

A Comparative Study of Teaching English in a Bangla Medium Rural Primary School and an Ibtedayi Madrasah



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an Ibtedayi Madrasah**

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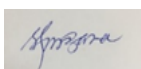
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



Date: 06.06.22

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Dedication

To my beloved parents

All my achievements are because of them.

In loving memory of

My late grandfather Md. Fazlur Rahman

Upazila Education Officer

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Abstract

This study explores English teaching in a Bangla medium rural primary school and an Ibtedayi madrasah. The study focuses on primary level English education because English is a dominant language in today's world. It is also a compulsory subject for Bangla medium primary schools and madrasah in Bangladesh. Primary level education is considered as the foundation of a child and it is believed that what a child learns in his/her primary level has a very good impact on his/her later education. Teaching English is not the same in rural and urban areas because often in urban areas both teacher and students have more resources, logistics and opportunities that are not available in the rural areas. Again, Bangla medium primary school teachers teach English and Bangla language whereas madrasah teachers teach Bangla English and Arabic. Training facilities and teaching processes are in many cases identical for the teachers of these two institutions. In this qualitative study I explore how teachers teach English similarly or differently in the two types of institutions. The final result of the study shows that teachers of the selected institutes use traditional ways of teaching and they lack knowledge of methodology. Most of them are not proficient in English language and the modern technology facility is not adequate. The researcher suggests professional development training of teachers where they will be able to learn pedagogy, how to develop and deliver content along with an effective assessment and feedback system.

Keywords: primary level, rural area, English teaching, professional development.

Chapter 1: Introduction

English is a mandatory subject from grade one in Bangla medium schools and Madrasas in Bangladesh. After the independence of Bangladesh there were huge changes brought to the education policies “from 1988 to 2010, the country got five fresh education policies, however, very few of those policies managed to bring any significant change and improvement in its education sector” (Chandan, 2016).

Background of the study

In the most recent National Education Policy 2010 education is divided into three parts which are primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The secondary level was segmented into three parts which are junior secondary (class 6-8), secondary (class 9-10) and higher secondary (class 11-12). In every sector of primary and secondary level the subject is compulsory. In Bangla medium primary schools English, Mathematics, Social Science, Science, Religious Studies subjects are taught besides Bangla. We also have a religious stream of education called madrasa where a huge number of students study. The madrasah institutions are divided into two parts one is Ibtedayi and another one is Kowmi. Kowmi institutions only focus on Arabic teaching and learning whereas Ibtedayi institutions follow the NCTB provided curriculum. From statistics we come to know that there are around 15995 Ibtedayi madrasah institutions in Bangladesh (Abdalla et al., n.d., p. 12). Abdalla et al. (n.d) in their study stated that “According to 2003 official estimates, there are almost two million students enrolled in Ebitda Education in Bangladesh” (Abdalla et al., n.d., p. 13). They teach English, Mathematics, Social Science, General Science, Arabic, Quran, Hadith, Aquaid and Fiqh subject to their students besides Bangla. The main difference between the Ibtedayi madrasah and Bangla medium primary school is teaching some

extra religious courses. English is not our first or second language and it is taught as a foreign language.

I am doing this research because I believe that the existing teaching of the English language is not up to the mark in rural areas in Bangladesh. Also, students and teachers are not completely aware of the lackings for which teaching learning of English is not working well. As we see a Bangla Medium student learns English from class one to 12 but they are not capable of speaking and listening well. I think the problem happens because of a faulty teaching and learning system. So, I want to explore the real scenario and find out some problems and suggest some possible solutions so that students and teachers can be benefitted. As a student of the English department and also as a dreamer of being a teacher I thought of doing research in this field.

Problem Statement

We know that Bangladesh is a densely populated country. According to Population & Housing Census 2011 Bangladesh has around 15 crore and 25 lac people. But the population is increasing day by day and according to Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data the population of Bangladesh is more than 16 crores in 2022. Around one fourth of them are not literate and those who are literate among them a huge number of people are weak in English language. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statics (BBS) the adult literacy rate of I is 72.8% alongside the literacy rate of Literacy rate of population (7+ years) is 73.2%. We know that population is a valuable asset for a country but if those people are not well trained and if they do not know English well it becomes harder for them to get a good job abroad and hinders them becoming human capital.

We cannot deny the importance of English because it is needed in every sector in our life. According to BBS there are around “133901 primary institutions of 10 different kinds namely, Government Primary School, Registered Non-Government Primary School, Non-Registered Non-Government Primary School, Experimental schools, Community schools, Kindergartens, NGO schools, Ibtedayi madrasah, primary sections of high madrasas, primary sections of high schools” (Salahuddin et al., n.d., p. 4). Among them a huge number of institutions are situated in rural areas. For a better education, the primary level of a student plays an important role. Burg (2006) argues that age 2-13 is the best time for a child to acquire a language. So, to learn English better we need to implement a better English curriculum at the primary level.

Students from class one to five (1-5) are called primary level students. They are actually taught the basics of English “the main objectives of teaching English in primary level education in Bangladesh are to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions, and requests in English and also carry them out” (Salahuddin et al., n.d., p. 2).

There are a huge number of students in rural areas who are admitted into both Govt. primary school and Ibtedayi madrasah. Teaching and learning are not the same in rural and urban areas. The students from urban areas get more access to teachers, materials, satellite, tv, internet etc. as well as their socio-economic condition is also good most of the time. On the contrary, rural students hardly get facilities like urban students. They do not have access to satellite, tv, internet, games etc. also their socio-economic background is not as good as the urban students. Rural students most of the time depend on tuition and private tutor because they do not get extra consulting hours after class. Also, teachers in rural areas have less training and educational background most of the time. Most importantly they are not so skilled and familiar with various

materials. In Ibtedayi institutions teachers are more inclined to teach religious subjects compared to English or Mathematics. This is why students have to depend on private tutor and guidebooks.

Objectives of the Study

In this research, I am at investigating the present English teaching scenario in a remote upazila in Bangladesh and the differences between English teaching in a rural primary school and Ibtedayi madrasah. Since there are not many research available that compare the two types of rural educational institutions, the study aims at filling in the gaps. Finding how the teachers teach English language in a rural primary school and a rural madrasah might yield important findings to help us support the teachers and students in these type of institutions. I believe the findings will benefit both the teachers, students and administrators. It will also benefit teacher educators who train rural teachers. With this aim, I investigate the following research question:

1. How is English language taught differently or similarly in a Ibtedayi Madrasa and a Bangla medium rural primary school in Bangladesh?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I will review the available literature on English language teaching in rural schools and madrasa in Bangladesh.

Milon (2016) used a mix method to conduct his study. He stated that the primary level is the basic level for a student and “teachers are entirely responsible for the students learning at this level”(Milon, 2016, p. 1). This is why he chose primary level as his research area. We know that the “Necessity of teaching English was addressed first time in the South Asian subcontinent in Lord Macaulay’s Minute of 1835” (Milon, 2016, p. 4). He stated that the reason behind rural children’s failure in learning English is because of the “lack of skilled and trained teachers, proper teacher training, proper teaching method and material, limited contact hour, class size, inadequate knowledge on pedagogy” (Milon, 2016, p. 13) and so on and so forth. He also stated that the objective of teaching English in primary school is “to enable students to understand simple commands, requests and instructions” (Milon, 2016, p. 3). He also claims that teaching learning in rural school means “memorizing only grammatical rules and textbook contents even without understanding” (Milon, 2016, p. 4). He also argues that “The urban students have the easy access to watch cable television, go to cybercafé and read English newspapers. As a result, they have the easy opportunity to use English outside their classroom” (Milon, 2016, p. 4). He stated that the reason for weak teaching in school is because of the indifference of the school authorities in English language teaching. Also, most of the teachers do not get necessary teaching materials from the school authority most of the time.

Nashruddin (2015) used ethnographic methodology to conduct his research. According to him “teaching English at primary school level has two different conditions; interactive and not interactive” (Nashruddin, 2015, p. 4). He stated that teachers’ training is important. He also

claims teachers use monotonous methods which do not focus on student's development in English rather they lose their attraction. He believes that children's learning in primary school could be in two groups: age (five-seven) and age (eight to ten) and it is important to identify their characters because different age groups should be taught differently or their learning process would be different. He also stated that there are three kinds of students based on their economic background which are rich, middle-class and poor, respectively. Economic background influences their education. He claims that many people believe that "madrasah is for studying religious subjects and is not qualified for teaching general subjects" (Nashruddin, 2015, p. 11) like Mathematics, English. He also stated that meritorious and rich students are unwilling to admit in madrasah so students from madrasah and non-madrasah create a gap. He also argues that the outcome of the students depends on teachers. He also suggests that parents should supervise their children while studying at home.

Salahuddin et al. (n.d.) used a mix method to conduct their research. They stated that most of the rural schools' students are poor in English language because skilled teachers are not adequate, teachers do not have proper training and professional development training are not capable of using proper methods of English language teaching as well as they cannot use materials properly. Teaching and learning process needs some necessary resources to make learning effective. They claim that a huge large "number of teachers do not have teacher's guide because the government do not provide them" (Salahuddin et al., n.d., p. 15). They also found that most of the urban students have access to cable tv, cybercafé and English newspapers and rural students do not have access to them this is why they are less proficient in English. They also found that for implementing "English language curriculum at primary level, teachers' knowledge about the aims, objectives of the English curriculum are very essential" (Salahuddin

et al., n.d., p. 15). They also claim that there are insufficient number of English teachers to take English class, thus teachers who are not good at taking English class or who have no training in English language teaching have to take English class to make up the teachers' gap. Hasan (2004) explained that there are a lot of teachers who are not capable of writing a piece of text of their own. They also believe that more English teachers with better quality should be recruited in primary school.

Rahman and Pandian, 2018 conducted their research through discourse analysis. They depended on secondary data to conduct their research. They stated that Bangladesh has three educational systems including the “mainstream” which is for secular education, “madrasah” which is for religious education and also there is an “English-medium” education system. The English medium education system is run by the British council which actually follows Cambridge University's instructions. As these three institutions have different characteristics thus “the role of English language is different in these three systems” (Rahman & Pandian, 2018, p. 2). They also claimed that Bangladesh is failing to implement communicative English properly because there is a scarcity of quality teachers. Rahman, Kobir and Afroze (2006) believe that existing teachers' training and the effectiveness as well as the outcome of it is not satisfactory. They found that various professional development trainings are not actually helping teachers to become a quality teacher and they are failing to change the classroom practice in a significant amount. Wang and Cheng (2008) thinks that rural area teachers are facing serious teachers' quality problems.

Rohmah (2015) used a mix method to conduct his research. He stated that learning materials play an important role in teaching and learning. Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks manifest the visible heart of any language teaching learning process. He also claims that “class

size and school facilities may influence the choice of reading materials” (Rohmah, 2015, p. 3). He also found that teachers express more negative comments on the most commonly used coursebooks. He also argued that some teachers are reluctant to adapt materials in the coursebooks because they feel they do not have the knowledge or time to do it. He also claims that students consider grammar as the most difficult part. He also found that students like English because English is a very important and international language.

Machfudi (2016) conducted his research using discourse analysis. He found that rural area teachers of East Java use different kinds of motivational strategies which are giving rewards, giving positive feedback, etc. Teachers also try to increase students’ self-esteem and self-confidence. He also claims that motivations play an important role in engaging students in learning English. He also stated that students with different learning levels can learn in different ways and thus the teacher should use different strategies. He also found that students who receive praise from their teachers are more enthusiastic than others. He also states that most of the time the motivational students are autonomous learners. He claims that teacher’s involvement increases student’s motivation and while the students understand the value of education, they become motivated. He argues that small praise from teachers positively triggers students’ desire to do better and enthusiastically. He also stated that the teacher’s role is pivotal in learning English and learners depend so much on the teacher’s performance.

Hadiyanto & Nuraini (2016) used qualitative case study to conduct their research. They found that there are some reasons for academic challenges which are students’ demotivation, lower basics in English, lack of facility, crowded classroom, socio-economic level, teachers’ effort and leaders’ support. He claims that teachers of English often struggle to teach their students in an effective way. He also found that madrasah teachers face problems like

curriculum, textbook, lack of support and effective administration. Rohmah (2009) found that there are some challenges faced by the teachers of madrasah tasnawiyah. They have limited financial support and resources. Thus, they fail to implement communicative language teaching (CLT) in their class properly and they have limited material to use.

Kizildag (2009) from Turkey indicated that teachers of the English language experience three main challenges while teaching English including institutional, instructional and socio-economic challenges. Alwasilah (2009) stated that English lessons was the lowest score achieved by the students of madrasah tsanawiyah. He also stated that English teachers cannot handle the class by themselves which results in their lack of attention in class.

Rezeki and Sagala (2021) conducted their research using descriptive qualitative methodology. They found that there are two difficult factors in learning English particularly internal factors and external factors, including 1) students' low motivation; 2) lack of understanding of the importance in learning English (3) lack of opportunities to learn English (4) Lack of environment support such as parents, friends, etc. They also stated that the students cannot understand English properly because they have problems in basic understanding of parts of speech.

Mukhaiyar et al. (2018) conducted their study using a mixed methodology. They stated that the success of the learning process is determined by teaching materials. They argued that "there are no best or the worst teaching materials, all of them are based on the appropriateness with the methods used and the needs of the students" (Mukhaiyar et al., 2018, p. 2).

Haryanto et al. (2018) conducted their research using a qualitative case study method. They think that there are some reason behind students demotivation which are "lack of belief in learners' capabilities, laziness and unwillingness to learn" (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 2). They also

stated that students become demotivated when teachers use or show textbooks or materials with less interest and unpractically. They suggested that teachers should always make lecture interesting because uninteresting lecture will make students demotivated. They also claim that there are five factors causing students demotivation which are “teaching style, school facilities, class conditions, negative attitude toward foreign language, and poor self-confidence” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 5). They also found that there are some common problems faced by students which are “underprivileged ability, lack of resources and facilities, inadequate time, and peer influences” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 13). They also claim that it becomes problematic and harder for teachers to convey a lesson to students when the students are not motivated and they (s) also cannot concentrate on the lesson. They also suggested that a student should prepare them well before coming to the class such as bringing a dictionary, notebooks, pen, pencils etc. and they should also do their homework at their home/dormitory to cut a good figure in the exam. They also suggest that the teachers have to teach using some techniques in their class including “games and creative activities, such as guessing games, simply singing a song in English, learning with pictures, linking verbs, playing interesting cards” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 13).

Aforementioned researchers discussed effective teaching processes in different schools and madrasahs. They sorted out some problems of students, teachers and curriculums for which the teaching and learning become affected. They show how different socio-economic backgrounds, different techniques of teachers and different teaching materials play an important role in the teaching process. They also suggest some possible solutions to cope up with the problems of learning English. To address some of the issues and compare and contrast the similarities and differences of teaching in a Bangla medium rural primary school and an Ibtedayi

madrasah I decided to research on it as there is no comparative research work has done on teaching English between rural primary school and Ibtedayi madrasah. I believe that it will really add value to the ELT research domain of Bangladesh.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research aims at comparing the teaching practices of English teachers in a Bangla medium rural primary school and a rural Ibtedayi madrasah. The study also focuses on the present scenario of the teaching practices and how the teaching is similar or different in those selected institutions. In order to conduct this study, I used a qualitative research method which “allowed the study to incorporate teachers’ perceptions, both emotional and intellectual, about teaching English of rural teachers” (Mohan et al., 2017, p. 4). Marshall and Rossman (1999) claims that the goal of using a qualitative method is to “explore, explain, or describe the phenomenon of interest” (p. 33). In order to collect data, I selected one Bangla medium rural primary school and a rural Ibtedayi madrasah. The selection of those two institutions was not a random choice; rather I selected those two institutions because I have access to institutions through some acquaintances, and I am also familiar with the participants. I believe that the participants have given authentic information which really helped me to conduct better research.

Research Site

The School and the Madrasah

In the rural primary school there are five classe which are class one to five. This is a government school and school hours are from 9:30 am to 4:15 pm. Class duration for each class is 45 minutes. Classes are held six days in a week, Friday is the only holiday.

In the madrasah there are ten classes but in Ibtedayi level they enroll in class one and finish in class five. This is a non-government institution and class hours are from 9:30 am to

4:15 pm. Class duration for each class is 45 minutes. Classes are held six days in a week, Friday is the only holiday.

Participants

There are three English teachers in the selected primary school and all of them participated in the research. Their names (pseudonym) are Shamima Akhter who is a Head teacher and she is a BA, B.Ed. also, she has 32 years of teaching experience; Jahanara Begum who is an MA and she has 13 years of teaching experience, Rozina Khatun who is a BA and she has 8 years of teaching experience. On the contrary, there were two English teachers in the madrasah and I interviewed both of them. Their names (pseudonyms) are Arafat Kazi who is a senior teacher and he has an MA degree along with 20 years of teaching experience, Sabbir Ahmed who is a BA and has 5 years of teaching experience.

For the recruitment of the teachers, first I selected two institutions which are reachable to me. Then I talked with all of them and told them about my research and also asked them to sit for an interview. All of them agreed to sit for the interview. Then I gave the consent form to make it professional.

Experience and Trainings of the Teachers

Shamima Akhter has subjective training on teaching English and she has also attended various professional development training. She said that subjective English training helped her to understand how to make students proficient in four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing). Those trainings have also helped her to understand how to use materials in class as she teaches children and children learn more while various materials are used in class. Jahanara Begum has PTI, subjective English and ICT training. Subjective English training has helped her to know the classroom management and to become expert in different methods and

techniques. Rozina Khatun has DPED, ICT, Bangla, English and Science training. She also has pre-primary training. Her ICT training has helped her to become an expert in ICT related work. She added that, “before doing ICT training I could not even turn on and off the laptop but now I know a lot of functions.” Her pre-primary training has helped her to know how to manage little children. From her training she has learnt that teachers should not utter the word “study” in front of pre-primary students. Teachers should make students learn things by acting, dancing, multimedia content etc.

Arafat Kazi has a training on communicative English. He also has 21 days training on spoken English. He also has joined different English seminars. These training sessions have helped him a lot, he believes. He said that, “we had a gap in English teaching and we did not know how to teach communicative English” (Interview 1, L- 3-4). After attending these training sessions, he has become efficient in English teaching. He says that the purpose of communicating English is to make students able to communicate in English. Sabbir Ahmed has computer training, subjective training. He thinks that his training has helped him a lot but he did not elaborate on how those training has helped him to become a good teacher.

Data Collection Procedures

I believe that “interview is the best way to collect the data because we as a researcher interview the participant to find out from them all the things that we cannot directly observe” (Hadiyanto & Nuraini, 2016, p. 5). As a part of qualitative method procedure, I interviewed them with their consent in my own developed consent form (please refer to Appendix A). To conduct this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews which were about 30 minutes long. I also asked some additional questions which I believe will be relevant for the study. I took permission from the participants to record the interviews (which will be deleted after conducting the

research) so that I can maintain accuracy. I think that the “recording was due to support the data in the interview section so that the results could be later transcribed” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 5). I transcribed the data and all of the transcribed data were analyzed so that I can identify the themes which I used in my thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

I used qualitative coding for my data analysis which is “related to assign some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of data” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 5) this also helps me to “get back or retrieve to specific data” (Haryanto et al., 2018, p. 5). Also, to find and describe similarities and differences in teaching English between two selected institutions, the individual interview data was analyzed and reanalyzed and finally connected with my research question. To make the findings trustworthy I shared my findings with the interviewees for them to check for validity.

Apart from these, I used thematic analysis and this is well known for data analysis in qualitative research methods. Based on this, I have come up with a number of themes based on the interviews and observation of the participants and themes have been made based on the words or sentences, uttered more times by the participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter I will discuss the major findings of my research.

Methods and Techniques Used by the Participants

The teachers I interviewed used various teaching methods. Often, they mention that they are using a specific method but when they describe it, or discuss what they exactly do, it shows that they do not really understand the method, and I found that they are using a different method.

Shamima Akhter claims that she uses a communicative method in her class where she acts as a facilitator and students do various tasks. She says that “I use pair work, group work, acting, repetition after teacher, dialogue practice, question answer etc. techniques in my class” (Interview 1, L- 11-15). She uses both Bangla and English in her class as the students are from rural areas and they do not have much knowledge of English. This is why she delivers her speech in English first then in Bangla to make students understand a topic clearly. She says that “as Bangla is their mother tongue and they understand thing is Bangla well thus while I uses Bangla after English, meaning of a word, sentence, command becomes clearer to the students”(Interview 1, L-16-18). In the grammar translation method (GTM) “The meaning of the target language is made clear by translating it into the students’ native language” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40). So, here we see that she is using both GTM and communicative methods but due to her lack of knowledge about GTM and communicative methods she can not report it correctly.

Jahanara Begum uses GTM for teaching English but the interesting fact is that she also uses techniques which are used in communicative methods. She uses group work, question-answer, pair work etc. in her class to teach English. She believes that group work, games help them to become proficient in English. She says that “In time of pare work and games students can communicate with other students as well as teachers thus their speaking and listening skills

as well as leadership, time management and teamwork skills get developed” (Interview 1, L- 6-9).

Rozina Khatun uses GTM and communicative methods in her class. She says that “I use different techniques including games, recitation, storytelling, group work, pair work etc” (Interview 1, L- 8-9) but “the language that is used in class is mostly the students’ native language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40).

Arafat Kazi claims that he uses a communicative method but the language he uses to command or give lectures in his native language is Bangla. He uses group work, pair work, loud speaking etc. as his techniques. In time of “pair work and group work students become confident and try to speak in English with their peers. Thus, their lacking overcomes and they become proficient in English” (Interview 1, L-10-12), he says.

Sabbir Ahmed uses GTM in his class but he uses some techniques which are similar to communicative methods. He uses group work, pair work, games etc. in his class. He says “I ask my students if they have any specific problem understanding any topic” (Interview 1, L-3-4). Then he starts using GTM to take his class.

Listening and Speaking Practice of Students

Shamima Akhter says “I use loud reading and students listen to me. Then students read in group and does loud reading as well. They also take part in question answer session, acting the reading with group etc. thus they practice speaking and listening” (Interview 1, L-29-31). When students do not understand any topic “the meaning of the target language is made clear by translating it into the students’ native language” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40) also students and teachers ask and answer questions in their native language. She gives an example “while teaching a topic called ‘tell about yourself’ students first read the text and then tell about

his/her and their family as well” (Interview 1, L-31-33). She also uses a multimedia projector where students can listen to the text in English for a couple of times and thus, they practice their listening as well.

Jahanara Begum uses pair work, group work and chain drill to make students practice listening and speaking. She thinks that this helps students to become proficient in speaking and listening. In her class “the primary skills to be developed are reading and writing. Little attention is given to speaking and listening, and almost none to pronunciation” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 37).

Rozina Khatun translates the topic in Bangla first then in English thus “the meaning of the target language is made clear by translating it into the students’ native language” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40). Again, students repeat after their teacher thus they practice speaking. She says that “students can understand English commands. For instance, when she says come here, sit down, look at the blackboard students do that accordingly” (Interview 1, L-21-23).

Arafat Kazi uses pair work and group work techniques to make students practice listening and speaking. He gives students the floor and “gives the students the directions for the activity in the target language” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 158).

Sabbir Ahmed “some picture related to a topic and asks his students to talk about the picture in a group or individually” (Interview 1, L- 16-17) and thus he “facilitates communication in the classroom” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 161). As the capacity of a student varies from place to place and country to country thus, he argues “we should find out how our students learn better and that will be the appropriate way of teaching a language” (Interview 1, L- 21-22).

Rewards Given by the Teachers to Motivate the Students

Shamima Akhter motivates her students by saying very good, thank you. “I makes good and bad students sit together thus the student who has fear or shyness becomes confident and smart” (Interview 1, L- 35-36), she says. Again, she uses to elect student of the day, student of the week, student of the month and finally student of the year which plays a pivotal role in students’ motivation she claims. She says that, “while I select a student of the day and praise him/her they become confident and other students also want to become ‘student of the day’ thus they become competitive which makes them laborious to learn English” (Interview 1, L- 39-41).

Jahanara Begum uses to give clapping and announcing gift for students who has better knowledge in English thus the students become motivated and competitive to get the gift, she says. She says, “It helps the students learning because when someone gets a good complement or a gift from the teacher other students think that we should also work hard to get that gift or complement” (Interview 1, L- 25-27).

Rozina Khatun motivates her students by making them (s) understand the importance of English, “When I (R) say them that if you (S) learn this topic well and can do the homework properly, I (R) will give you chocolate then they become so happy and almost all of them do the homework” (Interview 1, L- 26-28), she says.

Arafat Kazi says that “teacher should never demotivate his students” (Interview 1, L- 20). He uses to give claps if a student does well in class. He thinks that his reward makes students motivated. When a student can answer questions properly and gets reward other student also think that if I could answer properly, I also could get reward” which makes them competitive and he believes competition triggers their English learning.

Sabbir Ahmed motivates his students by saying that English is an international language and if you want to go abroad English will definitely help you. He makes students understand that “though English is a foreign language, it is easier than Bangla to acquire because in Bangla we use around 50 alphabets but in English we use only 26” (Interview 1, L- 25-26). Another interesting thing is that he uses to give reward to his students at his own expense. He argues that when I announce a prize students become motivated. He also uses ‘thank you’, ‘very good’ etc. to praise his students.

Evaluation of the Students

In case of evaluation of students, “we take exams after finishing every lesson” (Interview 1, L- 42) says Shamima Akhter. After every class we evaluate students according to our learning outcome and the evaluation is based on written and oral tests. She also says that we evaluate some of the good students who can answer the questions properly then they also evaluate other students and thus the evaluation process of large quantity students becomes more easier and consumes less time. In case of class one and two we evaluate their listening and speaking skills (along with reading and writing skill) in exams but in class three to five we do not evaluate listening and speaking. It is clearer that “little attention is given to speaking and listening, and almost none to pronunciation” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 37).

Jahanara Begum takes a written exam for her student’s evaluation. While conducting class she uses to evaluate their speaking and writing skill by various activities. She believes that “the primary skills to be developed are reading and writing” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 37). Rozina Khatun takes both oral and written evaluations to her students.

Arafat Kazi takes a written exam and oral test to evaluate his students. Sabbir Ahmed says “I use to evaluate my students every week, every month and in every semester” (Interview 1, L- 33). He uses both oral and written tests to evaluate his students.

Feedback Provided to the Students

Shamima Akhter gives oral feedback to students. She says that, “I divide them in groups (e.g., red, yellow and green) and we make a target to make them reach from red to yellow and yellow to green within three months of time” (Interview 1, L- 53-54). She believes that feedback helps them (s) a lot to develop their skills as they can practice more and can learn where they are lacking. In her class “errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40).

Jahanara Begum gives oral feedback and thus students can learn about their mistakes and after knowing this they try to overcome those errors. She believes that “having the students get the correct answer” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40) is very important.

Rozina Khatun makes students write a certain topic five/ten times so that they do not make a mistake again. In case of written feedback when it is negative, students are disinclined to show this to their parents, she says. She says that “feedback makes students motivated and they can know their lacking and they also learn what to do to overcome those lacking” (Interview 1, L- 33-34). She believes that “it is very important that students get the correct answer” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 38).

Arafat Kazi gives oral feedback to students. He does not give correction to mistakes immediately because he believes that “since this activity was working on fluency, the teacher did not correct the student, but simply noted the error, which he will return to at a later point” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 159).

Sabbir Ahmed says “I never tell students that you do not know anything or you will not be able to answer. I always try to give positive feedback to students”(Interview 1, L- 35-36). He also seeks answers from students and if one student gives an incorrect answer “he selects a different student to supply the correct answer or the teacher himself gives the right answer” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 37).

Technologies Used in Class

Shamima Akhter uses modern technology to teach English but she “cannot use it on a daily basis as there is only one multimedia projector in the school” (Interview 1, L- 57-58). She says that “while we make them listen to the audio of a lecture, show them video on an interesting place or people they become interested to learn” (Interview 1, L- 59-60). She believes that “different learning styles allow students to find learning resources that match their preferred way of learning” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 340).

Jahanara Begum uses a multimedia projector to show video, sideshow, audio and pictures. She thinks that “using multimedia helps them (S) to overcome their lacking. Student also become joyous after watching digital contents” (Interview 1, L- 33-34) because “for some learners technology-based learning is a less stressful way to practice using English than classroom-based activities where they feel they are being compared with their peers” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 340).

Rozina Khatun uses multimedia projector to show video, animation and to make them (S) listen to audio. She says that “these help students to become proficient in pronunciation, vocabulary” (Interview 1, L- 36-37). Modern technology also helps them (S) to become motivated. According to Richards and Rodgers “motivation often increases and discipline problems decrease when students are engaged in technology-based learning”(Richards &

Rodgers, 2014, p. 340). She says that “when I play something in the projector even the naughty boy/girl becomes quite silent and enjoys the class” (Interview 1, L- 38-39).

Arafat Kazi uses a multimedia projector to take English class and he says while I use video, audio and picture through projector teaching becomes effective because “it provides learners with opportunities to focus on particular skills, such as reading or speaking” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 340). Students also become interested in taking part in class and they are “no longer the passive recipients of instruction but are actively engaged in furthering their own knowledge and skills and are more in control of the process and the learning outcomes” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 340).

Sabbir Ahmed tries to use modern technology to teach English but as the institute has only one multimedia projector thus, he is not able to use it on a regular basis.

Materials Used by the Teachers

Almost all of them use NCTB provided English books to teach English and they also use teacher’s editions. None of the teachers use authentic materials to teach English in their class. As the exam is taken based on the NCTB provided books, they think that they should focus only on that book. Some of them use realia, model charts etc. to take their English class.

Lack of Skills of the Students

Shamima Akhter says that her students do not have speaking and writing skills. They also have a partial lack of listening too. She claims that “as English is a foreign language and they (S) do not have much access and they (S) cannot practice it much thus; they (S) lack those skills” (Interview 1, L- 20-21). She added that “students hardly hear any English words in their surroundings and family. School is the only place where they listen to some English words, sentences and conversation but as the class time is limited thus, they cannot practice it more”

(Interview 1, L- 21-23). She suggests that to overcome those lacking students should come to school regularly and participate in class. She also says that she gives homework to the students thus students can practice English after the class time also.

Jahanara Begum says that her students do not have speaking skills. She also says that, “we teachers do not always use English as a classroom language because most of the teachers are not capable of speaking English” (Interview 1, L- 13-14) . She believes that if teachers use English as their classroom language for the full class duration students will definitely be benefitted. That means “whenever possible, the target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to the students or in assigning homework” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 164).

Rozina Khatun says that her students do not have speaking and reading skills. She thinks that the main reason for the lacking of their English skill is their socio-economic background. She says that “as most of them belong to poor families and there is a bazaar which is on Tuesday. On that day about 90% of the students do not come to school because they need to sell something to help the family” (Interview 1, L- 12-14) . She also thinks that “the recent worldwide pandemic has a huge influence on students lacking in English learning” (Interview 1, L- 14-15). She believes mother’s assembly, managing committee, and home visit of students can make them aware so that they never miss any class.

Arafat Kazi claims that his students do not have speaking, listening and writing skills. They are lacking in these skills because they do not hear English in their house or surrounding. Also, “teachers use Bangla in their class and students cannot practice English listening too much. Madrasah is the only place where they can hear and practice English” (Interview 1, L- 14-16) . To overcome this problem teachers should always use English and should also encourage

students to ask and answer questions in English. In GTM “language that is used in class is mostly the students’ native language” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 40) but to make students proficient in all four skills target language should be used in class.

Sabbir Ahmed believes that his students do not have writing and reading skills. Another interesting matter is that he does not talk about listening and speaking because he never uses English as a classroom language and students need not to understand English. This is because “the teachers who use the Grammar-Translation Method, a fundamental purpose of learning a language is to be able to read literature written in the target language”(Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 39). He says that “due to the recent pandemic students were kind of separated from education and most of them have forgotten what they have learnt earlier” (Interview 1, L-8-10). To overcome this problem, he suggests taking extra classes and giving homework to students.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I will present a critical analysis of the responses of the teachers whom I interviewed. I will also summarize the key findings regarding my research question. The discussion is also done thematically.

Teachers do not have a Clear Idea About Methods and Techniques

From the responses of the five teachers, we see that all of the teachers think that they are using communicative methods in their classroom but they do not have a clearer idea about the method. All of the teachers use native language (Bangla) as the medium of instruction and then communicate in Bangla in their class. They hardly use English conversation because they believe students will not be able to understand what they say. Again, some of the teachers including Shamima Akhter, Rozina Khatun and Sabbir Ahmed claims that most of the teachers are not capable of talking in English. Jahanara begum uses to give focus on reading and writing only and a little attention to speaking and listening. Rozina Khatun uses native language almost all of the time. Arafat Kazi directs students in target language and Sabbir Ahmed uses his students to talk in target language. In case of evaluation almost all of them use to evaluate their students reading and writing which is common in GTM. Almost all of them except Arafat Kazi and Shamima Akhter believe that error correction should not mandatorily done immediately. Finally, none of them use authentic materials to take their English class. This is how we see although all of them believe that the method they are using is communicative method but they are actually following GTM even without knowing what is GTM. It is clear that GTM dominated the teaching of all of the teachers.

The Role of the Teachers

From the responses of the teachers, we see almost all of them are facilitators in their classroom. They use their students to do various tasks and when they get stuck the teacher helps them. All of the teachers except Sabbir Ahmed claim that they use pair work, group work, acting, repetition after teacher, question answer, dialogue practice in their class. Sabbir Ahmed uses to take class by asking if students have any specific problem and then he uses to take class in a traditional manner.

In case of feedback, we see the teacher is the person who decides what is a right answer and what is wrong. They use to give immediate feedback to their students because they do not want their students to repeat the same mistake a second time. All of them agree that teachers should not give negative feedback because it demotivates the students. This is why they just mention the error and give feedback in a friendly manner. All of the teachers like to give oral feedback and some of them give written feedback. Rozina Khatun believes that written feedback has a long-lasting impact because parents can know about their student's progress but it is also evident that students are reluctant to show negative feedback to their parents.

Impact of Student's Socio-Economic Background on Learning

From the teachers' responses we come to know that students' socio-economic background plays an important role in their learning. Shamima Akhter believes that as her students are from rural areas thus, they cannot hear any English words from their surroundings. When she gives homework to her students their parents often fail to help their child to help in their homework because they are not literate enough. Those who have better economical backgrounds go to private tuition to overcome their lackings. Jahanara Begum's students cannot practice English outside class because their family members are not capable of speaking in English. Rozina

Khatun's students need to sell things in the market to support their family thus they miss classes. Their parents are not also literate enough to help their children's learning. Arafat Kazi's students cannot hear English in their house or surrounding and they cannot practice it. This is how we see students are lacking speaking and listening because of their socio-economic background.

Role of Examination in Shaping Teaching

From the responses of all of the participants it shows that all of them use NCTB provided books as the core text and none of them use any authentic materials. Again, their students lack speaking and listening practice and the teachers are not making the students practice listening and speaking too much because they know that the evaluation will be based on students reading and writing proficiency. Shamima Akhter, Jahanara Begum and Sabbir Ahmed believe that speaking and reading skills should be included in the examination. Sometimes students and their parents do not care about speaking and listening proficiency because they only seek a good result from the students. As the result is based on reading and writing skills thus teachers as well as students are reluctant to give more focus on listening and speaking skills. Thus, we see examination is shaping the teaching of the teachers.

Inadequate Use of Technology

Almost all of the teachers use modern technology in their classroom but they mention that the number of multimedia projector is not limited to conduct classes regularly using the projector. In rural areas we know there is load shedding which also affects taking multimedia classes. Most of the teachers do not have ICT training and they do not know how to make PowerPoint slides. Also some of them cannot operate computers well. As multimedia classes make students motivated and they can learn better, this is why teachers should be trained and the use of technology in class should be increased.

Lack of Communicative Language Trainings

From the responses of the teachers, we see only Arafat Kazi has a training on communicative English and most of them have subjective English training. NCTB books are designed for communicative learning so teachers should have dedicated training on communicative methods. Teachers use native language in their class almost all of the time and they think this helps their students to understand better but as the students cannot practice listening and speaking much thus, they are failing to be proficient in those two skills. From their responses regarding evaluation and feedback system we see they follow GTM method. If the teachers can get proper communicative method training, then they will be able to follow it and students will be benefited.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Recommendations

In this section, based on the findings of my research, I would like to make a few recommendations to help our rural teachers teach English language more efficiently.

English Should be Considered as a Language not as a Subject

Most of the teachers and students consider English as an academic subject like science, religious studies etc. but they should not think like that. In Bangladesh students learn Bangla from their childhood and they learn it as a language and they use this for communication. If students and teachers can take English as a language, they will be eager to use it for communication. If they can do this, they will be proficient in all of the four skills I believe.

More Professional Development Training Should be Provided

As most of the teachers have zero experience while they are recruited this is why they need different kinds of professional development training. From the teachers' responses it is evident that those who have participated in various training have diversity in their teaching. As the primary and madrasah English curriculum is based on communicative method thus more professional development training on communicative method should be implemented. In case of ICT training teachers should not only be taught how to operate devices or how to make PowerPoint slides only, rather training should also address important competencies such as “content development, content delivery, design and implementation of the course, assessment, feedback” (Hafsa, 2019, p. 438).

Teacher Selection and Recruitment System should be Revised

From some of the participants' responses we come to know that there are several teachers who cannot speak in English. As an English teacher one must speak English in their class. If the

teacher is unable to speak English, he will not be able to make his students master in speaking. To eliminate this problem authority should recruit those people as English teachers who have proficiency in English.

Speaking and Listening Test should be Included in Exams for All Classes

The participants claim that they take exams on students' reading and writing skills. Shamima Akhter says that only class one and two students have 20 marks listening and speaking text in their exam. To make students proficient, speaking and listening tests must be included for all of the class. If it can be implemented then both students and teachers will focus on listening and speaking skills which will make them proficient in those skills.

Other than that, different kinds of teacher training, workshops, seminars can be done. Extra classes can be arranged for weaker students, weekly seminars on English can be arranged, language clubs can be a good place for students speaking practice. Recitation, speech on different topics, can also help students to do better in English.

Limitations of the Study

As I am from the same area where the two institutions belong thus, I had good access to the teachers. I also had a better understanding about the socio-economic background which impacts the learning of the students. I went from one place to another several times to collect data from the participants. Again, some of the participants were afraid and thought that their real name could come to light. Some of them were indifferent while answering questions. However, it has been done in the best possible and accurate way.

Possible Future Research

From my literature review it is evident that there is very few work done on Bangla medium rural primary school and madrasah. There is hardly any comparative study between

those two instituted English teaching and the quality of teachers, their experiences etc. So, my study tries to fill the gap. I believe for the development of primary education, much more research should be done in this field as research explores real scenarios and the problems and prospects. I would like to suggest some possible future research here:

- 1) There can be research done on the effectiveness of participants' professional development training.
- 2) Research can be done on teaching experience and trainings and how teaching experience and training help teachers shape their teaching and the transition from where they started and where they are after training and some years of experience.
- 3) Research can be done on English medium primary school and Bangla medium primary schools to investigate how English is taught in those two institutions and how they are similar or different.
- 4) There can be research on how the novice teachers see them as an English teacher and what is their view compared to trained and experienced teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

A Comparative Study of Teaching English in a Bangla Medium Rural Primary School and an Ibtedayi Madrasah

-Md. Ashikur Rahaman

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

This consent form describes a comparative study that is being conducted by Md. Ashikur Rahaman, Department of English and Humanities, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

The purpose of this study is to explore how teaching and learning is similar/different in a Bangla medium rural primary school and madrasah. English is a compulsory subject for Bangla medium students and it is also a dominant language in today's world. Different teachers teach English in different ways and this impacts students English learning. Therefore, if it can be studied how teachers in rural area teaches English and what are the problems they face while teaching then some probable solution could be given. This comparative study will focus on the teachers of two selected institutions and investigate how they teach English. The research on this topic is still very limited. That is why, my research will try to investigate the similarities and differences of teaching of those teachers.

If you make the decision to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview session. The interview session will not take more than 30 minutes. You will also be required to tell the exact teaching process you follow. After collecting the data, you will be invited to share your thoughts and review the probable findings. The PI will conduct the

interview and those will be **voice recorded**. Approximately 5 participants will take part in this study. If you take part in this study, your participation will last about May 30, 2022.

There is no confusion that some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable to answer. However, you will always have the right to tell the PI if you do not want some of the information you shared to be used in the study. Moreover, you can also skip any questions that you do not want to answer. There are no other expected risks to you for participating in this study. The reflections on your teaching experience will help finding out the problems and prospects of rural area English teaching. You will not be paid for participating in this study. There will be no cost to you to participate in this study.

The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh makes every effort to keep the collected information (taken from you) private. All data will be confidential from the researcher's side. Pseudonyms will also be used to keep the data more confidential. We will gather the shared information and analyze it privately. Sometimes, however, researchers need to share information that may identify you with people that work for the university. If this does happen, we will take precautions to protect the information you have provided. Results of the research may be presented at conferences or in publications, but your name or any other identifiers will not be used.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free not to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. For more information about this case study, you may call me – **01620965609** or send me an email –

ashikur.rahaman.deh@ulab.edu.bd

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. How many years of teaching experience do you have? What kind of teacher training did you have and how do you think those helped you to become a teacher?
2. What methods and techniques do you use in your class and how do you think they are improving your students' proficiency in English?
3. Which skills do your students lack? What do you think are the reasons for their lacking and how can they be overcome?
4. How do you teach listening and speaking skills? Do you think those are useful to make students proficient in listening and speaking skills?
5. How do you motivate students and how do you reward/praise them? How do you think those affect their learning?
6. How do you evaluate your students?
7. What kind of feedback do you provide to your students? How does it impact their learning?
8. Do you use modern technology to teach English? How do you use them/why do not you use them? How do you think using technology can improve students' English skills?
9. What kind of texts and materials do you use in your classes? How do you use them?