encouraged the students to choose vocabulary that matched the meaning of that context. This means that the students tried to reflect on and relate to their own experiences in terms of the text themes. Then Nagma pulled together their answers and summarised in English, “It is hard to live alone in a foreign country detached from family members. But as you continue to live in a place, learning about the different language, culture, and people could make you happy.” She also summed up the theme in Bangla with the help of translator and recounted it in English again to maintain the English flow. When summarising Nagma carefully chose words that matched with the textbook chapter’s theme and context. So, although the conversation involved a mixture of English and Bangla, the teacher encouraged the students to select English words that matched the meaning of the context and assisted them accordingly. It helped

the students to be engaged and understand the meaning of the lesson as well as practicing the English language exercises given in the textbook. As has already been discussed, the creation of relevance is not always the practice in ESL classes in Bangladesh. In the current learning context, therefore, both teacher and students were required to think critically when selecting vocabulary and practicing English sentences in accordance with the chapter's theme.

To make the situation more interactive, Nagma then put a big world map on the wall and asked the students to find places where their relatives, friends, neighbours might live or work outside Bangladesh. As seen in the pictures below students became active using the world map.



Image 9.4: Interactive students using the world map

It was a very interactive and interesting moment for the students, as I wrote in the journal. At the beginning, it seemed the students did not like to go to the map fearing they would not be able to find the places they wanted. The teacher asked randomly, "Sumon, come to the board;" however, Sumon, one of the advanced students, was hesitant in going to the map, another teacher came forward to help. Another student named Lipi, was courageous enough to go to the map to find

Dubai where her friend's father lived, as seen in the second picture of the top row. When Sumon was again asked to go to the map, he did so.

Reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that in this way, other students also became encouraged to find countries in the map where their relatives worked or lived outside of Bangladesh. The students realised that there was no threat of failure and the teachers were there to help them. I reflected that the teachers' positive attitudes, when the students became doubtful about their abilities, provided support and seemed to break the confusion encouraging the students to move forward. Similarly, it seemed to me that students encouraged each other by providing initiatives and supports in risk taking.

However, while the students were finding various places Nagma pressed them to speak English, offering a model sentence: "This is the place my father/ brother/ uncle/ neighbour works/ lives." The teacher made the decision immediately and intentionally to encourage the students' English usage in this session, because the students were only pointing at the places on the map without uttering a word, which would bring little benefit in a language session.

In addition, Nagma assisted students with lesser developed English skills to find the appropriate words. For example, Timmi, when pointing at Singapore tried to say, "My brother ...aa...aa." Everyone started laughing. Then Nagma said, "Okay... use the translator" and taking role as the translator helped her. Timmi said, "*boro vai*." The translator said, "Elder brother." Then Timmi continued and finished, "my elder brother work in Singapore." Nevertheless, Nagma said, "My elder brother works in Singapore." Then Timmi uttered again, "My elder brother works in Singapore." The teacher was assisting the students intensively and correcting language errors without highlighting them to others, as noted in my journal. Normal practice in this school, and many others, used to consist of looking for accuracy at all times, which most often created apprehension among the students, which minimised the use of English. But as the focus in this session was to encourage students to make meaning, the teacher made strategic choices about correcting errors.

Analysing Texts, Ideas, and Relating to Own Experiences

Then Nagma asked the students to read the questions relating to an activity in the textbook first and then read the passage. Reading the activity questions first would give a purpose for reading the text. The passage was a letter written from Uncle Zul to Sohan who was a Grade 6 student. His uncle was working in the Bangladesh army, and at that time, he was in Congo on a UN Peacekeeping Mission. In the letter the uncle explained the violent socio-political condition of Congo and how Bangladesh army personnel as UN Peacekeepers were helping the people of Congo to improve their conditions. He also mentioned a person named Gurmit Singh whom he met the previous week. Although Gurmit Singh was born in India, he visited many countries following his parents to complete his post-graduation degree. He came to Congo to work for a voluntary organisation to look after children's education in a community school. Uncle Zul added that Gurmit was a nice fellow and a good friend of many working there. So Zul and others called him 'Mr. Global Citizen.' But when someone said to Mr. Global Citizen, "You've been to so many countries and how do you feel about that?" Gurmit replied with smile, "It's nice to work with different peoples. And we are all global citizens. Aren't we?" After that, Uncle Zul finished the letter asking Sohan about his preparations for the upcoming examinations.

Nagma then instructed the students in English, "Read the questions first and then read the letter silently to find answers to the questions. Do this activity individually." In the textbook, the activity questions were: "Where is Congo? Who called Gurmit Singh 'Mr. Global Citizen'? Why? What do you mean by 'global citizen'?" Accordingly, the students started analysing the text with a set goal of finding the answers to the questions.

After five minutes Nagma asked, "Have you got the answers? Are you ready to answer? ...okay... yes... then raise your hands... Where is Congo?" Most of the students raised their hands. Nagma invited Rani to answer. Rani said, "Congo is a central African country." Nagma said, "Good, thanks. Okay... now Shankar." Shankar said, "Africa." Nagma said, "Yes, a central African country." Nagma corrected the answer without hindering the flow of the practice and Shankar

repeated after the teacher. Then Nagma said, “Now Fuli.” As Fuli was a little shy girl, Nagma purposefully asked her to answer to break the shyness. As seen in the picture below, Fuli replied, with shyness, “Africa.” Nagma said, “That’s great.” So... Congo is in Central Africa.”



Image 9.5: Fuli is answering

At this point I asked myself why Nagma accepted a single word answer. Might there not be a need to ask the student to repeat the full phrase? Or was the emphasis more on listening than speaking? After the session, I asked Nagma about the reason, and she said that Fuli was the shyest girl in that class and it was often very hard to make her answer any question. Nagma took the opportunity to bring Fuli into the flow where everyone was answering. Fuli answered, although only in a single word, and since Fuli had answered, Nagma took it as full answer and moved forward not wanting to demoralise her by looking for the full phrase answer. In this way, the teacher analysed the learning moment critically and tried to focus on students who needed special attention and encouragement to keep up with the lesson. This could rarely be found in regular English sessions in Bangladesh, where in most cases the teachers only focus onto the advanced students, neglecting others (Rasheed, 2011).

Continuing the session, Nagma asked, “Why was Gurmit Singh called ‘Mr. Global Citizen’? Please raise your hands.” When only a couple of students raised their hands, she asked Rani to answer and added, “After listening to Rani everybody has to answer the question.” Rani replied, “Zul called him ‘Mr. Global Citizen’ for his work.” Nagma asked, “Who is him?” So, Rani again replied, “He is Mr. Gurmit Singh. Zul called Mr. Gurmit Singh ‘Mr. Global Citizen’... and... why...for his work.” However, as Rani replied in a low voice other students asked for a repetition, so Rani repeated the answer again in loud voice with the help of Nagma. Then Nagma asked Sohel but when he failed to answer fully, she asked Shilpi to answer without showing any anger or saying any bad words to Sohel. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is a common feature in the Bangladesh context that the teachers very often strongly rebuke students when they might be unable to answer satisfactorily.

As Nagma wanted to get the answer from another student so that Sohel could get the full answer and repeat it again, Rani, one of the advanced students in this class, replied, “Mr. Gurmit Singh lives in many countries and gets his education, and worked in different countries. In the same way, we live in different countries and go to another country for education and work but we are situated in the same earth. So, we can call him global citizen.”

Then she asked, “Do you understand why Gurmit Singh was called ‘Mr. Global Citizen.’”

Most of the students answered in a voice, “Yes.” However, Nagma was not quite convinced with the answer “yes” only and pressed them to explain again, in order to find out whether the students really picked up the meaning of globalisation or not. I reflected that in that session it was not enough for the students to say just “yes,” especially in a national tradition where there was often a tendency among the students to please the teachers to get complete the activity quickly, as has been discussed in Chapter 2.

Nagma asked, “Can anyone explain it again?” At that moment, Tithi wanted to explain in English, “A person... ya...ya.” When she was baffled with English words, Nagma asked her to use the translator and explained it in Bangla. However, Nagma

explained it in English as well, to keep the English language flow, “A person may live in many countries for education and work. But as we all are sharing the same earth we can call Gurmit Singh Mr. Global Citizen.”

In reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that the answers, although in Bangla, indicated that most of the students seemed to have understood the English passage they had read and seemed to comprehend the surface meaning of globalisation. Nagma finished the activity saying, “...okay...thank you.”

At this point, the lesson still had strong elements of a top-down teaching approach, but that was expected as it was the beginning of interactive session and the students were given more opportunities to practice English sentences than occurs in many classrooms. However, Nagma still pushed the students to engage and to think differently about the topic the textbook presented. I reflected that she was preparing the students to think critically about the meaning of a text as well as practising English sentences.

Continuing the session, Nagma then described a new context to the students, which was similar but outside the textbook. She said, “Some Bangladeshi children who are students in a New Zealand school write letters to the Bangladeshi students saying that their school is running a project that explores immigrant students’ culture. Those Bangladeshi immigrant students want to know more about the country where they have come from and the major attractions of that place as well. Especially they want to know about the National Monument at Savar and ask the question, why is the monument there?” She wrote the question on the blackboard. Firstly, as Nagma told the story in English and as the context was new, the students asked for the translator. As translator, Nagma briefly explained the context in Bangla. After also explaining the context in English, she asked the students to make a list of the major attractions that a tourist can visit in Bangladesh or their local area. The pictures below show the students engaged in making the list.



Image 9.6: Students making lists of the attractions in Bangladesh

Within five minutes, the students had made individual lists. Nagma asked the students to raise their hands if they wanted to read their list. As most of the students raised their hands, the teacher asked Sumi to answer. Sumi was sitting on the back bench. Sumi read aloud her list of the major attractions that a tourist could visit in Bangladesh. She wrote '*Savar Jatio Sriti Sowdho*' the national memorial at Savar, '*Shohid Minar*' a memorial for the language movement at Dhaka, '*Cox's Bazar*' the longest sea beach in the world at Chittagong, and '*Sundor Bon*' a world heritage site consisting of a tropical forest at Khulna.

After thanking Sumi, Nagma asked Munir to answer. Munir was sitting on the first bench and he added, "*Cox's Bazar,*' '*Jatio Sriti Sowdho,*' '*Jatio Sanshad Bahavan*' the national parliament building at Dhaka, '*Mainamati*' an ancient Buddhist settlement at Comilla, '*Shohid Minar,*' and '*Sundor Bon.*" I reflected that the students were actively relating their own experiences and knowledge to the text theme.

I also wrote in my journal that the teacher asked two of the students, one from back and one from front, to answer because she wanted to know how comprehensively the students could follow the instructions. However, when she understood that all of the students ignored the question 'why is the National monument there', Nagma asked the students to think about that question again. I reflected that in this moment the students were forced to think beyond the textbook answers. However, after two minutes, only one of the students tried to

answer and he said, smiling, the following words, “It is there because it looks so beautiful.” The photo below shows Shohel answering.



Image: 9.7: Shohel is trying to answer, “Why is the National monument there?”

Nagma replied, “Oomm, okay. Yes, it looks beautiful but why is it there?” When all of the students kept silent, she used the translator and briefly explained the reasons in Bangla. Then she again said in English, “Now you understand why the monument is there. The National Monument represents our respect to the freedom fighters who fought and sacrificed their life for the country.”

I noted in my journal that at one level this learning moment did not seem to be developing students’ criticality skills as the teacher answered her own question. On the other hand, she was pushing the students to approach the textbook from a new angle. In the previous part of the activity where the teacher asked the students to discuss Gurmit Singh she had followed the textbook questions. But now she went beyond the textbook questions, as most of the ten-eleven years old students in this rural context were not commonly accustomed to questions outside of the textbook. The common trend was only to prepare students for the examination by making them memorise answers related to regular textbook questions (Das et. al., 2014).

Nagma then asked the students to write a letter in reply, providing this list and the significance of national monument, and also to ask the Bangladeshi immigrant children why they live in New Zealand. The students tried to write a letter in reply. Nagma observed for three minutes and discovered that the students seemed to be struggling to produce enough writing. Razzak, Tutul and Nagma all together moved into the session to help the students to write a letter in English. The photo below shows the teachers assisting the students and their facial expressions show they are arguing.



Image 9.8: Active teachers assisting the students

To further scaffold the learning experience Nagma asked the students to write sentences in Bangla first and then try to translate them into English. The other teachers helped them to do so, as these young rural students had never had experience in writing a letter in English. I reflected in my journal that Nagma seemed to be beginning to question her own teaching, to be reshaping it and then re-approaching it from a new angle. She seemed to be developing criticality skills as well. When we later discussed the lesson together, the teachers and I agreed that creating opportunities for the students to think differently about the given textbook context would encourage students to think independently, as the

students were seen to be encouraged to ask different kind of questions when writing a reply letter for the Bangladeshi New Zealand students.

Although it was individual work, most of the students wrote nearly the same way because the teacher and other colleagues assisted them with Bangla contexts and with the English sentences. As seen in the picture below the students are engaged in writing letters following the teacher's instructions.



Image 9.9: Students are busy writing letters

Here is an example of a student's letter:

Dear Jamie,

Thanks for your letter. You wanted to know about tourist places in Bangladesh. There are many places to visit. *Savar Jatio Sriti Sowdho*, *Shohid Minar*, *Cox's Bazar*, and *Sundor Bon* are the most attractive places you can visit. The National Monument represents our respect to the freedom fighters, who fought and sacrificed their life for the country. But I like to ask you a question- why do you live there as you are from Bangladesh. Okay. That is all for now.

Your friend, Fuli.

Reflecting on the above learning moment, I wrote in the journal that the students experienced letter writing in English for the very first time. However, this context

was intentionally created not only to practice letter writing but also to make the students more curious about the people living in foreign countries. In addition, the questions related to the context created opportunities for the students to think differently about the given textbook activity. The teachers and I had earlier agreed that it could help the students to be more curious about a simple matter, as we believed that creating curiosity could be a step towards the development of students' higher order thinking skills.

Negotiating Between Freedom and Discipline

Nagma finished the session for the day by briefly discussing what it meant to be a global citizen. The next day she started the session reminding the students about the letter they had written the day before and asking questions about it in order to initiate students' engagement for the day. Nagma moved the discussion forward by asking the students in English, "If you are forced to live in another place without your parents, and how do you feel then?" Interestingly, in the midst of trying to explain the context to Ratna and others, she suddenly stopped and asked Belal, "Belal, tell me what I was saying?" In the left picture below Belal is seen talking without hearing what Nagma was saying to Ratna, without paying attention to the teacher's instructions. His facial expression in the right picture shows his embarrassment.



Image 9.10: Belal's embarrassing situation

When we talked later Nagma explained that she saw that Belal and a group of boys around him were inattentive, so she asked the question to attract their attention and call them back to the content of the lesson.

Reflecting on the moment I wrote in my journal about the need for a teacher to make instant critical decisions in balancing student's freedom and the amount of discipline needed to keep them engaging. I saw this in terms of criticality in action. Within a large class maintaining discipline was essential. At this time, Tutul came forward to help Nagma to retain the classroom control. However, I noted in my journal that the inattention may have happened because at that time Nagma was using a lot of English language. I wrote in my journal, "Students seemed inattentive. They do not understand and could not follow the teacher because of too much English at a time."

It seemed Nagma had a similar realisation. She took the role of the translator and explained the scenario in Bangla. She said in Bangla, "*Amra poribarar sokol sodosso mile ek sathe bosobas kori. Kintu onek somoy amader baba maa vai bon chara onno jaigai jeta hoy. Sei somoy amader kemon lage* (We live in families with our family members. But sometimes we need to go to another place without our family members, for example, father, mother, sister, and brother. So, in that case how do we feel)?" Then once they understood what was being asked the students started discussing in groups with great interest. The teacher facilitated engagement in the learning by moving in and out of the role of translator.

Although the students started the discussion with eagerness, it was not a very pleasant moment for those very young students, because when they started thinking about being separated from parents, they began to worry about leaving their familiar context. I noted in my journal that most Bangladeshi children would never consider having to leave their parents at this young age. So, at the time of the discussion Sumi said emotionally, "*Ami kokhono baba maa ke chaara jabo na* (I'll never leave my parents)." Similarly, Shompa said, "*Ami sob somoy* (I always) happy travel with my parents." However, Raju said, "I miss my parents, my friends, and my house." Agreeing with these statements Nagma concluded the discussion saying in English, "Although we all feel comfortable to live in the familiar surroundings we have to move to different places to fulfil our various needs and take challenges to move forward."

In reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that the teacher did not want to continue the discussion further because of the time frame. However, it seemed she hoped that through such provocative questions the students might gradually begin to develop skills of thinking differently about a context. So, it seemed to me that Nagma was actively caring about most of the students' learning by trying to overcome little classroom obstacles. As discussed in Chapter 2 Bangladeshi teachers are often only concerned with advanced students and ignoring the others. Nagma was also careful to maintaining discipline in a big class like this and had shown it by strategically calling Belal's attention to the session's activities.

Questions to Provoke Curiosity

After that, Nagma created an imaginary scenario saying to the students, "Bangladeshi children who live in New Zealand wrote some replying letters to them and sent some pictures about their schools, holidays and life in New Zealand." Then she distributed copies of the letters and pictures to the students to give them some flavour of the New Zealand children's life. In the letters, Bangladeshi New Zealand students mostly described their schools and school activities, but they also mentioned their homes and playgrounds. In addition, they described how they spend their school holidays and the places they would often visit in those days. Every student read the letters. At this moment, Samin looked so excited when he tried to attract his group member's attention by showing a picture and saying in Bangla, "*Dekho dekho... class ta koto sundor... onek poster. Sobai floor e bose group work korse ar bivinno jinish banasse.* (Look... look... the classroom is so nice ...many posters. Students are sitting on the floor in groups and making different items with papers)." Similarly, Raam replied, "*Ha, ora sobai busy... kintu, onek moza korse... dekho, ei student ra poster e ki banaise.* (Yes, they are so busy...but they are enjoying also...look, what this student drew in the poster)." Although most of the time they used Bangla to talk about the pictures and English letters, the students talked and argued a lot at that moment. The letters promoted curiosity to know about a new country, the people, and their activities. Nagma introduced the letter to set up for the next activity, as in the next activity the students needed to visualise the students in New Zealand and their activities. The letters were intended to shift the students' focus from Bangladesh

to New Zealand and to help young students from rural Bangladesh to imagine a place they had never seen and probably never heard of before. I reflected that the way that the students talked and argued a lot over this activity showed they were engaged with the new context and actively thinking about it.

Nagma then asked the students to close their eyes and listen. She said in English, “How about going to New Zealand? Imagine we are going for a trip to New Zealand. What do we need to know about New Zealand? Can you write back to them asking questions? Now open your eyes.” With the help of the translator, Nagma explained the task again but with a mixture of a little Bangla and more English. She was gradually reducing the use of Bangla in the English session. She was also trying to push the students a bit further so that they could gradually understand English instructions. Then she asked the students in English, “Make eight or nine groups. Imagine you are writing to the Bangladeshi children who live in New Zealand.” She continued, “Make a list of the questions you want to ask them.” She then hinted with questions like, “What do you do after school? How does it feel to live in New Zealand? Are you still Bangladeshi or [are you a] New Zealander? Do you miss your own country, Bangladesh? What do you miss from Bangladesh?” After making nine groups of six members in each group, the students tried to make a list of questions that they wanted to ask to the Bangladeshi students who live in New Zealand as immigrants. The pictures below show the students busy to making questions and discussing among them in the group.



Image 9.11: Students making questions

Nagma assisted different groups to create questions in English. However, when she found that some of the groups were having problems with structuring questions she asked them to write questions in Bangla and then try to translate them into English. She facilitated the process by taking the role of translator. In one of the groups, Sumi asked in Bangla, “*Break er somoy ora ki khay* (At the time of break what food they eat)?” Then although she was unable to structure her question in correct English she managed to write, “What food they eat tiffin time? They eat rice? School give food tiffin time? Where they go for vacations?” Similarly, Samsul managed to write in English, “What books they read in the ... *amader moto text boi* (textbook like ours)? Teachers get angry with them?” Rani wrote in English, “How do you feel living in New Zealand? Do you have Bangladeshi passport? What problems do you face living there as Bangladeshi?” I noted in my journal that Rani was one of the advanced students in this class so she wrote questions with a fairly good English structure and with new perspectives. However, as Nagma was encouraging curiosity, she deliberately ignored accuracy issues for the moment. Accordingly, she pushed the students to focus more on writing as many questions as they wanted to ask the Bangladeshi students who live in New Zealand.

I noted in my journal that when the students finished writing questions in groups, the teacher did not ask for any presentation, rather she moved on to the next activity. I reflected that she did this consciously because she did not want to make any comment on the students’ questions, but rather seemed to want to provide opportunity for students to think about a foreign context. The textbook talked about globalisation. I reflected that this activity aroused curiosity and helped these young students to start thinking a little deeply about a foreign context, and so move beyond memorising the textbook.

Nagma then asked the whole class to discuss openly the following questions: “Who are we? Which country do we belong to? Do we belong to the world or a global village?” The picture below shows Nazma talking to the students and explaining what to discuss in the activity. The students seem very attentive. In the second to

last bench Runi is seen turning her head trying to listen to the teacher's instructions.



Image 9.12: Nagma instructing students for the activity

Because they were caught up with the ideas the students started discussing their identity and positions in this world without thinking too hard about using English. Nagma and the other teachers assisted them by moving in and out of the role of translator. The discussion the teacher initiated was simple and at the English level of the students. The students used both Bangla and English language in their discussions. Then when it came to presentation time they also used Bangla and English to express their opinions. The pictures below show Rani and Kamal presenting group statements.



Image 9.13: Rani and Kamal presenting group work

One of the groups presented in English, “We are Bangladeshi...we live in Bangladesh... yes, and we also live in the world.” However, the next group added in Bangla, “*Amra manush ebong Bangladesh a bosobash kori abar prithibi te o* (We are human being and live in Bangladesh as well as in this world).” A similar view was put forward by a group using a mixture of Bangla and English. They said in English, “Man live different countries... *bivinno porichoy e kintu ek e prithibi share kori, jake amra bissho gram o bolte pari* (with different identities but they also share the same earth so we may call it a global village)... we live in a global village.” After this discussion, Nagma closed the session agreeing with the students’ statements and added in English, “We are not alone in this world. We are all from the same human race. Although we live in a particular country, [but] work, business, immigration, tourism, education, media and many more causes [are there that] make us global citizens. We randomly move everywhere, as we are not living alone in this world. So, it’s like a big village where we live side by side with our own identities.”

It was a long statement to be said in English, so Nagma summed up the discussion again in Bangla and then again in English to make the students more familiar with the English statements. In this activity Nagma had focused mainly onto the theme and its different meanings so that the students could get the opportunity to think and talk about different contexts. Although these young students had no knowledge about globalisation and never discussed it previously, in the last activity they got a chance to discuss it and argue about it, rather than just memorise passages from the textbook about it.

In reflecting on the session, I noted in my journal that Nagma and Razzak were in constant movement around the class to motivate students and assist them to use English as far as they could. I also noted that at the very beginning of this activity, Nagma gave a Bangla summary after each instruction and discussion but gradually she minimised the use of Bangla. I noted that at the end of the activity, she summarized the discussion totally in English. Although the theme was new to the students, which made it very hard for them to continue the discussion in English, she continued to find ways to prompt the students into an English language environment. It was also noticeable that the teacher did not ask students to translate the results of their discussion into English. I understood that Nagma made that choice because the focus was engaging the students in exploring the theme and so lifting the concept of globalisation from the textbook and relating it to their own lives.

In my journal reflection, I debated whether the content of the lesson had got in the way of the students practicing English. However, the topic was in the textbook and Nagma's activities helped to motivate the students to read the English passage and to make more personal sense out of that they read. I understood that the textbook writers had shaped a chapter around globalisation because the Government saw it as an important contemporary issue. In our workshop, we had decided that it was important for students to begin to think a little critically about globalisation means. We had also discussed in the workshop whether language could be a barrier to developing scope for criticality in this age group. Accordingly, the teacher solely placed focus on the textbook theme to initiate curiosity. We believed this might be the first step for the students towards developing critical thinking skills.

I also reflected that this social context might also help students to develop their language. Although this activity did not exactly follow the textbook activity, it followed the textbook theme. The teacher extended this activity beyond the textbook to provide the students with an opportunity to look for the deeper meaning of a currently significant concept. She prepared this activity to go beyond the textbook meaning, as literacy learning encourages the learners to progress

from simple one-way meaning making to look for various other meanings of an apparently simple text. In this last activity the teacher created a space for the students by asking various questions about the student's own country and about the global village. In the replying letters to the Bangladesh students in New Zealand, the students also related their own experiences to the textbook topic.

Other Sessions

Now I will briefly highlight activities from other sessions, where aspects of critical thinking evolved as part of the learning. In particular, I will report the criticality moments of a lesson called *Thanks for your work*.

Thanks for Your Work

To set the scene, Nagma put herself in-role as a cleaner and started the session by cleaning the floor. The picture below shows Nagma is sweeping the floor and picking up the rubbish in front of the class.



Image 9.14: Nagma in-role as a rubbish picker

This session was about creating awareness about the need to respect and care about different professionals equally and Nagma set the scene with this little in-role activity, as I wrote in the journal. Most commonly in Bangladesh society, different professions have different social status and workers are not treated with equal importance, as briefly discussed in Chapter 2. Nagma asked the students to make a list of various professionals who were necessary to make everyday life easy. The students responded with lists. For example, Rumi wrote, "The rickshaw

puller, the nurse, the postman, the teacher, the hawker, the day labourer, the driver,” as seen in the picture below.

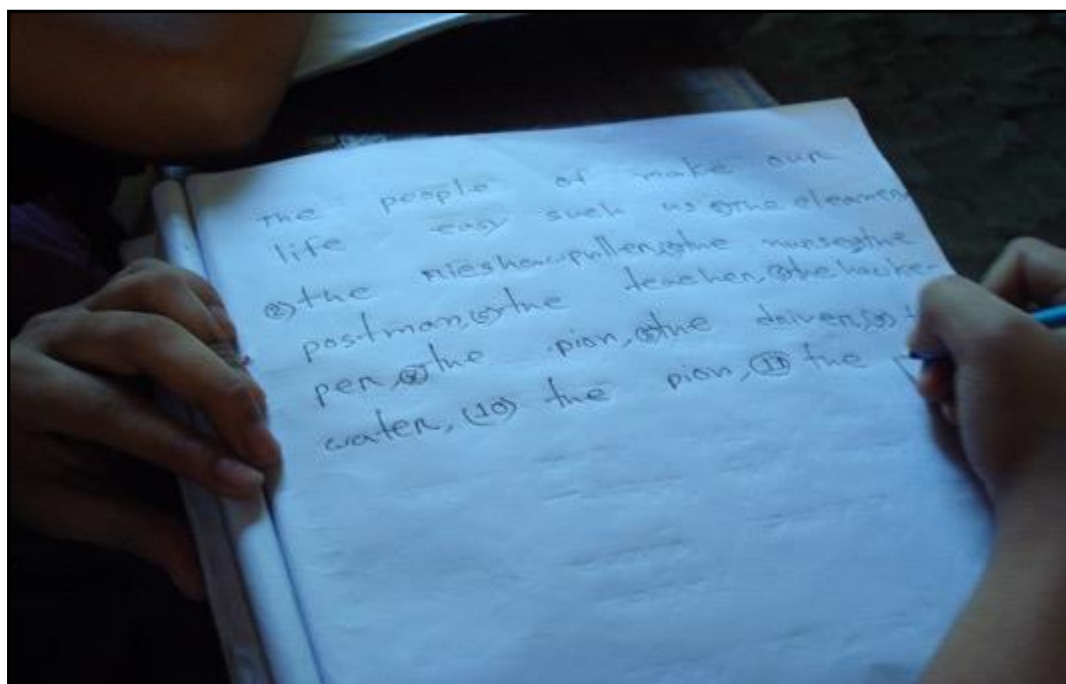


Image 9.15: Rani makes a list of different professionals

The first stage of the learning involved the students thinking about all the different professionals who provide help every day. After a brief discussion of the lists and different professionals' activities, Nagma invited the students to watch a mini drama. This was performed by Shompa, Kabir, Rani, and Hasan, whom she had selected earlier and helped to practice the dialogues secretly. It was a story of a rubbish picker named "Bulbul" and how he helped the community every day. It was based on a chapter in the textbook and during the teachers' workshop the teachers and I had written some dialogue so that the students could perform it in class. My own purpose had been to show the teachers how they could take a textbook story and turn it into an interesting mini-drama that was relevant to the rural Bangladesh context and that would allow students to actively practice English. In the workshop, we had talked about making mini-dramas as a way for the teachers to be creative when planning class activities.

Although there were no props or decoration, the mini drama was so appealing that all of the students watched it without making any movement, as seen in the pictures below.



Image 9.16: Students performance in a mini drama

After that the performance, Nagma asked the students to read the textbook questions first and then read the story of Bulbul silently to find the answers accordingly. The questions in activity B1 are presented in the textbook snapshot below.

B1 Now, ask and answer the questions in pairs.

- a) What time does Bulbul wake up?
- b) Where do the people of Sankar put their rubbish?
- c) Why does Bulbul think that all jobs are important?
- d) What happened when Bulbul became sick?
- e) What will happen if Bulbul falls sick again?
- f) What will you say to Bulbul, if you meet him?

Image 9.17: Textbook activity B1

The students started the activity in pairs. When they were finding the answers of the questions, they seemed totally engaged in the activity, as seen in the next two pictures.



Image 9.18: Students' group discussion on various professions

The conversations that took place in various groups provide indication of how the students were gradually trying to interpret the text. For example, Tumpa asked, "What will happen if Bulbul falls sick again?" In reply, Shilpi said in Bangla, "*Amar mone hoy sob dirty hoye jabe.* (I think, everything will be dirty)." Then Tumpa said in a different voice but with the mixture of English, "What will happen... *kisu e hobe na* (nothing will happen)... another rubbish picker will come." Then Rani interfered and said, "Yes, *ami ek mot* (I agree with you both)... you see a picker need to clean everything. So, *hoy to Bulbul nai*... but another one *Dorker* (needed)." Then they all agreed and Rani added, "If Bulbul falls sick again the whole area could turn into a dustbin as Bulbul mentioned in his story so we should not throw rubbish everywhere." Then Tumpa asked the last question, "What will you say to Bulbul, if you meet him?" Surprisingly, they all said together with a smile, "Thank you, Bulbul." The students seemed deeply engaged at that moment discussing the issue. As seen in the picture below, the students' facial expressions evidenced their involvement in the discussion.



Image 9.19: Students' discussion about various professionals

As I was near to this group, I added, "We must thank and respect not only Bulbul but to everyone who helps us every day to make our life easy." So, they agreed with me and said, "We will thank everyone." I reflected in my journal that the students were not only making sense of the English passage but they were also thinking about the work that people do and perhaps beginning to appreciate various professions.

Similar kinds of new thinking were provoked at the end of the session called "Our Pride." Nagma asked the students, "Do you know anyone in our family or society who could be our everyday hero?" This session was about the Bangladesh National Memorial and about the freedom fighters, who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence. Through various activities, the students learnt about the freedom fighters and how to pay respect to them by making paper flowers, drawing pictures and writing poems for them, as reported in Chapter 8. Nagma had affirmed that the freedom fighters were our heroes. But to further students' thinking she asked the question above. Then all of a sudden, the students stopped talking and started thinking. Then, breaking a silence of nearly one minute, Samin said, "Sorry madam, no freedom fighter... in our village." However, Nagma repeated the question again, adding, "Okay, do you know anyone in our family or

society who could be our nowadays hero?... They sacrifice their life for our better future.” Then again, a short silence followed, showing the students were thinking. After that, Rani broke the silence and said in English, “My father and mother. They always encourage - help me - study well.” Similarly, Sabeek said, “My parents and my teacher. They help very much.” Then Rumki added, “My friends.” The pictures below show Nagma writing on the board and summarising, “Our grandparents, parents, neighbours, teachers, friends are our real heroes in every day’s time. They are always sacrificing and helping us to make our future better. We should always respect them for their deeds.”



Image 9.20: Nagma’s discussion on everyday heroes

Reflecting on the session, I wrote in my journal that in this way the teachers could act as facilitators and could motivate students to think differently about the real time heroes. After this lesson, the students became really excited to discover that a hero could exist in the real time as well, as Munir said to Shohid, “My father is my hero. I love him so much.” They had always thought of a hero as being in the movies or remaining in the past. The teachers themselves found that the activity offered them new ways of reaching beyond the textbook. Razzak, one of the supporting teachers, commented later,

I really never thought like this, we always teach the text only but never relate it with the real life. Yes, our parents are our real heroes. The students easily got this. It was amazing.

This demonstrated that by using the textbook topics, a teacher could gradually begin to develop the students' critical awareness by relating the textbook topic to real life contexts.

Importance of Criticality

To develop criticality skills in a changed learning situation, where the students would be encouraged questioning without simply accepting the fact, the following kinds of criticality aspects I have discussed in this chapter. I have merged some together as they are closely interrelated:

1. ask questions to satisfy the curiosity and to help getting the answer
2. analyse texts, ideas, and relate to one's own experiences
3. strategic choices about corrections and interactions in terms of learning
4. create opportunities for students to ask questions
5. involve students in activities to look for inner meaning of a text
6. reduce fear in the classroom
7. follow criticality in various session's themes (activities)

From the sessions discussed above and even from the participants' views, these aspects are clearly visible in the sessions' activities. As Rani, discussing how those sessions minimised apprehension about English and pointed towards an emerging criticality, continued,

...every bit of those sessions was important for my English learning and to overcome the fear about it. We learnt how to relate textbook with real life around us, e.g. the hero, real hero, Bulbul's life... I learnt this from the sessions easily. Now I can think deeper to look into different meanings of a textbook theme.

Similarly, Hasan explained how these sessions helped him to think differently on an issue. He added,

...all of the students were involved in practical activities... real heroes around us, usually freedom fighters, in movies, but real heroes live next to us, with in us e.g. father, mother, uncle, aunt, friends, neighbours... they look after us, help us, inspire us all the time... they are our real heroes. I enjoyed and learnt a lot from those sessions.

Nagma explained how the students tried to think differently, which demonstrated a developing criticality in these sessions, as she added,

...students had the opportunity and developed higher order thinking although not in a big scale. Many of the students who hardly answer and some who never tried, they all were encouraged and tried to answer in these sessions. As you see, I could not make Fuli to answer in any English sessions before but in this session, she started answering actively although only a word but I think it's the beginning and it happened due the new session. Similarly, Bulbul/ global village/ real hero sessions were much more effective to develop students' critical thinking. The students learnt that in our family or nearby real heroes exist, not only in movies or only the freedom fighters are the heroes. Some learnt items were not directly in the textbook but related to the textbook. The students learnt extra, outside of the textbook.

Not only that she also believed about the long-term consequences of those session activities and put in, "If we continue sessions like those everyday student would develop more thinking power realizing the real-life situations." She also added, "...when students get the opportunity to make questions using the English language about a theme, as a result they would develop both language and critical thinking skills. That would help them to think freely about the context and unpack their curiosity."

As the term critical literacy has various connotations, I would like to define it in relation to my study. In the current study, critical literacy, which encourages questioning without simply accepting the fact, was considered and practiced with the grade six students to enhance their level of higher order thinking. It was hoped to boost critical thinking skills among the students so that they could be more reflective on their thinking, about decision-making and in actions. In the English sessions discussed earlier, we have seen that the students were making arguments before choosing correct words to fill the blanks and selecting answers for a question and also when analysing the texts and how they relate the text with their own lives. As this study was to create a learning atmosphere that could encourage opportunities for the students to question, analyse, argue and relate experiences to their life skills, when learning the English language; and of which they could bravely face the regular complexities of life and move forward with confidence using the language. So, in the very beginning of the above session's activity when

the students were asked by the teacher, “can you imagine how do we feel when we visit or go anyplace alone ...without our parents or family members?” These questions ask them to rethink about their life as one of them replied, “I feel happy to travel with my father. It is safe.” However, although considering the reality another student replied emotionally, “I do not want to go without my parents.”

Critical literacy could develop a practice of self-reflection meaning that individuals would be committed to both individual progress and communal/social justice. Similarly, in the session’s activity when the students learnt about the life of Bulbul and how he contributed to the society with his deeds, first the students argued but when realised the fact, they became more thoughtful individual, which could be perceived from their discussions, when they were asked, “what will you say to Bulbul, if you meet him?” However, surprisingly, they all said together with a smile, “Thank you, Bulbul.” It reflected the gradual development of the students’ thinking level, as I added in the journal.

Critical literacy also initiates the practice that in order to comprehend others and ourselves, as well as identifies the ways in which we need change. In the session’s activity when the teacher asked, “do you know anyone in our family or society who could be our now day’s hero?” In reply Samin said, “Sorry madam, no freedom fighter... near our house.” But when the teacher repeated the question again adding, “They sacrifice their life for our better future” and after a discussion students started thinking differently and realized who could be our hero in today’s world, as they started replying like father, mother, friends and even added emotional words as Munir said to Shohid, “My father is my hero. I love him so much.”

Empirical evidence supports and educators emphasise on the importance of developing higher order thinking in ESL and EFL learning contexts (Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011; Banegas & de Castro, 2016; Chapple & Curtis, 2000). Taking account, the influence of English language that admits the colonial past (Pennycook, 2001) and the neo-colonial present in form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009) critical thinking and critical pedagogy have an increasing effect in ESL and EFL classrooms. Kabilan (2000) argues that language learners need to be creative and

critical in order to become proficient in the targeted language. This means that language teachers have a great role to play in promoting criticality skills among the ESL learners (Banegas & de Castro, 2016; Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011; Pica, 2000).

Critical literacy does not encourage only teaching or only learning, but it offers the possibilities of learning and discovering by creating opportunities for all to think and rethink about any issue that offers the actual meaning of life. Discussing critical literacy Hagood (2002) asserts that in today's world, literacy is not only to develop the ability to read and write the text but also to encourage the readers to actively analyse the texts for hidden meanings and ask questions. The practice is not simply to attain the single meaning of a text but to consider the multiple connotations a text might have. For example, if different readers read a text or see a picture, different meanings often come due to different interpretations. As discussed earlier, it was seen in the classroom activity, when Samin looked into the New Zealand classroom pictures he focused on the classroom's physical structure whereas seeing the same picture Raam talked about the students' classroom activities.

Therefore, how to think flexibly for the multiple meanings of a text or language to cope with the complexities of the world is the focal point of critical literacy. The importance of critical literacy is undeniable as it refers to the ability of an individual to read, think, and act from various positions. According to Muspratt, Luke and Freebody (1997) critical literacy is more than only coding, decoding or encoding of a text but it encourages readers' understanding language as social construction. They also question the neutrality of language. A person can use the language for information, entertainment, persuasion and manipulation, which is essential to form social relationships.

On the other hand, the learners could also consider that at the very centre of critical literacy, a tension of power always prevails – “who has it? who does not? How is the power being used in hidden or invisible ways? Most importantly, am I contributing to the inequality due to my ignorance?” (McDaniel, 2006, p. 5). It is commonly acknowledged that literacy learning follows empowerment (Datta,

2007). A Bangla saying about literacy also says, "*Lekha pora kore jae, Gari ghora chore sae*" meaning those who knows how to read and write, can ride horses and carts. It metaphorically refers to the sophisticated, luxurious and secured life of a literate person as the individual is treated as morally high person. However, is this really true? Are all the literate persons good and sophisticated or beyond doing any bad deeds? Do all literate people live a peaceful life? This is certainly a very big debate about the consequences of literacy. Critical literacy guides a person to go through into this tension of power securing his/ her position in this world. In the classroom, also a tension of power exists between the teachers and students, students and students, and teachers and teachers. Within the Bangladesh context most of the time the teachers try to keep discipline in a session and the students often try to exercise freedom, which create indiscipline and the tension. Both the teacher and the student could keep balance respecting each other's need to make the session effective. Critical literacy plays a very distinctive role to keep this balance.

Creating a language learner, who is ready to see the world from various new perspectives and to question the status quo every now and then is the focus of a language session. Critical literacy could be simply defined as the disposition essential to uncover or unpack and expose the fundamental prejudices and duplicity within the society. According to Freire (1997) critical literacy is an alteration in the ways of thinking to recognize what is real and what is ideal or only an illusion. It challenges the traditional values or state of issue and comes across the new. Following this, people may be able to function more practically in this society and retain their own space. Freire also argued that when we know how to describe the world, we learn to control the world. This means that individuals have to know what we are describing and we need know what we want to do.

In the curriculum, critical literacy might be essentially applied to describe the process of creative analysis and discussion about the text (Brown, 2004). It considers the development of the skills to critique the text about one's own life, culture, philosophy and society. In the same way, when the students are learning

any language they would need to pick up the skills to comprehend the various connotation of a text or the language used in real life situations.

Although we have our own language 'Bangla,' English is the language by which we negotiate our place in the world because of its universal status. When we learn English, we want to learn it as somebody else's language. But it is essential to learn English as a language that we can use to communicate, to make meaning, and to question. Within a globalised society, it is essential to learn English language in a way that does not involve buying into global hegemony but to keep stance respecting others. This means that developing critical thinking skills when learning the language to defend us against one-way global ideas, monetarism and the implicit pressures of neo-colonialism is essential. A changed attitude of the next generation of learners means that the surface meaning of a text or idea could be explored in a deeper manner; however, this does require that individuals have the skills and tools for evaluating, questioning, and playing with new ideas in order to retain identity and to maintain a responsive fellowship with others.

In addition, the development of the criticality skills might put the English language learners from the rural Bangladesh context in a more advantageous position when facing global issues such as employment, migration and study abroad. A learning situation where the students get the opportunity to gradually develop criticality skills could also add a new dimension in the regular English language sessions in Bangladesh secondary schools.

As with this discussion reflective analysis of the data themes are wrapped up, the following chapter concludes this project report with implications on the Bangladesh ESL contexts.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

My account of the journey of breaking the students' silence in a rural Bangladesh context of English language teaching ends in this chapter. The project described in this study offers one example of pedagogical shift which could be possible and so offers an example of what the kinds of initiatives that could make ESL sessions more interactive. This chapter sums up key elements of the project and its outcomes. It then considers the implications of the project for policy and practice and makes a number of recommendations for policy makers, teachers and teacher educators.

Reviewing the Project

This study started with a goal to explore how English language lessons could be made more interactive and enjoyable in a rural Bangladesh secondary school, within the constraints of curriculum, class size, and limited resources that exist within the context. My own experience as a student in the secondary ESL classroom and as a practicing teacher educator prompted me to explore ways to break the students' silence that normally exists in English sessions.

Many earlier studies (Alam, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014; Das et al., 2014; Erling, Seargeant & Solly, 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Mazumder, 2013; Podder, 2013; Shrestha, 2013) reported multiple challenges, both local and national, in the Bangladesh education system but few researchers explored practical way to overcome them. As Salahuddin (2016) notes, there has been a lack of practice-based study in the Bangladesh context. Thus, this study focused on exploring ways to change practice and create opportunities for the students to be more active and more vocal when learning English as a second language and to enable students to use the language in real life situations.

This study adopted a qualitative methodology to investigate and report a case study of reflective practice of a teacher educator, as discussed in Chapter 4. The case involved working with teachers in year six English classes. The process

involved the development of a resource package based upon the nationally mandated textbook but extending the contents to encourage student engagement and interaction, as well as a training workshop with the participating teachers and four weeks of lessons with the participating class.

As detailed in Chapter 5, the resource package was based on the textbook contents and focused on ways to make the ESL sessions interactive despite the resourcing challenges of the context. The contents of the textbook were adapted to create opportunities for students to actively engage with the ideas as well as the language in each chapter. The lessons were especially focused to make the ESL sessions interactive and meaningful. On entering the field, before applying the resource in the classroom, an intensive workshop was conducted with the participating teachers to introduce them to the different ways of working that were in the resource package and to further refine the package to fit with the local context, as discussed in Chapter 5.

After that the resource was implemented in the classroom ESL sessions. Following the resource package, the new teaching practice utilised drama techniques, such as role-play and mini-drama to extend the mandated textbook chapters making the English sessions more interactive and meaningful, and to allow the students to be active and interpretive of the content. Therefore, an observation, analytic reflection and reporting and of pedagogical practice was the central focus in this study. The preceding chapters reported observation of the teaching-learning activities, highlighting the interactive moments. They also reported interviews with the students and teachers, identifying their perceptions of the pedagogical changes that had occurred in the sessions. I also critically reflected on my own actions, as well as elements of the classroom activities.

I took the above steps with the purpose of seeing if ESL sessions could be made more interactive and so allow the students to be more engaged and to speak out; thus, creating enjoyment in English classes. In this way, I sought to bring the textbook to life and to a level that students could understand and also apply the target language. As a result, interactive classroom aspects such as engagement, creativity, enjoyment and criticality became the focal lenses through which I

examined the data that emerged from the observations, interviews and my reflective journals. A diagram below shows the entire project in summary.

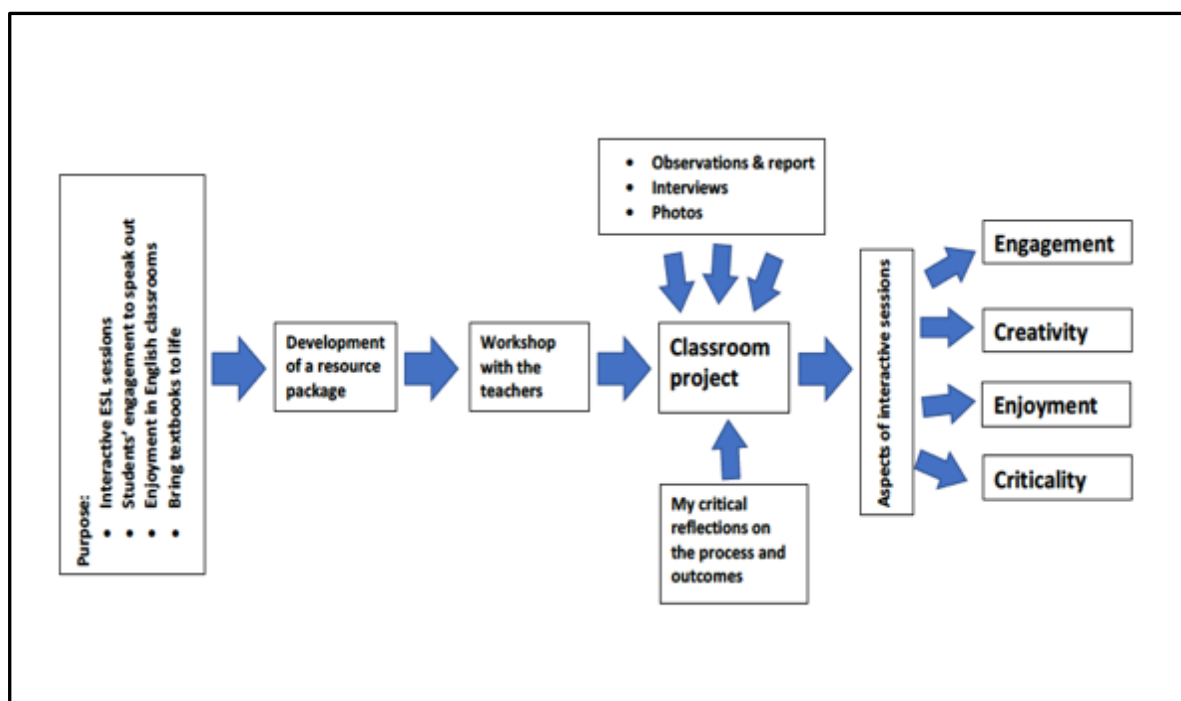


Figure 10.1: The project

Review of Four Themes Discussed and Change Initiatives

After the initial observation of the classroom activities four themes were selected as cornerstones for further discussion: engagement, creativity, enjoyment and criticality. Therefore, I have paid particular attention to situations and behaviours where aspects of those elements occurred and further reflected how these features could be encouraged and developed in Bangladeshi ESL sessions.

Engagement

Activities are carefully considered to focus on aspects of the students' and teachers' engagement with the content of each session. As detailed in Chapter 6, in a regular ESL session students are often found to be disengaged from the session's activities. A review of the literature indicated that crowded classrooms and the use of traditional teacher centred pedagogy could be the cause of this disengagement. I anticipated that an opportunity to be actively involved in practising the language could lead the students to be more engaged in a session. I

also considered that, to be engaged in an ESL session, students needed a free space to share their ideas and to develop agency, as described in Chapter 6. In this study, the teacher created a learning situation using different approaches like role-play and interactive activities, generating free spaces for the students to move around and share ideas, which enhanced students' participation in those sessions. Students' willingness to follow instructions and become involved in an activity, their interest in each lesson and their eagerness to be creative, as well as the way they appeared to own activities were considered as markers of engagement.

Creativity

As detailed in chapter 7, creativity was manifested in a number of innovative exercises the teachers designed to promote practice of the new language patterns that were being taught and in the art activities students engaged in while creating their shopping environments. Students were engaged in filling forms in various fictional contexts, such as making passports or shopping lists. Based on dialogues provided by the textbook various in-role situations were created for students to enter and so develop and practice contextual language. The students were also asked to answer textbook questions to further practice the language patterns that were being taught and to prepare them for the examination. Often, following a structured language practice, a free space was created so that the students could be encouraged to ask more creative or open-ended questions or make various paper models to accompany and prompt further language practice. Through the creation of a learning friendly atmosphere, where the students could move freely and follow their interests, they were encouraged to practice the language and create sentence forms that they found meaningful. The students were also encouraged to make parallel questions or dialogues following a controlled language practice based on a textbook context. This meant the students could play with the language, and so become more creative in their approach to language. The classroom project suggested that teachers' structuring of various creative activities could enhance students' creative skills in a rural Bangladeshi ESL classroom.

Enjoyment

As discussed in Chapter 2, students in the Bangladesh ESL sessions often seem bored and uninterested in attending class. Mindful of literature (Zhou & Enterpriser, 2016; Wong & Nunan, 2011; Ainley & Ainley, 2011) that asserted that adding fun oriented activities in the classroom could enhance students' engagement and learning. I developed a resource and amended it with the teachers in the workshop as detailed in Chapter 5 and therefore, games and role-playing activities were introduced in the classroom project to enhance students learning, as Chapter 8 reported. Since rural students have little access of the English language and learn it entirely as a foreign language, a session without any Bangla makes classes extremely difficult for the students to follow. In the current project the use of Bangla was often encouraged to continue the flow of the class. Opportunities were created to use English as well as Bangla and mistakes were overlooked to minimise apprehensions about the English sessions. As a result, the class observation showed that the students seemed more active than they had ever before in their regular ESL sessions. In interviews, the students also stated that they had never thought that in an English session they could make so much fun as they had when making a simple shopping lists and presenting them to the class, as detailed in Chapter 8. As the teachers introduced those activities in an interactive and friendly way, this helped to minimise student apprehension about English as a school subject. At the time of observation, this lack of apprehension was perceived from the students' enthusiastic participations in the session's activities. This indicated that they enjoyed the learning and the practising of English language in an interactive atmosphere. The photographs and my observations documented a congenial learning atmosphere, where the teacher often tried to create free spaces for the students to move around, talk to each other, have fun, share ideas, open their minds, make jokes, and help each other.

Criticality

In this study, as discussed in Chapter 9, I have highlighted the aspects of data that show learning moments, such as creating opportunities for the students to go beyond the textbook meaning when choosing answers, making meanings, and

engaging in arguments. I have also highlighted moments during language practice that illustrate the making of critical choices when selecting answers. The chapter also reported how the teacher asked different kinds of questions to provoke students into considering various possibilities before giving their own opinions. The students were also asked to answer questions outside of the textbook questions, which allowed them to further explore the situations given in the textbook. My reflection on those sessions noted that when creating a new context, the teacher always encouraged the students to choose words that matched the meaning of that context, so that the students could reflect on and relate it to their own experiences. It was also seen that the students were often asked to explain the answer, for example the teacher asked, “Can anyone explain it again?” without accepting a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. In those sessions, the students were also required to engage, think and act differently about the text topic. For example, Shohel when answering the question about ‘National Monument’ said, “It is there because it looks so beautiful.” But the teacher replied, “oomm, ok. Yes, it looks beautiful but why is it there?” She agreed with Shohel’s answer but encouraged the students to think and act in a different way. Students were asked to write questions about a topic to enhance their curiosity, and to prompt them to start thinking about a context beyond only memorising the textbook content. Wrong answers were celebrated without the teacher making any unpleasant remarks. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Bangladeshi schools, teachers often rebuke students when they answer incorrectly. In this project, the students were encouraged to offer various answers to a single question. Therefore, through various pedagogical shifts, opportunities were created for students to gradually develop conscious and critical thinking and to start thinking differently, by looking for alternatives in a given situation.

Other Key Findings of this Study

This thesis has reported aspects of changed pedagogical practices that answer the research question, “How can ESL teaching be enhanced to promote interactive learning of English language at a secondary level classroom in the Bangladeshi context?” Evidence of engagement, creativity, enjoyment, and criticality identifies

significant elements of an interactive approach. The discussion below focuses on how the project addressed specific challenges, which often hinder the making of ESL sessions interactive.

Textbook in ESL Sessions

A common Government issued textbook is provided to all school students in Bangladesh. It is used by both urban and rural students, even although rural students have little opportunity to encounter many of the situations described in the textbook and have very little exposure to English language in their rural context. Therefore, the question is often asked whether 'is it possible to use textbook for real learning in rural schools?' The resource package in this study built on the existing textbook content to make the ESL sessions interactive and relate it to student's own life context. This suggests that textbook contents can be used as long and that they can be adapted in ways that create relationships with students' own lives and offer practical experiences.

Use of the Native Language in ESL Sessions

Discussion with the teachers suggested that a large communication gap could be the cause of student's disengagement in and apprehension about the ESL classes, especially when teachers only use English in a session. In the current study, throughout the sessions' activities not everything was happening in English language. The observation findings suggest that a blending of native and foreign language allowed the session not only to flow but to sustain students' curiosity. To support the blend of languages the teacher introduced an interactive device that allowed the teacher to take a dual role, known as the translator, as detailed in Chapter 5. In a session, it was a simple picture; however, the translator created opportunities for the teacher to shift roles easily when students demonstrated difficulties in understanding English. The use of teacher in this role also interested students and increased their engagement in their learning. This aligns with findings from Nawi (2011) who demonstrated this within a Malaysian context. In a similar way, Song (2016) argued that a good mixture of native language and foreign language can enhance students' involvement by providing more understanding of instructions in a session. The findings from this study supports

the use of a native language in ESL sessions and contributes to on-going research findings about how native language may be used.

Teachers' Growing Confidence

The classroom observations and my reflective journal entries highlighted/suggested that the teachers seemed nervous and hesitant when they initially tried to use the English language and interactive pedagogy, as detailed in Chapter 6. However, the classroom project appeared to not only encourage the students to be interactive but also created opportunities for the teachers to become active. It was always the intention of this study to prepare the teachers to be professionally confident and for them to be able to make sessions interactive despite the constraints and challenges of the Bangladeshi context. In general, teachers have often blamed contextual and national challenges for the lack of interactive pedagogies being implemented in ESL sessions. This is despite the Government's initiatives to encourage teachers to use interactive approaches, as discussed in Chapter 2. The current study sets an example for teachers that they are able to work within the existing challenges, and to practice interactive pedagogy in ESL sessions. These findings thus contribute to the on-going exploration of how to make ESL sessions interactive within the contextual challenges and constraints.

Rural Students Involvement in Practising English Language

As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers often say that the textbook activities are too complex to be practiced in rural contexts. This study demonstrates that, although the textbook seems hard for rural students, it can be bridged and so made it adoptable and useful in rural classrooms. The resource package and classroom project indicate that by using various interactive approaches, such as drama techniques, textbook contents can provide a way for rural students to practice English language and to enjoy doing so, as detailed in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Teacher Educator in Action

My experience in this project suggests there is a large role for a teacher educator to play in the professional development of teachers and that this development can positively contribute to increasing confidence in teachers using interactive approaches in ESL sessions. A teacher educator can assist the teachers to become gradually confident by confronting their own apprehensions about ESL sessions, which may also assist students to be less apprehensive. By creating opportunities for the teachers to make their own decisions about session's activities, the teacher educator can set the foundation for teachers to practice interactive exercises. By intensively monitoring and assisting teachers when required, a teacher educator can enhance teachers' professional confidence in using interactive pedagogy, as I tried to do in this study. At the beginning of the classroom project sessions, the teachers were hesitant about using interactive strategies but they gradually developed confidence, as detailed in Chapter 6.

My Learning from This Study

My experience in this study enriched my learning in many ways. The following discussion focuses on the key aspects of my learning about research, classroom pedagogy, and how I see the role of English language learning within a Bangladeshi ESL context.

Teacher Empowerment

My understanding of why the Bangladeshi ESL teachers are so frustrated is related with the problems they face and the lack of opportunities they get to overcome those challenges. Much of the literature I cited in Chapter 3 tends to accuse teachers of incompetence; however, I realised that the teachers want to be active and try to help the students at all times. It appeared that the teachers did not have many opportunities to be creative and try the new approaches in the classrooms; rather they felt obliged to follow the traditional methods primarily preparing the students to pass the examination. In my view, this suggests that teachers need to be empowered to make changes in the session's activities.

Role of a Teacher Educator in Making Textbooks Meaningful

As I worked in this study, I realised that the textbook is complex especially for those rural students who have few opportunities to practice English language. It could be suggested that some of the failures in rural schools come from teachers not knowing how to teach the context of the textbook, as well as some of the failures coming from following the recent tradition of focussing only on ensuring that students pass the examination. This study also indicates that a self-motivated teacher educator can make a huge difference to student engagement by restructuring the textbook content to be attractive and suitable for students to practice target language in real contexts, as well as preparing them for the examination.

Focusing on Contextual Needs

Within this project, I began to learn about drama and roles. I have learned some of the drama techniques but I also know I do not yet know enough and I have to learn more. I have begun to explore roleplay and I have also realised that there are more uses of role that I still have to learn. I began to explore ways of blending English and native language but I have yet to learn more about the ways that I can control the blend strategically. As this study shows the positive impact of blending language and the use of drama techniques in ESL sessions, I, as a teacher educator, realised that the educational context is extremely influential to the use of drama techniques and that I need to take time to really explore the context teachers are working in order to adopt the approach effectively in the context. This would also enable me to more effectively facilitate teachers' professional development around blending languages and the use of roleplay within the classroom context. This could contribute to developing teachers' confidence by equipping them with strategies before asking teachers to apply these approaches in regular sessions.

Overall, through the application of the resource package in ESL sessions, I experienced that the teachers have the abilities to do interactive sessions in the Bangladeshi context and that this is underpinned by trust, assistance, and allowing them the flexibility to use their judgement. A pre-determination, plan, and gradual

step-by-step assistance from the teacher educator could increase teachers' confidence leading to noticeable changes being made in Bangladeshi ESL classrooms.

Evolving a Model to Look into Interactive ESL Sessions

I am beginning to play with the idea of a model of how we need to look into an interactive ESL practice. The following model illustrates my evolving framework.

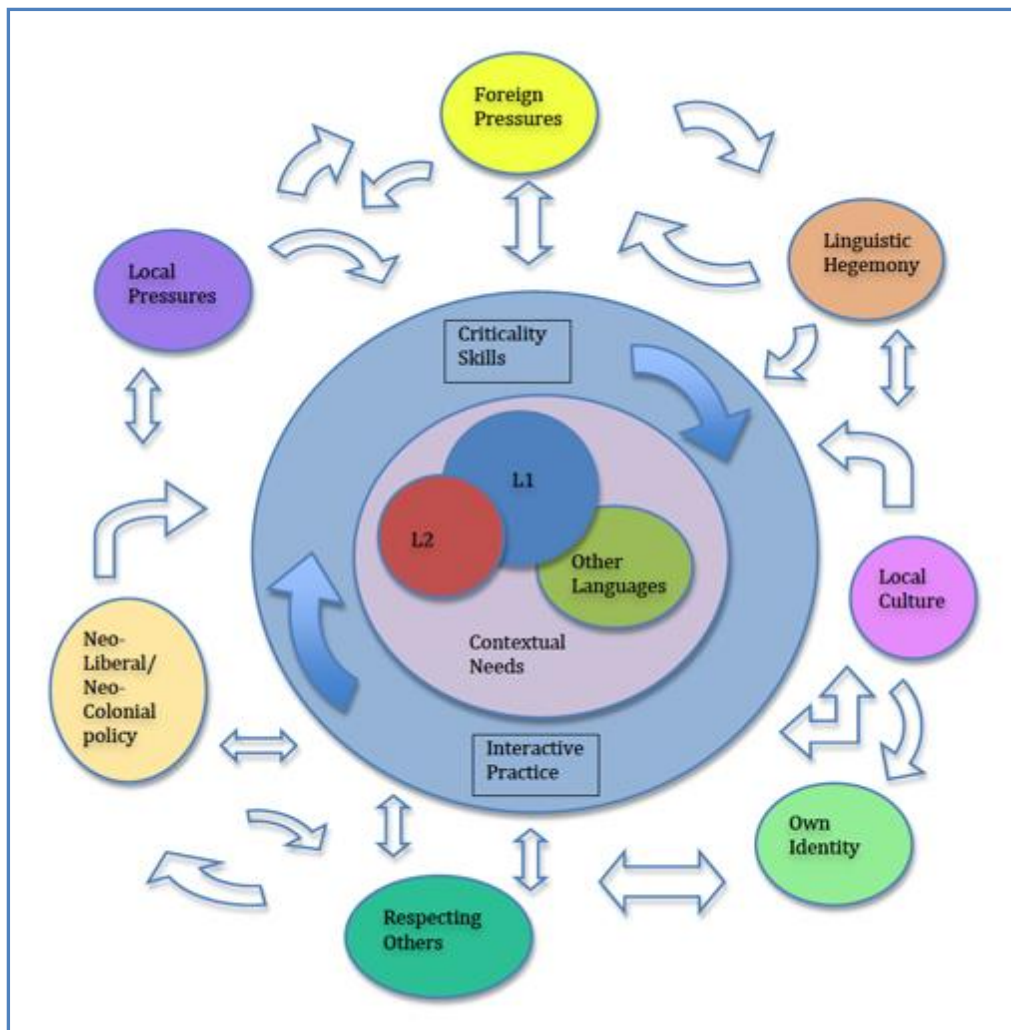


Figure: 10.2: Model of interactive ESL language learning classroom

At the centre, I have placed consideration of the contextual needs when learning languages: L1, L2 or any other language. In an interactive classroom practice, language learning needs to focus the gradual development of criticality skills. It is hoped that with this focus the learners could develop skills to see their own

context and others from various perspectives and would be able to cope with the outer pressures negotiating their positions at home and in global contexts, as highlighted in Chapter 3 and 9.

Perceived Boundaries

This is a study where I developed a project and observed its implementation in rural Bangladesh. This is one case study, and thus it has characteristics that are particular to this specific context. As such it is not possible to generalise my findings. However, it is possible to suggest more general applications that can be made from this study, as well as acknowledging the boundaries of the study.

As this case study is located in a rural school classroom the discussion is largely limited to rural schools. As aforementioned, there are many differences between rural and urban schools in Bangladesh. Thus, it is highly likely that the outcomes of the current study would have been different if it had been situated within an urban school.

In addition, this is a case study where I observed students and teachers and their decision-making skills when selecting answers and developing arguments. As detailed in Chapter 9, when identifying moments of critical thinking I focused on teachers' conscious critical choices in using English, their curriculum consciousness, and their active participation in decision-making. In the ESL classroom of Year six students I consciously set aside other meanings of criticality, as discussed in Chapter 3. In examining growing agency and criticality, I focused on instances where the students were not simply repeating after the teacher, but actively working to comprehend a text. Although this case study looked for criticality skills in ESL sessions, the aspects of criticality considered were confined to the critical choices made in language usage.

Because this study is a single project in one rural school, it is not intended as a basis for definitive generalisations. However, it does offer some insight into how things can be done differently in a rural ESL classroom. It suggests that despite the very real limitations of class sizes and lack of resources, interactive activities can be developed. It also suggests ways the Government's call for greater creativity

and criticality can be addressed. It offers strategies that are not normally used in Bangladeshi classrooms, such as the use of role to create a sense of safety for students when they need to admit they do not understand the language. It is my hope that a case study such as this one, will invite other teachers to talk to each other about their classroom problems and possible strategies to overcome them. It is a study that talks about some aspects of interaction that have been achieved within one project and it invites further talk about what is left to still be achieved.

Implications

This study has implications at both practice level that includes teachers, head teachers, teacher educators and researchers, and at national level that includes policy decision-making.

Practice Level: Teachers, Head Teachers, Teacher Educators and Researchers

As discussed in Chapter 2, ESL teachers in Bangladesh often raise concerns about applying interactive strategies in their classrooms because of many contextual challenges. However, due to the Government initiatives and the growing demand for learning English as a global language, the use of interactive pedagogy seems essential to make the target language useful in and outside of the classroom, as highlighted in this report. This study exemplified range of interactive strategies that could be used in ESL classes in Bangladesh despite contextual challenges. However, one main implication is that teachers would need to become confident so they can encourage the students to be active during ESL sessions. Encouraged and confident teachers, who are open to introducing new strategies and have an ongoing commitment to their work, have the capacity to create a suitable learning environment for the students. The teachers in this study did not lose hope even when the session was not going according to the plan, and their example suggests it is essential to keep refining strategies to encourage students to participate in the sessions' activities. In addition, it is important to explore and apply a range of strategies using simple readily-made resources to create opportunities for students with different skills to be engaged in the activities. The teachers, as seen in this study, applied strategies that included teacher-in-role, such as *the*

translator, and used the contents of the nationally provided textbook to develop opportunities for the students to be interactive in practicing the target language. While it is important to remember the significance, for both students and parents, and of examinations, it is argued that interactive ESL sessions might better prepare students for the examinations, since they promote creativity and criticality skills. As the teachers are paramount to fostering interactive sessions, they themselves need to be courageous and confident to take the challenge. They also, and importantly, need to be supported by their schools in their use of creative initiatives. It could be suggested that providing opportunities for continuing professional development for teachers so that they can learn new strategies and have the opportunity to experiment with them is fundamental to facilitating change in the current Bangladeshi ESL context.

Although the head teachers are the leaders of schools, in the Bangladeshi context they rarely share their powers with their teachers. However, if they distribute their powers to the teachers and create opportunities for the teachers to take decisions about classroom activities, it could enhance teaching and students' learning (Salahuddin, 2016). In this study, the teachers were fearful at the beginning, so one of the implications would be that as a nation we have to find ways to allow teachers to work through their mistakes to gain confidence. We should avoid evaluations or criticism that comes too early. The leaders of the schools could avoid criticism that just says the new initiative is not working and directing teachers to go back to their old style; rather they need to give teachers room to grow, and encourage discussions about what could be done differently. Considering the contextual issues, the head teachers could engage the teachers in decision making and reforming the classroom teaching process by enabling them to apply a range of pedagogical techniques in the ESL sessions. The school leaders could also allow the teachers to develop learning teams through which the teachers could be able to share their ideas and explore different teaching strategies.

Additionally, the teacher educator who has responsibility for professional development and in-service training sessions, has an important role to play in

fostering professional confidence in teachers. As a professional, the teacher educator needs to build good rapport with the teachers and to create a continuous exchange of ideas. As subject experts themselves, teacher educators need to continuously develop their own knowledge and strategies and be able to reflect on each school's classroom activities when assisting teachers from different school make classes more interactive. It is necessarily for the teacher educators to become reflective practitioners themselves so that they can encourage teachers to be so as well. A reflective and unprejudiced teacher educator could reduce the professional uneasiness between the teachers and him or herself by sharing in classroom experimentation and reflection. In this study, I found that I not only needed to encourage the teachers to discuss the resources and the activities we undertook, I also had to balance non-interference with monitoring teacher's actions in the classroom to ensure the lesson did not go off track and the teacher lose self-confidence. Thus, the suggestion from this study is that teacher educators who take in-service training programmes, themselves need support and training in how to be facilitators.

In addition, the literature indicates that researchers in Bangladesh often only look for quantitative data about various challenges that hinders ESL learning in secondary schools. In-depth qualitative studies like this one can bring different kinds of knowledge. Qualitative studies can offer contextual and rich understandings of challenges in the Bangladeshi context and analytic reflection on strategies that are undertaken to overcome those challenges. However, it is also important for researchers to consider the political context of Bangladesh when planning field work. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, in this study I faced and was unavoidably slowed down by a political crisis. I have learned that researchers need to consider all aspects of the context not just their anticipated field work.

Policy

The interactive ESL sessions which this study has reported can provide a resource for improving practice in Bangladesh, and might serve as a prompt for policy makers to consider ways of addressing the implementation and further

refinement of the language teaching policies they have developed. As education policy in Bangladesh largely depends upon the advice from foreign donor agencies, as discussed in Chapter 9, a significant gap is always perceived between policy and practice (Alam & Kabir, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014). Therefore, developing strategies to critique policy based on local studies could minimise this gap. Curriculum, textbooks, teacher training, and resources also need to examine contextual realities if teachers, students and teacher educators are to be encouraged to be interactive in ESL sessions. Examples provided in this study show that the curriculum and textbook are not related to the life experiences of rural students and are not aligned to their language proficiencies. However, although this study has shown that the gap can be bridged, it might be better if the policy makers could consider the local challenges when developing resources such as the textbook.

The Government's focus on communicative language teaching as discussed in chapter 3 has placed expectations on schools for which most are not ready. Policy makers need to allow sufficient time for sound implementation policies to be developed new educational initiatives so that students and teachers are not trapped without resources and are not condemned to failure.

Recommendations for Further Research

This current study presents a report of interactive ESL sessions in a Bangladeshi rural context and offers a number of insights into elements of the interaction. It particularly explores how ESL sessions can be made interactive despite contextual challenges and constraints. A resource package, using some drama techniques and building on content in the existing textbook, was developed to encourage interactive teaching and learning. Further studies might focus on developing further resources for interactive language teaching strategies. In my own further work, I plan to further develop the resource package using further interactive strategies and building still more on the content of the textbook together with developing ways to make that content come alive for the students.

In addition, as this study focuses on a rural case, it would be useful to find if the problems encountered are also evident in urban schools and if the strategies used in this study might be applicable in urban schools. This study did not include formal assessment of students' language learning outcomes. Further studies might examine particular improvements in students' specific language competencies and might perhaps explore an alignment between improvements in students' oral language confidence and examination results. Professional development facilitator could uplift teacher's confidence could be focused intensively to improve the teacher-training curriculum.

Concluding the Journey

This research journey started in a search for a way to break the silence in a rural Bangladeshi secondary school ESL classroom by making sessions interactive. It has identified strategies that could be adapted and adopted in other ESL sessions.

To conclude the journey, I would like to invoke the voice of Freire (1970/2005, p. 72), who says:

For apart from inquiry, apart from praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and each other.

Freire highlights the interrelationship of inquiry and praxis. It was the intention and hope of this study that a group of teachers, a teacher educator and a classroom of students, could become a team that enquires into new practices and encourages each other, to become curious, creative, and critical in their language practices, and so produce learners who can cope with future challenges. It is also my hope that teachers and teacher educators who in view of existing obstacles doubt their abilities to make a change in practice, may reconsider their views by reflecting on the tentative changes reported in this study. I suggest, in ending this report, that the most important thing to do in ESL classrooms is 'break the students' silence.'

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Checklist 1

Name of School: Ruposhi Danga High School

Class VI (year six)

No of students:

Date:

T E A C H E R	Set the scene	
	Modelling	
	Prompting	
	Questioning	
	Creating opportunity for creativity and developing critical thinking	
	Explaining	
	Giving feedback	
	Teaching aids	
	Teaching methods	
	Management / Control G = gp, C = class, R = roving	
	Others	

S T U D E N T S	Answer inferential	
	Answer literal	
	Question inferential	
	Question literal	
	Statement	
	Engagement in activity	
	Intuitiveness	
	Others	

Keep in mind:

Comments:

- Fun/ curiosity:
- Inter activeness/ engagement:
- Questioning (T/encourage Ss/how):
- Questioning (S/ how):
- Teacher leading activity:
- Teacher celebrates unanswered questions (open Qs):
- Playing with language:
- Opportunity for creativity and developing critical thinking:

Appendix 2: Observation Checklist 2

Focused Learning in Different Sessions (Critical Thinking)

Aspects of critical thinking Sessions	Asking questions	Making comparison through experiment	Exploring values	Exploring emotions	Exploring relationships	Playing with language	Developing consciousness about the different use of a language	Opportunity for creativity	Working in teams	Seeing different points of view	Range of perspectives	Assessing truthfulness and reliability
Where are you from?	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Thanks for your work	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Grocery shopping	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Our pride	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
An old people's home	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
We live in a global village	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 3: Teachers Feedback Form (after each session)

1. What do you find is working in the session (language, communication, interaction, engagement, activities, etc.)?
2. What do you find is not working in the session (language, communication, interaction, engagement, activities, etc.)?
3. What to do next to make it better (adoptable)?
4. How do you feel (overall view) about this session?

Planning the Role of the Translator

Who/ What?	Why?		How to use? What Conditions?		What Implications?	
	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers
A Picture	Translate the Bangla meaning	An excuse to use Bangla in English sessions	Any time when needed	Be in role as translator when asked for it	Get familiar learning spaces in English sessions	No such moral obligation when using Bangla in English sessions
The teacher	Opportunity to get Bangla easily	Become confident to use English instructions	Ask for it saying, "we need translator."	Prepare to provide context meaning	More engaged	Less apprehension about taking English sessions in English
A student	Student's learning need	Break the traditional culture of English sessions i.e. loud reading and translating	Translator can deny to answer instantly	Encourage students to use other sources for meaning	Learning through fun	Become more focused about students learning needs
	Native language could enhance second language learning	A change in English session	Translator could be busy for that time		Become more creative in language practice	Make a change in regular English sessions
			Not word by word meaning but mainly context meaning		Be confident to ask for their learning needs	Easy to get involve all students in English sessions
			Translator could instruct further where to look for meaning		Encouraged to use other sources when translator denies	More language practice easily
					Less apprehension about English	
					Enhanced second language learning through native language	

Appendix 4: Planning Translator

Use of the *Translator* in English sessions

<p>When to use? Any time. Problem with: Word meaning Understanding instructions, contexts, practicing language</p>	<p>What for? Use Bangla to understand instructions, contexts, words,</p>	<p>How to use? (Students) Ask for translator saying, "we need translator." Follow conditions:</p>	<p>What to do? (Teachers) Be in role as translator. Use Bangla to provide contextual meaning. Considering situation decide when to and how far Bangla could be used.</p>	<p>What's wrong?</p>
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